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International Affairs

Objectives for Human Rights Conference Told

93AS0947A Madras THE HINDU in English 3 May 93 p 6

[Article by Thomas Abraham: "India Links Terrorism to Human Rights"; boldface words as published]

[Text] Geneva, May 2. One of the objectives of Indian diplomacy at the preparatory meeting for the Vienna conference on human rights has been to try and introduce the concept of terrorism as a violation of human rights, a move which it hopes would have an impact on its efforts to fight the phenomenon in Kashmir and Punjab.

The leader of the Indian delegation, Dr. L.N. Singhvi, has proposed a paragraph in the draft declaration describing terrorism as a threat to human rights, though it is not yet clear whether the idea will get enough support to be included in the final document that the Vienna conference will adopt.

"We have been too long concerned with the violations of States, and not enough of victims of violence... we have to look at the human rights of victims as well," Dr. Singhvi said in an interview.

Earlier efforts: Efforts to introduce this concept at earlier preparatory meetings had run into stiff opposition from Pakistan, which wanted to avoid any condemnation of Kashmiri separatism, as well as from many other countries for different reasons.

At the Asian regional meeting on human rights in Bangkok, India succeeded in introducing a paragraph that noted that "terrorism, in all its forms and manifestations... has emerged as one of the most dangerous threats to the enjoyment of human rights and democracy..." The price of getting this in was a qualification that terrorism should be "distinguished from the legitimate struggles of people under colonial or alien domination and foreign occupation," a formula which Pakistan could use to describe the conflict in Kashmir.

Both Asian and western countries have been hesitant to endorse the concept for different reasons. Arab countries which have been accused by the West of sponsoring terrorism do not want to give the concept, added credence. Many western countries on the other hand, feel that the primary focus of human rights conferences and declarations should be the duties of a State towards its citizens. To introduce concepts such as terrorism would detract from the focus on the responsibilities of States.

Bridging role: Besides raising the issue of terrorism, India's main role in the conference has been as a link between radical Asian States such as Indonesia, Malaysia and China, and the Western countries. As Dr. Singhvi pointed out, India had played a "bridging role" at crucial times when the conference was deadlocked. As a functioning liberal democracy in Asia, India has a foot in both camps, and has been able to act as a mediator.

India has been less defensive at this meeting than it often is, agreeing with the West on issues of democracy and civil

liberties, but also emphasising the need to consider economic, social and cultural development as a human right.

"India has no reason to be apologetic about human rights, this is in keeping with our legal and constitutional traditions," Dr. Singhvi said. "We have always taken a larger view of development that includes human rights not only in the civil and political field, but also social, cultural and economic rights. Our Constitution, with chapters on Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles, has recognised the indivisibility of these two sets of human rights."

On India's overall aims for the Vienna Conference, Dr. Singhvi said that he hoped there would be a global review of the international community's experience in the field of human rights. This would lead to a "better understanding of what we have achieved, what obstacles remain, and how we can move forward within the framework and principles entrenched within the United Nations Charter."

Center's Reaction to U.S. Special 301 Reviewed

93AS0918A Madras THE HINDU in English 9 May 93 p 12

[Article by Alok Mukherjee in New Delhi: "A Low-Key Reaction to U.S. Stricture"; first paragraph is THE HINDU introduction]

[Text] Without making much fuss over the U.S. action, India plans to lie low and let matters take their own course. More than the issue of trade and aid, for New Delhi it is the question of overall bilateral relations with Washington.

It was towards the last week of April that the External Affairs Ministry received a communication from Washington indicating that India was likely to be included in the list of countries to be named under the Special 301 clause of the United States Trade Act of 1974. Senior officials of the Ministry contacted the Commerce Minister, Mr. Pranab Mukherjee, as to the likely course of action to be taken by India in case of it being named. Mr. Mukherjee, in turn, met the Prime Minister, Mr. P. V. Narasimha Rao, to discuss the matter.

Some quick calculations were made in the highest echelons of bureaucracy and the political leadership took the stand that there was very little that India could and should do. In the first instance, there is nothing that the Government could do in regard to the attempt to impose the trade law of another land on India, nor could it change its domestic policy at the behest of another nation. On the other hand, the likely damage to Indian foreign trade and other bilateral relations was assessed and it was decided that India should do nothing to ward off a possible inclusion in the list. The matter ended there.

Quite in contrast to earlier years, especially when India was first put on the Super 301 list (another omnibus clause of the U.S. Trade Act) in 1989, the reaction here was not one of panic. Once the new U.S. Trade Representative (USTR), Mr. Mickey Kantor, the successor to the famous "Crowbar Carla" (Ms. Carla Hills) did redesignate India

on the Special 301 list, the Government did not even come out with a statement. The Commerce Minister did go on the television news but his promised statement in Parliament failed to come off due to other pressing business. Observers, however, did not fail to notice that the promised statements on other important matters did make it to Parliament despite the heavy agenda and now that most of the listed business is over in the two Houses, Mr. Mukherjee may finally make the statement.

Even the various chambers of commerce and industry and other industry associations have not made much noise about the U.S. action. Though a section of the industry does hold the view that India should amend its patent laws, in the past it too had decried the pressure that was being put on the Government. This time it did not bother to comment.

The silence on the issue is not a case of bravado but one of practicality. For one thing, the Government has consistently maintained that it is not possible to change the domestic policies under pressure and particularly so when the whole gamut of issues is before the multilateral negotiations at Geneva under the Uruguay Round of trade negotiations. Conceding a point before a multinational negotiations is one thing but succumbing to the pressures of a super power is quite another, has been the stand of the Indian Government, which does not want to give up what is officially termed as "autonomy of decision-making."

To trace the history of action under 301, it is pertinent to point out that under the U.S. trade law, the USTR undertakes a review of foreign practices each year and must complete it within 30 days after the issuance of the National Trade Estimates report. In 1989, India was named under the other clause, Super 301 where the then USTR listed out three basic points on which it wanted the Indian Government to take action. These pertained to abolition of the practice of forced export obligation on joint ventures, abolition of the time-bound programme of indigenisation of the products manufactured by these ventures and opening up the insurance sector to foreign investors. That year, India was placed on the "watch list" under clause Special 301 which deals with intellectual property rights (IPR) violations as perceived by the USTR.

Initially, India did nothing to respond to the threat of action under Super 301 and even refused to hold negotiations under this arrangement. However, informal consultations continued at various fora, including those like the joint business council and trade associations and even some industry lobbies in the U.S. were activated to speak upon behalf of India. Even as Super 301 lapsed by 1990, India unilaterally changed its industrial policy in 1991 under which the export obligation and indigenisation stipulations disappeared automatically. Though no action was taken in regard to opening up the insurance sector, this year, significantly, a high-level committee has been constituted to consider reforms in the insurance sector on the lines of the committee for reforms in the financial sector which, among its other recommendations, did propose easy access to private and foreign banks into India.

As opposed to Super 301, the Special 301 clause concerns itself with IPR "violations." India was first identified as a "priority foreign country" under this clause in 1991 and again in 1992. According to the USTR, "although we were able to resolve some problems in the areas of trademark and copyright protection and enforcement and market access for motion pictures, serious problems in the patent area led the USTR to identify India again in 1992." That year, the USTR also withdrew about \$80 millions in generalised system of preferences (GSP) benefits on exports from India.

Justifying the action to redesignate India in 1993 as well, the USTR goes on to say that little progress has been made in the past year to provide adequate and effective patent protection in India. The patent law in India contains numerous deficiencies, including failure to provide product patent protection for pharmaceuticals, inadequate term of protection, licences of right and overly broad compulsory licencing provisions.

Translated in simpler terms, the U.S. is opposed to the Indian stand that while a process can be patented, the product cannot be which can be "invented" through a different process. India feels that if the products too are patented, simple items could go out of the reach of individuals, particularly the weaker sections of society. Secondly, the U.S. wants India to extend the patent protection terms to at least 20 years while it is generally for seven years in India. The argument here is that seven years is adequate time to recover initial investments in research and development of a new product and protection beyond that opens up the scope for commercial exploitation.

Having thus named India, the new USTR is rearing to go into action against the designated countries in order to prove more effective than his predecessor who he feels merely threatened action but rarely took it. As the Clinton administration put it, "the use of immediate action plans and out-of-cycle reviews marks a departure from prior Special 301 enforcement. The administration is committed to giving a fresh direction to the Special 301 review process to ensure that its objectives are clear and that other countries know what do we expect. The trading partners who fail to meet their commitments can expect a strong, speedy response from this administration."

Given this background, the Indian Government is playing it cool. The major issue of IPR that has been listed by the USTR is also contained in the Dunkel Draft which has emanated from the still deadlocked Uruguay Round of negotiations and in case India finally accepts that along with the other countries, most of the concern of the U.S. will automatically get addressed. Pending that, the immediate threat to India could be in terms of further pruning of the GSP [Generalized System of Preferences] benefits but here too, the Government feels that with the market-friendly policies now in vogue, it will be better for Indian exporters to compete in the open market rather than depend on crutches like GSP. In any case, the GSP benefit is scheduled to run out in July this year and it remains a moot question whether the tougher Clinton administration

will press the issue with the Congress with the same vigour as the previous administrations had done.

The other likely repercussions are in terms of linking bilateral aid to changes in the IPR regime, but here too India is at an advantage. With U.S. aid to India down to a paltry \$35 millions approximately, the matter is of little consequence.

For the Indian Government, more than the issue of trade and aid, is the question of overall bilateral relations with the U.S. While India may not be adversely affected by the proposed action under Special 301, the conduct of smooth bilateral relations with the U.S. is of sufficient importance to worry the Government, especially in terms of India's relations with Pakistan and the U.S. role in that. There are quite a few pending issues on the agenda, such as Kashmir and the Pakistan-sponsored proposal for a five-nation conference on nuclear-free zone involving Pakistan, India, the U.S., China and Russia. In these matters, it would not do to have an unhappy Clinton administration arrayed against India.

Thus, without making much of a fuss over the U.S. action, the Indian Government plans to lie low and let matters take their own course. There will neither be compliance nor complaint, in the expectation that Special 301 will go away one day as Super 301 did.

President Stresses Third World Amity

93AS0863F Bangalore DECCAN HERALD in English
11 May 93 p 9

[Text] New Delhi, May 10 (PTI)—India today called for a greater co-operation among the developing countries to achieve meaningful economic progress and to usher in a new era of positive change.

Hosting a banquet in honour of the visiting Tanzanian President Mr Ali Hasan Mwinyi, President, Dr Shanker Dayal Sharma said developing countries must accelerate their efforts more fully to participate in the world economy.

Noting that the world has changed to an extraordinary degree, Dr Sharma said the end of the cold war had generated new hopes and expectations for the comity of nations.

Framework Accords Signed With Belarus

93AS0914A Madras THE HINDU in English 15 May 93 p 9

[Text] New Delhi, May 14—The last leg of the Belarussian Prime Minister, Mr. V. F. Kebich's visit saw the two countries signing a number of "framework agreements" to lay the foundations for a durable bilateral relationship.

The two sides decided to undertake joint efforts to curb terrorism and drug trafficking. In addition, the two sides pledged for cooperation on the environmental agenda. An agreement was also reached on setting up of an inter-governmental joint commission on trade, economic, scientific and technological, industrial and cultural cooperation.

These issues were highlighted in a declaration on Principles and Direction of Cooperation signed jointly by the Prime Minister, Mr. P. V. Narasimha Rao and the Belarussian Premier. Five other agreements covering cooperation in trade and economic matters, tourism, visa free travel for Government officials, science and technology as well as a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on defence related technical cooperation were also signed.

Anchored to defence production, the agreement on Defence identifies "product support and services as well as bilateral projects relating to defence equipment and components" as a focal area. Transfer of technology, technical assistance, training and co-production are the areas being visualised as another sphere where the two countries could become engaged in cooperative efforts. These references assume significance in the context of the shortages of spares and product support for military hardware of Soviet origin equipment produced in several of the republics of the former Soviet Union.

Joint Committee

An agreement on Science and Technology highlighted the decision to appoint a "Joint Indo-Belarussian Committee on Cooperation in Science and Technology". The committee will coordinate research by encouraging long term agreements "aimed at developing long term cooperation between Governmental agencies, research institutes, scientific societies, higher educational establishments, and other scientific and technical organisations."

Arab League Envoy Deplores HINDU 'Insult'

93AS0913A Madras THE HINDU in English 15 May 93 p 7

[Quotation marks as published]

[Text] Ambassador Ali Muhsen Hamid, Chief Representative, League of Arab States, New Delhi Mission, writes:

Mr. Khergamvala's despatch which THE HINDU published on May 12, 1993 on the visit of Mr. Peres, the Israeli Foreign Minister, contained pernicious information, which obliged the League of Arab States Mission in New Delhi to clarify the following:

The absence of businessmen from the entourage of Arab Foreign Ministers who visited India is not a flawed practice, since that was the practice of all countries till a few years ago. This absence does not denote that there was no fruitful businesslike relationship between the Arab world and India.

It is extremely regrettable, improper and unexpected from Mr. Khergamvala to refer to a senior Palestinian official like Mr. Farouq Kaddoumi, the Foreign Minister of the State of Palestine and the Head of the Political Department in the PLO [Palestine Liberation Organization], as the "so-called." Mr. Kaddoumi was recently in India and it was noticed that Mr. Khergamvala ignored this important visit at the invitation of the Prime Minister of India, Mr. P. V. Narasimha Rao. Not to mention this visit is Mr. Khergamvala's right, but he has not the right to insult the

Palestinian people and the chief of the Palestinian diplomacy in a manner that amounts to derecognition of the Palestinian people. By this Mr. Khergamvala insults all those who support the Palestinian cause.

It is unfortunate that a discerning journalist of the calibre of Mr. Khergamvala who weighs his words well and knows the long suffering of the Palestinian people and the strong loyalty of these people to the PLO, their legitimate representative without whom the whole peace process in the Middle East could not start, describes this historical and political leadership as "wholly meaningless" in what he called the current scheme of things. May be Mr. Khergamvala has forgotten that the State of Palestine (PLO) is a member of so many international and regional organisations and it is recognised as the legitimate leadership by a majority of the countries of the world. May be Mr. Khergamvala is not aware of what the French President, Mr. Mitterrand, told the Israeli Prime Minister Mr. Rabin during his visit to Israel. I quote, "I see no leadership in the occupied Palestinian territories other than the PLO and you have to deal with it." How could Mr. Khergamvala forget this fact, especially since he was in the occupied territories last summer. This is not less than an affront to the noble and just struggle of Palestinians in their exile and under occupation. It is in fact a mistake from a journalist who knows the region and lives there as well.

By quoting Mr. Peres' description of terrorism as "population pressures on lesser available land and water," Mr. Khergamvala seems to advocate the misleading view which bears no shadow of truth or has any base in reality. The conflict in the region is deeper than this superficial phrase. The "thinking man's politician" in Mr. Khergamvala's words, depicts the Arab-Israeli conflict as if it is a conflict within one tribe belonging to the same forefathers and having the same culture, etc. In this Mr. Khergamvala shows that his knowledge of the region did not help him to distinguish between the facts and the propaganda. Mr. Khergamvala knows that three million Palestinians in exile are victims of Israeli state-terrorism, and the daily killings of children in Palestine is not a human act. The continuous deportation is not a result of dispute on water and acres of land. In this environment, the Palestinians under any human or legal norms, have the right to resist to fight till they achieve their goals of independence and have their own state according to U.N. resolution 181 of 1947. No doubt, Mr. Khergamvala will not keep idle and indifferent if anybody tries to steal just his lighter, let alone his homeland. If correct judgment and objectivity is a necessity it is more so on the issue of Palestine.

In stating that the Arab boycott is useless, one wishes if Mr. Khergamvala says that the overall peace in the Middle East will witness the end of the Arab boycott and that India will benefit from the peace process in the sector of tourism and other fields and that the current state of affairs is against the interests of India because the lack of peace impedes direct air links between India and Israel. Here again, Israel should recognise the geographical factor which impedes its business transactions with other countries due to its negation of

Palestinian political rights and its occupation of Arab territories in Syria and Lebanon. Peace, in this context, is in the interest of India. Here the League of Arab States Mission would like to confirm that the Arab boycott is still valid and relevant and it has been proved till this date that it is useful and legitimate. Above all, the exigency of the Arab boycott has not changed. Suggesting the idea that some Arab countries are going to ease this boycott is preposterous and rather immature coming from a journalist whose base is in an Arab country.

Papers Give Details on Israeli's Visit

Peres Meets Press

93AS0911A Madras *THE HINDU* in English 19 May 93 p 1

[Text] New Delhi, May 18—The role of international cooperation in combating terrorist violence received high priority at the political level today in the concluding day talks of the visiting Israeli Foreign Minister, Mr. Shimon Peres, with the Indian leadership.

Mr. Peres made it clear that India's "territorial integrity" must be preserved, suggesting in the context of the Kashmir problem that no purpose would be served by reopening the history of Partition.

Hours before his departure for Beijing, he rounded off his official two-day visit with a 30-minute meeting with the Prime Minister, Mr. P. V. Narasimha Rao. First the leaders met with aides, and immediately after, exchanged ideas for another half-an-hour on a one-to-one basis.

Informed sources suggested the two sides perceived the need for "international cooperation" to meet the challenge posed by terrorism.

Ending cross-border terrorism and defeating state sponsorship of terrorism are believed to have figured prominently during Mr. Peres' talks with Mr. Rao.

Given the Israeli experience in dealing with international terrorism, the sources suggested that exchange of intelligence on terrorist movements would be the natural concomitant of international cooperation in fighting terrorist violence. However, at his press conference earlier, Mr. Peres deflected a pointed question on intelligence-sharing with the simple retort, "That is a good question."

Calls on President

Concern over terrorism is understood to have been articulated during Mr. Peres' half-hour call on the President, Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma, as well, earlier in the day. As the Israeli ambassador here, who accompanied his Foreign Minister to the Rashtrapati Bhavan, is believed to have put it succinctly in the course of the conversation, "We would prefer world condemnation (of terrorist violence) to world condolences."

The Prime Minister and the visiting leader are understood to have expressed happiness at the establishment of diplomatic relations between their two countries. Mr. Peres has extended an invitation to the President to visit Israel.

At his press conference, he spoke of the opening of a new chapter in relations between India and Israel. He said he was overwhelmed by the welcome he had received. It looked as though the bride and the groom were just waiting to come together, Mr. Peres noted.

He dealt with the issues of terrorism, India's territorial integrity, the nuclear non-proliferation treaty and the vast scope for economic, commercial, and cultural cooperation between the two countries, besides cooperation in agriculture and science and technology R&D (research and development), as well as the West Asia peace process.

Answering questions on Kashmir, Mr. Peres made it clear that it would serve no purpose to "reopen (the) painful old wounds" (of Partition).

"We support fully and completely the territorial integrity of India, and agree with the Simla Agreement," the Foreign Minister noted. He said his country would be guided by the judgment of the U.S. on how best to combat terrorism and violence across the world.

Nevertheless, Mr. Peres told a questioner that all civilised countries were "agreed" on the need to introduce an economic boycott against countries that supported terrorism, and to "call their bluff" as such countries tended to deny their actions and also purveyed the "permissive philosophy that the end justified the (violent) means". Calling the bluff of supporters of terrorism "should be a first step," the Israeli leader said.

A happy relationship between India and Israel would contribute to a "different outcome" in Asia and Africa, he added.

Mr. Peres agreed with a questioner that in the past India voted against Israel in the U.N. forum, and noted, "We expect India to vote in U.N. in accordance with the new chapter of our relationship."

The Foreign Minister noted that the question of U.N. voting had come up during his talks here. Answering another question, he said the nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT) as it existed did not answer the needs of proliferation because some countries signed it "cynically".

A real NPT would not be possible without mutual inspection for verification, which, in turn, would be a chimera without the precondition of peace, Mr. Peres stated. Peace came first as it enabled verification, he added. The second storey of a house could not be built without the first, Mr. Peres said.

According to the official press release, Mr. Rao and Mr. Peres discussed the changed international situation following the end of the cold war, and the challenges and opportunities this presented. The Prime Minister said the changes in the international political system had given an impetus to the peace process in West Asia.

It was this that had resulted in India establishing diplomatic ties with Israel since it allowed India to "play a meaningful role in the peace process keeping in mind its traditional friendship with the Arab nations and its principled support for the Palestinian cause".

Earlier in the day, the Foreign Secretary, Mr. J. N. Dixit, called on Mr. Peres. Discussion focused mainly on the West Asia peace process. According to the release, Mr. Peres said that India's policy vis-a-vis the Palestinian cause and its traditional ties with the Arab nations "would be actually very useful to the peace process in having a credible voice which would help in the search for a compromise".

At the press conference, Mr. Peres said Palestinians were not Israel's "enemies". He said he felt strongly that they had a right to lead their own lives and become "agreeable neighbours" of Israel. The purpose of the current negotiations was "to co-exist, not to dominate", he added.

He also said Israel was ready to withdraw from the Golan Heights, but the size and the timing of the withdrawal would depend on how "serious" the Syrian proposals were. Mr. Peres noted that the seriousness of his country's intentions were clear from the fact that Israel had "put an end to adding new settlements".

Mahatma Gandhi Worshipped

Mr. Peres lauded the spiritual strengths of Mahatma Gandhi, whom he called a "Prophet", and said Nehru's "Autobiography" was published in his country in the face of British opposition when Israel was still a British mandated territory. The poetry of Rabindranath had inspired Israelis for many years, he noted, and the works of the novelist, R. K. Narayan, were well known.

More on Talks, Cooperation Pact

93AS0911B Madras THE HINDU in English 18 May 93 p 9

[Text] New Delhi, May 17—India and Israel today signed a Memorandum of Understanding on economic cooperation. It is intended to promote trade and economic cooperation and encourage public and private sector participation in industry, agriculture, solar energy, tourism and transport. The two countries also signed a bilateral agreement on science and technology.

The visit of the Israeli Foreign Minister, Mr. Shimon Peres, has led to the institutionalisation of the Indo-Israeli relationship through agreements on aviation, tourism, commerce and foreign office consultations. Moreover new areas of possible cooperation are being explored by the business and political leaders of the two sides.

Israel mooted a joint fund for research and development in the backdrop of a desire to see closer cooperation between the commercial banks of the two countries. Mr. Peres said this after his meeting with the Finance Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh.

The dangers which extremism posed was an issue for discussion between Mr. Peres and the Minister of State for External Affairs, Mr. R. L. Bhatia said the spokesman of the Ministry of External Affairs. But he declined to comment when asked whether Israel had offered any help to India to tackle this menace. The issue of terrorism was also raised when the External Affairs Minister, Mr. Dinesh

Singh, accompanied by the Foreign Secretary, Mr. J. N. Dixit, called on the Israeli Foreign Minister.

Expanding cooperation in the field of science and technology also figured in the talks between Mr. Bhatia and Mr. Peres.

The Israeli delegation meet a wide section of the Indian political and economic elite in which the emphasis on promoting cooperation in the field of agriculture was highlighted. At a luncheon hosted by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) Mr. Peres identified checking desertification and use of high technology as areas in which the two countries could promote cooperation.

The stress on agriculture was reinforced during the meeting which Mr. Peres held with the Agriculture Minister, Mr. Balram Jhakar. The latter saw in the Israeli advances in the field of water management, sprinkler and drip irrigation, solutions to "intractable problems of water logging and soil alkalinity". Mr. Jhakar felt that these technological advances had ready applications in controlling the expansion of deserts in Rajasthan and Maharashtra.

The Israeli delegation and Indian experts are slated to visit the Indira Gandhi Canal and desert areas in Rajasthan for a "travelling seminar". Attempts are being made to establish links between the Ben Gurion Deserts University of Negev and Indian academic and research institutions.

Joint Business Council

93AS0911C Madras *THE HINDU* in English 19 May 93 p 9

[Text] Indian and Israeli businessmen today institutionalised the framework for cooperation through an agreement to set up a Joint Business Council (JBC).

The agreement was signed by the vice-president of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), Mr. A. K. Rungta, and the president of the Federation of Israeli Chambers of Commerce (FICC), Mr. Dan Gillerman, in the presence of the Israeli Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Mr. Shimon Peres.

The JBC will aim at fostering closer ties between Indian and Israeli business houses in trade, investment, technology transfer, services and other activities.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Peres expressed the hope that the agreement would open up a new chapter in bilateral relations. He felt that the two countries could cooperate in order to cater to the European common market and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which encompasses the markets of the U.S., Canada and Mexico. Israel has a preferential tariff arrangement with the NAFTA.

Prior to the signing of the agreement, businessmen from the two countries discussed various areas of cooperation. Mr. Gillerman said that apart from trade and investment, India and Israel could cooperate in matters relating to finance and credit. "India is a target country not only for industrial cooperation, but also for tie-ups in banking and finance."

Mr. Gillerman said the peace process which was underway in West Asia would unleash tremendous scope for cooperation between other countries in the region. In the infrastructure alone, there would be an investment to the tune of \$50 to 60 billions, which would enable businessmen from all over the world to participate.

The two-way trade between India and Israel has grown in the last two years, from \$128 millions in 1991 to \$202 millions in 1992. In the first three months of 1993, bilateral trade had increased 121 per cent, compared to the same period last year.

MoU Signed

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the Gujarat State Fertilizers Company (GSFC) and Tahal Consulting Engineering Limited of Israel for projects on water management. These include feasibility studies of establishing a large scale seawater desalination plants in the coastal areas of Gujarat.

Water Technology Offer

93AS0911D Bombay *THE TIMES OF INDIA* in English 19 May 93 p 7

[Text] New Delhi, May 18—Israel has offered its latest drip irrigation and other water conservation technologies and expertise in dairy development to India and a large delegation of industrialists have arrived in the country to finalise the arrangements for technology transfer with their Indian counterparts.

The agriculture minister, Mr Balram Jakhar, is scheduled to visit Israel in July to sign a memorandum of understanding to facilitate easy transfer of technologies.

"We want to introduce the latest drip irrigation technologies in at least two lakh hectares of land in the next four years," said the agriculture secretary, Mr M. S. Gill. He was part of the high-level Indian team which visited Israel, recently to attend an agricultural technology exhibition.

Currently, about 50,000 hectares, mainly in Maharashtra around Pune, are under drip irrigation systems. The Maharashtra government is again taking the lead and setting up four regional farms of 2,000 hectares soon to demonstrate the latest drip irrigation systems.

As many Indian companies are likely to make these systems here itself, the agriculture ministry has asked the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) to evolve acceptable standards for the drip irrigation systems, according to Mr Gill.

He said Israelis were surprised by the interest among Indian farmers for their technologies as 500 of them, mainly from Maharashtra and Gujarat had visited the week-long exhibition. The government had sent 15 farmers through the national horticultural board to the agritech exhibition.

Even before India and Israel established diplomatic relations a year ago, farmers from both the countries had been co-operating with each other for long. Experts say that these exchanges have played some part in promoting full-scale ties between the two countries in other areas, too.

Horticulture was another area where India could make use of Israel's expertise. The predominantly desert country was a major exporter of horticultural products and used modern agricultural methods which utilised very little water for irrigation, he said.

For instance, water sprinklers were considered outdated technology there and most of the irrigation was through underground drip systems. Water was allowed to drip in predetermined quantities and regular intervals so that the crops got just the right amount of it. Compared to the little water used to produce crops in Israel, India's agriculture could be described as "flood irrigation", Mr Gill said.

Israel's experience in converting its desert lands into blooming agricultural areas is most relevant to us, says the agriculture secretary. India, too, could easily reclaim vast stretches of wastelands with some advanced technology inputs.

Other areas where both the countries could co-operate immediately are dairy development and wasteland development. The Israel-Dutch Holstein breed of cow, evolved in that country, is a high-yielding species with an average of 50 litres of milk daily.

And Israel had successfully greened hundreds of its barren hills in the last 40 years and India could gain from this experience, Mr Gill said.

Tourism Pact

93AS0911E Bombay *THE TIMES OF INDIA* in English
19 May 93 p 7

[Text] The Times of India News Service, New Delhi, May 18—India and Israel today signed a five-year agreement on tourism which would, among other things, encourage joint ventures in the private sector in tourism-related areas.

The agreement was signed by the Israeli foreign minister, Mr Shimon Peres, and the Union minister for civil aviation and tourism, Mr Ghulam Nabi Azad.

The agreement provides for encouraging tourism between the two countries and calls for co-operation between official tourist organisations in the two countries. It also provides for custom duty exemption to publicity material relating to promotion of tourism and encouraging tourism-related services. India is a popular tourist destination for the Israelis.

It was also agreed to establish joint committees, comprising equal number of representatives of both the countries, to help implement the terms of the agreement. The joint committees will meet alternatively in India and Israel on a regular basis to evaluate the progress.

Mr Azad informed Mr Peres about the proposed India festival cum tourism workshop, scheduled to be held in Tel

Aviv next month. The festival cum workshop will present the art and culture of India to the people of Israel.

Mr Peres also had a meeting with the human resource development minister, Mr Arjun Singh.

The two signed a cultural agreement covering art, culture, education, sports, journalism, radio, television and cinema.

Meeting With Indian Jews

93AS0911F Bombay *THE TIMES OF INDIA* in English
19 May 93 p 7

[Italicized words as published]

[Text] The Times of India News Service, New Delhi, May 18—The miniscule Jewish community here played host to the visiting Israeli foreign minister, Mr Shimon Peres, on Monday at the Humayun Road synagogue, in what seemed like a family affair.

Mr Peres, who was welcomed with the traditional *shofer* (blowing of the ram's horn) and presented bouquets by Jewish children, said, "We are a nation that lives on hope rather than past memories." He was referring to the emergence of Israel after the Jewish holocaust during the second World War.

Mr Peres greeted the small gathering inside the Judah Hyam prayer hall of the synagogue. He said that while the Jewish community here had diminished, the normalisation of relations between the two countries should give a fresh impetus to exchanges at various levels between the Indians and the Jews. He invited Indian Jews to come "home", as that was the leitmotif of the formation of the Israeli nation.

Though India had only 5,000 Jews, Israel was home to 50,000 Indians, said Mr Peres, adding that the Indian community in Israel was a happy and hard-working lot.

While referring to the "charm of memories" between the two countries and the present enthusiasm and support for Israel, Mr Peres hoped for the establishment of a direct air link between India and Israel in the near future.

Talks With Shimon Peres Hailed 'Fruitful'

93AS0878C Madras *INDIAN EXPRESS* in English
20 May 93 p 8

[Article: "A Fruitful Visit"; quotation marks as published]

[Text] The talks held by Shimon Peres, the Israeli Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, with his hosts in New Delhi will go a long way in developing the new bilateral relations on the right lines. His replies to questions on these ties at his press conference on Tuesday were marked by a refreshing candour about Israeli expectations as well as a sympathetic understanding of the problems India faces at the international level. Both aspects have served to underline the need for skillful adjustment in India's diplomacy. India often appeared to adopt a rigid anti-Israeli stance in the U.N. and other international fora in the past. Clearly, this still rankles in Israel. This is the implication of Peres's observation: "We expect India to

vote in the U.N. in accordance with the new chapter in our relationship." Yet, he took care to put the past in the wider perspective of the cold war. He even has had the grace not to appear to find fault with India's approach per se towards the Palestinian issue. He, for instance, told the Foreign Secretary, J. N. Dixit, that India's policy on the Palestinian cause and its traditional ties with Arab nations would actually be very useful to the West Asian peace process "in having a credible voice which would help in the search for a compromise." India should, therefore, be forthright in supporting Israel whenever the latter takes a reasonable stand on promoting Arab-Israeli reconciliation.

The two issues which are bound to figure prominently in the international arena in the coming years are terrorism and nuclear proliferation. The case for Indo-Israeli collaboration in combating terrorism is obvious. Likewise, India will stand to gain much by keeping in touch with Israeli thinking on how best to reconcile the growing pressure for halting nuclear proliferation with genuine security requirements. India can learn a lot from the Israeli experience in this field both from the technical and diplomatic points of view. At his press conference, Peres said, for instance, that a real NPT [Nonproliferation Treaty] would not be possible without mutual verification which, in turn, would be a chimera without the precondition of peace. Indian experts ought to subject this concept to close scrutiny.

It is by giving a boost to economic relations that India and Israel can hope to derive concrete benefits both in the near future and in the long run. Peres's visit has given an additional impetus to the process which was already set in motion to achieve this purpose. The Federation of Israeli Chamber of Commerce and its Indian counterpart, FICCI [Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry], have signed a Joint Business Council Agreement. As Peres has stressed, there is a vast scope for co-operation in technology transfer, joint ventures and establishment of production bases to cater to European and North American markets. The two countries' agreement on joint R & D in industry is also heartening.

Malott's Advice on Human Rights Resented
93AS0878G Madras *INDIAN EXPRESS* in English
21 May 93 p 1

[Article: "India Resents Advice on Human Rights"]

[Text]

No need for lesson, Malott told.

New Delhi—India has taken serious exception to the near condemnation of its performance in the sphere of human rights in Kashmir by John Malott, the Principal Deputy Secretary of State in the State Department of the U.S., during his visit here and conveyed to him that there was no need for any lesson on the issue which was fully safeguarded by Constitution and Judiciary.

Both the Government and the Opposition Thursday were unequivocal in telling the U.S. that India's commitment to the human rights was second to none. The official view of India was passed on to Malott by the Foreign Secretary J.

N. Dixit during talks with him, according to a spokesman of the External Affairs Ministry.

India did not need any "advice or exhortation" from any country on the human rights issue, Malott was told in clear and unambiguous terms. "While we don't mind discussing the issue with friendly countries, we don't want to be in a position of receiving advice," Malott was told.

The spokesman pointed out that human rights violations, if they take place, happen in abnormal conditions where a proxy war is being waged against India by terrorists trained in Pakistan. The Government did not condone any violation and took actions whenever any incident was brought to its notice, the spokesman said.

He said India explained its stand on the human rights issues in the discussions with Malott. Other issues of importance to Indo-U.S. relations, such as the transfer of dual-use technology and removal of trade barriers, were also discussed, he pointed out.

Opposition also reacted strongly to Malott's warning who had indicated that assessment of India's performance on human rights by the Clinton Administration would have a definite bearing in the evolution of its relations with the U.S. Major parties cutting across ideologies and inclinations stated that treating the phenomena of terrorism abetted by Pakistan in Kashmir with the alleged violation of human rights by the security forces on equal footing was uncalled for.

The BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] vice-president K. R. Malkani said it was "unfortunate" for Malott to have accused the Indian army and security forces of violation of human rights. The security forces in Kashmir were fight terrorism with minimum use of force. If the U.S. was really interested to see normalcy restored in Kashmir, it should ask Pakistan to refrain from encouraging terrorism there, the BJP leader said.

As for human rights, Malkani reminded the U.S. that there were racial riots in Los Angeles. No one in India sat in judgement over the U.S. on that issue. America should learn to respect other countries' sovereignty and let them solve their problems, Malkani said.

The Left parties condemned Malott's statement. The CPI(M) [Communist Party of India] politburo in a statement issued here said that the U.S. was trying to pressurise India and infringe on matters concerning internal affairs of the country. The politburo asked the Government to convey to the U.S. that while India welcomed any constructive approach to resolve the Kashmir problem bilaterally, there was no question of any interference from outside on the issue under the pretext of human rights.

Meanwhile, a human rights team, consisting of members of the People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL) and the Citizens for Democracy (CFD) will visit Srinagar, Sopore and other towns of Kashmir valley on Saturday.

The team would meet various delegations and probe the allegations of human rights violations, the CFD secretary N. D. Pancholi, said here on Thursday.

The team members will include former judge Rajinder Sachar, noted journalists, Kuldip nayar and Nikhil Chakravarty.

Reportage on Visit of State Department's Malott

Eternal Affairs Spokesman on 21 May

93AS0940A Madras THE HINDU in English 22 May 93
p 1

[Article: "India Rejects U.S. Stand on Pakistani Role in Blasts"]

[Text] India today warned the United States that its ability to play a "constructive role" would depend on the extent it shifted its stand on New Delhi, keeping in view India's democratic political set up.

The spokesman of the Ministry of External Affairs made the observations in the context of two aspects touched upon by the U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State in the State Department's South Asian Bureau, Mr. John Malott, during his recently concluded visit to India. The "violation of human rights" by Indian security forces and his comments on the Bombay bomb blasts in which Mr. Malott questioned India's conviction of Pakistani involvement in the serial bombings drew fresh flak from South Block. While the spokesman expressed "surprise" at the U.S. one-sided view on human rights, he characterised as "irrelevant," Mr. Malott's observations doubting India's "incontrovertible proof" of Pakistan's involvement in the Bombay blast episode.

Mr. Malott's references to the accesses by security forces were forcefully put across during his address on May 19 at the India International Centre here. "India must take steps to curb the abuses of its security forces" Mr. Malott told his audience during his much publicised speech.

It is reported that during a luncheon meeting with a group of journalists on the same day, he highlighted the "negative impact" which Indo-U.S. relations would experience if India did not check excesses carried out by its security forces. Since the U.S. foreign policy had made human rights a cardinal principle, human rights violations by uniformed personnel could lead to the obstruction of the ongoing Indo-U.S. cooperation.

On the violations of human rights, the spokesman said that if the U.S. were to play "a constructive role," it must take into account all the "relevant factors."

He chided Washington for discarding India's democratic policies, secular norms and open society in the formulation of its stance. Official resentment was also reflected when New Delhi reiterated the "problems created by State sponsorship of terrorism in Kashmir" created by Pakistan.

India has for the second day drawn attention of the U.S. to put the onus on Pakistan for causing violations of human rights.

In yesterday's briefing, the spokesman had drawn attention to the "proxy war" being waged against India, and the

"abnormal conditions" which prevailed in the State of Jammu and Kashmir in his remarks on human rights.

In fact, the spokesman "expressed surprise" that the U.S. which obviously knows intimately, the history and current situation in Kashmir, making suggestions and statements which do not take into account ground realities.

Referring to Mr. Malott's reservations on India's stand on Pakistan's involvement in the Bombay carnage, the spokesman said: "Arriving at a conviction is subjective exercise. The question of somebody's conviction is irrelevant here," he said citing the sequence of events and evidence which led India to conclude Pakistan's complicity in the blasts.

"As far as we are concerned what is important is not somebody's conviction but the fact that there is incontrovertible evidence which lead us to some definite conclusions," he said. The spokesman cited that the information yielded by the "people arrested" during investigations of the blasts makes it clear that the people involved have been trained in Pakistan.

Moreover, the fact that the "main perpetrators" left India for Pakistan via the Gulf just before the blasts points a finger at Pakistan. "There is documentary proof available in the PIA flight manifest that the main suspects flew from Dubai to Karachi."

Spokesman's 20 May Remarks

93AS0940B Madras THE HINDU in English 21 May 93
p 9

[Article: "India Resents U.S. Reference"; boldface words and quotation marks as published]

[Text] New Delhi, May 20. India today expressed its strong resentment to the references to human rights made by the U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State in the State Departments South Asian Bureau, Mr. John Malott. Mr. Malott during his stay, prodded New Delhi to improve its human rights record.

Suggesting that the security forces should be held accountable for human rights abuse, Mr. Malott said that continued infringement of human rights could be an impediment in bilateral relations.

However, in an attempt to straighten the record, the External Affairs Ministry spokesman, made the following observations: "While we do not mind discussing human rights with friendly countries, we do not want to be in a position of receiving advice or exhortations by any country." When shorn of its diplomatic niceties, it is a blunt message asking the Americans to stop patronising India on human rights.

Mr. Malott's inability to see Pakistan's support to Kashmir militants as a fertile ground for human rights violations is being viewed here as the U.S. one-sided perception of the issue.

Denied access to technology: The Ministry spokesman added that in the bilateral dialogue, human rights was one

of the issues. India's access to dual use technology, that is, technology which has civilian and military use also came up for talks.

Guided by multilateral agreements such as Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), the Coordination Committee for Multilateral Export Controls (COCOM), the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) and the Australia Club, a range of dual use technologies had been denied to India on account of New Delhi's non-compliance with either to the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) or the guidelines of the MTCR regime.

The spokesman described the on-going talks as being "useful to both sides."

Mr. Malott's statements on Wednesday have drawn flak from other quarters as well. A section of the press statement by the CPI(M) [Communist Party of India (Marxist)] politburo read: "The statement made by the visiting U.S. assistant Deputy Secretary of State, Mr. John Malott make it amply clear that the U.S. administration would make the issue of 'human rights,' a vehicle for pressuring India and to infringe on matters which should purely be within the internal jurisdiction of India."

The statement advised New Delhi to "make it clear" to the Clinton administration that welcoming the U.S. for a "constructive approach" on Kashmir to resolve the issue bilaterally should not be construed as an allowance to cause "infringement of Indian sovereignty on the Kashmir question on the pretext of human rights."

Moreover, the statement challenged the U.S. by saying "While assuring the Indian Government that the U.S. wishes to see the Kashmir dispute resolved bilaterally between India and Pakistan on the basis of the Shimla accord, enough indication has been given that the U.S. treats Pakistani help for terrorist activities in the valley and India's human rights record here, on an equal footing."

'Strained Ties' Noted

93AS0940C Madras THE HINDU in English 21 May 93
p 8

[Editorial: "Strained Indo-U.S. Ties"]

[Text] The gratuitous insult of India by the United States over the question of human rights within this country will hurt the emerging spirit of mutual confidence. A new take-off in Indo-U.S. relations is certainly the stated objective of the Clinton administration. But Mr. John Malott, the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs, has made an astonishing observation that might indicate turbulence ahead. He said: "Our concerns go beyond Kashmir... I hope appropriate action can be taken to ensure that human rights is a positive element in our relationship." The message he sought to convey was not as polite or subtle as these words imply. In fact, the

ranking U.S. official's action smacks of a tendency to bring a disturbing new irritant into play.

On the face of it, Mr. Malott's plea for "appropriate action" by the Indian authorities could be taken as an attempt at brazen interference in this country's internal affairs. But it might be pointless to resort to a moralistic repudiation of an essentially realpolitik move by Washington. The issue at stake is not whether the U.S. commands the necessary power and influence to compel a sovereign democracy like India to act the way it wants. On the other hand, it could be said, that the issue is simply a question of America's intrusive concerns regarding the observance of human rights in India.

It requires no great insight to recognise that the U.S. may have chosen to play an evenhanded arbiter of South Asia's destiny. For some time now, Washington has been monitoring Pakistan's sponsorship of political terrorism in India—in the Kashmir valley as well as Punjab, not to mention the suspicions regarding Islamabad's involvement in the recent Bombay blasts. In this context, Mr. Malott's hint that Delhi is under surveillance for its human rights record could be seen as an attempt by the U.S. to hold the scales evenly in its judgment of Indian and Pakistan in this post-cold war era. But the U.S. should have, in this scenario, confined its attention to Kashmir or Punjab. There is no figleaf of justification to subject democratic India to scrutiny in the realm of basic human rights or to interfere with this country's sovereign right to set its own democratic agenda.

Apparently conscious of his own political mischief, Mr. Malott sought to assuage India's feelings by asserting that there would be no 'tilt' in the Clinton administration's policy towards any country in South Asia. But a nodding acquaintance with the dynamics of Indo-Pakistan-U.S. relations would suffice to see through this patently absurd proposition. Mr. Malott's exposition of Washington's perspective on the Kashmir issue is, in fact, reflective of a subtle shift in emphasis in the American stand. The latest formulation that "the views of the Kashmiris" should be taken into account seems to mark a departure from the earlier U.S. position that a plebiscite was not the answer to the Kashmir dispute.

The U.S. official has also made a strong plea for an end to the Indo-Pakistan "cold war" in a spirit of positive detente. One reason cited in support of these unexceptionable principles of international diplomacy is the fear of a nuclear war in this region. The international community is accustomed to Washington's claims of a presumptive right to call for universal adherence to the discriminatory Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty [NPT]. And India's rational counter-arguments need no repetition. But the prospects for greater maturity in the Indo-American relationship might seem to recede further as a result of the glimpses of American strategic attitudes such as provided by the encounter with Mr. Malott.

HINDU Analyst Comments

93AS0940D Madras THE HINDU in English 4 May 93 p 8

[Article by K. K. Katyal: "U.S. Policy Towards India, Pakistan"]

[Text] Because of its preoccupations with domestic economic issues, the Clinton administration is yet to turn its attention to India and other nations of South Asia for purposes of policy formulation. Till then, there will be continuity of the George Bush approach with one difference—the new administration would be tougher on issues on which its predecessor had taken a hard line. But whether it would be softer on matters on which Washington had shown understanding in the last four years is not clear. The earlier optimism in New Delhi in this regard appears premature. The new U.S. policy towards India and Pakistan is yet to be unfolded.

In the absence of an authoritative statement by the new administration, last week's testimony by a top U.S. State Department official, Mr. John Mallot, to the House Foreign Affairs Sub-Committee, attracted special attention in India. What he said could not be regarded the considered view of the State Department, which is yet to address itself to this region and yet to appoint an Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia (the energetic Political counsellor in the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi, Ms. Robein Raphel, is tipped for the post). But to the extent the continuity and "more of the same" principle is to influence the thinking in the future, his comments are, undoubtedly, important.

Surprisingly, the Washington despatches in the Indian papers tended to give a highly favourable interpretation to the testimony, not quite warranted by its text. He did say that the Clinton administration was not considering restrictions on aid to India nor its linkage with the human rights record (as seen by Washington). Similarly, he was categorical that there was no change in regard to the Pressler Amendment, under which the U.S. aid to Pakistan had been suspended and that "as long as it is the law of the land, we will pursue it." But there were other comments which were clearly not to India's liking—as for instance the assumption that Kashmir is a disputed territory. He spoke of the support of the new administration to an "even-handed approach," with regard to India and Pakistan and opposition of the U.S. officials to the "concept of a tilt in either direction." Then there was the reiteration of the U.S. stand that any solution of the Kashmir problem "must take into account the views of the Kashmir people themselves." This position, according to him, should not be seen as either supporting or rejecting the possibility of a plebiscite.

The rest of the Kashmir reference was balanced—"we believe that the outside support for the militants and the cycle of violence between the militants and the Government security forces must end." In addition, he wanted India to "safeguard human rights fully, grant genuine access to Kashmir for international human rights groups and propose a meaningful dialogue with the Kashmiris."

On proliferation, the known stress on the regional approach was reiterated. As part of a comprehensive,

incremental and long-term approach, the U.S. would like the weapons of mass destruction "in the region" to be capped, then reduced over time and finally eliminated. On economic matters, the harder line was already evident—India was put on "Special 301" priority list (which would hit its exports to the U.S.). This was the thinking in relation to India. What about Pakistan?

The latest pointers from Washington could not have given comfort to Pakistan. Take the April 21 testimony of the CIA Director, Mr. James Woolsey, to a Senate panel—that Pakistan and Sudan were "on the brink" of being declared terrorist States, that Pakistan had "supported the Kashmiri and Sikh groups which have been waging long-running insurgencies against India's Central Government" and that the "Kashmiris and Sikhs have found safe haven and other support in Pakistan while forcefully redressing grievances against New Delhi."

Under the U.S. law, any country providing sanctuary to terrorists attracts punitive action. As another Congressional panel was told by Mr. McNamera, Coordinator of Counter-Terrorism, "when a Government provides weapons, training and training sites, intelligence support, funds, travel documents, safe haven from prosecution and similar assistance, it enhances threat and lethality of international terrorist groups." The State concerned has not to be involved in the conduct of terrorist operation to invite sanctions under the U.S. law, according to an authoritative interpretation from Washington.

Last month, Mr. Nissar Ali, the special envoy of the then Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mr. Nawaz Sharif, had a tough time in Washington. He had gone there to defend his Government against the charges of complicity in terrorist violence in India. His laborious explanations—that the violence in the Kashmir Valley was to be seen as a liberation struggle and that the Indian troops were guilty of serious human rights violations—failed to carry conviction with State Department officials. When Mr. Ali sought to dismiss the charges against his Government as an Indian canard, he was told that Washington had its own sources of information and that under the U.S. law, Pakistan was guilty. In an amazing display of innocence, Mr. Ali quoted Mr. Nawaz Sharif as having maintained that he had no knowledge of terrorist operations (by an intelligence agency in Pakistan). The U.S. officials were not prepared to let that go. Had the Prime Minister (of the day) issued any instructions in this regard and had he called for compliance reports?

The change of guard in Islamabad may help Pakistan in the sense that the decision on whether or not to include it in the list of terrorist countries may be postponed. It was on January 9 that the U.S. put Pakistan on the watch list for 180 days, that is, till July 6. There is nothing to suggest that Pakistan has scaled down its involvement in terrorist activities in Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir. That is also the view in Washington, but a drastic action against Pakistan is unlikely on the eve of the National Assembly elections. Washington, obviously, would not like to rock the Pakistani boat at a crucial juncture because of the fear of unpredictable consequences. Taking a narrow legalistic

view, the U.S. had not taken a very serious view of the dismissal of the Nawaz Sharif Government. The Pakistani Constitution allows the President to sack the Government and dissolve the National Assembly, it noted while expressing the hope that "they will work to strengthen the democratic process."

The U.S. would also like to watch the conduct of the new rulers in Pakistan—whether they stick to or depart from the policy of their predecessor and whether the all-powerful I.S.I. [Inter-Service Intelligence] notorious for its skill to mastermind destabilising operations in India, continues to call all the shots.

Even before the dismissal of the Nawaz Sharif Government, the U.S. policy-makers seemed disinclined to follow the logic of the conclusions drawn under their law. On the basis of the evidence available to Washington, there was not much doubt about the dubious nature of Pakistan's role, but other considerations appeared to have weighed. Here is one such argument. An affirmative determination under the U.S. anti-terrorism law may radicalise the Pakistani politics, push it closer to Iran and others inimical to Washington, and, thus, deprive the Americans of the leverages they now have in Islamabad.

The six countries already named as terrorist States are: Libya, Syria, Iran, Iraq, Cuba and North Korea. The impact of the sanctions has varied in the first two cases (the other four being in a different category because of the peculiarities of their relationship with the U.S.). It did not mean any change in the case of Libya but had a salutary effect on Syria. The U.S., however, is not prepared to bracket Pakistan with any of the six countries, certainly not with Libya. That was because Tripoli was charged with instigation of terrorist violence against the American interests, while Pakistan had been an ally and a valuable frontline State in the fight against the Communist rulers of Afghanistan. Pakistan may not be that useful now but the U.S. does not find it easy to swing to the other extreme and place it in the category of terrorist States. Also, the Pakistani terrorism is of a different brand—it has not hurt the American interest the way the Libyan actions did.

As a victim of terrorist violence, India has spared no opportunity to draw attention to Pakistan's role. But there has been no campaign nor a formal demand to the U.S.—that Pakistan be penalised with sanctions. New Delhi has yet to take a decision on the issue. But perceptions in the U.S. at the policy-making level on the one hand, and law enforcement side on the other differ widely. The policy-makers wonder why India is keen on punishment for Pakistan. Any such action, they argue, could only strengthen extremism, in Islamabad, thus adding to India's problems. It is in India's interest, according to them if the U.S. continues to be in a position to restrain Pakistan. All this adds up to the indication that Pakistan may continue to be on the watch list longer.

Friendship, Other Treaties Signed With Uzbekistan

93AS0941A Hyderabad DECCAN CHRONICLE
in English 25 May 93 p 1

[Article: "India, Uzbekistan Sign Five Treaties"]

[Text] Tashkent, May 24 (PTI): India and Uzbekistan on Monday agreed to strive for a nuclear-weapon free world and signed treaties for mutual cooperation in trade which includes a \$10-million Indian credit for the Central Asian republic.

The five agreements, including a 10-year friendship treaty on the principles of inter-State relations and bilateral cooperation, were signed on Monday afternoon soon after the Prime Minister, Mr P. V. Narasimha Rao, returned after a tour of the ancient city of Khiva.

The agreements were signed at the conclusion of official talks between the visiting Indian delegation led by Mr Narasimha Rao and the hosts led by the President, Mr Islam Karimov.

The two nations expressed their resolve to strive for a nuclear weapon-free and non-violent world and promote bilateral cooperation for peace and international security, globally and in Asia.

Apart from the treaty and the credit agreement, the two sides signed documents on trade for 1993, air services and science and technology and tourism.

The agreement identifies and quantifies the items to be traded between India and Uzbekistan, while the air services agreement formalises the division of routes and revenues between Uzbek Airways and Air India. The \$10 million credit would mainly be for import of capital goods, project exports and services from India.

The friendship treaty sets the framework for development of multi-faceted and mutually beneficial cooperation and is automatically extendable for another 10 years, unless either side desires to terminate it six months in advance.

The treaty specifies that the two sides adhere to the principles and purposes of the United Nations charter. It states that the relations will be governed by respect for each other's independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity, inviolability of existing State borders and non-interference in each other's internal affairs.

The two countries condemned all forms of violence, fundamentalism and religious extremism and decided to cooperate in the fight against international crimes and terrorism in all forms.

The two countries also pledged to fight crimes against civil aviation security, shipping and other forms of transport, illegal and international trade in narcotics and arms and cultural and historical objects, the treaty said. It said if necessary appropriate agreements could be signed.

Significantly, the treaty also binds the two parties down to refraining from participating or supporting any action directed against one of them.

The treaty also provides for furthering bilateral cooperation in sea, air, rail and road transport to ensure unhindered transit of passengers and cargo of the other party through its territory.

It also provides for most favoured nation treatment in trade and economic cooperation besides development of beneficial cooperation in political, economic, trade and scientific spheres.

Former Foreign Secretary on Relations With U.S.
93AS0889A Madras *THE HINDU* in English
27 Apr 93 p 8

[Article by Eric Gonsalves]

[Text] A recent conference on Indo-American relations concluded on a consensus that circumstances are now more propitious for improving relations between the two countries because of changes in the international scenario and a growing convergence of foreign and economic policies. Much effort is still necessary to enhance the economic relationship, to put content into the intellectual, cultural, people to people links, etc., to improve the Indian image in America, and to establish a more constructive dialogue to handle the remaining differences and frictions. The participants agreed that this meeting took place in a more relaxed and amicable climate than would have been possible in earlier years. Hard and sustained work is still required, if the promise is to be achieved.

Beyond the overt dialogue addressed to the commonality or clash of issues and interests there are also less rational attitudes which can colour the dialogue. India like many other countries is far below the average American's horizon and the prevailing attitude is disinterest. On the other hand, it is still possible to get a knee-jerk anti-American reaction in most countries including India by making some important local interest seem threatened by the U.S.

Does such antagonism stem from civilisational differences as is claimed by some, and if so will it remain as a permanent, if limited, factor? The answer to that is clearly in the negative. One only has to note certain facts. The shifts in perception between the former allies and enemies after the last World War is one proof. The Chinese, the Koreans and the Vietnamese have been both close friends and fierce foes of America at the same time depending on the regime under which they lived. A million or so Indians have settled down happily in the United States. They come from every part of India and they belong to every shade of opinion in the Indian elite. They are not very affected by the climate of Indo-American relations. Indeed they can even influence them to some extent.

The end of the cold war has put an end to the myth that ideology made for permanent affinities and enmities. Most of the post-cold war world still presents a mixed picture of turbulence and cooperation. In Eastern Europe the breakdown of the entire political and economic system has produced many difficult and even violent situations. The search for effective governance and viable entities has pitted groups against each other at the basic level of race, religion and language. In the West too violence haunts Ireland, Spain, etc. Africa faces many tribal animosities. Israel appears to generate greater insecurity in its region as it tries to make itself more secure. North America has

Quebec. Asia has its share of problems in South Asia, Cambodia, Korea and the South China Sea. Against this we have the genuine cooperation of ASEAN [Association of South East Asian Nations] which, having overcome the confrontation of the Sixties, is now seeking to build bridges with Indo-China. The European Community has established that its citizens are far better off as Europeans than while pursuing their traditional antagonisms. Those looking for a solution for Ireland see it only in a European framework. Maybe Israel would do better if it sees its future as a mixed race Mediterranean State rather than as an exclusive Jewish homeland. Neither the present wave of democracy nor the earlier belief in Marxism has been able to make ethnic, religious or other affinities obsolete. Tensions between contiguous groups have erupted into such intense conflicts that it might have given credibility to a theory of permanent racial hatred. Distant as it may appear just now, even South Asia will have to acquiesce in this trend.

India is beginning to discover that however disinterested the aid we give to neighbours, it can create resentment. We should therefore appreciate the plight of the U.S. which is seen as the principal actor and donor of economic and military largesse even if actions are taken in the name of the U.N., other Western allies, the World Bank or the IMF. During the cold war era when the U.S. supported the authoritarian regimes, such resentment was often heightened. How else can one explain the burning of the U.S. embassy in Islamabad and the tremendous protection required by the U.S. installations in Seoul?

One of the promises of the Clinton administration is to look more incisively at the American policy at home. If it is to do this effectively then external policies must be given their due. Protectionist policies to 'save jobs' not only harm the whole system of world trade but also harm the American public by protecting inefficiency. It would help if the Americans see themselves as leaders who have the most to give because they are the richest, most powerful, and most technologically advanced nation on the earth and not as takers and in any real need. It would also help if the Indians did not always whine about the barriers and difficulties they face and used their undoubted entrepreneurial skills with greater efficiency to penetrate the enormous openings that do exist. Increased self-respect arising out of a growing business relationship is perhaps the most obvious way to reduce prejudices and increase leverage.

For a while the prejudice of the Marxists and the socialists in India and elsewhere will continue to colour the perceptions of America. This should gradually disappear as we develop indigenous political and economic models more suited to our actual situation. It would help if the American and other Western preachers were to understand the local circumstances better before they offer advice. Experience shows that almost everywhere a real expert is reluctant to do so. Perhaps we all need to rein in these instant specialists. In fact, it seems likely that Indian and American thinking on political and economic systems is converging as are their perceptions of the international situation.

Many activists working very sincerely for a better world have taken up nuclear non-proliferation or human rights with zeal. They hope that they can improve the whole world including their own society. However, movements of this kind can easily be misused as India has found in the case of Kashmir and Punjab. It is disconcerting to realise that in the interplay of lobbies, different standards are applied to the same situation in different countries. Certainly the Indian authorities should take complaints of abuse seriously, and we must accept that their behaviour needs improvement. But it is also necessary that the rule of law should apply to the Government, the governed, and those outsiders who want to intervene or observe.

Many a time, the fact that India and America are the world's two largest democracies is proudly proclaimed. Yet this does not necessarily make for harmonious relations. Interest and issues do take precedence. Further free comment in open societies can even exacerbate differences, especially as Indians and Americans both react sharply to criticism. Now that democratic systems are spreading world wide, it is better to realise that the common bond of democracy should make us to realise that differences must exist as circumstances vary around the global arena as they do within each country. These need to be thrashed out in a democratic spirit, that is, by seeking agreement and compromise and accepting to a reasonable extent the equality between sovereign nations, i.e., that the rich and powerful do not always have the right answers, nor do those who lay claim to wisdom and an ancient civilisation.

Ultimately acceptance of this equality makes for the best management of a relationship.

Those of us who have had to deal with the Americans or America for any length of time have made deep and long-term relationships. No visceral antagonism can really be discerned. The PL 480 Agreement was finalised soon after the liberation of Bangladesh and the consequent "tilt" against India. The Joint Commission came into existence at the same time. The revision of the Tarapur nuclear agreement was possible despite profound disagreement over Afghanistan.

Relations between India and America need not suffer from unnecessary hang-ups. Memories may haunt us for a while. If we pressure in building the relationship, we should not live in fear of old stereotypes. We need to be confident enough in ourselves that compromises over differences can be accepted. Once put into perspective there be no great triumphs or defeats. With that maturity and equality once achieved, the future for Indo-American relations can be fair, if not bright.

U.S. State Department Said to Infringe on Sovereignty

93AS0899G New Delhi *PATRIOT* in English 30 May 93 p 4

[Editorial: "State Department's Old Tricks"]

[Text] India has done well to let the Clinton Administration know that while it welcomes U.S. "constructive approach" towards the region, it cannot allow any infringement of Indian sovereignty—infracture camouflaged as defence of

human rights. Indians have responded to U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State John Malott's high-sounding homily in New Delhi, asking this country to improve its human rights record. As the first senior U.S. official to visit New Delhi after President Bill Clinton entered the White House, Mr Malott's views are being widely regarded as reflecting the new administration's policy towards South Asia. That is why his statements have depressed the hope of a substantial improvement in Indo-U.S. relations. In fact, Mr Malott's fulminations on the subject of rights have undermined the U.S. claim that America is even-handed between India and Pakistan. It is strange indeed if the U.S. chooses to treat Pakistani help for terrorist activities in India as being no worse than the propaganda of human rights violations in India. It betrays old, old American reflex that somehow Pakistan has to be exculpated of its guilts. Little wonder then that Mr Malott has not only been blind to the "ground realities" in Kashmir where our forces have been fighting a proxy war against the infiltrators sent by Pakistan but has also totally ignored India's institutional safeguards our democratic polity and independent judiciary provide for human and civic rights. Mr Malott clearly was making a case before he takes Pakistan off the hook—of being proclaimed what it really is, a state that sponsors terrorism. He even refuted India's allegations of Pakistani complicity in the Bombay blasts for want of evidence. Thus, apart from the confessions of those arrested that they had been trained in Pakistan, even the flight manifest of Pakistan International Airlines showing that the main perpetrators of the blast took off for Pakistan via the Gulf countries failed to convince the American official of Pakistani involvement. Obviously, the U.S. was finding it difficult to chastise Pakistan, their former client-state. That would perhaps explain its desire to balance its admonishings of Pakistan on a range of issues like terrorism and nuclear proliferation with a similar outburst against India. But while such a stance can enhance U.S. influence in Islamabad, Mr Malott's unwarranted advice to India amounted to a brazen interference in India's internal affairs. On nuclear proliferation, while expressing alarm over India's indigenous missile programme, the U.S. has turned the proverbial Nelson's eye on the Chinese missile transfer to Pakistan. Pakistan's nuclear programme progressed with sensitive equipments, blue-prints raw materials imported from those very countries which were among the original signatories of the NPT [Nonproliferation Treaty]. There is duplicity in America's dealings with India.

Regional Affairs

Reaction to OIC Kashmir Stand Reported, Discussed

Spokesman's Statement

93AS0921A Madras *THE HINDU* in English 1 May 93 p 9

[Article by K. K. Katyal: "India Rejects Karachi Meet Resolutions"]

[Text] New Delhi, April 30—The Indian Government could have either ignored the reference to Kashmir by the Organisation of Islamic Conference (at the meeting in Karachi) with the contempt it richly deserved or rejected it

because of its wildness. New Delhi chose the second option. A Foreign Office spokesman said today that the assessment and recommendations, endorsed by the OIC [Organization of Islamic Conference] Foreign Ministers, were "totally unacceptable."

It was clear from the comments of the spokesman that New Delhi did not regard the OIC as having a locus standi either in relation to Kashmir or the Muslims in India. As for the OIC's self-assumed role on matters concerning Indian Muslims, he did not mince words—"the political gimmicking inherent in this futile gesture is obvious."

The Karachi conference once again revealed the murkiness that had characterised the OIC's discussions on India in the past. As on earlier occasions, connivance between the organisation's secretariat and the Pakistani representatives was responsible for the formulations on Kashmir, and the Babri Masjid. Then there was the familiar phenomenon of the governments of the Muslim countries accepting, willingly or otherwise, extreme positions, running counter to their individual judgment, as shown in their bilateral dealings with India.

Libyan Stand

This was proved by the sentiments expressed by the Libyan Foreign Minister, Mr. Omar Mustafa Al Muntasir, now here, in his talks with the Minister of State for External Affairs, Mr. R. L. Bhatia. Libya, said the visiting Minister, wanted to be even-handed towards India because of its belief that the religious problems here could be resolved through the traditional spirit of tolerance. "We know tolerance is a predominant factor in India", he was believed to have said. India's differences with Pakistan, according to him, should be resolved through mutual consultations in the framework of the Shimla Agreement.

This collective surrender to religious bigotry in disregard of the best judgment of the OIC members, at the individual level, was also a setback to India's Pakistan-related diplomacy and a challenge. The dissonance between the collective and individual positions provided a good enough opening to India which did not appear to have been used effectively. The lapse was not as serious as the one that marked the External Affairs Ministry's handling of the case of Memon brothers, but part of the damage could have been avoided.

India need not have complained—as the spokesman did today—against its exclusion from the OIC. It need not have referred to its credentials for the membership for this organisation. Apart from other things, this did not fit in with its secular approach.

The spokesman's statement said: "The communique and resolutions adopted at Karachi make it obvious that the OIC Foreign Ministers' meeting was misled by certain elements of the OIC secretariat and the host country. In the circumstances the views expressed in the communique and the resolution do not come as a surprise to the Government of India. At the same time, the Government

of India categorically questions the assessment and recommendations endorsed by the OIC at the Foreign Ministers' meeting at Karachi.

"We consider these totally unacceptable. Kashmir is an integral part of India and the enduring question is for Pakistan to come to terms with the realities and to cooperate with India to serve the larger objectives of peace and stability on the subcontinent. The OIC resolution will serve no purpose other than encouraging Pakistan to persist with its support and sponsorship of terrorism and subversion directed against India.

Panel Discussion

93AS0921B Madras *THE HINDU* in English 5 May 93 p 9

[Text] New Delhi, May 4—The resolution on Kashmir, passed by the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) countries and the testimony of the U.S. Principle Deputy Assistant Secretary, Mr. John Mallot at the U.S. House Foreign Affairs Sub-committee on Asia and Pacific topped the agenda of today's discussion at the Parliamentary Consultative Committee on External Affairs.

"This resolution is not conducive for good relations between India and the OIC countries apart from being one sided", the committee members felt after they were told that the Government had already issued a formal statement rejecting the resolution and its recommendation.

Divergence

The resolution on Kashmir passed at the OIC is of considerable concern to India, particularly because some of India's traditional friends among the Arab countries have declared themselves on the Pakistan side of the fence on the Kashmir issue. The resolution passed by the OIC which called for a plebiscite in Kashmir was endorsed by these "pro-India" members of the OIC.

In addition India has strongly objected to the resolution because it has bracketed the developments in Kashmir with the happenings in Bosnia and Palestine. Since India rejects plebiscite and favours resolution of the Kashmir dispute bilaterally, as laid out under the framework of the Shimla accord, the divergence with the OIC views now stands graphically illustrated.

Some members felt that India should send a ministerial team to OIC countries in order to explain the "incompatibility" of U.N. involvement in the Kashmir issue and the bilateralism underlining the Shimla accord. A section of the members felt that the failure of India's Kashmir policy lay in the inability to convey to the world the incompatibility of the U.N. intervention and the bilateral resolution of the dispute as worked out by the Shimla accord.

Subtle Shift in U.S. Policy

Mr. John Mallot's testimony at the Congressional subcommittee has been of considerable concern because the State Department official's comments suggest a subtle shift in the U.S. policy in Kashmir. When Mr. Mallot said that the U.S. "neither accepts nor rejects" plebiscite in Kashmir, the comment has generated speculation that U.S. may be

in the process of reformulating its decision which was based on the view that the 1972 Shimla accord had superseded the issue of plebiscite.

Mr. Mallot's observation that, "the current U.S. policy is that for any solution to the Kashmir problem must take into account the views of the Kashmir people themselves, both Muslims and non Muslims", this has led to apprehensions here that a new dimension of "popular choice" has been added to the U.S. policy which has been distinguished earlier for favouring the resolution of the Kashmir dispute only under the framework of the Shimla accord.

Correspondent on Reaction

93AS0921C Madras THE HINDU in English 7 May 93 p 6

[Article by F. J. Khargamvala: "India Needs To Counter Pak. Lobbying in OIC"]

[Text] Manama (Bahrain), May 5—The progressively harsh positions adopted on India by the Organisation of Islamic Conference [OIC] are the result not just of Pakistan manipulating the OIC but also India handing it over to the OIC Secretariat-Islamabad combine on a platter. In fact, strong OIC resolutions play to the domestic advantage of both the Congress(I) and the main Opposition party, the Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP].

The rather inexplicably long-winded official Indian reaction to the recent Karachi communique and resolutions of the OIC masks the fact that the political leadership has completely avoided making any effort to push India's case before the OIC membership. Somehow the present leadership appears to place great faith in the expectation of permanence in a slight pro-Indian tilt in the U.S. position which too apparently is showing signs of erosion.

Past and present Indian ambassadors in West Asia are divided on whether India can succeed in countering Pak. efforts in the OIC but are agreed that the effort has not been made and should be made. Some of them feel that harsh OIC (Muslim) pronouncements help the ruling Congress(I) in showing itself to the majority Indian electorate as the party with an Islamic world foreign policy. Whether this is true or not, the only entity to have made any effort at all with the OIC membership is the National Front [NF] Government in 1990 but that was essential because it was during the NF Government that the OIC first took aboard the "J&K dispute" on its agenda in Cairo.

At that time, the External Affairs Minister, Mr. I. K. Gujral and others trooped all over the place in a well meaning but unsuccessful try in competition against the Pakistani Prime Minister herself exploiting a situation in Kashmir that most countries saw as having gone out of hand. That was the only occasion on which battle was joined and lost by India. From the one extreme of chasing Pak delegations all over the region, India has now moved to the other of not making any effort against Islamabad. In fact, the best indicator of how easy everything has gone for Pakistan is that practically no delegations have travelled abroad, except to Saudi Arabia and Iran before the Karachi meeting.

On Aug. 5, 1992 the Minister of State for External Affairs, Mr. R. L. Bhatia, told the Rajya Sabha that India proposed to review its bilateral relations with each OIC country which had taken an anti-India attitude on the Kashmir issue. He said the Government had suitably conveyed to the OIC member States that their stance on Kashmir would be taken note of in the bilateral relationship. Since then, so far as is known, the Consultative Committee on MEA [expansion not given] has neither challenged nor questioned the MEA. During the Istanbul meeting of Islamic Foreign Ministers India's Ambassador in Turkey was specifically instructed not to go about lobbying. In December 1991, India's lawmakers asked the Government "what is our Embassy in Senegal doing" to counter Pak propaganda at the Dakar OIC Summit. The Embassy had an Ambassador and a Foreign Service probationer. Did India seriously expect two officers to lobby with 51 delegations, most of whom Heads of State whom Indian Ministers have trouble contacting?

Misinformation

Misinformation has been the order of the day by almost every Indian minister travelling abroad, including foreign ministers. They have put out that such and such a Government supported the Shimla agreement and sections of the Indian media have collaborated in the charade that the very mention of the word "Shimla" should be construed as a pro-Indian position and consequently a successful diplomatic exercise on the Ministers' part. The truth, of course, is that Pak itself supports the "spirit of the Shimla agreement" and almost all of the OIC membership mentions Shimla for two reasons. Either they wish to stay out of the scrap and club it with "relevant U.N. resolutions" or apply Shimla only to stress an unresolved dispute.

Considering the view that a tough OIC position may be a good domestic platform for both the major political parties it is doubtful that India will attempt a serious lobbying effort but on strictly diplomatic considerations this is not only warranted, according to many Indian officials but should be undertaken. Its absence is not a slur on Indian missions but due to lack of guidance from the leadership.

Two Tactical Areas

India may have to review at least two tactical areas. One, can it cultivate to a point of steadfastness a small group of African and Arab nations? Here too the fault lies in losing friends, like Yemen. If this is not possible, of what use has been that "Chalis saal ki nonalignment," as one Indian businessman put it. (40 years of influence in the Non-aligned Movement). Alternately, like South Africa and Israel did to the NAM [Nonaligned Movement], the OIC can be wholly ignored.

Another option is to play hard ball. OIC powerplayers like Iran, whose need to woo India is greater in the face of Western pressure, must be told to make a choice between the relationship and doing their bit at the OIC to effect moderation. India can also catalogue in public through news agencies, items like numbers of Muslims killed by Muslim regimes. If the OIC wishes to play the champion of Indian Muslims, New Delhi can expose OIC regimes

before their own masses. This has not been India's style but nor has the policy of embracing the Velayatis worked. It is just outrageous that any friends of India can allow a comparison to be drawn between killings in Bosnia and Kashmir. Above all, success of diplomacy will be limited by the actual situation on the ground, in Kashmir and in killing fields such as Bombay. The onus for action is not on the MEA but on the political leadership.

Violence, Assassinations in Region Called 'Tragic Cycle'

93AS0864H Calcutta THE TELEGRAPH in English
9 May 93 p 4

[Article by M.J. Akbar: "Initiation to a Beheading"; quotation marks as published]

[Text] Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, Liaquat Ali Khan, Solomon Bandaranaike, Mujibur Rahman, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi, General Ziaul Haq, Ranasinghe Premadasa. What do these eminent people have in common? The last name is probably the easiest giveaway, and only because it is so recent. All of them have been assassinated, of course.

Add to this the list of leaders who have been removed illegally or arbitrarily, thrown into prisons by kings, as in Nepal, or generals—Pakistan and Bangladesh and of course the silent, isolated jailhouse called Burma—and the old empire of Winston Churchill doesn't look in too healthy a condition four and a half decades after the white man laid down his burden.

Between Mahavira, Gautam Buddha and Mahatma Gandhi we also seemed to have bluffed ourselves that we are a non-violent people. A load of rubbish. In fact, the large number of prophets of peace that mark the history of our subcontinent seems to me to prove quite the opposite of conventional wisdom: these prophets felt it necessary to preach peace not because we were naturally non-violent but precisely because we were—like most of the human race—naturally violent. And this attitude towards violence was encouraged by depressing social realities like casteism, ethnic/tribal differences, and later Hindu-Muslim communalism.

After all, you don't have to preach non-violence to peaceful people. They simply do not need such lessons. But people who have hatred floating just under the surface, waiting to bubble up into a scenario of swords and fire, need prophets who can lift their consciousness to the higher idealism of peaceful coexistence. We prefer blood to love—that is the problem.

Nor is violence the preferred ethic of only the ruling classes. If that were so, it would be once again be in perfect consonance with behaviour patterns the world over. The greed for power has always brought out the worst in human beings. There is no human relationship, however deep, however intrinsic, more powerful than this cure to hold the sword of domination in your hands. The bond of a son to his mother has been strangled at the altar of power. Brothers have been ritually massacred. Fathers have been murdered to the beating of triumphant drums. And if

children—sons—have been spared it it not because of parental love but again, only parental greed: because of the desire to see a dynasty perpetuated, to stretch possession into an indeterminate future.

That has been the traditional behaviour pattern of ruling classes all over the world, irrespective of religion, creed, colour. On our subcontinent, the masses have so often participated in political violence that one does not quite know how to analyse this phenomenon. Civilians have become brutal armies in the service of political manipulators, all the more vicious for being haphazard and undisciplined. Communal armies on the rampage are evil enough; communal civilian hordes are infinitely worse. Uniquely, this noble subcontinent of Pakistan, India, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka is suffering the excesses of both. If one part is not diseased by one problem then it is tormented by the other.

It is no surprise, consequently, that instability is the defining reality of the political process everywhere. A reporter writing about the calm deposition of the Pakistani ex-prime minister, Mr Nawar Sharif, noted that the replacement (Mr Who?) was the 24th prime minister of Pakistan in 25 years. He should have gone back another two decades: he could have taken the count to fifty. If the martial law of General Ayub Khan in 1959 was welcomed by the people when it began, it was only because a completely irresponsible political elite had converted the most sacred institutions into a parody. People were literally dismissing one another. And in Dhaka, being a trifle more excitable, they began killing deputy speakers on the floor of the House.

India's national ideology—secularism and social justice—was more stable. Hence it gave birth to a constitution that protected the institutions that nurtured the system. We had some right to a superior smile, particularly whenever we stole a glance at Pakistan. But that is a luxury we can hardly afford anymore.

The cancer of India can be summed up in a single word: compromise. Inch by inch in the beginning, and mile by mile these days, those who are in power are ready to barter away every basic principle if it can extend their term in power for a little while longer. Secularism has not been hurt in India by the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh [RSS] or the Shiv Sena or the Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP]. They never believed in it, so how could they possibly betray it? It is the so-called secular parties who have sold secularism for spoonfuls of electoral soup.

Even as one writes this column, the Congress is still doing this. After selling out to majority communalism in December it is trying now to save its tattered skin by selling out to minority communalism. And all for the sake of one, just one, byelection to the Lok Sabha in Kerala.

When the history of BJP rule in India is written, please add the name of Mr K. Karunakaran to the long list of Congressmen who made it possible. His problem, of course, was a familiar one. He presides, as we know, over a United Democratic Front [UDF] government in Kerala which includes the Indian Union Muslim League. But after

the mismanagement of the Babri Masjid crisis not even the participation of half a dozen caliphs from the Ottoman empire in his government was likely to persuade the Muslims of Kerala to vote en masse for the Congress.

But on May 19, the constituency of Ottapallam, vacated by Mr K.R. Narayanan, after he was elected vice-president is scheduled to elect another member of Parliament. Mr Karunakaran does not want to lose a seat which has been with the Congress traditionally. The balance in Ottapallam is held by the 150,000 Muslim voters. With the IUML [Indian Union Muslim League] in the UDF fold this should not have been a problem. But the credibility of the IUML has also been shattered by its continued alliance with the Congress despite the destruction of the Babri mosque. The president of the IUML, Mr Ibrahim Sulaiman Sait, has actually decided he cannot show his face in the constituency in order to ask for votes for a Congress candidate.

So what does Mr Karunakaran do to "woo" the reluctant Muslims? Bring out a traditional sop of the kind the ruling party has been throwing out to Muslims before every election on instructions not from Muslim educators or progressive thinkers or economists anxious to secure jobs for an impoverished community, but on the advice of the most rabid and extremist mullah-politicians who have kept Muslims in a ghetto only to be able to thoroughly exploit them. So often has this column made the point that it has never been the Muslim masses who have been appeased. It is only the conservative brigade which has been appeased.

Mr Karunakaran gives us fresh evidence of an endemic problem. In order to soften the 150,000 Muslim voters of Ottapallam, he has decided that from the next academic session Friday will be a holiday in schools with a majority of Muslim children. In other schools, Muslim children will be entitled to a break between 12:30 and 2:30 pm to enable them to pray.

Even the merits of this decision are secondary to the simple fact it is a thirdrate electoral bribe in order to whitewash a firstrate political blunder. If Mr Karunakaran wants to even begin addressing Muslims, he would be far better advised to emulate Mr Arjun Singh, who now begins speeches at political rallies by an unqualified apology for the events of December 6, 1992.

The real irony, of course, is that Mr Karunakaran, is headed for a double squeeze. This crass foolishness is unlikely to bring any Muslim votes to the Congress on May 19, and the only party to benefit from such stupidity, will be the BJP. Who can prevent RSS children from asking time off on every Tuesday for Hanuman worship? And what a marvellous point this will make in the oratorical flourishes of communal leaders seeking to target Muslims as the "pampered" minority.

The signs all around are not propitious. The tragic cycle of mistake and retribution, of sequence and consequence continues to haunt us. Reports now confirm the growth of minority terrorism: a Bihari student has been arrested in

Kashmir, indoctrinated by the secessionists there into joining the war against India. He is not alone.

And remember this is the age of the kamikaze. The assassination of President Premadasa has once again confirmed just how vulnerable everyone and everything has become: Terrorism has never been a matter of mere technology, although no one wants to argue too much with the properties of RDX. But the key to terrorism lies in the nature of human will. It is the sacrifice of what we hold most dear, our life, by an individual to some idea which is the real source of terror.

The picture of a Premadasa cutout being dismantled after his assassination in Colombo, his head at right angles to his body, somehow symbolises the unhinged world we have created. We have sent an invitation to a beheading. Ours. And it has taken man, many years to write out that invitation.

Tamils Welcome Talks With LTTE

93AS0863E Bangalore DECCAN HERALD in English
10 May 93 p 9

[Text] Colombo, May 9—Sri Lanka President D.B. Wijetunga has said he would make a fresh attempt to bring the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] to the negotiation table to find a peaceful solution to the ethnic problem.

At the same time he has said the Sri Lankan armed forces will continue their operations in the embattled north and the east to disarm the LTTE and bring the area under the Government control.

Mr. Wijetunga has spelt out his Government's stand in an interview to the ISLAND.

Mr. Wijetunga said there was no conclusive evidence yet to establish that the LTTE was involved in the assassination of his predecessor, Mr Ranasinghe Premadasa. "The police have so far only said the LTTE is one possible suspect," he added.

Meanwhile, Tamil parties and groups like the PLOTE, EPRLF [Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front], TULF [Tamil United Liberation Front] and EPDP [expansion not given] have welcomed the President's promise to take the initiative to find a peaceful solution to the ethnic problem.

Mr. Siddhartha, leader of pro-government PLOTE [People's Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam] has said his group is not opposed to talks with the LTTE. At the same time, it feels that a solution can be found even without the involvement of the LTTE. He said the Government should evolve a package that will satisfy the basic aspirations of the Tamils.

Mr. N. Rmish of the EPDP, another pro-government group, has said Mr. Wijetunga is a mature politician and the Tamils are confident that he will find a solution during his presidency.

Mr. Joseph Pararajasingham, TULF MP, has said there can be no military solution and welcomed the President's offer to hold talks with the LTTE.

The EPRLF leader, Mr. Suresh Premachandran, has said the new President's concern over the ethnic crisis is appreciated by his party. He has pledged his party's co-operation to the President's efforts to find a solution.

Economic Programs, Challenges Seen Same Throughout Region

93AS0879H Calcutta THE TELEGRAPH in English
18 May 93 p 6

[Article by Syamal K. Ghosh: "Subcontinent of Reform"]
[Text]

South Asia's biggest nations are at least united in the nature of their economic programmes.

The Eighties and the early Nineties have been witnessing a zealous interest in economic reform. The perils of unbridled state intervention, protectionism, and immature monetary and fiscal policies became too evident to ignore. Economic reform is the buzzword of the West, the former East Bloc, in "socialist" China and pretty much the entire developing world.

To Indians, in the process of liberalising and globalising their economy, the economic experiments of Bangladesh and Pakistan are ones they can relate to their own experience.

It is worth examining how other nations of the subcontinent, which share the same ethnic and cultural background and which confront problems similar to those of India, grapple with global economic integration.

The first comparison is with Pakistan. By 1990 Pakistan's population stood at 113 million, almost one-seventh of India's. It also had a very high natural growth rate of 3 per cent. Population would double in 24 years. Life expectancy stood at 56 years and the literacy rate was 35 per cent. The per capita gross national product was \$380. Regional disparities, unemployment and poverty remain fixtures of Pakistan, much as they are in the rest of the subcontinent. Pakistan's average per capita GNP annual growth rate between 1965 and 1990 has been better than that of Bangladesh or India, though modest compared to those of east Asian economies or China's. Its inflationary track record has not been unsatisfactory. Between 1965 and 1980 the average annual rate of inflation was 10.3 per cent, between 1980 and 1990 6.7 per cent.

Like India and Bangladesh Pakistan's economic policy has centred on five year plans. The planners and policymakers realised the economy was stagnant and needed to break out of a vicious poverty trap. During the Fifties and Sixties the first three plans focussed on growth and transformation. Emphasis was initially placed on industrialisation, agriculture received attention later.

On the whole Pakistan's economy grew rapidly but there was a feeling the benefits were being reaped by a minority. The fourth plan, which ended in 1982-83, focussed on social justice. A regime of industrial sanctions and permits came into existence. Under Zulfikar Ali Bhutto there was a spate of nationalisation but a drought of private sector

industrial investment. But improvements were afoot in the agricultural sector. The green revolution was introduced. Further economic succour came in form of massive emigration to west Asia. Through the late Seventies growth was sluggish though the service sector grew reasonably well.

The fifth plan sought to alleviate poverty and stabilise the economy. This was a fairly successful plan. Many of the controls of industry that had been imposed earlier were eased or abolished. Pakistan, by and large, succeeded in keeping its balance of payments current account deficit under control. Except for edible oils, the economy attained self-sufficiency in food.

However there were still glaring shortcomings. Private industrial investment did not pick up. Expenditure on social needs was insufficient. Though given constraints this was perhaps understandable.

Conscious efforts were made to boost savings and investment during the sixth plan. During this plan period measures were taken to raise agricultural productivity and to reduce energy imports. More money was spent on health and education. Probably the nature of policy prescriptions explains why. In spite of the severe drought in 1986-87 Pakistan achieved a respectable growth rate of more than 6 per cent.

During the seventh plan the outlay on energy was jacked up and that on industry and housing reduced. Encouragement was offered to private investment in all sectors of the economy.

Although reforms were being gradually introduced over the years, during the seventh plan period some remarkable changes were made. Public sector corporations, mainly in the area of water and power, were encouraged to finance their own investments with their own profits and borrowing. This was a major departure from the normal dependence on the public exchequer crutch.

Pakistan has introduced a number of deregulation and privatisation measures since 1990. Moves are on to deregulate private investment. Most private investment no longer has to wait for government sanctions. Red tape has been slashed. State run financial institutions are being sold off. The private sector is being urged to trespass where previously only public sector were allowed to tread like power generation and telecommunications.

Another noteworthy feature is that irrespective of the kind of reforms introduced, the agricultural sector has remained largely untapped for tax purposes. This is even though one cannot strictly say that there is "minifundia" or only small and marginal farmers in Punjab. The parallels with India are obvious.

Pakistan has committed itself to wideranging reforms between 1992-93 and 1993-94. A paper circulated within the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank in December 1991 contained Pakistani commitments to targets of gross domestic product growth rates of more than 6 per cent and foreign exchange reserves good enough to sustain imports for 6 weeks.

Everyone is familiar with the chaos and confusion that prevailed in India around 1990-91—balance of payments problems, shrinking foreign exchange reserves, debt servicing hassles and so on. This was followed by a devaluation of the rupee and a shifting of focus on to structural changes.

Pakistan's experience has not been very different. It ran into a serious payments crisis in November 1988, was bailed out by an IMF loan of \$830 million after committing itself to a programme of adjustment—tax reforms, trade liberalisation, subsidy elimination, budget deficit cutting by revenue generation and less expenditure—the whole ball game.

From 1990 there has been a move toward deregulation and privatisation, liberalisation of capital flows and full convertibility of the Pakistani rupee.

The Pakistani rupee was devalued in 1972 and actually rose when the dollar fell in 1973. Until 1982 it remained stable but then it pegged itself to a trade weighted currency basket. It has depreciated steadily ever since.

India's eastern neighbour, Bangladesh, is a predominantly agrarian economy. Its 1990 population was 107 million. In spite of being blessed with fertile riverine lands and other resources, it is a country that is also at war with nature. Much of its wealth is spent fending off floods, typhoons and the like.

Its population grows at little over 2 per cent. Life expectancy at birth was 52 years in 1990, literacy rate 35 per cent, the GNP [Gross National Product] per capita of \$210 was the results of a growth rate of 0.7 per cent through 1990, way behind even the modest gains of Pakistan and India. This is understandable for a young country still putting its house in order. And Bangladesh has no shortage of socio-political problems. On the economic front, inflation raged at an uncomfortable 15 per cent till 1980. It stood close to 10 per cent between 1980 and 1990.

Bangladesh also plumped for five year plans. Its crying need was to rejuvenate the agrarian and rural economy. In 1989-90 nearly half of the GDP [Gross Domestic Product] owed its origin to agriculture which also served as industry's main source raw materials. This sector is important just in terms of food self-sufficiency given the fast growing population. Other headaches include a reliance on imported fuel despite natural gas reserves, a dependence on imported machinery and equipment, a perennial trade deficit and a need for foreign aid.

Its first five year plan was demolished by natural disasters and oil price hikes. The second and third plans were partially successful but the growth rate was a meagre 4 per cent. The ambitious third plan, which ended in 1989-90, sought to have domestic private sector provide roughly a third of investment funds. This did not materialise. Instead there has been an overt reliance on foreign aid. The current fourth plan relies heavily on external resources.

Bangladesh needs strict fiscal dieting through the normal menu of tightly curbed unproductive expenditure, controlling public sector costs and broadened the tax base.

Bangladesh still has a fairly restrictive regime. Things can be imported only under licence or buy the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh or other government approved agencies. Imports of luxury goods are discouraged.

Even then Bangladesh is gradually introducing economic reforms. The Foreign Private Investment (Promotion and Protection) Act of 1980 is indicative of the mood. In 1989, to encourage investment, extensive tax and import concessions were announced and rules for profit repatriation softened. Today in the private sector foreign investors no longer have to take a local partner. Even the public sector can go in for joint ventures with foreign investors. But investment has to be approved by "Boards of Investment." Bangladesh has set up export processing zones in various cities.

Dhaka's goal of bringing about rapid changes in income levels and quality of life through growth and development has nonetheless remained elusive. The currency has been weak. Over the 10 year period to 1992 the Bangladesh taka depreciated at the rate of 5 per cent. Evidence points to the currency still being overvalued.

How has India fared? India has had five year plans since the Fifties. Except for a handful of years during which annual economic plans were introduced this approach has been maintained.

Planning in India is not wedded completely to the common model. Nor is it akin to French style indicative planning. It is midway between the two. The private sector has been very much part of the post-independence era. There is still in India a regime of peaceful coexistence between administered prices and market determined price, between private, public and joint sector units.

In spite of a rapid surge in population over the past four decades—361 million in 1951 to 845 million in 1991—an effective food security system has been built up with buffer stocks and a public distribution system. The food subsidies are now being targeted to help the really needy, rather than the relatively affluent. Large scale famines are a thing of the past. Literacy has gone from 16.7 per cent in 1950-51 to 52.1 per cent in 1991. Life expectancy has risen from around 30 years to 60 years.

The green revolution was successfully introduced in the late Sixties, in part thanks to the opening up of credit and marketing facilities. One of the positive fallouts of bank nationalisation in 1969 and 1980 was the help extended to the rural sector and small scale entrepreneur. Even though rain fed agriculture is still important, the situation has changed markedly. Between 1950-51 and 1989-90 agricultural production has grown at the rate of 2.7 per cent, ahead of the population. For a major breakthrough growth of 4 to 5 per cent are desirable.

Agricultural prosperity has demand side effects as two-thirds of the labour force, a third of the total population, derive their livelihood from the primary sector. It has supply side effects as well. Prices are held in check when harvests are bountiful.

Industrial production has grown at 5.8 per cent between 1950-51 and 1980-81, 7.1 per cent between 1981-82 and 1991-92. Industry exhibited resilience during the acute drought of 1987. Public sector investment in infrastructure and in the industrial base means the country is poised for a quantum jump.

Inflation has seldom reached double-digits. The average annual rate of inflation was 7.5 per cent between 1965 and 1980, and 7.9 per cent between 1980 and 1990. External shocks and financial indiscipline drove the inflation rate up to 16.6 per cent by August 1991. This has since been suppressed to around 7 per cent.

India still has to address the problem of poverty, improve its power sector and infrastructure, and ensure balanced regional development. It has to improve its domestic savings and investment. If India is to grow rapidly, there is little choice but to invite foreign direct investment and portfolio investment. Savings, around 20 per cent of the GDP, are simply too small.

The economic crisis caused by the Kuwait war was a boon in disguise. It led to a reappraisal of the strategy of import substitution. Policymakers were forced to realise state intervention may not be conducive to efficiency under all circumstances, that no country could afford to live beyond its means.

The process of economic reform, the liberalisation and globalisation of the economy has been on for some years. There was some reform during the regimes of Indira and Rajiv Gandhi but the process has gathered momentum in recent months. A conscious attempt is being made to woo foreign investment. The equity limit on foreign investment has been relaxed. EPZs [Export Processing Zone] now exist at Bombay, Calcutta, Cochin, Delhi, Kandla, Madras and Vizag. The EPZs provide many incentives including a 5 year corporate tax holiday, exemption from customs and excise duties and duty free imports. These benefits are available to all export oriented units as well. The government appears to be serious about containing bureaucratic delays.

The list of reforms is impressive. There have been significant changes with respect to industrial licensing, monopolies and restrictive trade practices and foreign exchange legislation. Even control of capital issues has been reformed. Changes are being introduced to make the money and capital markets more efficient and provide adequate investor safeguards. Taxes on international trade have been slashed. Elaborate tax reforms are under consideration.

An effort is being made to gradually ensure not only the freedom of entry, but also the freedom of exit. The government is aware of the need to tighten its belt. It is seeking to contain the budget deficit and the keep growth in money supply to prudent levels.

The Indian rupee was a non-convertible currency for a considerable stretch of time. From June 1973 sterling was the intervention currency for establishment of cross rates. From September 1975 the rupee was linked from the

sterling and exchange value was fixed in relation to a basket of currencies of India's trading partners. To move toward liberalisation and globalisation in February 1992 the rupee was made partly convertible. Recently it has been allowed to float. The currency has been holding ground belying sceptical predictions.

It is noteworthy that national boundaries do not mean much when one starts reckoning the magnitude of the economic problems confronted by the three largest countries of the subcontinent. All three have been home to fierce debates on the question of economic growth. Drastic reform has turned out to their common response to the problems they confront.

Internal Affairs

Renewed Call for Gorkhaland State Analyzed

93AS0866A Cochin THE WEEK in English 25 Apr 93
pp 14-17

[Article by Tapash Ganguly: "Petty Politicking"]

[Text] The historic 1988 Darjeeling accord is dead. Long live discord. Subash Ghising, the maverick soldier-turned-politician, is again on the warpath after dissolving the much-touted Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council (DGHC).

On March 31, in a fit of pique, the Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF) leader read out the resolution that dissolved the council. He was watched sullenly by an IAS [Indian Administrative Service] officer, three Marxist councillors and his own partymen, who in a sense were representative of the accord, signed after protracted discussions between the Centre, West Bengal government and Ghising.

The GNLF supremo's immediate reason for the dissolution was that the West Bengal government had played dirty with him. He said he could not tolerate the "bossism" of Chief Minister Jyoti Basu anymore. He told the assembled press corps that the council had opted to ask for a separate state within the Indian Union.

On April 2, the central committee of the GNLF decided to take to the agitational path. It would hold street-corner meetings and organise rallies all over the Darjeeling hills for a month to tell the people why the council had to be dissolved. The next phase of agitation was not specified, but it is commonly believed that it would be militant. If that happens, the nightmarish days between 1986 and 1988—when arson, stabbing, firing and killing were daily happenings—could recur.

According to Ghising, the main reason for the dissolution of the council was that the West Bengal government had starved it of funds. "It did not allow me to work. It stopped all payments so that we would not be able to carry on with development projects. It blocked Rs 70 crore earmarked for the hill area projects on flimsy grounds. Even Central assistance was blocked," says he.

The West Bengal government, on the other hand, says that Ghising had initially refused to submit utilisation certificates for money spent on different projects. After much

pressure, he did give the certificates, but by then the government was facing a financial crunch and was forced to impose an embargo on expenditure. The financial position looked up only on April 1, the beginning of the new financial year. And the government had wanted to release more than 50 per cent of the blocked amount. But by then Ghising had dissolved the council.

But financial constraints alone do not seem to be the real reason for Ghising's drastic step. Darjeeling-watchers refuse to accept such a simplistic cause. According to them, the malaise is much more deep-rooted and embedded in the hill politics. They believe the CPI(M) [Communist Party of India (Marxist)], in its bid to finish Ghising politically and regain its base in the hills, precipitated the crisis. Said one of them: "Ghising dealt a mortal blow to the CPI(M) in the early period of the Darjeeling movement. He branded it as a plains people's party which has no interest in the development of Darjeeling. His success lay in the fact that most of the Nepalis in the hills were sold on the idea."

According to him, the CPI(M) resorted to a double-pronged attack to finish Ghising politically. First, the Darjeeling unit of the CPI(M) spread canards against Ghising. And it was followed by the CPI(M)-led West Bengal government gradually tightening the financial squeeze on the DGHC. The canards invariably painted Ghising as inefficient, corrupt and prone to nepotism. To help fan it, the services of Madan Tamang, a former All India Gorkha League leader and the present head of the Gorkha Democratic Front, came in handy. He publicly accused Ghising of corruption and nepotism.

Tamang claims that Ghising built a huge mansion with a swimming pool in Calcutta's Salt Lake at a cost of Rs 6.5 crore. He also says that the GNLFF leader purchased a big building in Delhi for Rs 2.5 crore and another one in Patna's Kankarbag for a fabulous amount and was planning to build a luxury hotel complex in Goa. He is supported by R. B. Rai, the Marxist MP from the hills. But both say they do not have any documents to prove the charges. "I have seen a letter from the vigilance commission in which Ghising has been asked to cooperate with an inquiry on this matter," is all Tamang would admit to.

But DGHC officials categorically deny all the charges. Says a senior officer: "The Calcutta building did cost us Rs 2.5 crore, but it has no swimming pool. Anyway, the accord itself had provisions for this building, which serves as the liaison office of the DGHC." According to him, the building in Delhi was purchased to provide a comfortable stay for the people of Darjeeling. He adds that the DGHC had neither purchased land nor building in Patna and Goa. "Ghising's honesty and integrity are above board," says an IAS officer who has worked with him for a long time.

Interestingly, according to a senior officer of the Darjeeling administration (separate from the DGHC), Tamang was being foisted on the Darjeeling political scene by Dil Kumari Bhandaria, wife of Sikkim Chief Minister N. B. Bhandari. He says that Dil Kumari, who is from Darjeeling, has dreams of merging Darjeeling with Sikkim "and to

realise her dream she has engaged Tamang to demolish Ghising first and then go for a separate state of Darjeeling." But Tamang laughed away the charge saying, "it is simply a canard."

The officer says that Jyoti Basu never wanted to destabilise the DGHC. "During many talks in Darjeeling he asked us to go soft on Ghising. His argument was that there were certain procedures of administration and any deviation from it would come to the notice of the newspapers who would make the life of the government miserable. He told us that DGHC is like a baby. We would have to help it, not disturb it."

Whatever the intentions of Basu, his government seems to have acted exactly the opposite way. From 1991 onwards it began a financial squeeze on the DGHC. It is said that Finance Minister Dr Asim Dasgupta began to demand utilisation certificates a year and a half ago at the behest of Information Minister Buddhadev Bhattacharya, who handles Darjeeling affairs.

Interestingly, Dasgupta does not get utilisation certificates from more than 40 per cent of the panchayat bodies to which the state government hands over more than Rs 500 crore every year. According to Ghising, the state government held back Rs 70 crore out of the Rs 190 crore due to him. "They continued to block the funds despite the chief secretary confirming through a letter on March 1 that he had received up-to-date accounts and utilisation certificates."

In a letter to Basu on March 26, Ghising stated his stand without any ambiguity: if the funds were not released before March 31, he would wind up the DGHC. But Writers' Buildings could not be moved. Ghising saw no alternative but to dissolve the DGHC and revive the old slogan of Gorkhaland.

"The CPI(M) was certainly hurt by Ghising's rise," says a senior journalist of Darjeeling. "It was at the peak of its power after marginalising the Congress. But then Ghising appeared on the political centrestage and within two years literally wiped out the CPI(M) from the hills. What Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi couldn't do with the CPI(M), Ghising did single-handedly."

A GNLFF councillor admits that the CPI(M) had been able to make considerable inroads since mid-1991. "It was a bad time for us. Some of Ghising's trusted lieutenants left him because they could not be given posts in the GNLFF or DGHC. They joined hands with our detractors. We thought that the people would remain with us if we continued our developmental activities. But right at that time the state government began its financial squeeze. We had to abandon our plans midway."

But the prevalent view in Darjeeling is that Ghising is still a powerful force. "If Basu could not solve the problems of West Bengal in 16 years, how could he expect Ghising to turn Darjeeling into a paradise in four years?" asks a hotel owner. "Yes, the youth are restless. But what could Ghising do as the little job opportunities he created were lost due to the financial embargo?" Most of the 400

hotel-owners are solidly behind Ghising because under his dispensation they have had a relatively free run vis-a-vis the terror tactics of the Marxist trade union CITU [Center of Indian Trade Unions] in the early 1980s.

Says a school teacher: "Like the CPI(M), the GNLF is not popular in the urban centres but in the villages. So far, no one has emerged to dislodge Ghising from his position as the uncrowned king of Darjeeling."

With the Darjeeling and Kurseong assembly byelections fast approaching, the state government seems to have driven itself into a cul-de-sac. It would grant Ghising a political victory if it releases the funds now and would make him a martyr if it fails to do so. Whatever little progress the CPI(M) could make over the last two years seems to have been nullified by Ghising's master-stroke.

"Moreover, now that Ghising has revived his old demand for a separate state, Tamang would have no alternative but to toe his line," says a veteran Gorkha League leader. "For all this, one should blame Buddhadev Bhattacharya."

Even CPI(M) activists in Darjeeling blame Bhattacharya for his shortsightedness. "By precipitating the crisis he has allowed Ghising to attain martyrdom. By dissolving the hill council and forsaking his chair Ghising has made himself a hero again. And reduced us to our earlier position of zero," says a Marxist leader.

Ghising has decided to place his case before Delhi. But he is not sure how much help he would get this time. With the Congress precariously positioned in the Lok Sabha, it is dependent on the support of the CPI(M)-led Left Front. Perhaps, the results of the assembly byelections would decide which way the wind blows.

RSS Leader Said Involved in BJP Leadership Competition

93AS0866D Cochin THE WEEK in English 25 Apr 93
pp 38-39

[Article by Sachidananda Murthy: "Leadership Struggle: BJP Seeks the Help of Deoras"; quotation marks as published]

[Text] A face to meet the faces one meets—T.S. Eliot

Which is the right face to meet the Indian voter—that is the question. A dilemma which the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] tried to grapple with and eventually left to RSS [Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh] supremo Balasaheb Deoras to handle, even as it became clear that the face of Murli Manohar Joshi may not beam from the pictures of party president after the national council meets in Bangalore in mid-June.

The party's worry was not just about a vote-catching human face. The debate at the national executive meeting in Calcutta was also on the thematic face of the party—whether to depend solely on the appeal of Ram or go for a composite ideological thrust. "Nobody can separate Ram and the BJP," said Atal Bihari Vajpayee, though he admitted that something had to be done about the negative fallout of the Ayodhya issue.

The party's in-house economist, Jay Dubashi, explained it in corporate terms: "Here is a company which has done well because of a single product. We would not be here but for the Ayodhya issue. But now the question is whether we should keep selling the same product hoping to increase sales or go for diversification so that we have products to capture the other segments of the market."

But the BJP is no Hindustan Lever or Tata Tea. And that is why the national executive as well as the party's informal think tanks laboured hard to decide on the faces of the BJP.

Joshi's supporters have been lobbying for another two-year term for him while others, who have the tacit blessings of Vajpayee and Lal Krishna Advani, are convinced that his face will not be an election winner. Joshi has fallen foul of a dominant section which, his supporters say, was worried about his growing popularity and decisiveness.

Taking over from Advani in 1990 as president, Joshi had gone about dismantling Advani's team. Most glaring was the case of Govindacharya, who in a whispering campaign was romantically linked to Uma Bharati, MP [Member of Parliament], and was later shunted off to Madras. Govindacharya and his think tank had felt that the party should project Advani as the man who would rule India and that he must have a higher billing over everyone else. Thus Advani got a big build-up in 1989 and 1990.

As president, Joshi was not prepared to play second fiddle to Advani and there was tension between their followers. Joshi felt that Advani's media managers were planting stories against him and he was also worried that some western governments and intellectuals were more keen on Advani leading a BJP government than Joshi. The tensions refused to thin away even after the party defined its strategy on Ayodhya.

The debate within the RSS and BJP before the Calcutta session was on the man to lead the party during elections, the one to be projected as the prime ministerial candidate. Joshi's supporters wanted election for president to be announced after his continuance was agreed upon. Otherwise they wanted organisational elections to be put off until the general elections were over. They argued that it was better to keep Joshi at the helm since he had led the party during the Ayodhya incidents, which were sure to be the issue in the general elections. They also pointed out that the attention of workers should not be distracted from the main task of bringing down the Rao government.

Madan Lal Khurana, party general secretary in charge of northern states, was one of the advocates of the postponement of elections. Joshi himself wrote in February to vice-president Sunder Singh Bhandari that the national executive's decision to complete organisational elections before May 15 would interfere with the ongoing political struggle. Joshi had missed the executive meeting as he was hospitalised after being knocked down by a police water cannon on February 25.

However, Joshi's supporters went with the pro-election stream in Calcutta and the party delayed the process only

by a fortnight in view of byelections to the Lok Sabha and state assemblies. Joshi's fate would be decided by Deoras, who visited Delhi to take stock of BJP affairs before the Calcutta meeting. The general demand is for Advani as president as he is seen as a statesman 'who would lead the country.' But the debate is whether the BJP's future Prime Minister should head the party for this purpose, as is the practice in Congress which does not believe in collective leadership.

Besides, some senior leaders feel that Advani should not be burdened with organisational work, but be used as the star campaigner. In that case Vajpayee could lead the party or the job could go to Bhandari, an Advani confidant who was pipped at the post by Joshi last time. But the RSS chief is agreeable that Advani—not Joshi or anyone else—should be projected as the party's answer to Rao.

Bhairon Singh Shekhawat, former Rajasthan chief minister, was averse to making the Ram temple the single issue of the party even during Advani's rath yatra. Said Shekhawat at the national executive: "We have got the reputation of demolishers, but we must highlight our ability to hold this country together, address various problems and improve the lot of various sections. While there is tremendous support for Ram, there are equally strong negative feelings." Former UP [Uttar Pradesh] chief minister Kalyan Singh, while praising the Ram dividend, wanted the scheduled castes and backward vote banks to be wooed vigorously.

But there were others who did not want Ayodhya to be soft-pedalled at all. Said Delhi leader V. K. Malhotra: "Whether we like it or not, our opponents will focus on Ayodhya. We are a party for Hindu renaissance and we should not lose that plank to anyone else." Thus, the party decided that it would go for a diversity of issues, but keep its focus on what touches the sensitive nerves of the majority—Ayodhya, pampering of minorities by the Congress, etc.

The party also agonised over the sadhus' and the VHP [Vishwa Hindu Parishad] hotheads' penchant for taking extremist decisions and then expecting it to toe their line. It had benefited from the emotions generated, but it also suffered losses. Hence it felt that its political interests should be protected by the Sangh Parivar by reining in the zealots.

The national executive also agreed that the battle ahead was a long and tough one, the opponents being no push-overs. Yet the strategy to turn the tide of national politics in its favour was not perfected; nor was the demand for expanding the party's appeal fully digested. Thus the action plan released by the party president was no political dynamite.

Joshi Interviewed on Party Leadership

93AS0866E Cochin THE WEEK in English 25 Apr 93
p 39

[Murli Manohar Joshi Interviewed by Tapash Ganguly: "Ours Isn't a Party of Leaders"; italicized words as published]

[Text] *QUESTION: What have been the achievements of your presidency?*

ANSWER: During this period, a qualitative change has taken place in our polity. And this change took a sharp turn after December 6. The country has polarised and while the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] is one pole, the other pole consists of a conglomeration of all non-BJP parties.

Has this helped the BJP win more public support? In Tripura, most of your candidates lost their deposits though the majority of voters are Hindus.

P. V. Narasimha Rao virtually handed over Tripura to the CPI(M) [Communist Party of India (Marxist)] on a platter in return for support at the Centre. If the election had not been postponed, the results would have been very different. After the postponement the voters realised that the Congress did not want to put up a fight and so they voted for the dominant party.

How strong is your party outside the Hindi belt?

We are growing in almost all the major states like Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh.

Do you think the Rao government will complete its full term despite your attempts to unsettle it?

This government can't last beyond 1993. It is surviving thanks to parties which are paranoid about the BJP and afraid to face elections. They would simply be swept away. Hence they are sticking to Congress to delay such a fatal consequence.

How then are you hopeful about elections being held within this year?

There may be a break in Congress in the near future. The party may go to pieces because of internal pulls and pressures.

If the BJP wins the next elections, who would be the Prime Minister?

We don't go by personalities. Whoever may be entrusted with the duty by the party, he would carry it out. Ours is not a party of leaders, but of workers. We are all party workers who believe in collective leadership.

Will Ram Mandir be the main issue of the next elections?

We never wanted to make it an election issue. But our adversaries thrust it upon us. We always wanted a grand reconciliation (of the two communities) on the basis of negotiations. Our opponents thought otherwise and branded us communalists because we demanded a proper and just resolution of this issue. So whether we want it or not, it will be an election issue.

Why did you attend the Iftar party of the Pakistani high commissioner when your party held Pakistan responsible for the Bombay blasts?

I as party president gave Iftar parties for last two years. After Ayodhya, a canard was spread that foreign diplomats were boycotting the BJP and were reluctant to attend our parties. But this year the turnout of foreign diplomats in my Iftar party was so large that it belied all such canards. The Pakistani high commissioner, who attended my party, came personally to invite me. At the time of invitation, I

told him categorically about our perception of the role of Pakistan in Punjab, Kashmir and Gujarat and behind the Bombay blasts. Moreover, let us not forget that we have a diplomatic relations with Pakistan. It is a Catch-22 situation. If I had not attended that party, our adversaries would have branded us as anti-Islam. Now that I have attended it, we are being criticised for that. I consider it to be a planned reaction jointly drummed up from behind by the CPI(M) and the Congress.

But you have been criticised by your ally Bal Thackeray for attending it.

I don't discuss Bal Thackeray at all.

Pilot Push for Kashmir Elections Ridiculed

93AS0866C Cochin THE WEEK in English 25 Apr 93
pp 33-36

[Article by K. M. Rakesh and Ehsan Fazli: "Cold Feet, Hot Minds"; quotation marks as published]

[Text]

No one is ready for elections except Pilot

The valley is on fire. So are the prospects of a political settlement of the issues. Political parties, despite their differences and bravadoes, are unanimous on one thing: it is just impossible to hold elections at this juncture. Militants might fire in the air in approval.

The pro-Pakistan Hizbul Mujahideen, which has gained an edge over the JKLF [Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front], is determined to shoot down any electoral move. The gunning down of cardiac surgeon Dr Ahmed Ahad Guroo, just when the peace process was being worked out in New Delhi, is chilling proof that the Hizbul means business.

"This is not the time to hold elections," says state BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] general secretary Chandra Mohan Sharma. He argues that there can be no polls without rooting out the gun culture, which has claimed over 2,000 lives in three years. "Yet, the BJP will certainly participate if an election is declared at any state because ours is a democratic party," he declares bravely.

His party had suggested to the Centre that, for starters, elections should be held for the local bodies to get a feel of the popular pulse. Chandra Mohan is optimistic that elections might be possible in Jammu and Ladakh though the situation in the villages bordering Kashmir is "as bad as in the Valley in terms of violence."

The state Congress camp seems to be even more jittery than the BJP over facing elections in the valley. "In my opinion, elections are not possible now," says Mangat Ram Sharma, the general secretary who virtually runs the party as state president Ghulam Rasool Kar is most of the time away in Delhi. Mangat is against elections being held only in "certain areas" of Jammu and Ladakh where the situation is under control. "But election is the only remedy for bringing normalcy to Kashmir" he asserts.

Mangat knows that the militants will stop at nothing to scuttle poll plans. "The government can proceed with

elections only when a peaceful climate is brought about. It should be possible for candidates to move around freely. Instead of being too much bothered about government plans to hold elections nationalist political parties should start work among the people," he says.

During his visit to the valley, Internal Security Minister Rajesh Pilot met with leaders of just about every other political party and representatives of democratic organisations. He had also dropped hints that he was not averse to meeting militants across the table. "Let the government first decide whether to invite the militants for talks. Then we can talk of elections," says Saifuddin Soz, National Conference leader whose daughter was held hostage by militants two years ago. "Whatever discussions are held, it must be held in the open. India should show to the world that here it is only democratic process that will ultimately count. When the Pakistan propaganda machinery is so active, we should be very careful to avoid all traps."

However, Soz is categorical that elections will not be possible in the near future. "How do people go to vote when faced with deadly weapons, from the militants on one side and the security forces on the other?" he wonders.

Another political question is whether the National Conference's alliance with Congress can continue. "I don't think it will be possible to fight another election with the Congress," says Soz.

The differences between the two parties are only widening. The Congress is virtually non-existent in Kashmir. In fact, people seem to hate the very name of the party. Not that Farooq Abdullah or other National Conference leaders are faring any better. Soz, however, is confident that his party would be able to win back the party cadres, most of whom are said to have strayed into the JKLF. "We are sure that our cadres will come back to us once the political process begins," he hopes.

The migrants from the valley are a disillusioned lot. "How can the government even think of polls without including us?" fumes N. N. Kaul, organising secretary of the all State Kashmiri Pandits Conference. Having fled the valley from the militant guns, the Hindu families are now in refugee camps in Jammu and Delhi. Most of them are prepared to return to their homes in the valley "but only when peace returns," says Bhushan Lal Bhat, another office-bearer of the Pandits Conference. "The government must stop the free run of the militants and pay some attention to those who had to flee the guns," he says.

The BJP has suggested to the Centre that the migrants should be allowed to vote from wherever they are irrespective of their actual constituencies. However, there is still a long way to go before the Centre can think about having special booths for Pandits.

Mirwaiz Umar Farooq of the Awami Action Committee (AAC) is a rising star in Kashmir's separatist movement. The 18-year-old chief priest of Jamia Masjid recently convened a 'Hurriyat conference' of all the separatist

groups. A joint forum of 32 groups was formed including Jamaat-e-Islami, JKLF, People's League and People's Conference.

Though the new forum is yet to take off, the young mirwaiz had the blessings of almost all the groups for launching a new political movement for separation. There has been no common political platform for the separatists after Muslim United Front had broken down.

Founded in 1964 by Umar's father Mirwaiz Mohammad Farooq, who was assassinated a few years ago, the party was thought to be an adversary group of national Conference till they agreed to share seats in the legislative assembly in 1983. The 'double Farooq' accord, however, broke down after the political situation changed drastically in 1987. Since then, unlike the National Conference, AAC has been rooting for the 'right of self-determination' for Kashmiris.

Not surprisingly, AAC secretary Mohammed Yaqoob sniggers at Delhi's initiatives to reactivate the political process. The Ongoing movement is not aimed at gaining concessions from Delhi but "the climax of the struggle started in 1949 when Kashmiri people were promised plebiscite by the U.N. as also the governments of India and Pakistan," he says. "Concede the right and the tension in the entire subcontinent will vanish," he believes.

Doctor-turned-politician Ghulam Mohammed Hubbi, who leads the People's Conference, hails from Chrari Sharief where the venerable Sufi saint Alamdar is laid to rest. "Kashmiri people cannot be denied the right of self-determination and no political system can break their will," thunders the young Hubbi, who took over the mantle from Abdul Ghani Lone who founded the party in 1978. Hubbi dubs the government's moves as nothing but "self-deceptive political manipulation" which can have disastrous consequences for the "manipulators".

The only way out, he says, is to hold tripartite talks by India, Pakistan and Kashmir. "Guns will be silent only when the struggle of Kashmir people is given due recognition and repression on them is stopped," Hubbi notes. He denies his party's links with Al-Baro, a militant outfit, and claims that People's Conference has no armed wing but holds all the militant organisations including Al-Baro in high esteem. "They are sons of the soil and have reasons for wielding guns," he says.

Jamaat-e-Islami chief Syed Ali Shah Geelani, the former MLA [Member of Legislative Assembly] who hails from Sopore, was one of the prominent political leaders released by the government last year to pave way for a new political era in Kashmir. Since no headway has been made towards granting "freedom" to the people, "gun has to remain in the fore," he reasons. Geelani has only derision for the government's efforts to hold elections. The people of Kashmir will

not participate in such a "hoax", he asserts. Election for self-determination is welcome but that too must be backed by international assurances. Dubbing Farooq Abdullah as a frustrated and discredited leader, he says that no one will be allowed to stop the "ongoing struggle for freedom."

Jamaat-e-Islami believes that talks to solve the problem must involve India, Pakistan and the representatives of Kashmir. "Pakistan accepts the right of self-determination but India does not. That is why the problem is lingering," says Geelani. He points out that at the time of partition, 600 states were asked to decide their future but not Kashmir. "Muslims constituted 85 per cent of the total population and 750 miles of the state touched Pakistan. Srinagar-Rawalpindi Road was the only link with the outside world," he recalls. Yet, the people were not given a chance to execute their right of 'self-determination' even after the U.N. passed two resolutions on this.

"When India accepts that it is a disputed issue, the barriers to hold negotiations will be over," says Moulvi Abbas Ansari, who heads the Ittehadul Muslimeen. Only then can the youth be persuaded to bid farewell to arms, the Shia separatist leader explains. He does not think much of a revival of the political process. Two earlier accords—Indira-Abdullah accord of 1975 and Rajiv-Farooq accord prior to 1987 elections—failed miserably, he points out.

"We are not involved in militancy but we support the ongoing militant struggle," says Muzhir Imam, acting patron of Islamic Students League. The young advocate who is also a student of journalism took over the reins after patron Shakeel Ahmad Bakshi was detained in April 1990 under TADA [Terrorism and Disruptive Activities]. The party was founded in 1983 by Mohammed Yasin Malik, Asfaq Majid Wani, Naeem Ahmad Khan and Mehmood Ahmad Sagar who went on to become some of the most vociferous spokesmen of separatism.

Muslim Conference leader Abdul Ghani, who was a professor of Persian, says that Jawaharlal Nehru had promised a plebiscite so that the people of [as published] could decide their fate. Ghani was dismissed from service just for holding the same view.

Ghani explains that the youth of Kashmir took up arms after they felt that Indian leaders were not truthful. The struggle for self-determination will be achieved at any cost, he thunders. For him, political process has become a misnomer and the only solution is to hold a plebiscite.

Muslim Conference has a five-point plan. It wants U.N. trusteeship for five years, simultaneous withdrawal of troops by India and Pakistan from Kashmir, reunification of Kashmir as it existed before 1947, interim elections and implementation of U.N. resolutions after the expiry of five years.

Leaders Interviewed on Gorkhaland Demands

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pp 15-17

[Subash Ghising, Madan Tamang and R. B. Rai interviewed by Tapash Ganguly; place and date not given; italicized words as published]

[Text]

Interview: Subash Ghising

Planning for Statehood With Centre's Help

A bitter man after four and a half years as Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council [DGHC] chairman, Subash Ghising is no longer enthusiastic about the future of the council. He would rather take Parliament's help in getting statehood conferred on Darjeeling and the surrounding hill areas. Seated in his chamber at Lalkuthi, the headquarters of the DGHC in Darjeeling, Ghising spoke to THE WEEK about the issues troubling him. Excerpts:

QUESTION: *Why are you demanding Gorkhaland again?*

ANSWER: We can't stand state bossism anymore. We have had a very bitter experience in the last four and a half years. They have withheld our legitimate funds. When our due was Rs 70 crore, Calcutta offered us just Rs 7.82 crore. When we asked for an administrative set-up, they did just the opposite. I have written to Jyoti Basu, S. B. Chavan and Rajesh Pilot detailing everything.

But the Centre had accepted DGHC as the role-model for Bodoland and was all set to apply the same principle of Jharkhand and Ladakh.

What can we do? All through the West Bengal government forced us to go back to our original demand for a separate Gorkhaland. They have blocked our money, deprived us of our administrative set-up, encouraged destabilising forces to create chaos in the hills.

But you too were a signatory to the Darjeeling accord which gave birth to the DGHC.

The council was not our concept. I accepted it at the request of Jyoti Basu. He personally requested me to give a trial to the council in the presence of Buta Singh in Delhi prior to the accord. But from the very beginning they started playing dirty politics with us.

But your demand for a separate state for the hill people has already been hijacked by Madan Tamang.

Who is Madan Tamang? Please don't talk about him. His election fund is raised in Kathmandu. How can he enter politics here when he is not even an Indian citizen?

Would you adopt a violent method like last time to clinch your demand?

We have not given thought to our strategy. A movement does not always mean violence. Our resignation from the council was also a part of our movement. It didn't hurt anyone but ourselves. This time we are pressing for Article

1 (3-C) of the Constitution whereby Parliament can confer statehood to any territory under the Union without referring the matter to the state.

Interview: Madan Tamang

I Have No Truck With the CPI(M)

In the CPI(M)'s Communist Party of India (Marxist)] estimate, Madan Tamang, 45, founder-leader of the Gorkha Democratic Front (GDF), is the new darling of the Darjeeling hill people. It believes that he has the potential to take on Subash Ghising and emerge as the new messiah of the hills.

From his days with the All India Gorkha League in the early 1970s, Tamang has certainly come a long way. Last June 28 he founded the GDF which, he claims, has 10,000 members. According to him, its trade union front, Darjeeling Dooars Shramik Sangh, has already control over 28 of the 62 gardens in the hills. The third among six brothers and nine sisters, Tamang says that his ancestral home in Migma was burnt down by Ghising's men during the height of the Darjeeling movement. Excerpts from an interview:

QUESTION: *You seem to have a personal animosity towards Ghising.*

ANSWER: Just the opposite. What has Ghising done for Darjeeling? Nothing. He is a humbug, a RAW [Research and Analysis Wing] agent. He can be compared to Najibullah, the former Soviet agent in Afghanistan. In the last four and a half years DGHC got Rs 190 crore for the development of Darjeeling, but what did he do? He siphoned the money to further his own interests.

What sort of interests? He built a palatial six-storeyed house in Salt Lake, Calcutta, with a swimming pool. He purchased a house in Delhi costing Rs 2.5 crore, which normally would not have cost more than Rs 60 lakh. I am told that he has purchased a huge building at Kankarbag, Patna, and a big property in Goa. He has shared the booties with his political mentor Inderjit Khullar.

When the people of Darjeeling are suffering from acute water shortage, Ghising is building a luxury hotel in Goa. Do you think we are fools? How long can we suffer such humbug? He must go.

What about the charge that you are a CPI(M) agent?

I have no truck with the CPI(M). Rather, I am against it. They want to subjugate Darjeeling and we are opposed to that. We want a separate state comprising Darjeeling and contiguous areas in Jalpaiguri district.

When we demand a separate state, we are clear that we do not want to drive out Bengalis from the hills. To us a Bengali-speaking Nepali from Calcutta is a plainsman as a Nepali-speaking Bengali from Darjeeling is a hillsman. We want a separate state for the hill people within the Indian union.

But that was Ghising's original demand too. Have you thought up a name for the separate state?

What's in a name?

Is a separate state a viable proposition?

It'll be more viable than Sikkim or for that matter any other state in the northeast except Assam.

Interview: R. B. Rai

People No Longer Believe Ghising

R. B. Rai, the Nepali Marxist member of the Rajya Sabha from West Bengal, is confident that the CPI(M) would stage a comeback in the Darjeeling hills. The party is going all out to win the assembly byelections and DGHC elections, and it has pinned its hopes on the GDF-led anti-GNLF [Gurkha National Liberation Front] front to defeat Ghising. Rai believes that the people have lost faith in Ghising and would be glad to see him back. Excerpts from an interview:

QUESTION: *Darjeeling has never seen so many leftist posters and wall-writings since 1986. Are you planning a comeback?*

ANSWER: It appears to be so. People started getting disenchanted with Ghising and his administration as early as 1989. They have been patiently waiting since then to find a better political climate for the hills.

Ghising's political balloon was first pricked last August when, contrary to his demand for Gorkhali, Parliament recognised Nepali as the language of the hills. All political parties fought together to clinch the issue and the GNLF had to accept the verdict meekly. The second turning point came in November when GNLF activists killed Sudarshan Sharma, a highly-respected teacher who was at the forefront of the movement, out of sheer frustration. People realised that they would perish if they did not assert themselves. The formation of the GDF acted as a morale booster. Now the GDF is in the forefront of the anti-GNLF movement.

How are you placed for the coming assembly byelections and the DGHC elections?

There will be no problems if all anti-GNLF parties remain united.

Will Madan Tamang be a consensus candidate for the Darjeeling seat?

It cannot be ruled out. There can be a consensus candidate if there is proper understanding between all anti-GNLF parties.

Ghising has again raised the slogan of a separate Gorkhaland.

People are not fools to believe him again.

Is a separate state feasible?

It is not a question of feasibility. Unless the Centre and state government change their attitude of political manoeuvring and treat the problems of the hills sympathetically, this problem will always linger. There are thousands of educated unemployed. If we can't give them jobs, we have no right to condemn them for their separatist

attitude. Ghising is just a symbol of frustration of the youth. A Ghising will be replaced by another if these burning problems are not tackled on a war-footing.

BJP Seen Gaining Support of Backward Castes

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pp 14-15

[Article by Debashish Mukherji and Kanhaiah Bhelari: "Changing Colour; Backwards' Support for BJP Grows"; quotation marks as published]]

[Text] The spotlight has been on the backward classes ever since V. P. Singh's controversial decision to implement the Mandal Commission report, announced on August 15, 1990. Even as the debate rages over whether or not the Mandal proposals should be implemented and if so should the 'creamy groups' be excluded from getting the benefits, it is being asked how saffron are the backwards.

Do the backwards, who constitute 54 per cent of the population and hold the key in any election, want a Ram mandir at Ayodhya? To what extent will they support the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] in the next polls?

The BJP, for one, believes that it will secure the support of the backwards. Never before has L. K. Advani drawn such enthusiastic crowds in backward caste-dominated Bihar as he did in Patna, Gaya and Darbhanga. Murli Manohar Joshi, too, proved to be an equally big hit in Chaibasa. Amazingly, the majority of those who turned up to hear and cheer the BJP supremos were the backward caste Kurmis, Koeris and Baniyas. They had backed the National Front in the last two Lok Sabha elections in Bihar. More ominously for Chief Minister Laloo Prasad, the Kurmis and Koeris jointly formed a Lavkush Manch on March 3 and parted ways with the ruling Janata Dal. Enthused a participant: "We are sons of Ram and not Krishna."

Recently over 50 backward caste leaders of various parties at the block level joined forces with the saffron brigade. The massive turnout at the BJP meetings in the first fortnight of February had startled leaders like Laloo Yadav. Congress bigwigs acknowledge in private that Hindutva has dented the Mandal vote bank, at least in north India.

Of course, not everyone has forgotten Mandal, there has only been a shift in priorities. As Mod Narain Singh, a Kurmi of Sasaram, puts it: "We need Mandal but not at the cost of the nation's interest. Whatever BJP is doing, it is doing in the national interest."

THE WEEK's tour through seven parliamentary constituencies in north and central Bihar confirmed that a big chunk of the backwards had forsaken Mandal for mandir. "In the last two elections, I voted for Ram Prasad Kushwaha but this time I am ready to die for the cause of Bhagwanji," declared Sheoperson Singh, a Koeri of Uchitpur. The village has over a thousand Koeris and, he claimed, all of them had made up their mind to vote for the BJP. "How can we survive without Ram," wonders aloud Anand Mahatao, a Kurmi of Begusarai.

Even the Yadavs, who constitute a sizeable 14 per cent of the 65 per cent backward castes in the state, appear to be more sympathetic to the BJP after the December 6 demolition of the Babri masjid. Said Ranvir Yadav, an independent MLA [Member of Legislative Assembly] from Khagaria: "Earlier the people were in no mood to hear the names of Advani and other big leaders of the BJP. But now they are genuinely interested in Ayodhya." Another Yadav legislator is no longer confident of retaining his seat: "The Ayodhya issue has changed the hearts of my voters. And when the Mathura issue too is raised by the BJP, it will be all over for the other parties."

Hindi novelist and playwright Mudra Rakshas hit the nail on the head when he said: "Mandal does not have the same emotive power as the mandir. I have often heard even educated backwards saying 'I oppose the mandir, but what to do? My own mother and wife are supporting it.' That explains the predicament of many educated backward caste men."

But it is another thing whether the BJP can capitalise on the sentiments stirred up by the temple issue. For one, the educated urban backward castes cannot be taken for granted. Besides they don't seem to be too keen in building a temple in Ayodhya at the cost of communal harmony. A backward caste bureaucrat in Lucknow pulled no punches at the BJP for cashing in on religious sentiments: "No well-educated, middle-class backward supports the Ayodhya movement except for people like Kalyan Singh who have a stake in its outcome. Among the educated upper castes, the majority support the mandir." Adds noted Hindi literary critic Virendra Yadav: "The majority of the backward castes are against the temple movement."

But if all the backwards were indeed opposed to the temple how did the BJP win the 1991 elections in UP [Uttar Pradesh], counter mandir supporters. Nearly a third of the BJP MLAs elected were backwards. Chief minister Kalyan Singh is himself a Lodh. Other leading backward lights of the Ram movement include Vinay Katiyar, a Kurmi, and Sadhvi Rithambara, a Lodh, apart from Uma Bharati, also a Lodh from Madhya Pradesh.

But Virendra Yadav insists that "they are not really representative of the backwards." He believes that the BJP succeeded mainly because the backward and Muslim votes got divided between V. P. Singh and Mulayam Singh. Had they been united, as the example of Bihar shows, the BJP would not have come to power. Interestingly, if the votes polled by Mulayam Singh's then SJP [Samajwadi Janata Party] and the United Janata Dal [UJD] are added up constituency-wise, an exercise some JD [Janata Dal] leaders carried out after the elections, the combine would have won 291 of the 425 seats! But Yadav concedes: "Backwards are not unaffected by the environment around them. There was a Ram wave at that time, and some may have succumbed."

The last election was dubbed a 'mandir versus Mandal' contest. "Advani began his rath yatra from Somnath to Ayodhya, only because V. P. Singh decided to implement the Mandal report. Until then V. P. Singh had been a puppet

in the BJP's hands. Advani had to act immediately, or the BJP dream of a united Hindu society would have crumbled. So he acted and he was successful," says Chhedi Lal Sathi, a backward caste lawyer and politician. Virendra Yadav agrees: "There is no doubt that the mandir issue was brought to a flashpoint in end-1990 solely to counteract Mandal."

According to the Lucknow bureaucrat, two basic feelings have fuelled the Ram movement. "Most of it stems from a hatred for the Muslims and the remaining is made up of middle-class insecurity. This is their last battle to retain their superior status, at least in the north. In the south, of course, they lost it a long time ago," he says.

Backward caste leaders, on the other hand, believe that it is the political innocence of the illiterate which led them to support the mandir issue. According to Chhedi Lal Sathi, "the prosperous backward castes like the Yadavs, Kurmis, badhais (carpenters), sonars (goldsmiths) and lohars (blacksmiths) are realising how the upper castes exploited them. They fully support the Mandal and oppose the mandir. At the other end are the nais (barbers) and the kewats (boatmen) who are finding the going tough. Steeped in ignorance, they fall for mandir." Ironically, opposition to the mandir and the upper caste doesn't necessarily mean that these people love the Muslims. "They are just as communal as the upper castes," feels Mudra Rakshas.

But how does that square with the backward-Muslim political alliance that politicians like Charan Singh forged, or that which enabled Laloo Prasad to consolidate in Bihar? "The Congress also built an alliance around Brahmins, Muslims and Harijans. Does that mean there is any goodwill between Brahmins and Muslims or Brahmins and Harijans? The backward-Muslim alliance is just as fragile and tenuous," insists Mudra Rakshas.

But Virendra Yadav feels that backwards are not as communal as the upper castes like Brahmins because their life is not dominated by religious rituals. "There is little difference between the life-style of a backward and a Muslim from the same socio-economic class. They have no reason to clash."

Chhedi Lal Sathi is convinced that "both in 1990 and this time the lower castes responded in fewer numbers to the high castes' attempt to incite them. The riots, both in 1990 and after the destruction of the Babri Masjid, would have been worse if backwards and Harijans had not, by and large, refrained from taking part in the rioting. In UP, the post-December 6 riots were controlled in five days, mainly because backwards were hardly involved."

"The extremely communal image which the BJP has come to acquire may not be acceptable to every Ram lover. The backward classes believe in certain human values. Those who have heard of what happened during the riots in Kanpur, Surat and Bombay, may well be repelled by the BJP. Also, the manner in which the BJP allowed the mosque to be broken down, after giving an assurance that it would be protected, has not been liked," says Sathi.

Another factor which may hold back the backward classes from voting for the BJP is their poor representation at the party and organisational level which only strengthens the perception that the BJP is an upper-caste dominated party though the Kalyan Singh government was well-stocked with backward caste ministers. The Lucknow bureaucrat claims that "the backwards who flocked to the BJP are now moving away, convinced that the party is partial to upper castes."

Support for the Ram mandir may not necessarily translate into a vote for the BJP in all cases. Mainly because the majority continue to vote along caste lines. Chances are that even though some may relish the idea of a temple in Ayodhya their vote may go to a candidate of their caste, who may belong to a non-BJP party.

"The main problem with the backwards," says Mudra Rakshas, "is that there has been no movement seeking to convince them that they can live outside the Brahminical social order. There has been no equivalent of Periyar in the south. Our entire religious order has been designed and is controlled by Brahmins. Until we can move outside this order, a backwards will never be able to convince themselves that they are not subservient to Brahmins. And as long as Brahminism remains, our people will be swayed by pernicious doctrines like the BJP ideology."

Laloo Prasad, though, is trying his best to stanch the Ram tide with statues, literally. He has instructed his men to install statues of revered Koeri leaders Sardar Patel and Jagdep Prasad wherever possible to woo the caste. Laloo, himself has unveiled over 10 statues. And there are many more to come.

Text of Interview With BJP Leader Advani
93AS0920A Hyderabad DECCAN CHRONICLE
in English 3 May 93 p 9

[Interview with L. K. Advani, BJP leader, by Karan Thapar: "Advani Unhappy With the Anti-Muslim Image"; place and date not given; italicized words and quotation marks as published]

[Text] Karan Thapar interviews BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] leader L. K. Advani for *Eyewitness*. The following is the full text of the interview.

On the Ayodhya Movement

[Thapar] Mr Advani, in the recent white paper issued by your party, one of the explanations put forward for the Ayodhya movement is that it is a quest to recapture our national identity. What is India's national identity?

[Advani] The values, the ideals, the understanding of the country's culture, history and traditions which informed the entire freedom movement and which, broadly speaking, influenced the constitution-makers of our country after independence to frame the present constitution. It is that which I regard as the true core of Indian nationalism.

[Thapar] You began by talking about values, principles and ideals. In what way did the events of December 6 identify, evolve or develop values, principles or deals?

[Advani] If you have carefully gone through the white paper, we described the Ayodhya movement as a whole, though December 6 was a very important day in the course of that movement, just as August 15 is a very important day in the history of India though it marks not only the freedom of the country but also a traumatic event like partition, the slaughter of millions of innocents. But when we talk about the freedom movement of the country we are talking about the whole course of events. Similarly, in the white paper, I specifically changed that, that it is the Ayodhya movement which seeks to recapture the essential ideals, principles and values which informed our freedom movement.

[Thapar] But December 6 represented demolition, undisciplined if not anarchic behaviour, organised beating up of journalists, the breaking of commitments by your own party; and most importantly from your position, your own resignation as leader of the opposition in regret. How does that in any way add up to India's national identity?

[Advani] Just as the freedom of India came after several events including a revolt by naval people—and a revolt within the navy is not something you can inherently praise, but you'll have to explain it. In totality, this was a contribution even to the freedom movement.

[Thapar] We cherish our freedom movement because of the peaceful, legitimate, honourable means by which we believe we secured it. That's why August 15 is such an important date; it is a culmination and fruition of a process that we cherish...

[Advani] Because of the impact of the last four-and-a-half decades we seem to forget all that revolutionaries like Bhagat Singh or Chandrashekhar or others contributed to the freedom struggle; you may totally disagree with it, and Gandhiji was very right when he disagreed with them. He had his own principles. He had his own values. But for the country it was freedom from foreign rule which was a crucial issue. And whosoever contributed towards freedom by whatever means was, in their eyes, a patriot who was doing the right thing.

[Thapar] By your own analogy, you are identifying the Ayodhya movement with the naval mutiny, not with the mainstream of the freedom movement.

[Advani] No, I am not. Because even on that day people seem to underscore the fact that the Vishwa Hindu Parishad [VHP], RSS [Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh] and BJP leaders all of them kept pleading with those who mounted that dome to break it down: "This was not our programme, please do not do it."

[Thapar] You lost control of the movement on that day and yet it is representative of national identity?

[Advani] To that extent just as Gandhiji wanted the whole country to accept non-violence, it did not.

[Thapar] But he regretted Chauri-Chaura and called off the entire movement when it happened.

[Advani] That was the Chauri-Chaura killing of innocent people. This was something else.

[Thapar] Beating up of journalists.

[Advani] If the Congress had been committed to killing policemen and without orders people had killed policemen it would have been one thing. Here was a situation where the whole movement was committed to removing that structure from that place. But removing it by due process of law, removing it by passing due legislation.

[Thapar] But that's not what happened.

[Advani] That was not happened. That's all. Nothing more than that.

On the Fallout of December 6

[Thapar] Let me put to you an opinion that is said by many people and they are not all your critics. The BJP is directly or indirectly responsible for creating the present mood of communal tension in the country and for creating the political climate within which the Bombay blasts happened.

[Advani] It is precisely these people with whom I have been discussing these things. You explain to me what happened in Punjab. You explain to me what happened in Kashmir. They have predated Ayodhya, don't pick upon Ayodhya....

[Thapar] I am not linking Ayodhya with Punjab or Kashmir. I am suggesting to you the December riots, January riots, the March bombs.

[Advani] I am giving Punjab and Kashmir as an explanation as to why this explanation is wrong.

[Thapar] Are you Mr Advani? You are raising a ghost to shoot it down and thus diverting attention. The nexus I am pointing at is the December riots—January riots—the March bombs in Bombay. The atmosphere and climate within which these happened flows out of December 6.

[Advani] I have been there. I have been to Bombay in the month of February, after the January riots and everyone there including those in office told me that they have nothing to do with Ayodhya.

On the Anti-Muslim Stance

[Thapar] For whatever reason the BJP today is identified as an anti-Muslim party. And often it is said of your party, 'Yahi hain party jho unko sabak seekayegi' (This is the party which will teach them lessons). Are you happy with that image?

[Advani] I am not. I am unhappy and in fact when I visited Bombay and Gujarat after the recent riots, a friend has

made a tape of the speeches also and I am told that those who think in these terms are not happy with my speeches.

[Thapar] Mr Advani, you tell me very eloquently that you're unhappy that your party is identified as an anti-Muslim party, as a party that bashes Muslims. And yet what are the words I hear from Calcutta, that people who cross the border from Bangladesh who happen to be Hindus are refugees, the Muslims are infiltrators. And then you understand why you're identified as a Muslim bashing party. You're almost inviting that perception, aren't you?

[Advani] But have we not a responsibility in respect of people who are thrown out of Bangladesh? Have we not a duty in that regard? I would not call the Muslims infiltrators. I would call them illegal immigrants. They are not refugees, they come here whether they come here as infiltrators or whether they come here for economic reasons. I do not view them in the sense in which I view the Hindus.

[Thapar] You tell me that you're unhappy with this anti-Muslim image, what is your party doing, what are you doing to ensure it stops?

[Advani] Even though I'm happy with this kind of image, I do feel that the image is more the contribution of my adversaries than anything that my party has done or said. Further, even while being unhappy with the image I would not like to change the image at the cost of compromising with what I believe in.

On the BJP's Image as a Fascist Party

[Thapar] Let me put to you some of the fears that people have of the BJP particularly because of its association with certain elements of the Ayodhya movement. The BJP is, as a result, often identified with the views of Swami Muktanand who wants a Hindu constitution, people like Ramchandra Paramahans who publicly defended sati and caste and these worry and put people off. Can you understand why?

[Advani] Do you realise that it is this kind of association that has been used even by the Britishers, by the Westerners, to malign this entire country as being a country of snakes and snake-charmers.

[Thapar] So you're telling me this association is unfair. If the association is unfair why don't you publicly dissociate yourself now from the views of people like Ramchandra Paramhans [as published] who defended sati and caste and tell me you find his views so distasteful you wish to have nothing to do with such a man on any count?

[Advani] I don't say that on any count, but when I told you that Ashok Singhal dissociated himself from that, for me the matter is sufficient.

[Thapar] Caste and sati or the other views that many consider reprehensible about women and about widows are views that affect a core in this country so fundamentally that they want to hear your strenuous denouncement of those views. I don't find it.

[Advani] I'm less concerned with denouncement. I'm more proud that this entire Ayodhya movement, which has incorporated within its fold very many sadhus and sants and even mahants and orthodox pandits, succeeded in persuading all of them to see that when the foundation stone of this temple is laid in 1989 it shall be done by a Harijan.

[Thapar] You described the Ayodhya movement as a recapturing of our national identity. Ramchandra Paramhans is one of the most important people in that movement and he holds these views and you won't dissociate from them. Are you not surprised that people look at your party and say they must support the same thing.

[Advani] So far as sati is concerned I totally dissociate from any support, any endorsement. Just as in the present context I would say that even the caste system has no validity in the Indian situation. I'm opposed to the caste system as a whole, the whole concept of varnashram dharma. It may have had scientific validity in the past, it has lost all its validity today. But I know very many people today who subscribe to the varnashram dharma very strongly...

[Thapar] You often say that you resent people calling your party fascist. One of the fundamental reasons that term is used is because of the association in the public eye between your party and views like this from people who are so close to it. Give me a clear-cut dissociation. Tell me that these people are distasteful and you've nothing to do with them and this term will never be used again.

[Advani] This distasteful, this word that you use, I'm not inclined to use the word for any person or individual. I disagree with these views and I would say it very categorically. But because I disagree with the views of a person I do not call him distasteful and thereby condemn the person as a person.

[Thapar] As a politician you don't want to be misunderstood.

[Advani] I don't want to be misunderstood by anyone. Those who are bent from misunderstanding me will not spare me even if I use the word distasteful and therefore I confine myself to commenting on certain issues rather than commenting on those persons.

Courtesy Eyewitness

Home Minister Clarifies Stand on Bombay Blasts

93AS0945A Madras THE HINDU in English 4 May 93 p 9

[Article: "Pakistan Hand in Blast: Chavan Sticks to Stand"; boldface words and quotation marks as published]

[Text] New Delhi, May 3. The Pakistani High Commissioner, Mr. Riaz Khokhar, appears to have jumped the gun in reportedly "thanking" the Union Home Minister, Mr. S. B. Chavan, for "retracting" his statement that his country had orchestrated the March 12 bomb blasts in Bombay.

Scotching reports that he had let Pakistan off the hook in the Rajya Sabha on April 28, the Home Minister clarified today that he stood by his statement made in the Lok

Sabha on April 21 accusing that country of hatching a conspiracy with Dawood Ibrahim and the Memon family for executing the blasts.

"The Home Minister has clarified that he stands by his statement made in the Lok Sabha and reiterated that Pakistan's involvement in the Bombay blasts was clear and irrefutable," an official release said.

"The statement of the Pakistani High Commissioner and that of the Secretary-General of the Pakistan Foreign Office in this connection are based on misleading press reports which the Home Minister has described as absolutely incorrect," the release said.

During clarifications on his statement, Mr. Chavan had stated in the Rajya Sabha: "Equally, I will strongly refute any kind of thing which will aggravate the situation knowing full well that Pakistan has not been very friendly to us with their direct or indirect involvement in this (blasts) episode and not in this along, but also in Punjab and Kashmir."

Such a clarification was given by Mr. Chavan following demands by some members that both Houses of Parliament pass a resolution declaring Pakistan a terrorism-sponsoring State.

Certain involvement: Mr. Chavan continued: "We know for certain that Pakistan is involved in a large number of ways. Knowing that also, I don't think it will be prudent on the part of the Government of India to say anything or threaten that we will cut off all our diplomatic relations with Pakistan, and even if it is to be done, I am not the proper person to say anything of that nature..."

During the course of clarifications, Mr. Yashwant Sinha (SJP) [Samajwadi Janata Party] inquired: "Madam, though it is a little late in the day for any intervention, I would just seek one clarification. I had asked the Home Minister specifically whether there was irrefutable evidence of the involvement of Pakistan. He has been very circumspect in his reply... but is he aware of the fact that only recently, about 3 to 4 days back, the Minister for Internal Security, during his visit to Bihar, to a place called Hajipur, where he was addressing a Congress congregation, said 'We will destroy Pakistan, we will teach Pakistan a lesson.' That is why I would like to know whether we have enough, irrefutable, evidence that Pakistan is responsible for all this. If this is the public stance of the Government of India, why is the honourable Home Minister so circumspect about it in the House?"

Mr. S. B. Chavan: "Madam, unless I see the authentic report of it, it will be hazardous on my part to say anything." The Deputy Chairman, Ms. Najma Heptullah: "Now the clarifications on this statement are over..."

Clearly, the record does not do anything to suggest that the Home Minister had let the Pakistani Government off the hook. In fact, Mr. Chavan, during the course of his clarifications, had once again named Pakistan for its involvement in the blasts.

Authentic report: When Mr. Sinha asked him about the role of Pakistan in the context of Mr. Rajesh Pilots reported statement, the Home Minister merely said he would like to see the "authentic report." Given the "delicate" nature of relations in the Home Ministry, Mr. Chavan was, perhaps, being prudent in his part.

Following reports in a section of the press, the issue became a full blown controversy, Mr. Chavan's clarification is a bid to counter the Pakistani propaganda that it had been absolved of all responsibility for the blasts.

In conclusion to his widely reported statement of April 21 in the Lok Sabha, the Home Minister had said: "While the investigations are continuing, the results of the inquiries so far clearly indicate Pakistan's organised support and involvement in the planning and execution of the series of bomb blasts which took place in Bombay on March 12, leading to a large number of innocent persons being killed and injured, besides enormous loss of property."

The "thanks" from the Pakistani Government appear to be a trifle premature going by the record.

Correspondent's Interview With Rao Reported

93AS0944A Madras *THE HINDU* in English 4 May 93 p 1

[Article by M. Pattabhiram: "Unity, Discipline Essential for Party: PM"; boldface words as published]

[Text] New Delhi, May 3. In an exclusive interview at his Race Course residence, the Prime Minister, Mr. P. V. Narasimha Rao, said he would go all out to root out dissidence in the party. He was answering questions on the recent action taken against four important dissidents against whom showcause notices were served by the disciplinary committee of the ruling Congress(I). They were given time to reply on receipt of which the committee took the drastic step of suspending them from the primary membership of the party.

Mr. Narasimha Rao was of the view that the action taken against them was not only justified but was also of a unique character. Explaining the implications of the action the Congress president, who looked visibly upset by the campaign carried on by the four dissidents, said that while they retained the primary membership of the party they could not hold any office or participate in party activity. In his view, this was an effective way of immobilising them and he could already see that the action taken against them had had its effect in the sense that at least for the time being they were silenced. This should serve as an object lessons to those who wanted to break discipline and create confusion in the party.

As he had said much earlier, unity and discipline were the essential requisites without which the party could not function as an effective political force. Asked whether he would take action against those who were associated with the four leaders, he said it might not be necessary right now. He said that indiscipline from whatever quarters it came was a serious matter. But, of course, it was not possible to throw out every one. By implication he was suggesting that the action already taken should be enough

to drive home the fact that he as Congress president would not hesitate to do everything within his power to see that discipline was preserved.

In regard to Mr. P. Shiv Sankar it appeared no action was taken against him since he did not join the other four in issuing any statement and, in any case, his term as a member of the Rajya Sabha was due to expire in the next three months or so.

Tamil Nadu Congress: The brief interview covered Tamil Nadu Congress(I) affairs too. When it was suggested to him that the Congress(I) leaders in Tamil Nadu must fight the Chief Minister, Ms. Jayalalitha, on substantive issues without frittering away their energies on frivolous matters, he cautiously remarked, when some one was trying to create a split in the party what could really be done? He would not comment on the Assembly incidents and the role played by the Congress(I) members either, but said that he was interested in preserving the party image.

He was at his wit's end as to what exactly was the point of dispute between the Chief Minister and the Congress(I) leaders. Till some months ago, she was all praise for them and he could not understand on what issue they had fallen apart. He recalled his visit to Madras and the talks he had with the Chief Minister at a personal level when he did say that he was very keen on preserving the alliance with the AIADMK [All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam].

Mr. Rao wondered what else he could do to impress Ms. Jayalalitha that he wanted the alliance to be preserved and fostered. And when conscious and deliberate attempts were being made to split the Congress(I) he asked what option he had other than going with the State Congress(I) leaders. Was it too late to restore status quo ante? He was not prepared to say anything.

When it was put to him that the Chief Minister's real grouse was that the Congress(I) could be behind the tirade against her by Dr. Subramaniam Swamy, the Prime Minister pooh-poohed the entire idea and asked in return, "is it ever possible for anyone to stop Dr. Swamy from doing anything?" One got the impression that the Prime Minister was unhappy at the developments in Tamil Nadu although it was clear that he was going to support his party leaders fully in their actions.

Punjab: On national issues, the only subject that figured was Punjab. Now that conditions had improved in the tormented State and there was relative peace and order would he do anything dramatic? He wanted to know what exactly I had in mind and it was then suggested to him that he could make a unilateral announcement on the transfer of Chandigarh to Punjab in regard to which there was no controversy. He interjected to say that it was not right to say there was no controversy. I put it to him that everyone was agreed that Chandigarh should go to Punjab and the only controversy, if that expression could be used, was in respect of the quid pro quo to Haryana. He agreed that the point was well made and it would be his endeavour to hold talks with the parties concerned in the near future. From the way he replied to the questions on Punjab it was clear

that the subject was much in his mind. It is up to the political parties to take up the matter with the Prime Minister so that it gets the required attention and priority.

While talking about the Congress(I), a reference was made to Mr. P. Upendra, former Minister for Information and Broadcasting, who had announced that he would associate himself with the Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP] because, according to him, the Prime Minister had not made up his mind about admitting him into the Congress(I). Mr. Narasimha Rao said he valued Mr. Upendra's contribution to politics in general and his role as Minister but he thought he was a little hasty in deciding to go with the BJP. He said his offer to admit him in the Congress(I) still stood and if Mr. Upendra could extricate himself from the BJP he could join the Congress(I), even though Mr. Narasimha Rao was quick to add that a decision earlier was delayed because of certain reasons which Mr. Upendra himself was aware of.

Groups Demanding Manipur Reorganization Named

93AS0922A Bombay *THE TIMES OF INDIA* in English
7 May 93 p 7

[Text] Imphal, May 6 (PTI)—Insurgency-infested Manipur is likely to continue to reel under the spell of agitations by various ethnic groups demanding separate homelands and a reorganisation of the state's territory.

At least four organisations are demanding a split of Manipur to create different homelands and "Southern Nagaland" while four valley-based extremist outfits are fighting for secession of Manipur from the Indian Union.

While Zeliangrong, a group of Nagas in Manipur's Tamenglong district and other areas, are demanding the creation of a "Zeliangrong homeland" by integrating all the Zeliangrong-inhabited areas of Manipur, Assam and Nagaland.

The Kuki National Front (KNF) and Kuki Democratic Force (KDF) want the formation of a Kukiland by carving out Manipur's Sadar hill areas autonomous council, Chandel and Senapati districts.

A political organisation led by a former legislator has launched a movement for conversion of Manipur's Churachandpur district into a Union territory and its ultimate aim, according to political observers, was to form a part of "Greater Mizoram."

Besides, the KNF and KDF's demand for a Kukiland is different from that of the Kuki National Organisation (KNO) and Kuki National Army (KNA).

While the KNF and KDF want a "Kukiland" by carving out Manipur's territory, the KNO and KNA are fighting for a "Kukiland" to be formed by Kuki-inhabited areas of India and Myanmar.

The present KNF and KDF's demand for a Kukiland has resulted in Kuki-Naga clashes that have claimed over 90 lives in Manipur because the Nagas had strongly objected to the proposed "Kukiland" included the Naga-inhabited areas of Chandel and Senapati districts in Manipur.

The demands of the banned National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) led by Thuingaleng Muivah and Isaac Chishi Swu are different.

The NSCN is fighting for "independence of Nagaland" and their "Nagaland," according to intelligence sources, includes "Manipur's Senapati, Tamenglong, Ukhrul and Chandel districts."

The Naga activities term these four districts as "Southern Nagaland," said the sources. These four districts are mainly inhabited by Nagas of different communities.

There is however no Naga over-ground organisation supporting the demand for formation of a "Southern Nagaland."

The Nagaland-based Naga students federation (NSF) in a statement recently said they were not opposed to the creation of any new district or state or homeland but they asserted that "not an inch of Naga traditional land should be carved out while creating any new district or state or homeland."

The Manipur chief minister, Mr R. K. Dorendra Singh, has strongly ruled out the possibility of formation of either a "Kukiland" or a "Southern Nagaland" by carving out the state's territory.

Besides, the demands for homelands by different ethnic groups, the banned United National Liberation Front (UNLF), the People's Liberation Army (PLA), the Kangleipak Communist Party (KCP) and People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak (PREPAK) are also waging an armed struggle for "an independent Manipur," said the intelligence sources.

Having a total area of 22,327 square kilometres, Manipur is a tiny, sensitive, border state in north eastern India.

Manipur has peculiar land laws under which valley people particularly majority Meiteis find it difficult to settle in the hill areas while hill people can easily buy land in the valley and settle there without any problem.

V. P. Singh Interviewed on Political Future, Prospects

93AS0866G Calcutta *SUNDAY* in English 8 May 93
pp 20-26

[V. P. Singh interviewed by Louise Fernandes: "I Am Running a Relay Race, Not a 100-Yard Dash"; place and date not given]

[Text] *SUNDAY*: There is a lot of speculation about the health of V. P. Singh. Is he a sick man? Is he a dying man? Is he taking a sabbatical from politics?

V. P. Singh: My body is sick but I am not sick. Basically there is a slight dysfunction of the kidneys which causes blood pressure. But I am not the only sick person in the country. The doctors said this is because of the trauma of the fast I undertook (in Bombay during the riots). Though it was short, perhaps the body was too tired. They have said with a certain amount of rest it can possibly recover.

There are certain limitations which ill health can cause. But I hope that over a period of time I will be able to take a full load.

Q: So it is nonsense, this talk about V. P. Singh taking a sabbatical from politics?

A: In our field many rumours circulate. Many times we are not interested to kill all rumours (laughs). Yes, for the last two or three months I've not been able to move out and have had to cancel programmes to U.P. [Uttar Pradesh] But I am now taking on one programme every week.

Q: I have to put to you the cynical view that it is very difficult for a person's kidneys to pack up in two days, especially when there is no previous history of kidney disease. So could you give me the precise nature of what happened to you?

A: I don't know. I'm not a doctor.

Q: What have the doctors told you has happened?

A: The first day the tests were normal, so I don't know what happened. I don't know how the body mechanism works so I'm not competent to comment on it. But that's not the major issue. As I said, I'm not the only sick person in the country.

Q: So you say there is no interruption in your politics?

A: Well, there has been interruption because everybody knows the way I campaign. In the Tamil Nadu elections for instance, in 72 hours I slept only two hours. Certainly I've not been able to keep up these levels of inputs. I didn't know till this age of 62 that the body exists.

Q: What is going to be your main thrust in the next couple of months, in the run up to the elections in the four formerly BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party]-run states?

A: I don't see these elections as the final settlement of the issues that have been raised.

Q: And what issues are we talking about?

A: One is of communalism, the other of social justice. These issues are so basic that one election cannot decide them. However, elections are important when you are in party politics. So certainly you want to defeat the communal forces. This will be broadly the goals that will dictate our activities.

Q: You say one of the main thrusts will be to fight communalism. In this fight who is the Janata Dal going to take on—the BJP? The Congress?

A: Oh, I think this issue is more complex. We have to see it in the historical perspective and also the socio-economic context. If we are to understand what is happening today we have to go to pre-Independence days. When Gandhi was fighting the British there was still a mindset which was not fighting the British but was fighting the minorities. For them to fight the minorities was of greater priority than fighting the British. It is the unfolding of that mindset that we are seeing today. It was that mindset that led to the assassination of Gandhiji. The same mindset which physically assassinated Gandhi then wants to emotionally assassinate him today by saying he is not the father of the nation. It is the

same mindset that wants to put the national anthem at second position. They not being in the freedom struggle are at loggerheads with every institution which the freedom movement has produced—the Constitution, the Supreme Court.

Q: Who is the 'they' we are talking about?

A: This mindset. This force which says that their faith is above the Constitution. Virtually they are talking about a theocratic state. They may deny it. But then the BJP went on denying about any temple—telling the court that they would protect it, etc. But to what avail? This is seeing the issue from the communal angle. Seeing it from the social angle, let's see what has happened to the BJP and the Congress.

They may say that the BJP wasn't around (during the Independence struggle) but the sangh parivar, which is the head of them all, has been around for over 70 years. How is it that in all this time they have not been able to produce one national leader from the Scheduled Castes and Backward Classes? Not one. They quote Kalyan Singh. And what did he have to do? The reservation in U.P. was annulled during Kalyan Singh's time. He stabbed the Backward Classes in the back. And what have they created? Mr Advani, M. M. Joshi, Atal Bihari, Khurana, Malkani, Singhal, Deoras, Pingle, Deshmukh, Sheshadri. They are against the Muslims anyway. They make claims for the whole Hindu society. But 80 per cent of Hindu society was never found in this upper layer. So are they casteist or am I casteist? In fact they are anti-Hindu forces. They never spoke for Mandal. In fact they are against it. They nullified it in U.P. Being the main Opposition party not once they made a demand for implementation of the Supreme Court judgement. They have never fought till now the Dalit movement. It is a highly casteist outfit.

Q: Are you saying pro-Brahmin?

A: I don't spell out names. Because I don't want to project any 'anti' sentiments. They speak of Hindu Rashta. When I was in Bombay recently one young man came up to me and said he used to admire me but was very disappointed with my stand on Mandal. I said to him: look up the Bombay telephone directory and check the lists of chairmen and managing directors of important private and public sector companies. Look up the editors and senior reporters of newspapers. Look up the presidents and office bearers of political parties. Look up the various senior secretaries and their immediate juniors in the bureaucracy. Look up the ministers. 99 per cent will be Hindu. This is the ruling elite. Parties are just labels of the ruling elite. How much more Hindu is there feasibility of making it? Already it is a Hindu raj! And only an upper caste Hindu raj.

Q: So far you have talked about the BJP's record. What about the Congress? You don't differentiate between the BJP and the Congress?

A: Congress is also, in the final analysis, an upper caste outfit. Only perhaps it was not hostile to other sections.

But the relationship was transactional. "I'll give you benefits, you give me power." Whereas in the north the transactions were with the minorities, in the south they were with the backward classes. The BJP wants a situation without Muslims. Or if the Muslims come they have to succumb and come. The upper caste ruling elite was quite comfortable with the Congress. They got a jolt for the first time with the advent of the Janata Dal. Not the Janata Party. The Janata (Party) gave a jolt to the Congress but not to the ruling elite. In 1989 the ruling elite didn't see any danger in me, so it supported me. But after Mandal it saw a danger in me so it opposed me. What was happening was not that Congress was not being challenged by these left out sections. Challenges have been coming from the Dalits through the RPF [Railway Protection Force], the backward classes through the Lok Dal, the minorities through various Muslim organisations. But they didn't realise it was the same sword.

The first jolt came when leaders in their own right arose from the backward classes. Laloo Yadav, Mulayam Singh Yadav. And on the Janata Dal staking everything on Mandal, and Mandal being a reality they started feeling uneasy and started looking to who could protect them. So whenever they found that congress could not protect them, overnight they shifted to the BJP. That's why, to my perception, so far the ruling elite is concerned, Congress and BJP are freely convertible currencies. You see many people of the BJP coming to the Congress and the Congress to the BJP. Overnight.

Q: You are attacking the BJP extremely hard today. But there is a strong view that it was people like you and the Janata Dal/National Front who gave initial respectability to the BJP. How do you respond to that charge?

A: Our aim was to defeat the Congress. To defeat Hitler, Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin came together. At that time there was a common cause and everyone was of the mind to defeat the Congress. So a strategy was evolved wherein the regional parties and the centrist parties merged in alliance and some seat adjustments were made. More cohesion was between the centrist parties and the regional parties. Only seat adjustments were done with the BJP. It was only part of the strategy to defeat the Congress. That's why during the elections—when everybody does anything—I refused to go under their flag. In Mathura, Agra and Hathras I refused to go on to the BJP platform. My candidate was begging me. Said he would lose. I said: "Let ten of you get defeated. I'm here not for friendship of the BJP. I'm here to defeat the Congress."

Q: You may not have gone on their election platform but there are those who believe that the Janata Dal would not have been the ruling party without the help of the BJP. Isn't that true?

A: The primary need was that there should be a non-Congress government. The BJP couldn't have formed it because the left wouldn't have supported it. The BJP wouldn't have supported the left. The BJP had no choice but to support JD. Even then they did not give a letter to the President. We didn't become a government because

they supported us. That's a fallacy. We got into government because we were the second largest party. The President told me in so many words: We are inviting you not because anyone is supporting you or not. The first single largest party has refused to form the government so I am inviting the second largest party. When the left gave the letter of support and I gave it to the President, he said: These letters are not necessary. So we didn't form a government because of any support. But it sustained itself because they supported it.

Q: How do you respond to the charge that the JD and the National Front gave respectability and credibility to the BJP through this seat adjustments?

A: Those who are raising this, did they raise it then? Not one of them did.

Q: Do you feel that had they not had the adjustment they may not have won so many seats?

A: No, no.

Q: Do you say they would have won so many anyway?

A: No, no. That's not the point. The point was that at that time the Congress was projecting the TINA (There-Is-No-Alternative) factor—that there was no alternative. This factor had led to a bonded democracy where those dissenting from the Congress had no choice. Which led to authoritarian trends and degrading democracy itself. The challenge was to save democracy and shatter the TINA factor. And we have successfully done it.

Q: I'll ask you again. In retrospect do you think that the BJP is proving to be a more dangerous force than the Congress?

A: BJP is nothing. It will go because it cannot sustain itself. Because its social base cannot encompass the majority. Its contradictions will eat it away.

Q: But they didn't eat it away in 1991.

A: So what? The Congress couldn't be eaten away all these years. It's no small change we've brought about. They are talking about Kalyan Singh (as president of the BJP). Would they have spoken of him earlier? They may not make him (president), but they are under pressure to say such things. Mandalisation of every party will take place. It's an inexorable process and that will take place in the JD as well.

People of these (backward) sections will be in the leadership of the JD. I cannot go on officiating on their behalf all the time. If I have honestly to see these people come to power they should be in the front row and I should be in the second.... If the principle succeeds my success is greater than my personal success.

Q: In 1989 you were not talking about social justice. You were talking of safeguarding the interests of the minorities. What of that now?

A: The biggest failure of the present government was that it could not save the authority and justice of the Republic.

The same circumstances I faced. I decided that the government should go but the Republic should be saved.

Q: The present government is also saying that the Republic should be saved and that the BJP is out to destroy it.

A: What the BJP has done it has done in broad daylight. The question is: You (the Rao government) were the guardian and custodian of the Republic. Consciously you have allowed such authority and justice to be destroyed.

Q: What would you have done?

A: It's not a hypothetical question. I was in power and everybody knows what I did. Couldn't allow it (the Babri Masjid) to be destroyed. I didn't allow the court judgement to be violated. I didn't allow the justice and authority of the Republic to be ruined.

Q: You had your own government in UP whereas Rao had to contend with the BJP government.

A: If the state government could take over the land so could the central government. How have they taken over the land now?

Q: What happens now? PM [Prime Minister] has gone on record saying that he would not rebuild the mosque. That the Muslims have taken to mean rebuilding on the same spot. The BJP continues to insist that the temple should be built there. What is the solution?

A: This is the biggest joke that Rao is playing on the country. He couldn't protect what was there. Now he's saying he'll build it (the mosque) there. When he said this, I said; Far from building at the site, if he has the courage let him just draw two rectangles on a piece of paper marking where the masjid will be and where the mandir will be.

Q: Where would you draw them?

A: It's not the question of my rectangles. There has been illegal destruction of the mosque. What did the court do? In fact the judiciary is under test. In Madhya Pradesh the court said that the BJP government was illegally removed by the Congress and so it should be restored. Congress has done injustice to the BJP and so it should be convicted.

I'm not going into the merits of what happened in MP. What I say is: Court says Congress did wrong so BJP should be restored. If BJP has done wrong in the removal of the masjid what is the justice? The question is whether the balance of justice is even or tilted towards the BJP. Now if there is going to be two kinds of justice in the country how will we keep the country united?

Q: If you were PM what would you do?

A: I was PM. What I did was known.

Q: How do you react to the claims that Pakistan has a hand in the Bombay blasts and the subsequent boycotting of film stars who have had anything to do with Pakistan Day celebrations?

A: Pakistan may have given the bombs but for the placing of the bombs I blame the VHP [Vishwa Hindu Parishad], BJP and the Shiv Sena. They created the atmosphere and

environment in which misguided Muslim youth may have responded to Pakistan's offer. Pakistan has been around for the last 45 years. How is that they have not been able to palm off bombs in India before? Why are they successful today?

Q: What do you think should be done with Bal Thackeray?

A: Criminal cases must be started against everyone who has incited violence. As for the boycott, the philosophy and mindset is the same. Murli Manohar (Joshi) is not a suspect. A Muslim has to be suspect. (Bal Thackeray) is injecting the poison of suspicion and hatred.

Q: Suddenly, the BJP has become outspoken about Hindu Rashtira. Is it because it sees power round the corner or because it is desperate?

A: Because they have nothing else. The difference between them and us is the difference between a wrestler who drinks alcohol and one who drinks milk. Our pahalwan drinks milk. Sometimes the daru drinker looks stronger, but in the end his health will give way. The doodh drinker will triumph.

Government Urged to Allow Inspection of Nuclear Facilities

93AS0864D Calcutta THE TELEGRAPH in English
8 May 93 p 6

[Editorial: "Talking Nuclear Sense"]

[Text] It has been painful to watch the execution of Indian foreign policy in the past few years. New Delhi has been like a toddler learning to walk, without balance, lacking direction and with a propensity for unnecessarily blundering into objects. It is a source of relief to hear the government is preparing for its upcoming talks with the United States on nuclear non-proliferation by putting together a committee chaired by the cabinet secretary and five ministry secretaries. However there is reason for scepticism. It is bureaucrats of this nature who are largely responsible for India's floundering in the post-Cold War world. It is telling it is only now an apex body has been asked to work out India's negotiating stance on non-proliferation. There remains a fear the committee will do nothing but evolve new stalling tactics or regurgitate the hackneyed words "sovereignty" and "discrimination" once again.

The danger in such geriatric thinking will be the possible reaction of Washington. The U.S. can react in two ways. One, it may weary of oriental obfuscation, and wash its hands of south Asia. This would strike a chord with the isolationist sentiments of Mr Bill Clinton. While a U.S. pullout was desirable during the Cold War that is not the case any more. Today it would mean India's exile to the global periphery and a further loss of clout in international economic circles. Two, a failure by the state department to make any headway with India would lead to an increase in congressional influence. Senatorial opinions regarding the nuclear non-proliferation treaty are hawkish to the extreme. Unversed in the subtleties of diplomacy or damage to long-term bilateral relations, Congress will

prefer bludgeoning to persuasion. India is sure to remain unbowed. But it does not mean it will not be bloodied. It is a price that can be avoided.

New Delhi needs to take the initiative in the talks and explain how south Asia can be made nuclear safe. It is an error to believe the U.S. is adamant about the NPT [Nonproliferation Treaty]. More pressure has been exerted to make India sign on the dotted line by countries like Japan and Germany. Washington has been more blase. There is a reason. The U.S. has recently had unpleasanties with Iraq and North Korea over their nuclear programmes. Both errant nations are NPT signatories. The U.S. realises the treaty is so toothless as to have little security relevance. The U.S. wants something more concrete. Indications are it will want India to open its nuclear facilities to inspection, international or otherwise. This will cause coronaries among many Indians steeped in the touch me not nationalism of 1947. They should reconsider. The nation state is more porous these days. The true yardstick should be whether inspection will compromise Indian security. If the cards are played right India's security will be enhanced.

New Delhi's goal should be to allow inspection on terms most favourable to India. This would mean encompassing Pakistan in such an agreement and seeing to it India can opt out of the agreement and pursue a military option if circumstances demand it. Such concessions will require a large reservoir of credibility and goodwill. There are two easy means to score points with the U.S. One is for India to voluntarily stop producing fissionable material as Pakistan did in the Eighties. Another is to take the lead in proposing something that would appeal to both U.S. politicians and public, namely a comprehensive test ban. This would be a Nehruvian grand gesture but one in conformity with the realities of today's world. It is time India's foreign policy establishment showed a greater grasp of the new world order. It is time New Delhi showed greater confidence in its ability to cope with the outside world. There would be no better way to start than for New Delhi to remove the NPT thorn from its side, push south Asia away from the brink of a nuclear arms race and secure membership in the inside circle of the nuclear club.

Sangh Parivar Vision of India Said To Echo Vivekananda's

93AS0866H Calcutta SUNDAY in English 8 May 93
pp 84-86

[Article by Dina Nath Mishra, columnist and the editor of Bhasha: "Visions of a Hindu India"; italicized words as published]

[Text]

Swami Vivekananda's philosophy comes closest to the sangh parivar's Shocked by the events in Ayodhya on 6 December last year and the subsequent political developments, both the communist parties demonstratively came out lecturing the *sangh parivar* about the real Hinduism through booklets, one by Sitaram Yechury, the CPI(M) [Communist Party of India (Marxist)] Politburo member, and another by the CPI secretary, A. B. Bardhan.

It is a case of traditional Hindu-haters turning to be Hindus and pushing Hindus to the category of pseudo-Hindus. Two booklets provided the basis to the left media

brigade to shout the same propaganda all over India through print and other media again and again. The whole edifice of propaganda was demolished by two well-researched articles by Arun Shourie in SUNDAY (*Myths about the Swami*, 31 January—6 February 1993). The burden of Shourie's pieces were, as put by Shourie himself in conclusion: "...lessons upon lessons for friends who suddenly find Swami Vivekananda so quotable. Stray quotations cannot be set up to counter the entire life and work of such a man; as that life and work is the exact opposite of what you have been propagating, the more you lean on Vivekananda, the more he will recoil on you; never forget what you have been saying about a man when you suddenly find him handy, others are not likely to have forgotten; and, finally, never proclaim your intention to quote a man before you have read him."

Shourie's pieces were too powerful and aggressive to be ignored by the communist parties and hence a laboured rebuttal in SUNDAY (*Of Shourie and Vivekananda*, 28 March - 3 April 1993) by A. B. Bardhan, who has made the following points:

- That they have not jumped suddenly but their approach to Swami's role and world view are very much positive. In his effort to prove that the communists have not suddenly jumped to quote Vivekananda, but have been doing so for long, Bardhan quotes from a book published by the CPI titled, *Sociopolitical views of Vivekananda* by Benoy Roy in 1970. Benoy Roy was profusely quoted to clarify the party's assessment of Vivekananda.

That as Marxists we hail his revolutionary and humanist teachings as inspiring message to the people of India and the world.

That communists are not alienated and keep themselves aloof from our culture. To substantiate this, Mr Bardhan has marshalled names of communist and other writers including Rahul Sanskritayan, S. A. Dange, Ram Bilas Sharma and has reminded us of their contributions.

That Vivekananda was a revolutionary, a socialist and a secular person.

That Arun Shourie has made a Muslim crusader out of Vivekananda and Shourie's and the *sangh parivar's* views are just opposite to that of Vivekananda.

"That there is enough food and ammunition in Vivekananda's works to last all who are searching for India's social, cultural and spiritual development. Let no one try to appropriate him for oneself." Vivekananda is not the monopoly of the *sangh parivar* and Arun Shourie.

"That the communist approach to Vivekananda underlines the enlightenment of the downtrodden, dumb millions, his revolutionary approach to the problem of liquidating the privileges of the propertied classes and giving the toilers their due share in the national wealth, his preachings against untouchability, and above all, his teachings on the purification of the soul—they were all later

adopted by different political and social organisations of this country, including the Indian National Congress led by M. K. Gandhi."

Now let us face the facts. On pages 391-392 of the *Documents of history of the CPI* published in 1971, there is an assessment of Vivekananda by the party. "Although its political philosopher and leader were found subsequently in the persons of Aurobindo Ghose and Bipin Chandra Pal respectively, its fundamental ideology was conceived by a young intellectual of petit-bourgeoisie origin. He was Narendra Nath Dutt, subsequently known by the religious nomenclature of Swami Vivekananda...Like Tilak, Dutt was also a prophet of Hindu nationalism. He was also a believer in the cultural superiority of the Indian people, and held that on this cultural basis should be built the future Indian nation. He preached that Hinduism, not Indian nationalism, should be aggressive. His nationalism was spiritual imperialism."

Now Mr Bardhan, please tell me was Vivekananda a believer of Hindu nationalism or was he a secular person of your variety? Were you right then or now? Was he an intellectual of petit-bourgeoisie origin, or were his ideas food and ammunition for various developments of the nation as claimed by Benoy Roy and which was quoted in your rebuttal? Was Shourie not right in accusing you and your colleagues for suddenly alighting upon Swami Vivekananda?

I will give you yet another instance. Please turn to page 393 of the party document, where the following appears. "Thus an intelligently rebellious element which otherwise would have been the vanguard of the exploited class in a social struggle, had to give in to national preoccupations and contribute itself to a movement for the immediate overthrow of foreign rule, not for progress forward, but in order to go back to an imaginary golden age, the fountain-head of India's spiritual heritage...In their religiousness and wild spiritual imperialism, they embodied the reactionary social forces."

Mr Bardhan, my simple question is, was Vivekananda a revolutionary or a reactionary as your party document says? Do you stand by your party document or a single comrade's view expressed in *Socio-political view of Vivekananda*: "...his revolutionary approach to the problem of liquidating the privileges of the propertied classes and giving the toilers their due share in the national wealth..." Where do you stand? Did he overlook the immediate overthrow of foreign rule or has he a very special position in inspiring the freedom fighters of the Freedom Movement as mentioned in your rebuttal?

You quoted Mahatma Gandhi in defence of your new-found love for Vivekananda. I am quoting your party document: "The extremists, now called non-cooperators, have had better success than moderates in drawing the masses under the influence of nationalism...But they could not develop the potentiality of the mass movement by leading it in accordance with its economic urges and social tendencies. Their tactics was to strengthen the nationalist movement by the questionable method of exploiting the

ignorance of the masses. And the best way of exploiting the ignorance of the masses was to make a religion of nationalism. This tactic led to the appearance of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi on the political horizon, and the eclipse of all other politico-social tendencies in the shade of Gandhism." So, is it not the same as the charge you are levelling: that Shourie and the Sangh parivar are making a religion of nationalism? And mixing religion with politics, the "crime" which Mahatma Gandhi also committed?

Veteran communist leader R. Palme Dutt wrote in 1931 that "to all that is young and generous in India the name of Gandhi is an object of cursing and contempt, the name of Judas." This must be strongly combatted by the communists.

No, Mr Bardhan, the *sangh parivar* and Arun Shourie did not and do not monopolise Vivekananda. While you threw Vivekananda in the dust bin like a rotten egg, calling him a "wild spiritualist," the *sangh parivar* found in him the biggest asset in the exercise of nation-building. The relationship of Vivekananda with the sangh movement is very much like a mother-son relationship. Dr Hedgewar, the RSS [Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh] founder, was a Tilakite. The second *sarsangchalak*, Sri Gururji, was in Rama Krishna Mission for two or three years around 1935. One of the most revered central leaders of the RSS, Baba Sahed Apte's life-long pet sentence was: "Vivekananda is like Gita for the RSS."

Vivekananda's literature has always been the staple intellectual diet for *swayamsevaks* since the early 40s. When the centenary year of Vivekananda was approaching, the RSS entrusted to Eknath Ranade the job of compiling Vivekananda's thoughts into a handy volume. Ranade adopted it as a one-dimensional mission and brought out the vision of Vivekananda in a book titled, *Rousing Call to Hindu Nation*, first published in 1963. The 168-page book costs Rs 2. Since then, it has been translated into all Indian languages and underwent numerous reprints. Over a million copies have been sold so far among the RSS people. Add to that booklets brought out by various publications. *Rousing Call to Hindu Nation* has been like a textbook and motivating vision for all *swayamsevaks*. Mr Bardhan, you have flaunted a quotation of lower caste exploitation and taunted if Shourie and the *sangh parivar* agreed to it. Let me add here that the textbook I just spoke about contains admonitions of the upper classes of India. There are numerous quotations like that you have quoted and is not tactical.

The study of Vivekananda convinced Eknath Ranade to build the Vivekananda Rock Memorial temple at Kanya Kumari—the rock where the Swami had meditated in 1893 before going to Chicago. This grand memorial came up only after crossing hundreds of hurdles set up by almost all political parties and many groups. Literally, crores of people contributed to the dream of the rock memorial. Should I remind you, Mr Bardhan, that all the state governments had contributed to that end, barring the one you had in Kerala led by E.M.S. Namboodiripad, despite the best efforts of Eknathji. Let me remind you that when

Ranade approached Jyoti Basu for help, the latter questioned, "How dare you come to me for Vivekananda, I am a communist." But finding Eknathji persuasive, Jyoti Basu told him, "Meet my wife, she had gone to Kanya Kumari when I went to the Ernakulam convention." Comrade Kalyana Sundaram of Tamil Nadu greeted Eknathji thus: "You have defeated me by coming to me because I was telling my friends that you will not come to me as you know I am a communist. You know I am very much inspired by Vivekananda." Eknathji had collected signatures of more than 50 per cent MPs [Member of Parliament] to remove the hurdles in the construction work. In the process, the only enthusiastic support that came from "your camp", was that of comrade Renu Chakravorty, MP, who got a few signatures of other communist MPs, too.

There is no need of reminding you from how many textbooks you removed Vivekananda in West Bengal when you came to power in that state. No, Mr Bardhan, there is no intention of monopolising Vivekananda. He was not an RSS [Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh] member. He was the finest Hindu model produced at the end of last century after waves and waves of Hindu awakening from Bhakti Movement to 19th Century renaissance in Bengal and other places. His vision was basically Hindu and was meant for the whole of humanity. You can very well quote Vivekananda provided you apologise for calling him names. Till, then, you are just ineligible to quote him.

As to your challenge that Arun Shourie's and the *sangh parivar's* vision of Vivekananda is that of a crusader against Islam, etc, I can only say that you believe your own propaganda that the party's reflexes do not work and are generally delayed by at least 50 years. Did you concede your mistake of 1942 before 1970? You were confused about Vivekananda as late as 1990. You started rethinking about him in the late Sixties in a half-hearted manner. It was under your pressure that many references of the word "Hindu" were removed from the latest edition of the eight volumes on Vivekananda, though they existed in earlier editions. Let me remind you that the son of Bipin Chandra Pal substituted the word "Hindu" with "Indian" in the works of his father. Even today, your acceptance of Vivekananda is not general in nature but partial and that is why you say: "We have never pretended to be Vedantists, and have remained Marxists...as Marxists...we hail his teachings (and)...inspiring message..." There is a definite anti-Hindu trait in saying, "We are not Vedantists," and yet you quote Swami Vivekananda's Chicago speech in full, which is nothing but uniquely Vedantic. And that is why Arun Shourie says: "Stray quotations cannot be set up to counter the entire life and work of such a man."

Byelections in Kerala, Tamil Nadu Postponed
93AS0919A Calcutta THE TELEGRAPH in English
9 May 93 p 1

[Text] New Delhi, May 8—The Election Commission today postponed the May 19 Lok Sabha byelections to the Palani seat in Tamil Nadu, and the Ottapalam seat in

Kerala to August 19 since, free and fair polling will not be possible in either of these two seats.

The commission, in its order, said elections might trigger communal clashes in Ottapalam, and referred to reports of the state government and the home ministry, both of which said the law and order situation in the constituency was not conducive for elections.

As for the postponement of byelections in Palani, the Election Commission has accused the Tamil Nadu government of presenting only "selective information" to it on the drought prevailing in the district and the relief work undertaken.

The commission's announcement today comes in the wake of the chief election commissioner, Mr T. N. Seshan's threat to cancel the May 19 round of bypolls in different states if his disciplinary jurisdiction of drafting government officials for election duty was not conceded. He had threatened also to shelve the forthcoming Rajya Sabha elections in some states and fixed May 6 as the deadline for the government's response.

Also, the West Bengal government has been locked in a serious conflict with Mr Seshan which in so many ways was the root behind the current dispute over jurisdiction. Mr Seshan was not convinced that the officer, who wanted to take over as chief electoral officer in the state, was genuinely indisposed. He had asked the state government to get a medical certificate from the officer to ascertain his illness but this was promptly refused by the former.

According to the commission, intelligence reports from the Kerala government have revealed that there have been a number of communal and political clashes involving RSS [Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh], BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] and CPI(M) [Communist Party of India (Marxist)] workers in Ottapalam and adjoining areas.

During the last four months, the commission says, there have been eight serious political and communal incidents. "The Hindu-Muslim divide has widened after the communal riots and will have serious ramifications in Ottapalam, Pattambi, Thrithala and Waddakanchery areas which have sizeable Muslim populations," the commission says.

It also quotes the home ministry report which has reiterated the views of the state government and the commission maintains that there has been a steady "deterioration in the law and order situation" since it issued its notification announcing elections to the seat on April 19.

Against the backdrop of complaints from the Tamil Nadu Congress(I) committee, Janata Party and the Tamizhaga Nallatchi Iyakkam, all of which felt that other parties would be placed at a disadvantage because of the sinking of borewells and schemes undertaken by the government, the commission feels it will be in everybody's interests to postpone the polls in Palani.

The acute drought and the scarcity of water in Palani, according to the Election Commission, will not be conducive for holding the scheduled polls. "It will neither be

desirable nor in the interest of the general public and electorate," says the order. Elections will also adversely affect relief operations, the commission feels.

The Election Commission has considered several representations from individuals and parties before deciding to postpone the Palani byelections. The state chief secretary had observed in his letter to the commission dated April 30, 1992, that "acute water scarcity prevails in many villages of Palani parliamentary constituency."

Meanwhile, the CPI(M) general secretary, Mr H. K. S. Surjeet, has flayed the decision to postpone the byelections in Ottapalam. He said there were no reports of communal clashes and the area was peaceful. This has been done to placate the Congress(I), which was in a position to lose, he felt.

Agencies add: The Kerala chief minister, Mr K. Karunakaran, tonight said the state government had no voice in the postponement of the Ottapalam Lok Sabha byelections in the state. He described the Election Commission's decision as unilateral.

Bengal Congress (I) Leaders Said Joining BJP

93AS08791 Calcutta THE TELEGRAPH in English
14 May 93 p 6

[Article: "Congmen Join BJP on Panchayat Election Eve"]

[Text] Calcutta, May 13: The state BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] has received a shot in the arm on the eve of the panchayat election with some state Congress(I) leaders joining the party.

According to Mr Paras Dutta, general secretary of the state BJP, the former convener of the state Congress(I)'s Scheduled Caste cell, Mr J. N. Biswas, recently joined the BJP and was now campaigning in Gaighata area of North 24-Parganas. The BJP hopes Mr Biswas's entry will considerably help in making inroads in the Scheduled Caste areas.

Mr Ramen Chatterjee and Mr Swapan Bose, vice-president and secretary of north Calcutta Congress(I) Chhatra Parishad respectively, also joined the BJP with 40 parishad workers.

A sitting panchayat samiti member of Bandel area in Mogras block of Hooghly district, Mr Subhas Harijan, also joined the BJP along with 1,200 followers.

"All this indicates a serious erosion in the Congress(I)'s support base," Mr Dutta remarked. He refuted the Left Front chairman, Mr Sailen Dasgupta's assertion that the BJP and the Congress(I) had entered into an alliance to defeat the CPI(M) [Communist Party of India (Marxist)] and other front partners in the panchayat elections.

"On the contrary, we feel that the CPI(M) and the Congress(I) have reached an understanding against us. This is indicated by the fact that while 16,00 (as published) CPI(M) candidates have been declared uncontested, Congress(I) nominees in 46 gram panchayats also did not face any contest," Mr Dutta said.

Uttar Pradesh Elections Seen Key to Nation's Future

93AS0879A Calcutta THE TELEGRAPH in English
14 May 93 p 8

[Article by S. Nihal Singh: "The Future of the Congress, BJP and India Will Be Determined by the Uttar Pradesh Assembly Elections"]

[Text]

North Lies at the Centre

It seems as if Indian political parties have exhausted themselves and the system. Even as the budget session of Parliament meanders to an end there is a sense of ennui. Shadow boxing has taken the place of real debate. Inevitably, the impeachment move in the Lok Sabha on Justice V. Ramaswami petered out, thanks to the Congress losing its nerve.

The next big event on the national calendar is the elections to the four formerly Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP] ruled states. Everyone seem to be marking time and positioning himself for the event likely to take place in October or November. The results of these elections, particularly the performance of the BJP, will determine the next stage of the drama and Mr P. V. Narasimha Rao's political longevity.

Meanwhile the posturing of politicians barely conceals the fact they have little new to say for themselves or their parties. The Left Front's efforts to form an effective secular front continue to be bogged down by predictable personality clashes and lack of trust. The BJP is banking on the less than perfect electoral understanding between non-BJP Opposition parties.

The Congress is following the familiar path of talking rather than acting. The sound and fury that will doubtless emerge in the planned Amethi conclave will capture newspaper headlines and little else. Mr Arjun Singh's challenge to Mr Rao, wrapped in the garb of fighting communalism, remains a destabilising factor for the party. The action taken against some dissidents was essentially to make the point the leadership did have the will to act if forced into a corner.

That the BJP is beset by the kind of problems traditionally faced by the Congress indicates the long road it has travelled from the days it had two members in the Lok Sabha. The heartburn over Mr L. K. Advani's expected elevation to the party presidency has merely accentuated the factional pulls and pressures within the party.

Indeed the BJP's internal problems prove the Congress's method of doing things was unique only because it has such a long inning in Parliament. The closer the BJP feels it is to power, the greater the number of opportunists it attracts, the more compromises it makes and the fiercer the battle over party posts.

Beyond these issues lies a central problem for the BJP. It has not quite decided how to play the Ayodhya card and what other issues to highlight to strike a winning formula. Its theme of Hindu nationalism will remain a bulwark but

in a sense the party has shot its bolt by conniving with the destruction of the Babri Masjid. The evocative symbol of a mosque, supposedly built on a temple site, is gone. The question of building a new temple on the spot does not have the same resonance.

Admittedly the BJP has been able to convince a large number of Hindus in the North, in western India and some other parts of the country about its Hindu credentials. Kerala's foolish move to make Fridays holidays in Muslim schools is grist to the BJP propaganda mill. Inevitably the question of protecting Hindu interests must remain the party's theme song weaving around Ayodhya, Muslim infiltration from Bangladesh and the espousal of the cause of Kashmir's Hindu refugees. The last implies the government's weak kneed approach to the troubled state's problems.

The BJP's dilemma is that while beating the Hindu drum it must give evidence of its credentials as an alternative ruling party. It has been casting around for issues to burnish its image. It has also self consciously set about preparing "white papers" and alternative budget formulations. It has nibbled at farmers' problems, chosen to ride the nationalist bandwagon on the economy and, refuting the logic it has reiterated its traditional nuclear bomb posture has berated the government's foreign policy.

Over the decades the Congress came to learn to refine its appeal to the bewilderingly diverse constituencies. The consensus on secularism, nonalignment and socialism was a help because even while it had to make adjustments, even U-turns, the Congress's deviations could still be clothed in familiar garb.

With two of the precepts now irrelevant, if not counter-productive, the Congress is battling to hold aloft the tattered flag of secularism. The Kerala move on the Friday holiday and the Centre's shameful connivance with the Shiv Sena in permitting the daily propagation of communal poison are indication the party seeks to trim its sails to weather the storms created by the BJP.

Whatever the future holds for the BJP, it can already claim the triumph of having altered the terms of political debate in the country. A stronger and more resilient Congress could have chosen to fight for secularism in a bolder fashion. But too many Congressmen seem to feel their political future lies in accommodating the new Hindu nationalism defined by the BJP. The feeling is heightened by the process of their party's disintegration.

If one event is to determine the country's future in the next few years, it will be the elections to the state assembly in Uttar Pradesh as and when they are held.

Here the contest is not so much between the BJP and the Congress as between the BJP and the combine of Mr Mulayam Singh Yadav and Mr Kanshi Ram of the Bahujan Samaj Party. If the Left Front and the assortment of other centrist parties such as the Janata Dal of Mr V. P. Singh and the Ajit Singh faction have the sense to support the two party combination, the BJP can be humbled.

If the BJP is defeated in the Uttar Pradesh assembly elections it is unlikely it can wrest power at the Centre in the next general election. The Rao government can look forward to completing its full term in such an eventuality.

Uttar Pradesh has always played a dominant role in national politics by virtue of its 75 member contingent in the Lok Sabha. Added to this is the fact the family that long ruled India belonged to this state. Besides, four short term prime ministers, including Mr Chandra Shekhar, belonged to Uttar Pradesh. The monopoly was broken by Mr Morarji Desai. After Rajiv Gandhi's assassination, Mr Rao, the first prime minister from the South, donned the mantle.

As Uttar Pradesh's importance in the national scheme of things began to wane—the dominance of the South in the Congress parliamentary party after the last general election is unmistakable—the BJP brought the state back to prominence by winning it. The BJP's war dance in Ayodhya also served to highlight the state's importance.

The BJP will thus have to highlight the importance of Uttar Pradesh in determining its political future. This will be part of the broader agenda of projecting itself as an alternative to the Congress at the centre. Depending on how serious it feels the Mulayam Singh Yadav-Kanshi Ram threat is in Uttar Pradesh, it will probably choose to sacrifice the latter for the former.

Assuming the Mulayam Singh Yadav-Kanshi Ram combine wins in Uttar Pradesh with outside support, does the Congress have a chance beyond its present term? The Arjun Singh challenge camouflages a larger issue. The BJP's onslaught has served to confirm the feeling among some Congressmen that given the best scenario emerging out of the winter assembly elections Mr Rao is unlikely to lead the party to victory in the next general election.

There are Congressmen who believe only the family can rescue the party. But Mrs Sonia Gandhi is an unlikely candidate for a variety of reasons. Priyanka Gandhi's age is against her. Among the other possible successors to Mr Rao, Mr Arjun Singh would be ruled out because the South is unlikely to tolerate a Hindi speaking prime minister. Mr Sharad Pawar is a possibility only if he stops compromising with the Shiv Sena. Much hangs on the outcome of the elections in Uttar Pradesh.

CPM Said Protecting Notorious Criminal

93AS0879E Calcutta THE TELEGRAPH in English
15 May 93 p 1

[Article by Charles Nandi: "Notorious City Criminal Still at Large"]

[Text] Calcutta, May 14: The notorious city criminal, Sridhar Das, who is backed by the CPI(M) [Communist Party of India (Marxist)], continues to evade arrest despite the police chief, Mr Tushar Talukdar's repeated assurances that he would round up all leading criminals, irrespective of their political support.

The demand for Sridhar's arrest was first raised in April last year, the day after Swapan Dey, another criminal, had

created a drunken ruckus during the film maestro, Satyajit Ray's cremation at the Keoratala crematorium. Swapan, known to be a Congress(I) supporter, was promptly nabbed but his rival, Sridhar, eluded the city police.

Police sources and local people at Keoratala have informed THE TELEGRAPH that Sridhar is still a regular visitor to the area. He also frequently visits the railway siding under the Majherhat Bridge in New Alipore to "collect tola" (extortion money) from wagon-breakers who queue up there to unload the trains.

The criminal, protected by a leader of the CPI(M)'s youth wing, the Democratic Youth Federation of India (DYFI), moves around in a white Ambassador, with a WB023459 number plate. He had last arrived at the railway siding on May 2 before which he had visited it on April 26 and on Holi.

On May 2, the Tollygunge police station received an anonymous call informing them that Sridhar had come to the railway siding. But before the police could reach the spot, CPI(M) volunteers informed the criminal that the police were on their way. Sridhar escaped and the police failed to arrest him.

Sridhar, has long been away from Keoratala—his zone of anti-social activities—and has received shelter from people. He has not taken shelter with another criminal, Kala, in the Sealdah area. Incidentally, Kala is backed by a prominent Congress(I) leader and trade unionist.

The three other areas, where Sridhar has been in hiding for the past few months, are all known to be CPI(M)-infested pockets. They are Bantala, beyond the Eastern Bypass, Subhasgram in South 24-Parganas and Sodepur in North 24-Parganas.

The police said they had tried to raid the Bantala hideout and had sent a 40-strong contingent to the spot. They knew that a fishmonger, who enjoyed considerable CPI(M)-backing, was protecting Sridhar. But the team could not make a breakthrough as they did not dare interrogate the "influential" fishmonger.

Following the lull in the police search, Sridhar has re-established his hold in Keoratala in the past few months. He is now operating through one of his associates, Dom Pradip. Like Sridhar, Dom Pradip is also backed by the CPI(M) and illegally raises funds for the party.

Swapan Dey, whose behaviour on the day of Ray's cremation lost the former police chief, Mr Biren Saha, his job, is also back at the burning ghat and is conducting his own extortion racket through his henchman, Jaya.

The police attribute their failure to an outdated photograph of the criminal in their possession. "If Sridhar is in our midst we won't be able to identify him, such is the quality of our reference picture," a police officer said.

But there are many who would take this excuse with pinch of salt. The illegal trade of cots, pillows and mattresses brought to the crematorium by the families of the bereaved is once again prospering.

Articles View Wide-Ranging Opinion of Election Commissioner

Sympathetic to BJP

93AS0867A New Delhi INDIA TODAY in English
15 May 93 p 29

[Article by M. Mitta: "T. N. Seshan: Change of Heart"]

[Text] Some months ago when a journalist asked T. N. Seshan, "are you a gentleman or a Congressman?" The Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) told his security personnel to throw the offending journalist out of his office. But the suggestion of being a closet Congressman no longer brings out Seshan's spleen. In fact, there is a distinct coolness in the CEC's attitude towards the Congress(I) which explains why he no longer fears being dubbed a Congress(I) stooge, a tag he has carried since the day he assumed office in December 1990.

His latest targets are senior Congress(I) leaders Vijayabhaskara Reddy and Santosh Mohan Deb, both of whom came close to losing office thanks to Seshan's orders. His differences with Reddy stem from the days when Reddy was law minister and had a say in the Election Commission's (EC) administration. Last month, when Reddy was to contest the Payam byelection, Seshan saw his chance. He adamantly refused to hold the election within the mandatory six-month period during which Reddy had to be elected to continue as Andhra Pradesh chief minister. It was only on Narasimha Rao's intervention that Seshan relented.

Earlier, Seshan had slighted Deb during the run-up to the violence-ridden Tripura poll. He permitted the election to take place only after the state Government took action against police officials who had hobnobbed with Deb during the election campaign in the state.

Seshan also locked horns with Arjun Singh. After the dismissal of the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] governments in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Himachal Pradesh, Singh announced that elections would be held within a year. Seshan issued a press release in which he quoted legal provisions and asserted that the dates could be fixed only by the EC.

For one who is widely assumed to owe his job to the Congress(I)—the Chandra Shekhar government is believed to have handed this specialist job to an IAS [Indian Administrative Service] officer at Rajiv Gandhi's insistence—Seshan's change of heart is raising eyebrows.

Significantly, the only major political party that does not have a grievance against Seshan today is the BJP. Initially, even this party had opposed him. But things changed after he dismissed a petition filed by Singh seeking the freezing of the BJP's election symbol. The BJP reciprocated by distancing itself from the opposition-sponsored impeachment notice against Seshan in Parliament. The allegations were that his functioning was "biased" and "arbitrary". Now, the Congress(I) camp is hurling the same charges

against him. Will the CEC [Chief Election Commissioner] be cowed down by the Congress(I) or will he respond by cosying up to the BJP?

Sympathetic to Congress (I)

93AS0867B *Calcutta THE TELEGRAPH in English*
12 May 93 p 6

[Editorial: "Bypass Polls"; italicized words as published]

[Text] For all his reputation for independence and volatility the opposition is not without reason in claiming the chief election commissioner, Mr T. N. Seshan, has shown his ultimate loyalties lie with the ruling party. The last minute postponement of the two Lok Sabha byelections at Palani in Tamil Nadu and Ottapalam in Kerala could not have suited the interests of the Congress party more. Palani, for example, seemed set to fall to the All India Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam [AIDMK]. This would have been a telling humiliation of the Congress. Not only is Palani a Congress stronghold of long standing, this would have been the first time in 25 years the Congress would be contesting a seat in Tamil Nadu without an alliance with a regional party. Defeat, in other words, would have been laid solely at the feet of the ruling party alone. The Election Commission's decision to abort because of drought was subjective but incontestable. Nonetheless, that the cancellation should have been made only 10 days before polling serves to undercut the commission's credibility.

In the case of the Ottapalam seat, postponed for supposed law and order problems, the commission is on far less secure ground. While the reserved constituency did suffer communal and political unrest after Ayodhya, by no stretch of the imagination was law and order reason enough to cancel the vote. The commission has cited a police report and the concurrence of the state and Centre that the election threatened violence. Ottapalam has defied all such doomsaying. Since the election was announced the local police have failed to register a single case, even a petty crime. It has also been an open secret the Congress led United Democratic Front [UDF] government of Mr K. Karunakaran had lobbied hard in New Delhi for a postponement. The chief minister, who ironically boasted that under him Kerala has known only calm, knew he was staring defeat full in the face in Ottapalam though the previous incumbent had been the respected Congressman, K. R. Narayanan.

What is particularly troubling about Ottapalam is the inability of Congress to strike a proper communal balance, something that should be second nature to an experienced party. Its plan to close Muslim schools on Fridays earned it more notoriety than it probably deserved. It is less known that the UDF was unable to implement the promise after the Bharatiya Janata Party began brandishing it as evidence of minority "appeasement". The net result was the alienation of both communities. An example of how strapped Congress is for a post-Ayodhya communal equation is its relations with the Indian Union Muslim League. Though a member of the UDF and IUML [Indian Union Muslim League] president, Mr Ibrahim Sulaiman Sait, preferred to savage the Congress. But all traditional

attempts to woo the Muslim vote opened the Congress to telling attacks from both left and *sangh parivar*. It is a dilemma the Congress is unlikely to be any closer to resolving by August 19, the new byelection date, than it is now.

Weakening Public Trust

93AS0867C *Calcutta THE TELEGRAPH in English*
7 May 93 p 6

[Editorial: "Jam Seshan"]

[Text] India's chief election commissioner walks around with a big jurisdictional chip on his shoulder. If Mr T. N. Seshan stalls all the coming byelections because of the official squabbles he is entangled in he will not enhance his office. However, the demands of some parliamentarians for Mr Seshan's immediate impeachment would be equally damaging and impetuous. Mr Seshan is embroiled in two controversies. The first is a conflict with the cabinet secretary, Mr S. Rajagopal, over whether the Election Commission can discipline deputed officers. While Mr Seshan has reason to doubt the government will punish erring officers, the solution is not to walk off the straight path on to the grass of extra-legal action. Under the All India Services Act disciplining a civil servant is the prerogative of the appointing authority and no one else. Even the vast authority of the commission, as the Supreme Court ruled in a number of cases, is constrained by the requirements of law.

Mr Seshan is on stronger ground when it comes to the cancellation of the byelections in Tamil Nadu and Haryana. While Mr Seshan is more answerable to the law than he believes, his authority to withdraw an electoral notification cannot be questioned. This is very much the constitutional prerogative of a CEC [Chief Election Commissioner]. What can be questioned are the grounds of which a commissioner has ordered the ballot boxes to be placed in storage. Mr Seshan needs to realise he cannot arbitrarily stop polls simply because he is the CEC. Rather his office's power lies in its implementation of guidelines that allow for cancellation. Reasons need to be given and Mr Seshan's are at best weak. He has cited violations of the model code of conduct. But this code, as he himself has admitted, is just a gentleman's agreement between parties. It has no legal teeth. It is an ideal but not a law. Stopping elections for the violation of ideal conditions would not safeguard Indian democracy, it would make democracy impossible.

The commissioner is the fulcrum in the balance of Indian democracy. It is an office that deserves considerable deference because of its central role in maintaining the legitimacy of the electoral process in the eyes of the general populace. That is why Mr Seshan's actions, charitably described as bizarre, more critically as egotistic irresponsibility, have received far greater tolerance in both government circles and the press than he deserves. The Supreme Court acknowledged the dignity of the office when it set aside the high court decision to override Mr Seshan's cancellation of the Kalka byelections as "inappropriate". Whether he was wrong or right, it implicitly stated a CEC deserves to be treated with greater care. Mr Seshan's antics

threaten to undermine this sort of deference by involving the office in trivial disputes and trying to nonsensically assert a status above the law. In pressing such claims the commissioner does not increase the authority of his office. He does quite the reverse and only weakens public trust in the electoral process.

Hated by Leftists

93AS0867D Calcutta THE TELEGRAPH in English
5 May 93 p 4

[Article: "Seshan Being Monitored: Government"]

[Text] New Delhi, May 4: The government today said it was closely following all the moves and utterances of the Chief Election Commissioner, Mr T. N. Seshan.

In what was obviously an expression of the government's sense of exasperation over Mr Seshan's recent actions, the Union parliamentary affairs minister, Mr Vidya Charan Shukla, told an agitated Lok Sabha, "nobody is above Parliament and the Constitution."

He also assured members that the government will consider the strong sentiments expressed by them while taking a final view on Mr Seshan's behaviour. However, this will have to await the Supreme Court's disposal of the case pending before it on the cancellation of the Kalka byelection and the Haryana High Court's order staying the Election Commissions' directive.

Mr Shukla's statement came on a day when the non-BJP Opposition revived the move for the impeachment of the chief election commissioner in the light of his reported demand for being empowered to dismiss any bureaucrat found mismanaging the election process.

The non-BJP Opposition found tacit support from the treasury benches with three senior, Congress(I) MPs [Member of Parliament], Mr Buta Singh, Mr Pawan Kumar Bansal and Mr Dharampal Malik, taking the opportunity to criticise some of the recent decisions and directives of the chief election commissioner.

The heated debate on Mr Seshan's reported actions saw the former Prime Minister, Mr Chandra Shekhar, admitting that he had made a "mistake" in appointing the former to the Chief Election Commissioner's post. "Every person can make a mistake. I now admit that I also made a mistake," he said.

He said it was "totally unacceptable" that a person holding a high constitutional office should behave like a "mini-Feuhrer". Earlier, the CPI(M) [Communist Party of India (Marxist)] member, Mr Nirmal Chatterji, pointed out that the chief election commissioner's demands had put a question mark over the May 19 byelections and the elections to six Rajya Sabha seats from West Bengal.

The CPI leader, Mr Indrajit Gupta, said the powers and functions of the chief election commissioner were such that if a remedy was to be sought for the present situation, then the Constitution would have to be amended in respect of the chief election commissioner's powers. The other option was to go in for impeachment.

He urged the government to seriously apply its mind to defusing the present situation. During the discussion, tempers were frayed and at one stage Janata Dal members walked into the Well of the House, raising slogans against the Election Commission.

Efforts of Janata Dal Factions To Reunite Viewed

93AS0866I New Delhi INDIA TODAY in English
15 May 93 pp 49-50

[Article by Javed Ansari: "Looking For a Glue"; italicized words as published]

[Text]

The myriad offshoots of the party are now desperately seeking to reunite in a bid to emerge as a viable alternative which won't come unstuck at the first hurdle.

Will the much-splintered Janata Dal (JD) rise from the debris of self-inflicted disasters? If the numerous pronouncements by various factional leaders and the spate of unity moves launched by JD stalwarts are any indication, the revival attempt is on in earnest.

What began as an "exercise in restoring communication" between sworn rivals V. P. Singh and Chandra Shekhar over a lunch hosted by Orissa Chief Minister Biju Patnaik last month, has led to purposeful action, making the revival a distinct possibility. "It is our duty to bury the past and come together," says V. P. Singh. "The nation is bigger than all of us, we must respond to its call," echoes Samajwadi Janata Party (SJP) leader Chandra Shekhar. The Ajit Singh faction too, though still locked in a bitter wrangle with the JD over the latter's appeal to the Lok Sabha Speaker to disqualify the Ajit group as well as the fight for the *chakra* symbol, has called for a realignment of secular forces to avoid a division of the non-BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] vote.

However, differences persist on the nature of the envisaged third force, opposed to the Congress(I) and the BJP. Patnaik and R. K. Hegde, the JD leader from Karnataka, want a merger of their party with the SJP [Samajwadi Janata party], the JD (Ajit) and the Samajwadi Party of Mulayam Singh Yadav. But Mulayam would prefer to go it alone, although he is not averse to an electoral pact.

The SJP, the Ajit group and some JD leaders are keen on an immediate merger, while keeping the door open for Mulayam in case he changes his mind. But V. P. Singh and his supporters feel that any unity attempt without Mulayam would be meaningless, for, in Uttar Pradesh he is the most powerful leader from the non-BJP parties.

The current plan envisages a reunification of the various splinter groups of the JD, a revival of the National Front and an alliance with the Left Front and other like-minded parties. The emphasis is on developing the JD into a force in the Hindi heartland, which holds the key to power in Delhi. Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Karyana and Rajasthan alone account for 222 Lok Sabha seats.

The reunification strategists lay much store on the impact of such a move in Karnataka, where Hegde and SJP leader

H. K. Deve Gowda can make a similar unity bid. "Together we can push the BJP to a distant third place in the state," says Hegde. In the Hindi belt, the strategy seeks to consolidate the OBC and Jat vote as well as a section of the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe vote in order to become a secular alternative to the Congress(I) and the BJP. The reunified party will target those disillusioned with the Congress(I)'s economic policies and those unhappy with the BJP's communal line. For starters, the combined appeal of Chandra Shekhar, V. P. Singh, Mulayam and Ajit Singh can help the proposed front to defeat the BJP in the next Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections.

It has taken much effort, cajoling and a little pressure to bring Mulayam around to the idea of doing business with the parent party. While Patnaik and Hegde were authorised to talk to Mulayam, George Fernandes and Chandrajit Yadav who have a good rapport with him, have been trying to impress upon him the need for a joint front. "The BJP can only be defeated if all of us join hands. If we fail, the people will never forgive us," Patnaik told Mulayam when the two met last fortnight.

Some minority leaders, fearing another BJP government in Uttar Pradesh, have been urging Mulayam and V. P. Singh to come together. At a reception hosted for Mulayam by the Aligarh Muslim University Students' Union, its president said that if he or V. P. Singh wanted the support of the minorities they would have to united. The two leaders cannot afford to ignore this. A division of votes in the 1991 elections catapulted the BJP to power in the state. In 1989 the JD had won 48 of the 85 Lok Sabha seats and also formed the government in the state. The party split in 1990 and in the 1991 general elections the JD and the SJP could manage only 27 seats between them. In the Assembly poll the JD won 91 seats and the SJP 34.

Many observers fear that by its very composition such a third force would be vulnerable to the BJP's propaganda against anti-Hindu groupings. It might, therefore, help the front to align with the Congress(I). But the strategists of the proposed front, especially in Uttar Pradesh, feel that the Congress(I) has lost credibility among the Muslims and the backward classes through its handling of the Masjid and Mandal issues and is now left only with the upper caste vote, the same vote bank that the BJP is wooing.

In the event of a general election in the near future, the BJP and the Congress(I) may well end up eating into each other's votes, thereby giving the proposed combine a chance. However, in states like Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, where the real battle will be between the Congress(I) and the BJP, the combine may consider aligning with the Congress(I) to keep the secular vote from splitting.

Mulayam too has softened his stand on the unity moves somewhat, given the favourable attitude of his cadres and supporters. A month ago he had refused to have any truck with the JD at all. Now he is ready for an electoral alliance. His relentless campaigning in Uttar Pradesh and the enthusiastic response he has been getting, has proved his

importance in the state. By playing hard to get and making his rivals woo him publicly, he has virtually ensured his position as the eventual leader of the combine in the state and able to call the shots during the distribution of tickets. "Let him be the chief minister. The larger goal is to defeat the BJP," says V. P. Singh.

However, any cohesion among the leaders of the proposed front is hard to find. Contradictions and petty squabbles continue. A section within the JD feels that unity moves are aimed at side-lining V. P. Singh, given the differences which Patnaik and Hegde have with him over Mandal. Besides, JD leaders like Sharad Yadav and Reoti Raman Singh have yet to reconcile themselves to Mulayam's leadership.

The Ajit faction believes that the front should also consider the option of electoral adjustments with the Congress(I) in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh where it is not a force. But the Congress(I) remains anathema to most, especially V. P. Singh and Mulayam.

Numerous splits, a failure to fulfil the people's mandate in 1977 and 1989, and giant-sized egos place a huge question mark on the possibility of any such combine staying together. And the protagonists themselves are acutely aware of their shortcomings. "It is now or never," says Hegde. "if we fail this time, the people will never give us another chance." He is not keen to undertake a unity bid again if this one fails. Others are even more pragmatic. "It is a matter of survival," says JD spokesman Hari Kishore Singh.

To avoid a clash of egos among the leaders of various groupings, it is proposed that a committee comprising second-rung leaders should handle the day-to-day matters. Such an experiment was tried successfully in 1989. It worked largely because the politicians, who had not yet made it to the top, had a larger stake in keeping together. It has also been decided to let the future take care of itself and the question of overall leadership will be taken as and when the Lok Sabha elections are announced.

Whether the leaders will be able to rise above their petty claims and ambitions, and display the leadership qualities required to make the third force a credible alternative, remains to be seen. But what is clear is that a failure to do so could well spell their end as an electoral entity.

Congress Seen Further Weakened by Court Case
93AS0879C Calcutta THE TELEGRAPH in English
16 May 93 p 6

[Article by M. J. Akbar: "Strategies of Retreat"; italicized words as published]

[Text]

Electoral life after Ramaswami will be hard for a Congress already weakened by communalism.

It would be wrong to say there have been no victors in the messy non-impeachment of Supreme Court Justice V. Ramaswami. The clear winner is the brilliant lawyer who

defended Mr Ramaswami in front of slightly over 400 members of Parliament, Mr Kapil Sibal.

Mr Sibal has been a bright star in the legal firmament, an overcrowded sky at the best of times, for a long while. He now enters the very restricted circle of superstars. There are about half a dozen lawyers in the country who can make a difference to any argument by their sheer presence, without even opening their mouth. Mr Sibal has become a member of this club. No one else emerged from this rather sordid squabble with much to add to his or her unsteady reputation.

The Congress took what might be called a grammarian position on the issue, full of inflexions and past participles and future imperfects. It decided to issue a lengthy and, unusually, handwritten clarification of its see-saw behaviour in Parliament. As well it might. Its official decision was not Mr Ramaswami was innocent but he was not guilty enough. A sort of half-virgin. Soiled, but not violated. Deserving of a rap on the knuckles, but not expulsion from home.

The basic line was not that Mr Ramaswami's carpets, furniture and telephone calls were reasonable perks for a man sent to terrorised Punjab to deliver justice. A judge later found competent enough to merit a place on the Supreme Court. That argument might have made some sense. The Congress position was, to put it in the stark language of the law minister, Mr H. R. Bhadrachari, "Listen, we all do it, so why single out poor Mr Ramaswami?"

There is a kind of plaintive honesty in that argument. The problem is it simply will not wash anymore. As far as the people are concerned the issue is not really the ethics of Mr Ramaswami or the guidelines of the Judges Inquiry Act, but the lifestyle of the ruling class in New Delhi.

Two thousand rupees a day on telephone calls may or may not sound expensive in the capital of India. To a man for whom this adds up to two months earnings it is a startling exhibition of excess. Furniture costing Rs 600,000 may be perfectly normal in the files of the public works department. To a man for whom this is equivalent to 20 dowries it is going to sound a bit of a waste of the people's money.

You can literally imagine the statistics rolling off the tongues of political orators like Mr L. K. Advani and Mr George Fernandes. "Rs 600,000 for a dining table! So that burrasahib can eat his pilau and curry in luxury while India starves." Applause.

The subtleties of whether the auditor general in his testimony before the inquiry committee was able to draw an objective conclusions on the appropriateness of carpets in the living room and sofa sets opposite toilets sounded delicately convincing in the spellbinding environment created by Mr Sibal. It will probably be lost in the constituencies of more than 150 of the members of parliament sent to the Lok Sabha on the Congress ticket.

The only happy ones are the Congress MPs [Member of Parliament] from Tamil Nadu. They converted the issue from one of ethics and degrees of corruption to pure racism. Persecuted Tamils versus the rest of India. What

they mimed a familiar and dangerous streak of Tamil politics was off no concern to anyone in New Delhi.

The success of these MPs can be measured from the simple fact no one in Tamil Nadu had the ability to take an alternative position. Mr N. Karunanidhi's Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam [DMK] broke ranks with its high morality national partner, Mr V. P. Singh, to express satisfaction at the survival of Mr Ramaswami.

It was this simple, undiluted political pressure which persuaded the prime minister, Mr P. V. Narasimha Rao, to shift his stand on the voting in the Lok Sabha. The tempting carrot of conscience voting was dangled in front of the MPs. Then the whip was circulated around at the 12th hour that the party would abstain, thereby ensuring Mr Ramaswami's survival.

The fudge helped in other ways. Conscience as an operating principle always makes a leadership nervous. Today a judge, tomorrow a minister. The day after tomorrow? Accountability is always a tough rule for any executive authority to swallow. The buck never stops with only a judge.

Even if we ignore Mr Jaipal Reddy's sharp jibe that the Congress has become conscience proof, it will be difficult for the party to easily answer Mr Advani's latest aphorism, "First Ram cost the Congress dearly. And now it will be Ramaswami."

The policy of retreat under pressure on both emotive fronts, communalism and corruption, has cost the Congress a great deal. Interestingly the ruling party never seems to act when the problem is a bud. It waits patiently for the problem to flower, develop deep roots in the mass consciousness and become a huge tree overground.

Then when the opposition has been given enough time to identify this very visible tree as a kind of symbol of evil the Congress seems to become its only guardian. It is a strange phenomenon with no rational explanation.

The prime minister seeks to distance himself from these troublesome realities through a prolonged investment in silence. That is a strategy which can work only up to a point. In the end, as happened in the Ramaswami case, the prime minister cannot escape the responsibility of a final decision. Even a non-decision is a decision. You have to make up your mind, even about staying aloof.

The people miss nothing. They may not be able to say very much while the drama unfolds across the newspaper pages and over radio and television. But they remember who stood where and wait for their moment in the silence of a curtained booth in front of a ballot box. Thanks to the wayward calendar of Indian democracy, there are always elections around the corner.

The Congress will now go limping into electoral battle. It is injured on both issues even as a potentially catastrophic confrontation looms ahead. That is elections to the assemblies of the four states where the Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP] was punished for December 6, 1992.

Mr V. N. Gadgil, the Congress spokesman, has already indicated these elections will be held in October. Which means by November we will probably see BJP governments back in Lucknow, Bhopal, Jaipur and Shimla.

The byelection to the Lok Sabha from Patna in a few days—for some reason Mr T. N. Seshan has not cancelled this poll—will indicate where exactly the Congress stands with the people of the Hindi belt. But ask any Congressman and he will confirm the party has not a ghost of a chance in Uttar Pradesh, the biggest prize of them all. The Congress is number four in the ratings. It is a little behind the Janata Dal, while the BJP and Mr Mulayam Singh Yadav's front vie for top honours.

In Madhya Pradesh, Mr Arjun Singh is trying his best to create a semblance of unity and cohesion. It is difficult to see how even a united Congress can shrug off so many mistakes and wrong positions. The personality and credibility of Mr Bhairon Singh Shekhawat should provide the winning edge in Rajasthan.

The BJP is taking no chances. It has decided to reappoint Mr L. K. Advani its party chief so that nothing is lost by poor leadership. A limping Congress does not seem to be much of a match for an aggressive and confident BJP. You can count on the cool and devastating Mr Advani to floor the Congress with Ram and deliver the *coup de grace* with Ramaswami.

There is a growing feeling in New Delhi that the next budget session may be the last faced by the present government. That Mr Rao may not be able to delay a general election beyond next summer. Mr Manmohan Singh is trying his hardest to push through whatever reform he can within the next eight months and get it all past Parliament before the edifice totters under the pressure of circumstances.

There is the unease of potential instability in the air. A pre-election lull touched with the serious worry that even as massive a storm as another general election may not quite clear the air this time.

Confusion is not the healthiest environment in which to envelop a capital city. Once again this mood is not a function of numbers in the Lok Sabha. The Congress did not look like a minority party till last winter. It certainly did not behave like one.

On paper the present government still looks perfectly comfortable, perhaps even healthy. At no point during this long budget session did it look in any sort of problem as far as cobbling a majority was concerned. The disease has crept in below the surface. The problem is one of confidence. Once again the party feels it is out of sync with the mood of the people.

Directly elected MPs go through two broad kinds of mindsets. The first is one of undiluted relief they have managed to reach the Lok Sabha at all. It is a feeling that cuts across party lines. Everyone wants the club to simply last as long as possible. The second syndrome hits the Lok

Sabha at some point in its term: anxiety. The predominant emotion is no longer relief at victory but worry about how to return.

This is a volatile mood, dangerous for leaders. The old certainties have gone. There is no anchor left around which politicians can construct their careers. Leave aside charismatic leaders, even political parties have collapsed. There is neither a dominant personality nor the warmth of a powerful institution. There is a hollowness in Indian politics which is hard to describe.

The BJP could become the first party to come to power not because it won a great election, but because there was no one else on the battlefield.

Congress Credibility Said Destroyed by Court Case
93AS0879D Calcutta THE TELEGRAPH in English
16 May 93 p 6

[Article by Nikhil Chakravarty: "Guilty by Abstention"]

[Text]

The Congress has sacrificed its credibility by bailing out V. Ramaswami.

Few could have imagined that abstention in voting on a motion before Parliament could be so eloquent about the state of disarray of the party concerned. On May 11, at the fag end of the two debates in the Lok Sabha on the motion of impeachment of the guilty judge, Mr V. Ramaswami, there came the oral whip to the Congress members of Parliament to press the "abstention" button on the electronic panel for the recording division inside the House. With the Congress abstention, the combined Opposition could not muster the requisite strength needed for a motion of impeachment as laid down by the Constitution.

Prior to this, ruling party circles let it be known that the Congress MPs [Member of Parliament] would be given the opportunity to vote according to their conscience after listening to both sides of the case—the demand for impeachment led by Mr Somnath Chatterji and the defence counsel of the indicated judge, Mr Kapil Sibal. At that stage there was no whip on the Congress MPs except the mandate to attend. The reason for permitting free vote to the Congress MPs, as given out at that time, was that those among the MPs who came from Tamil Nadu were not prepared to impeach Mr Ramaswami on the ground that it would not be acceptable to the people of the state to which he belonged. It was argued they must not therefore be penalised for openly opposing his impeachment.

At that stage, it was thought the free vote would itself defeat the motion for impeachment, since the Congress whips did not expect the Opposition would be solidly ranged in favour of impeaching the guilty judge. When it was found that the free vote would not ensure the scuttling of the motion for impeachment—since a good number of Congress MPs favoured it—it was hurriedly decided that the Congress would abstain from voting.

What all this amounted to is the fact that the Congress was throughout uneasy about Mr Ramaswami's impeachment. As a Congress pundit confided to the author, voting for Mr Ramaswami's impeachment would have badly alienated the party in the South, particularly Tamil Nadu. The present leadership could not afford to weaken the party's base in the South given its debilitation in the North. In other words, the supreme concern of the Congress was the vote bank. Any stand against corruption could only be a subsidiary issue.

This was made clear by the Congress spokesman, Mr V. N. Gadgil who, while defending the party's abstention on the impeachment motion, tried heroically to make a rather apologetic distinction between corruption and "financial irregularities." The judge, according to him, was merely guilty of the latter.

Apart from the objection of MPs from the South, the Congress leadership has also had to take into account the indisputable fact that many ministers have been permitting themselves perks and establishment expenses much beyond prescribed limits. It was thus natural for the law minister, Mr H. R. Bharadwaj, to make an impromptu intervention that the charges against Judge Ramaswami was also applicable to the ministers themselves. In fact, this was one of the arguments unashamedly put forward by Mr Kapil Sibal in the defence argument for his client, Mr Ramaswami.

To take a wider view, it is unfair to have expected Congress MPs to indict Mr Ramaswami for making a little money on carpets and room decor when they had to defend the kickbacks on gun and submarine deals amounting to millions and implicating the top dogs of their own party. Who knows, Mr Ramaswami, if indicted, could have turned around and started spilling the beans on some of the leading lights of the Congress.

It has not however been smooth sailing for the Congress leadership. Some leaders seemed to have assured their supporters Mr Ramaswami had agreed to step down from the Supreme Court Bench on the condition he was not impeached. He was then reported to have refused to quit the bench. His argument was the Congress, not having voted against the impeachment motion, could not expect him to agree to a quid pro quo arrangement.

Meanwhile, a fairly large section of the Congress both within the parliamentary party and outside have openly come out against the whip for abstention. Not only Mr Arjun Singh's dissident group but even such loyalists as the Andhra Pradesh chief minister, Mr Vijay Bhaskar Reddy, have spoken out against the abstention vote and declared their preference for the impeachment motion.

Judging by the instant public reaction to the fate of the impeachment motion, it is now clear the Congress is held responsible for bailing out Mr Ramaswami. No matter what alibi the Congress leadership may now invent, the guilt for shielding a guilty judge has fallen squarely on Congress MPs. No doubt this will prove a heavy liability at the time of the next poll, whether for the assembly or for

Parliament. It must be disconcerting for a member of the Congress to think he or she may have to pay for shielding a guilty judge.

A seemingly plausible argument now being forwarded by the Congress is that Mr Ramaswami's financial lapses were not so serious as to call for an impeachment motion. This looks like a plea based on afterthought.

Congress leaders had ample time to thrash out that plea with those in the Opposition who had moved the impeachment motion. An arrangement could have been worked out at that stage to force Mr Ramaswami out of the bench without going through the impeachment move. But at no stage did the Congress leadership make such a move. Which means Congress bosses did not expect the impeachment motion would rally so much support as to have got through even with a free or conscience vote.

Abstention in the impeachment debate in the Lok Sabha has thus turned out a disastrous fiasco for the Congress both in Parliament and outside. It is likely the issue will come up at the Amethi All India Congress Committee session even if the party leadership tries to dodge it.

The Congress claims to be the only national party in the country. But it has no excuse to fall back on for having quietly slunk away from taking a stand on a momentous issue facing Parliament. Was it not amazing the ruling party took no clearcut position when the legislative body in the country took up for consideration an issue without precedents? Abstention in such a situation amounts to abdication of responsibility.

Congress Trying To Pass Bill To Harm BJP Electoral Prospects

93AS0879F Calcutta THE TELEGRAPH in English
16 May 93 p 1

[Article by Rakesh Joshi: "Bill To Check BJP's Misuse of Religion"]

[Text] New Delhi, May 15: The Narasimha Rao government is cautiously embarking on a strategy to tie up the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] in legal knots by enacting a comprehensive law to prevent misuse of religion for political purposes before Assembly elections are held in four former BJP-ruled states.

Though government sources say the Bill being prepared to bring political parties into the secular mainstream, it is evident from the inputs, which are going into the preparation of the proposed Bill, that it is aimed at depriving the BJP of its Ayodhya plank. For instance, the government is seeking the advice of leading political thinkers with unsailable secular credentials like Mr Madhu Limaye.

Those involved in the exercise are confident that the law will be ready by the time Assembly elections are announced in Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Himachal Pradesh, where the BJP is the main contender for the political spoils.

A draft Bill to achieve this objective has already been prepared by the law and justice ministry. There are indications it may be introduced in Parliament during the monsoon session beginning July 15. The draft Bill was one of the issues which topped the agenda at a meeting of the Union council of ministers called by the Prime Minister at his residence this morning.

At the meeting, Mr Narasimha Rao is said to have expressed the view that instead of taking a unilateral decision, the government should go in for the widest possible consultations on the object of the Bill. If possible, the law and justice ministry should prepare a note on a model Bill and circulate it among political parties.

The Union parliamentary affairs minister, Mr Vidya Charan Shukla, told THE TELEGRAPH that the government would consult all major parties, including the BJP, before introducing the Bill in Parliament. "The BJP may not support the Bill but this does not mean we will not consult them," he said. Informed sources said these consultations would in all probability take place during the inter-session period of Parliament.

The Congress(I) is confident of getting the support of the Left in order to secure a two-thirds majority in both Houses for passing the Bill in case the Constitution has to be amended.

Sources in the law ministry said the idea of enacting a law to prevent misuse of religion for political purposes first surfaced in 1991. In the run-up to the elections, secessionist leaders like Mr Simranjit Singh Mann and Mr Attinder Pal Singh had openly said they would interpret the outcome of elections in the state as a verdict on the formation of Khalistan. Subsequently, elections had to be cancelled.

The December 6 incident at Ayodhya gave a further impetus to the exercise and the Prime Minister declared that the BJP's growth was attributable to unfair means like the use of Ram as an electoral weapon. He spoke of a "level playing field where players have the same advantages and disadvantages."

Since then, the law and justice ministry has been working on a Bill to prevent parties like the BJP and Shiv Sena from exploiting religion during elections. In fact, the government was keen to introduce the Bill in Parliament during the recently-concluded Budget sessions. But circumspection and the government's preoccupation with other issues relegated this matter to the background.

Plans To Check Misuse of Religion Discussed

93AS0939A Madras THE HINDU in English 16 May 93 p 1

[Article: "Government Bid To Check Misuse of Religion"]

[Text] New Delhi, May 15. At a lengthy session chaired by the Prime Minister, Mr. P. V. Narasimha Rao, this morning the Union Council of Ministers considered a working paper on banning the misuse of religion in politics. The intent of the Government is to bring about

far-reaching changes in the legal and constitutional structure to eliminate communal, casteist and terrorist propaganda from the electoral process.

Well-placed sources suggested after the meeting that the Government proposed to have a more detailed internal discussion based on the paper presented today before remitting this subject for discussion to other political parties.

It is visualised that the monsoon session of Parliament will have before it a series of Bills to give effect to the changes the Government has in mind. It is understood that the gamut of issues pertaining to checking the misuse of religion in politics has been engaging the Government attention at the working level for the past two months.

Mr. Rao had first raised the issue at the Tirupati session of the Congress(I) in April 1992, and has had occasion to bring it up in Parliament and outside subsequently.

The paper presented today before the Council of Ministers specifically discusses how to eliminate from the political process appeals to divisive factors which aroused irrational passions running counter to the basic tenets of the Constitution. A definition of the concept of secularism is also understood to be attempted in the working draft, for the Government is said to be of the view that the definition of secularism needs to be properly clarified.

The frame of reference of the legislators envisages amending the Constitution, the Representation of the People Act as well as several internal security Acts. This comprehensive review of all existing legislations designed to eliminate the play of communalism and religion in politics is expected to lead to powers to the executive as also the Election Commission—of course, subject to review—to derecognise political organisations and associations and prevent individuals from taking part in the poll process if they make appeals to religion or caste to further their prospects.

The Representation of the People Act is expected to be amended suitably to confer jurisdiction on Returning Officers for summary inquiry into complaints which could lead to disqualification of a candidate from the election process. As the law stands now, a person violating existing legislation pertaining to misuse of religion cannot be proceeded against until the conclusion of the poll process.

The Government also hopes to push through legislation on non-registration of parties with religious names. At the moment, election laws only deal with recognition of political parties for the purpose of allotting election symbols. The Government hopes to strengthen Section 29A of the Representation of the People Act with a view to derecognising political parties violating laws that separate religion from politics. In this connection, special powers are likely to be conferred on the Election Commission, with appeals possible only before the Supreme Court.

At the moment, laws like the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act, 1967. Religious Institutions (Prevention of Misuse) Act, 1988 and Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991, are some of the instruments available,

besides provisions from the Indian Penal Code, to check misuse of religion for political ends. The objective of the exercise being undertaken by the Government is to suitably amend all such laws to prevent parties and associations from misusing caste and religion in the political process.

BJP Said Trying to 'Hinduize' Famous Temple
93AS0879B Calcutta THE TELEGRAPH in English
17 May 93 p 8

[Article by Jatindra Nayak & Deepak Mishra: "Divine Discord: The Secular Nature of the Cult of Jagannath in Orissa Is Facing the Saffron Threat"; italicized words as published]

[Text] Last year a big stone slab fell from the ceiling of the *garva griha* or the sanctum sanctorium of the temple of Lord Jagannath in Puri sending shock waves throughout Orissa. It seemed the unifying cultural symbol embodied in the temple of Jagannath was threatened with disintegration. People recalled lines from *malikas*, apocalyptic poems written by sages, which said falling of stones from the temple heralded doomsday.

The Orissa government promptly took steps to repair the 12th century temple. The three deities needed to be removed from the *ratna singhasana* or the throne. But the tasks of renovation was not so simple. Questions of intricate temple rituals, procedures of worship and historical precedents had to be considered before a decision could be arrived at on the question of repair.

After elaborate consultations with the temple administration and *sebayats* and other agencies it was decided the idols of Jagannath, Balabhadra and Suvadra would be shifted from the *garva griha* to a specially constructed temporary throne. What was actually a simple task to be left to the temple authorities, archaeologists and architects snowballed into a major struggle for monopoly over cultural symbols between the *sangh parivar* and the ruling Janata Dal in the state.

Thanks to Mr Biju Patnaik's implacable hostility towards the Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP] the saffron force was marginalised in the 1989 elections. The BJP is still a negligible force in the state assembly. With places of worship assuming increasing importance in the political life of our nation it is little wonder that for the BJP in Orissa Jagannath is as important as Ram in Ayodhya.

The BJP seized the opportunity to expand its base in the state. It projected itself as the sole custodian of the safety of the temple and asked all Hindus to assemble at the temple premises on November 29, 1992, the day the idols were to be removed. Provocative slogans like, "Jagganath's temple is falling down, when are you going to rise, O Hindu" appeared on the walls of the temple town.

On November 29 *bhajans*, *kirtans* and religious meetings were held by different organisations almost all over the state. The *gajapati*, king of Orissa, Mr Divya Singha Dev, appealed to the people to abstain from meat and alcohol to mark the occasion. The Puri municipality run by the

Janata Dal made special efforts to stop the sale of liquor and non-vegetarian food on that day. Hundreds of people gathered at the temple to take part in the historic ceremony.

The same day the Vishwa Hindu Parishad [VHP] organised a massive meeting outside the temple. A banner declared the purpose of the great Hindu *sammelan* was to ensure the safety of the temple and to construct the Ram *mandir* at Ayodhya. Leaders of both the BJP and the VHP spoke at the meeting. They demanded the temple be declared a "special project". The Centre was criticised for providing funds to the Jama Masjid but neglecting the repair of the Puri temple. Hindus were told to prepare for the *mahabharat yudh* at Ayodhya on December 6.

A Janata Dal meeting was held very near the site of the VHP meet. On behalf of the state Janata Dal a number of senior ministers, members of legislative assembly and office bearers of the party's Puri district unit undertook a day long fast at a nearby monastery. Amidst the chant of *sankirtan* or devotional songs from the rival Janata Dal camp VHP leaders exhorted Hindus to see the parallel in the fall of the stone slab from the temple ceiling and the downfall of Hindus. VHP leaders even accused the Janata Dal of trying to disrupt their meeting. The police had to intervene to stop an altercation between the two.

The Janata Dal's aim was to project the secular face of the cult of Jagannath and the role of Jagannath as the focus of Orissa's culture and consciousness—distinct from nationalist Hindu aspirations. Later, Mr Biju Patnaik made clear his party's secular and nationalist stance through broadcasts.

The *Srimandir* or the Jagannath temple has for centuries represented the tolerant face of Hinduism. Untouchables and non-Hindus are still not allowed access to this temple. But a sense of accommodation has always existed. The *rathayatra* or the chariot festival is organised because, according to popular belief, Jagannath wanted to provide an opportunity to the lesser born and non-Hindus to see and worship him. Popular myths and legends show Jagannath as a universal symbol of oneness and unity. Fables about the tribal origins of the three deities are recited all over the state. Songs written by Salabeg, the Muslim devotee of the lord, are sung with great devotion. Mohammad Sikander Alam, a noted Oriya singer, has earned fame singing these and other devotional songs.

Mr Mustafiz Ahmed, a minister in Mr Patnaik's cabinet, is a great believer in the lord. Recently he was in the forefront of an agitation demanding the live telecast of the *rathayatra*.

The VHP's, however, was not the first attempt to politicise the cult of Jagannath. History is witness to more such attempts in the reign of the *gajapati* kings. The former chief minister of Orissa, Mr J. B. Patnaik, was fond of presenting himself as a humble devotee of Jagannath. Mr Biju Patnaik went a step further and claimed a special relationship with the lord. Jagannath to him represented a unifying force for those wanting to regenerate Kalinga.

The *sang parivar* seems to counter this by laying particular emphasis on the identity of Jagannath as a Hindu deity. It is only natural in their scheme of things Oriya nationalist aspirations will be superseded by a communalist, essentially anti-Muslim interpretation of Orissa's past. A process of redefining the past along similar lines was already under way.

A cursory look at the history of the Oriya novel provides one with disturbing evidence. The historical romances written in the last decades of the 19th century and in the early decades of the 20th saw the bargi or the marauding Maratha as the chief enemy of the oppressed Oriya. In Fakirmohan Senapati's *Lachhama*, a Hindu Oriya chieftain sides with Muslims against a Hindu Maratha king and is executed by the Marathas for his treachery. But *Nilasaila*, a historical novel written in the 1960s, gives a different picture of the bargis. Here *bargi* oppression recedes and gives way to an Orissa devastated by idol smashing Muslims.

In a cultural climate dominated by this scenario communalist politicians found it easy to invoke memories of Muslim tyranny at the time the idols of the deities were being removed. Newspaper reports also dwelt on the earlier desecrations of the temple by Muslim invaders.

In its attempt to stem the tide of aggressive *Hindutva* the government of Mr Patnaik sought to articulate Oriya nationalist aspirations. The state sponsored Bali Yatra, voyage to Indonesia, is part of a programme to revive memories of the glorious maritime trade in ancient Kalinga. The recent government decision to ask the Centre for an annual grant of a million rupees to the *gajapati* king can be viewed as an attempt to prevent the BJP from hijacking this symbol of Oriya identity.

Mr Divya Singh Dev has for the first time stepped out of his purely ceremonial role and made his preference felt as a guardian of Orissa's unique religious heritage—as a living representative of Lord Jagannath. A world Oriya convention was held in Orissa last year. It stressed on the essential Oriya identity of the lord. The meet was formally opened only after a consecrated garland from the temple was received by the organisers. The convention was not an unqualified success. It is doubtful whether it has the strength to counter the *Hindutva* wave.

Legend has it centuries ago Lord Jagannath set out on a black horse to defend Oriya honour in a battle against a Southern non-Oriya king in Kanchi. This time the lord may ride to the North as a champion of Hinduism.

Election Commissioner Seen Inspiring Fear

93AS0879G Calcutta THE TELEGRAPH in English
18 May 93 p 6

[Editorial: "Poll Skirmish"]

[Text] The spectacle of Mr Beant Singh's minions desperately bulldozing foundation stones recently laid to woo the voters of Jalandhar is mirth provoking. It is a pleasure to see a government taking such extreme measures to conform to the electoral code of conduct. That even the use

and abuse of government vehicles for campaigning should come under scrutiny is a suitable reminder of what effect a stern chief election commissioner can have on even India's politicians. Mr T. N. Seshan can be faulted for many things, not the least being treading the realms of unconstitutional behaviour. But much can be forgiven at the sight of even Mr Beant Singh scrambling to immunise himself from Mr Seshan's famed independence and impetuosity of mind. Yet Mr Seshan should not detract from the subtle implications of the May 19 byelections even the schedule has already been trimmed to two Lok Sabha seats and 16 assembly seats.

Hopefully Mr Seshan will not crack his whip again. At a time when India's main political parties, through disgrace or indecision, are uncertain of themselves it is useful to turn to the common man to help clear the palpable sense of national drift in the air. Though statistically unviable the poll results will, in dribs and drabs, serve as preambles to the larger electoral contests expected at year's end. Jalandhar and Patna, the parliamentary seats, have dominated the spotlight. The Jalandhar contest strongly recalls Punjab before the trauma of Khalistanism. The competition is being the Akali Dal (Badal) and the Congress, a traditional roster of battle in that state before Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale. Mr Laloo Prasad Yadav has been using every ounce of flamboyance he can muster to polish a tarnished image in Patna. The anti-Laloo vote is dominant but sufficiently splintered so that the chief minister's candidate may yet come out smelling of roses. Mr Yadav's larger concern will be to see if his winning backward caste-Muslim electoral formula is holding up under the strain of his administrative incompetence.

Unfortunately the Congress's ability to tackle the resurgent saffron challenge will not be put to the test in the Lok Sabha fights. Local issues make assembly polls poor barometers of a nation's climate but it is hard not to give special attention to the straightforward Congress versus Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP] duels in the six Gujarat assembly seats. Definitely the BJP has invested considerable credibility in the results. The past few weeks have seen the state crisscrossed by its party heavyweights. This is after all its first trial by ballot box since Ayodhya. The assembly fights also hold out the tempting prize of unzipping the Congress-Janata Dal (Gujarat) merger that provides Mr Chimanbhai Patel his majority. While all the parties quite rightly cringe when Mr Seshan so much as clears his throat these days, in the end their real nemesis will be those nameless thousands who will be lining up outside the poll booths come Wednesday.

Partial Suspension of Ban on RSS Decreed

93AS0912A Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA in English
19 May 93 p 1

[Text] Allahabad, May 18—The Allahabad high court today suspended part of the Central government notification declaring the RSS [Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh] unlawful till the unlawful activities (prevention) tribunal confirmed the declaration and published it in the official gazette, reports PTI.

An interim order to this effect was passed by Mr Justice Anshuman Singh and Mr Justice D. P. S. Chauhan on a writ petition moved by Mr Rajendra Prasad Agarwal, a retired professor and member of the RSS [Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh] challenging the constitutional validity of the notification banning the party.

The judges said as a consequence of this order the RSS was not an unlawful association till declaration made under sub-section (1) by the Central government was not confirmed by the unlawful activities (prevention) tribunal constituted under section 3 of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act.

Hailing the order, the BJP said there was no ban on the RSS anywhere in the country as a consequence of the verdict.

In a statement issued in Delhi, the party vice-president, Mr Sunder Singh Bhandari, said the court on examining the Central government order banning the RSS found that no case existed for a ban on it and therefore struck it down.

He said the ban could become effective only if as and when the tribunal took a decision on the matter.

Inept Minister Blamed for Congress' Continuing Demise

93AS0879K Calcutta THE TELEGRAPH in English
20 May 93 p 6

[Article by Ashok Malik: "Gung Ho Governance"]

[Text]

Inept ministers like Rajesh Pilot, not corruption, threaten the Congress' position as India's natural ruling party.

Justice V. Ramaswami's aborted impeachment is not the first incident to have had observers wondering about the importance the common Indian attaches to corruption in public life. Whether probity is a decisive factor in the exercise of a citizens' political choice, whether public morality scores over public satisfaction at the quality of governance has been a matter of intense debate over the past decade.

The defeat of Rajiv Gandhi and the Congress in the 1989 general elections was to a certain extent a function of the sustained campaign conducted largely by Mr V. P. Singh and a section of the media on the Bofors scandal. As it was delivered through the ball to box, democracy's supreme symbol, this verdict is often cited as conclusive corroboration of the fact that an individual's vote is directed by his sense of right and wrong.

This is a simplistic argument. Given that one Indian party is as murky as the other, it would be optimistic or naive on the part of a voter to scrutinise his ballot paper every five years, in search of a new Caesar's wife.

Indian politics in 1993 is as tainted as it was in 1953. The development of society and the growth of the economy have increased the magnitude of corruption, not its proportional representation in the polity.

Corruption is a phenomenon which an Indian encounters at every level. He has learnt to live with it and make allowance for its presence in society. The opulence of a faraway elite disturbs him less than it is often made out to. His vote is won or lost by matters which touch him everyday—from law and order to prices to, most disturbingly, religion.

Opponents of the Congress have accused the party of condoning corruption by not voting in favour of Mr Ramaswami's impeachment in the Lok Sabha. Opposition parties, particularly the Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP], have already drawn parallels with the Bofors affair and promised to make Mr Ramaswami's trial a subject of debate in the next election. The euphoria of 1989 seems to have all but returned.

The Congress may well be corrupt and it may well draw flak on this ground the next time an election comes around. Corruption, however, is not the party's chief malaise. Inexplicably, independent India's first ruling party has forgotten how to govern.

The Congress is severely handicapped by a paucity of good administrators. The party's new "talent" is characterised by impetuosity and zeal. The pragmatism so necessary for government is missing. In recent times, the most visible member of this genre of neo-Congressmen has been Mr Rajesh Pilot.

As a result, the administrative structure so assiduously crafted by Jawaharlal Nehru's Congress generation is in danger of being subverted by its successors. This is obvious since the structure was built for men of reason. It was not built for the likes of Mr Rajesh Pilot, a man who has all the sense and sensitivity of a social climber.

A case study of Mr Pilot would be a revelation. He is as good a representative of the breed of incompetent socio-political upstarts who dominate and threaten the Congress as any. Mr Pilot has been a minister of state for some time now but his transfer to the ministry of home, internal security division, earlier this year made him particularly dangerous. Apart from giving him all the publicity he craved, it left certain vital institutions and components of the Indian nation state vulnerable to his bungling.

Among the first things Mr Pilot did on entering the home ministry was pick a quarrel with the home secretary, Mr Madhav Godbole. Ministerial hostility led Mr Godbole to resign and deprived the home ministry of its top officer.

The popular image of the Indian bureaucrat being that of a stodgy and lumbering man in love with himself, Mr Pilot emerged from the squabble with his reputation not as tarnished as it should have been. In the process, a civil servant with a fine track record was not given the treatment he deserved. "A bad workman blames his tools" is an adage one learns at school. Since bureaucrats are the instruments which the political executive uses to govern one only needs to turn to Mr Pilot to test the veracity of this adage.

The epilogue to the hounding of Mr Godbole was Mr Pilot's insistence that the defence secretary, Mr N. N.

Vohra, be shifted to the home ministry. That Mr Vohra was due for retirement fairly soon and, more importantly, that he had been in comfortable charge of the defence ministry for three years did not bother Mr Pilot.

A secretary of a ministry is at the apex of its permanent executive. He represents continuity amid the fluctuating political fortunes and faces above him. To remove him for reasons other than his competence means subjecting the ministry to an avoidable and prolonged period of readjustment. The irresponsibility in such an act is only compounded when the ministry is one as crucial as defence.

Under Mr Pilot—and he is only one of many—the old rules of administration, the traditional formulae do not apply anymore, and it is not as if they have been replaced by something more efficient.

Take Mr Pilot's handling of Jammu and Kashmir. On being given charge of the troubled state, Mr Pilot promised peace, and in next to no time, to anyone who would care to listen. All he did was remove an able governor, Mr Girish Chandra Saxena, and his ensconced team.

Mr Saxena had waged a relentless war on militancy in Kashmir. His dismissal would have made sense if he had been replaced by a person more acceptable to the militants. The hawks having done their job, the doves would not move in to commence negotiation, or so the nation thought. Instead Mr Saxena was replaced by an army general in a move which amounted to no change in policy.

For a man with an apparently limited benefit of education, Mr Pilot is amazingly interested in contemporary history. His special fascination for Rajiv Gandhi and his era, possibly born of the desire to win the blessing of the Congress' first family, has been reflected in his Kashmir policy.

Since Mr Pilot has taken over the Kashmir cell in New Delhi, a governor originally appointed by the last Gandhi has been brought back. There has also been talk of foisting Dr Farooq Abdullah as chief minister once again and ridiculous ideas like "restoring Kashmir's pre-1953 autonomy" have been bandied about.

Such foolish notions can only emanate from minds which have a poor understanding of the Kashmir problem. They needlessly add fuel to India's communal fires. Instead of trying to play Arthur James Balfour to Kashmir's Israel, Mr Pilot would do well to let the state and the country ride out the present storm.

How does one link Mr Pilot to corruption? Corruption becomes an issue of contention whenever governance slips. It is not a major electoral factor itself but an outrage over it is a symptom of a larger public disgust vis a vis the government. This was as true in 1989 as it is today. With ministers like Mr Pilot playing infantile games with the nation, public patience is bound to wear thin with the Congress again. Ramaswami may then join Bofors in the opposition's pantheon.

The weight of history and the persistence of feudalism in large parts of the country have kept alive the concept of the

mai-baap in India. Like the omnipotent and omnicompetent kings of old, the village landlord or even the big city employer is still seen as the provider. The Congress is the political inheritor of this legacy.

About four decades of Congress rule have reinforced the popular belief that only that party can rule the country. Widely seen as the mai-baap party at the grassroots, the Congress has in some ways become India's natural ruling party. This attitude is the biggest obstacle in the path of any party, even one as big and organised as the BJP, which seeks to displace the Congress.

Take the instance of Uttar Pradesh's Kalyan Singh government which gave its bureaucrats, a freer hand than previous regimes. While this was welcomed by the populace, it was also viewed as the BJP's inability to control the state machinery in a manner in which the Congress could. The archetypal Congressman's ability to twist a government official's arm is still a subject of awe in large parts of India.

Since it knew the ropes so well, the Congress continued ruling merrily, the odd 1977 apart, till the mid-Eighties. The advent of Rajiv Gandhi changed equations. Unschooled in the science of government or the art of understanding India, Rajiv Gandhi, well meaning as the cliché says he was, ran the country with the ingenuity of a block of wood. Some of his flunkies, unfortunately, are still around. To make matters worse, they have been joined by parvenus like Mr Rajesh Pilot.

The Rajiv touch, the delusions of grandeur are fairly apparent in Mr Pilot. His overenthusiasm is tackling the February 25 BJP rally in New Delhi—complete with helicopter based monitoring—led to a lurid display of "gung ho secularism" as far removed from constitutional democracy as Mahant Avaidyanath is from rational inquiry.

Acolytes like Mr Pilot have their uses for Mr P. V. Narasimha Rao and others with a manipulative bent. They are useful in allowing the prime minister to fire from over their shoulder or helping him win psychological trifles against rivals like Mr Sharad Pawar. Petty victories no doubt inflate the self-opinion of such people but cannot save them from eventual oblivion. Upon having outlived their utility, they are dumped.

Thus, Mr Pilot is destined to be an ephemeral political factor. The tragedy is not that somebody else will take his place. The tragedy is there are so many of his kind around in the Congress that the party might soon find it impossible to distinguish government meetings from the "bring your own turban" political rallies Mr Pilot is so fond of addressing.

As Congress president, Mr Narasimha Rao should be reigning in his ministerial tyros. Instead he is encouraging them to serve his narrow interest. What the party does not seem to realise is that by giving unseemly exuberance a decisive role, it is digging its own grave. Since good governance is the only effective answer to the saffron challenge, if the Congress loses the next general election it should consider blaming itself rather than the BJP.

Dissidents Detect Leadership Lacking in Policies

93AS0878E Madras INDIAN EXPRESS in English
20 May 93 p 9

[Article by Bhaskar Roy: "Rebels Flay Congress Leadership Policies"]

[Text] New Delhi—In a move of far-reaching consequence, the Congress dissidents have accused the party leadership of neglecting the party in the northern states and urged the Congressmen to take a major initiative to decide the direction and policy on their own without waiting for any directive from the Central leadership.

Addressing an open letter on behalf of the dissidents to senior party functionaries in the country, former Union minister Sheila Dikshit charged that Congress president Narasimha Rao had vacillated instead of taking on the Sangh Parivar and allowed the Congress organisation to wither in Uttar Pradesh. "The truth is in these (BJP-ruled) states, particularly in Uttar Pradesh, the Congress support base came under a sustained assault. By ducking the face ostrich-like in the sand away from this grim reality would help no one in the future. It was not only our responsibility to highlight this issue but to stress its significance, discuss it and to deliberate on the steps to overcome the crisis was our right also," she told the Congress members.

The eight-page letter, which aims at starting a new debate in the party before the AICC [All India Congress Committee] session at Amethi later this month, said that it would have been wrong on their part not to point out that the Babri demolition had impaired the traditional allegiance of the minorities towards the Congress. Dikshit said in an earlier letter to Rao, she along with the other suspended leaders had charged that on a sensitive issue like Ayodhya he had held parleys with the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party], RSS [Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh] and VHP [Vishwa Hindu Parishad] leaders but never bothered to take the party into confidence. "That too at a time when these forces were not just challenging the basic Congress ideology but plunging the entire polity and the Constitution into a crisis."

Justifying their activity before and at the Surajkund session, she said, "When the top leadership's policy of vacillation continued even two months after the shameful incidents at Ayodhya, keeping mum would have been, not only impossible but unprincipled too." Since Congress at present does not have a charismatic leader, the organisation has to be strengthened, she argued. "The success of any political party depends on two factors—either a charismatic leadership or a strong organisational structure... Today it is conceded by all that we do not have a charismatic leader among us," she said.

"We had been stressing that the party organisation should be made effective—from Delhi to the remote villages. But instead of activating the party, we were stripped of our active party membership," she said. In this depressing situation all the workers have been left with are the party organisation, principles and hard work. Significantly she suggested that in view of the coming Assembly elections, the Congress functionaries take the initiative on their own

to decide their policy and direction instead of looking forward to the central leadership. "We cannot sit idle any more. We have to take some major steps to strengthen the Congress organisation and this we have to do on our own at our own level."

The letter which reads like the dissidents' chargesheet against Rao, clearly aims at setting the tone for the forthcoming Amethi AICC session.

Commentary Recommends Cooperative Federalism

93AS0878D Madras INDIAN EXPRESS in English
20 May 93 p 8

[Article by S. R. Maheshwari, Director of the Centre for Political and Administrative Studies, New Delhi: "Coercive Federalism; Three Out of Ten People Do Not Live Under a Popular Government"; quotation marks as published]

[Text] Paradoxical though it may appear, three out of every ten Indians are presently living without a popular government in four states with a combined population of 247 millions for nearly five months. President's rule was imposed on Uttar Pradesh on December 6, 1992, and after nine days on December 16 on Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Himachal Pradesh. All these four states were ruled by the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party], which is an opposition party at the Centre. President's rule is due to end on June 6 in Uttar Pradesh and on June 15 in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Himachal Pradesh.

Article 356 relating to President's rule has been misused more often than not, and by all political parties which have come to power at the Centre. Even the first instance of imposition of President's rule was for a reason never visualised by the framers of the Constitution and thus plainly constituted its abuse. The locale was Punjab in the year 1951 when Gopi Chand Bhargava of the Congress was in power. Because the Congress was even at that time deeply involved in infighting, Bhargava was compelled to resign. In years to come, Article 356 was to witness higher frequency of its misapplication, the rulers not caring to realise that each such misuse is a blow to the federal structure of the Constitution in particular and the democratic process in general.

One may first look at President's rule in the four states of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and Rajasthan. The Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh had already tendered his resignation and President's rule in this state cannot be faulted so far as its proclamation is concerned. But Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan did not see any widespread breakdown of law and order, even remotely justifying the invoking of President's rule. Himachal Pradesh is, and was, a pacific state known for its sublime tranquillity, and in this case there was not the slightest sign of stress on law and order. Let this also be stressed that President's rule is designed to cope with cases of constitutional breakdown. If 'law and order' is the newly-discovered criterion for Central rule some other states have been faring far worse, but have been exempted from Article 356. And, when viewed from another angle,

one may doubt if there is 'law and order' left in most states in the country. India is worse than a soft state: it is a land of functioning anarchy.

The framers of the Constitution visualised Article 356 to be invoked most sparingly and to reduce its attractive capacity, the rulers were obligated to cultivate a discipline which was articulated in the Constitution itself. Whenever matters in a particular state are not happening in accordance with the letter and spirit of the Constitution, the Centre should send definite signals, and not sit idle and be a passive spectator. The Constitution has Articles 256 and 257 to serve precisely this purpose. Articles 56 and 257 empower the Centre to issue directions to a state to ensure compliance with the existing laws and, further, to restrain it from impeding or prejudicing the exercise of the executive power of the Centre.

That President's rule is not to descend like the proverbial bolt from the blue was absolutely clear in B. R. Ambedkar's mind when he told the Constituent Assembly that before Article 356 was to be brought into operation the Centre would first issue warning to the state that erred that things were not happening in the way in which they were intended to happen in the Constitution. A sounding of the alarm bell can ordinarily have a salutary effect on the apparently deviant state.

Secondly, the state Governor, who is the President's local agent, is to submit his report which is to become the basis of the Centre's action. Being the man on the spot, the Governor possesses direct and first-hand knowledge of the functioning of the government. It is of the utmost importance that this report must not be forced out of the Governor. This office unfortunately has suffered serious erosion since 1950. On some occasions, a favourable report was coaxed out of the unwilling Governor and was even obtained after President's rule had already been proclaimed. Independence of the Governor in sending the report is now mostly fictional—he dutifully submits his report when the Centre so desires.

Even the preliminary of a report could be dispensed with by the Centre. In 1977, the Janata Government imposed President's rule in as many as nine states without waiting for the Governor's report. Though this report is not a precondition, it is nevertheless very desirable and must not be made optional, for it makes presidential satisfaction more objective. It is only after all efforts by the Governor to install a stable government fail that the Centre should bring that unfortunate state under President's rule. When President's rule is proclaimed, an early poll is to be held, and this should ordinarily be done within the constitutionally stipulated period of six months.

The Central government invoked Article 356 in the case of the four states in its extreme form—it even abolished the legislative assemblies. If the legislatures were kept in 'suspended animation' the democratic process could have been reactivated without going through the electoral turmoil. The Centre has thus closed all options, even though the Sarkaria Commission on Centre-State relations (1984-87) which examined among others the theory and practice

of President's rule in India, had suggested that instead of dissolving the state legislative assembly, it should first be put under 'suspended animation' and the proclamation imposing President's rule on a state should be subject to the ratification of an inter-governmental council a body which is to be not under the direct control of the central executive.

The Centre has not cared to evolve any conventions or ground rules on the use of Article 356 even after 43 years of functioning of the Constitution. It has kept itself completely released from all constitutional obligations and decencies. And the Prime Minister ventures to think of further beefing the provision. On December 21, 1992, he suggested a review of Article 356 observing that it should be 'strengthened' as it provided for imposition of President's rule on a state only after a situation has arisen and not if a situation is likely to arise. Mere power-grabbing cannot much help the Centre. A statesmanly use of powers already within the central armoury is the need of the hour: it must choose the path of cooperative federalism and forsake coercive federalism.

Uncertainty Looms Over Kadamparai Power Plant

93AS0878B Madras *INDIAN EXPRESS* in English
20 May 93 p 5

[Article by V. Subramanian: "Uncertainty Over Kadamparai Plant"; boldface words as published]

[Text] Madras—three years have elapsed since the prestigious 400-mw Kadamparai pumped storage hydel station suffered extensive damage in a major fire accident. Uncertainty still looms large and it is not known when the power house will be fully rehabilitated. While unit No. 1 (100 mw), which did not suffer any major breakdown, was put on bars in March 1991, work on the other units is yet to get through in full swing.

The Tamil Nadu Electricity Board, which conceived the project in the late 1970s, wanted to import cables to set right unit No. 2. Facing as it was the worst ever BOP [expansion not given] crisis, the Government of India turned down the Board's plea for import licence. Though the Board wanted to obtain the high voltage 230 KV cable indigenously, no Indian manufacturer then was in a position to produce the material. At last, it succeeded in identifying a cable producer (Cable Corporation of India), who was entrusted with the task of developing a prototype of the cable. This took sometime, and the cable so produced was tested and found quite in order.

Meanwhile, the government's liberalisation policy came and with it the free imports. It would have been beneficial to the Board to import the cables in terms of both cost and time factors. But that was not to be. The Board having already finalised the contract for supply of the material could not go back. The cable required is likely to be delivered in the next couple of months, and the unit is expected to be commissioned in about a year.

Units 3 and 4 require replacement of generation transformers, and the equipment has started arriving at the site. These units are also likely to be put back on stream in the next one year.

The estimated cost of the rehabilitation scheme is Rs. 28.35 crore against which Rs. 6.65 crore had been spent up to March 1992. The revised estimate for 1992-93 was Rs. 16.26 crore. The budget estimate for 1993-94 is Rs. 5.44 crore.

First underground installation: Kadamparai electric project was the first underground installation in Tamil Nadu and the first in the country to operate on pumped storage though this will be the second pumped storage principle project, the other viewing the Nagarjunasagar pumped storage installation in Andhra Pradesh.

The project was designed, in addition to the utilisation of the natural flows from the free and diverted catchments upstream of the Kadamparai dam in the Anamalai Hills on the Western Ghats, as a pumped storage plant to meet a part of the likely deficit in the grid during peak hours. The main benefit from the project will be the supply of peak energy to the grid and preservation of the capacity value of the station during the irrigation closure season.

To suit the site conditions and terrain and reckoning also the technical and economic feasibility, the project was conceived as an underground installation with the power house and water conductor system located completely underground. "It is a marvellous engineering feat by our own people," says a senior electrical engineer of the Board. The Kadamparai project envisages pumping of water utilising the surplus grid power available during nights, and generate power during day time which will go a long way in meeting the peaking power requirements.

The project cost about Rs. 181 crore and the first unit was commissioned in March 1987 and the other three units in the next one year.

Thanks to a good hydel storage in the State, the Board has so far not had any serious problem in the current summer in meeting the grid demand. "We have, in fact, met a record peak demand of 3,900 mw on April 1," an official said.

BJP: Performance Seen Declining Per Other Parties
93AS0878A Madras *INDIAN EXPRESS* in English
20 May 93 p 1

[Article: "The Young Unhappy With BJP Veterans"; quotation marks as published]

[Text]

Poor Performance in Parliament

The second-rank BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] leaders have expressed dissatisfaction over what they perceive as the inability of the party MPs [Member of Parliament] to set the agenda in Parliament during the three-month-long budget session.

The younger leaders are planning to take up at a proper party forum the 'failure' of the senior MPs to strongly represent the party viewpoint on a host of issues of national importance in Parliament. They are worried that the unimpressive performance of the BJP parliamentary party on subjects like Chief election Commissioner T. N. Seshan's controversial decisions, various corruption cases and even the historic impeachment motion against Justice Ramaswami, is only reinforcing the impression that the BJP is a one-issue party which cannot look beyond Ayodhya.

Indeed the showing of the party members in the Upper House was not in conformity with the BJP's status as the principal Opposition party. While on issues like Seshan's sudden postponement of byelections and Verma Commission report, the members from the other Opposition blocks stole the limelight, party president Murli Manohar Joshi's budget speech failed to make any impact.

The BJP's lacklustre performance during the budget session was in sharp contrast to its domination of the proceedings in the earlier sessions in which the temple issue ironically topped the agenda. The poor BJP show this time round has invited comments from parliamentarians of other Opposition parties. Janata Dal deputy leader in Parliament S. Jaipal Reddy remarks: "The party gained strength in Parliament so suddenly that it could not live up to its new stature with a matching performance in the House. There is an acute dearth of talent among the BJP MPs." He feels that as the main Opposition party the BJP should "contemplate on this deficiency." With the December 6 demolition having a cathartic effect on the popular psyche, the BJP at the moment is groping for a new issue, the Janata Dal leader said.

The BJP leaders, however, strongly contest this view arguing that the party as a whole did a good job in terms of both teamwork as well as individual performance of the MPs. Party deputy leader in Parliament Jaswant Singh, in fact, attributes the impression of an unsatisfactory BJP performance to the "prejudices of the observers." He claims that on every issue that came to dominate Parliament the party strongly argued its case. On the impeachment motion he correctly pointed out that the issue at stake was the 'misbehaviour' of the judge and that too with dignity, Singh said.

Party vice-president and Rajya Sabha member Krishan Lal Sharma, however, agrees that as far as performance of the party members is concerned "there is always scope for improvement."

Bodo Executive Council Takes Oath of Office

93AS0915A Madras *THE HINDU* in English 21 May 93
p 1

[Text] Kokrajhar (Assam), May 20—An 18-member interim executive council of the Bodoland Autonomous Council (BAC) took oath of office at a special function here today.

The Chief Secretary, Mr. Haren Das, administered the oath of office to the members headed by the All Bodo

Student Union president, Mr. Sansuma Khungur Bwismu-
tiary. The Chief Minister, Mr. Hiteswar Saikia, was
present.

The other members of the council, which has representa-
tives from five communities other than the Bodos, are Mr.
Prem Singh Brahma, former supermo of the Bodo Militant
Force, Mr. Louis Islary, Dr. B. B. Brahma, Mr. Kushal
Basumatary, Mr. Dwijen Basumatary, Mr. N. W. Takheng
Basumatary, Mr. Biswa Kumar Brahma, Mr. Darao
Dakhreb Narzary and Mr. Uttam Brahma.

The non-Bodos in the council are Mr. Phillmon Bashe, Mr.
Samerendra Burman, Mr. Kanistha Rava, Mr. Haripad
Biswas and Mr. Abbas Ali.

Tamil Nadu: Water Project Talks With Rao On
93AS0878H Madras *INDIAN EXPRESS* in English
21 May 93 p 1

[Article: "A Requiem At Last"]

[Text] Nearly three years after it was known to have
decided that the best way to rescue the loss-burdened
Vayudoot was to merge it with the loss-making Indian
Airlines, New Delhi has decided to actually do it. If the
remedy seems worse than the disease, the Civil Aviation
Ministry couldn't apparently care less. It has made it clear
in recent months that it is more concerned with its writs,
however chimerical, being enforced than with the efficient
operation of air transportation in this country. That the
cumulative effect of all this will be detrimental to not
merely the future of Indian Airlines but also to all the
passengers dependent on it has apparently escaped the
notice of the Cabinet which is credited with the latest
decision to merge the two domestic carriers. Perhaps, the
damage could be limited if private airlines are allowed to
operate in sectors currently reserved for the two State-
owned airlines. Such a possibility looks uncertain with the
present incumbent in the Civil Aviation Ministry being
not favourably disposed towards private operators.

It is pointless to go over the reasons for Vayudoot's
pathetic collapse. In some ways it was unavoidable given
the thoughtless manner in which it was allowed to expand
and operate. With an accumulated loss of Rs 180 crore and
a negative net worth of over Rs 120 crore, Vayudoot is a fit
case for closure. Apparently, such a drastic option is not
being exercised because it will require large-scale retrench-
ment of personnel. Evidently, there were two better
options before the Government. First was to make it a
subsidiary of Air-Indian which would have helped the use
of its fleet for the international carrier's hub-and-spoke
operations. The second was to encourage private operators
to take over the Vayudoot's routes and personnel, if not its
fleet. That none would be prepared to take over the
liabilities has to be necessarily reckoned with. But clearly,
it would help the Government get the heavily losing airline
off its back, which the present option does not ensure.

Three years ago, when the Government first thought of
merging Vayudoot with Indian Airlines, the feeder airline
could not have been offered to private operators because
there were no takers. The situation has changed and

private operators are serious about their business. If nec-
essary, their operations on the trunk and regional routs can
be made subject to their serving certain feeder routes.
Some flexibility in fare fixing may also be unavoidable. In
any case, this will be better than putting the entire burden
on Indian Airlines without any matching or compensating
benefits. Ground and other facilities on routes currently
operated by Vayudoot have to be improved if private
operators are to be persuaded to step in. But this will have
to be done regardless of who runs the services.

RSS Said Establishing Rapport With Bengalis
93AS0900A Calcutta *THE STATESMAN* in English
23 May 93 p 3

[Article: "RSS Using Elections To Create Base"; boldface
words as published]

[Text] More than political victory of its ally, the BJP
[Bharatiya Janata Party], in the elections, the RSS [Rash-
triya Swayamsevak Sangh] is interested in establishing a
close rapport with the people in the State

Amid the feverish poll campaign and political mud-
slinging on the eve of panchayat elections, enthusiastic
bands of RSS workers are working hard to forge a closer
alliance with the rural mass in West Bengal.

To them, more important than the victory or defeat of its
political ally, the BJP, is the fact that the poll gives them a
chance to establish a closer rapport with hoi polloi in a
State, where it has never been able to create a formidable
base.

It is natural, therefore, that the RSS workers have fanned
out to the countryside all over the State, and are assisting
the poll campaign of the BJP.

"It's a chance to interact with the people. Why let go this
opportunity," RSS cadres say. Their poll exercises are,
therefore, limited more to small group meetings in each
village.

They prefer to stay away from the limelight because that
will only frustrate their professed aim at building up mass
contacts. The RSS leadership considers as urgent this need
to align with the masses wholeheartedly because that is the
only way in which they can throw a challenge to the mighty
cadre-base of their arch-enemy, the Marxists.

In a way, they are using the BJP to reach their end, and
workers do not dispute the point totally. "We always
distance ourselves from politics, as our goal is different
than that of a political party. In times of crisis like now
when we face a ban, we lend our support to the BJP but
more from outside. We never involve ourselves too deeply
in politics. We are a different outfit altogether," workers
claim.

They have been encouraged by the Allahabad High Court's
interim order in favour of the RSS, but the State unit has
no immediate plans to capitalize on the judgment to
ensure speedy resumption of its activities in this part of the

country. "The order is applicable to Uttar Pradesh alone and not to other States, leaving us to a position of status quo," leaders say.

Instead, the leadership is eagerly awaiting the outcome of the case put before the Central Tribunal (dealing with Unlawful Activities, Prevention Act, 1967) on behalf of the RSS challenging the ban order served on it by the Centre last December.

The Tribunal, a judicial body, is slated to give its verdict on the issue on June 10. "That will be important and will determine our future course of action," leaders say.

In the intervening period, the RSS workers have been asked to work "according to their conscience," without immersing themselves in politics. To keep up the process of involvement with the mass, the RSS leadership has plans to undertake vigorous socio-cultural activity in phases in the rural belt. But only when the dust settles over the panchayat elections.

Weakening of Congress in Bihar Viewed

93AS0898A Bombay *THE TIMES OF INDIA* in English
26 May 93 p 14

[Text] So endemic is violence to Bihar's political scene that despite the Chief Election Commissioner, Mr T.N. Seshan's best efforts to ensure a free and peaceful poll in the Patna Lok Sabha constituency, the authenticity of the impressive victory notched up by the Janata Dal [JD] candidate will continue to be questioned by his rivals. Yet it will be downright churlish and bad sportsmanship to clamour for countermanding the result; it is to be hoped that Mr Seshan will not want to do for the non-Janata Dal parties what they could not achieve for themselves at the hustings. After Mr Laloo Prasad Yadav went out of his way to stake his prestige and popularity in the contest, almost converting the Patna election into a referendum on his chief ministership, there can be little doubt that he remains the most innovative political personality in Bihar. While the rest of India may find his invocation of the caste antagonisms and loyalties to garner electoral support distasteful, Bihar apparently continues to be his fiefdom. And if to the victory in Patna can be added the Janata Dal's triumph in Garhwa and of the Janata Dal-backed CPI [Communist Party of India] candidate's success in the Goh assembly byelections, the political dominance of chief minister will be seen to be complete.

But more significant than a reaffirmation of Mr Yadav's clout and influence is the relegation of the Congress to the position of a third force, if not fourth, in Bihar politics. Congressmen may cry themselves hoarse about the chief minister's politics of intimidation but the fact of the matter is that the party does not seem to know how to cobble together a winning electoral combination in a society deeply divided along caste lines. No less significant is the BJP's failure to move in decisively with its Hindutva appeal. Though the party is likely to take comfort from its second position in Patna, it is obvious that the Bihar electorate is yet to feel sufficiently enthused by the presumed integrative attraction of Hindutva to rise above its

caste preoccupations. The BJP's inability to counter Mr Yadav will certainly make the party's arithmetic of capturing power in New Delhi a little more complicated. To that extent, Mr Yadav has proved his point that the Patna election was the most important event since December 6, and insisted on fielding a Janata Dal candidate even if it means breaking the party's alliance with the CPI. By defeating the BJP squarely Mr Yadav has given its leadership some food for thought. The Congress, meanwhile, can well and truly go into mourning in Bihar.

Chavan Chided, Political Lapses Pointed Out

93AS0898C Madras *INDIAN EXPRESS* in English
28 May 93 p 8

[Text] The Union Home Minister, S.B. Chavan, has put his foot in his mouth so often that there was good reason to take his openly expressed doubts about the bona fides of the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister in combating the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] as the latest instances of this habit. This impression has now been fully confirmed by Jayalalitha's reply to Chavan which she has released to the press. The letter dated May 26, makes mincemeat of the Union Home Minister's statements. It reveals that he had talked to her on May 21 on phone and made inquiries about the escape of some LTTE detenues from police custody. She promised to send him a detailed report in this connection. But the very next day Chavan's damaging remarks about her appeared in the press. Why is it that the Home Minister did not think it decent and prudent to wait for her report before publicly casting aspersions on her? And that, too, in relation to so sensitive a subject as checking the dangerous activities of LTTE?

The Tamil Nadu Chief Minister's letter makes it abundantly clear that she had regarded the escape of the TADA [Terrorism and Disruptive Activities] accused, Kirupan, as an extremely serious lapse. She also took immediate and stern action against the police officers concerned and even announced her decision to institute an inquiry by a High Court judge into the incident. What she has had to say about Chavan's doubts about her attitude to LTTE—which is believed to have kept her high on its hit list—puts him in worse light. Besides, escape of hardened criminals from police custody and even jails is by no means a rare event in any state. The question essentially is one of strengthening the police machinery. Yet, when a police lapse took place in Tamil Nadu, Chavan apparently received such a rude jolt that he thought nothing of questioning the Chief Minister's intentions. Perhaps he has been unduly influenced by her state Congress critics' wild charges against her.

Could it be that the whole thing was part of a deliberate bid by the Centre to create an atmosphere conducive to imposition of President's rule in the state? If so, Chavan's role is doubly reprehensible not because of moral considerations—after all political skulduggery takes unsuspected forms and no party can reasonably claim to be above it—but because it has grave security implications. LTTE's network in Tamil Nadu is far from being busted. The challenge requires the most effective possible coordination

between the Central and state security agencies involved in the task. The Union Home Minister is supposed to take this responsibility seriously. But Chavan is doing just the opposite. It is time the Prime Minister tried to ascertain whether his Home Minister's foot-and-mouth disease is incurable. Everyone knows how it caused grave embarrassment to the security agencies and complicated their work needlessly even in Punjab and Kashmir from time to time.

Need for Left of Center, Non-Congress Party Stressed

93AS0898D Madras *INDIAN EXPRESS* in English
28 May 93 p 8

[Text] The Chief Election Commissioner, T.N. Seshan, has only himself to blame if the inordinate delay in formally announcing the result of the Patna Lok Sabha by-election spawns suspicion about his intentions. There were allegations of rigging in Patna and repolling was ordered in 75 booths. But similar charges notwithstanding, the result of the Jalandhar Lok Sabha by-poll was announced promptly. In the case of Patna there can be no doubt that the Janata Dal candidate, Ram Kripal Yadav, would have won even in less controversial circumstances though his margin over his nearest rival, S.N. Srivastava of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), might not have been as large as it has been. This as well as the Janata Dal's [JD] victory in the Garwha assembly by-election in the state, underline the basic political reality that whatever its failings, Laloo Prasad Yadav's government enjoys mass support in Bihar, particularly among the backward castes and the minorities. The Communist Party of India (CPI), whose candidate was routed in the constituency, has to recognise this fact and also that it must cast its lot with the Janata Dal and the latter's allies if it has to have a political future in Bihar.

The Janata Dal has not held its ground in Bihar alone. It has retained the Hindol assembly constituency in Orissa by an impressive margin. Results in the two states suggest that despite the BJP's remarkable surge in Gujarat and Karnataka and to some extent in Bihar where it seems to have emerged as the principal challenger to the Janata Dal, there is political space in the country for a left-of-centre non-Congress party with strong secular and egalitarian credentials. This space will become larger with the incorporation of some of the ground which the Congress holds now if the latter's political decline, which has been further highlighted by its candidate losing his deposit in Patna, continues unchecked.

The Janata Dal, however, will have to transform itself if it wants to retain its own ground and also capture what is lost by the Congress. Holding its own in Bihar and Orissa will not be enough if it wants to emerge as a force at the national level. It has to regain its lost position in states like Uttar Pradesh and Karnataka, which it can only do if it is able to end the endemic factional warfare and leadership squabbles which haunt it. It has also to win back people like Mulayam Singh Yadav and Ajit Singh who have left its fold. On their part, these leaders, who have not always covered themselves with glory in their political conduct, will have to be more accommodating, as will have to be

leaders like V.P. Singh. Also, the party must widen its political base by not harping on the Mandal theme alone but taking up other economic, social and political issues of national relevance, and re-establish its rapport with the intelligentsia. This will not be an easy thing to do. But then success in politics does not generally come easily.

Uttar Pradesh: Janata Dal Options Viewed

93AS0898E Madras *INDIAN EXPRESS* in English
28 May 93 p 8

[Article by Amrita Abraham; quotation marks as published]

[Text] Inside the fragmentary remains of the Janata Dal [JD] of 1989 is a third force struggling to be reborn. As the mid-wives congregate, their hands stained by their own assaults on the earlier entity, few people expect anything like a real political alternative to emerge. How can the electorate be willing to court disaster for a third time? Can these leaders put aside their monumental ambitions long enough to agree on anything?

Like it or not, the fractious remnants of the former Janata Dal are the only possible challengers of the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] in Uttar Pradesh [UP] today. The Congress has just bought itself six more months which seem likely to be wasted like the first six months. It has neither the organisational strength nor a coherent platform to take on the BJP strongly. Desperation often makes realists of us all. As the desperate need to survive has led to meetings between former Janata Dal leaders who until yesterday would not have exchanged the time of day, so those who feel unhappy with the BJP and have given up hope on the Congress may be prepared to lower their expectations and look for a centrist formation voting for which will register, at the least, as a protest.

A survival strategy in response to the inroads made in UP by the BJP requires of V.P. Singh, Mulayam Singh Yadav, Chandra Shekhar and Ajit Singh, at the minimum, that they do not cancel each other out at the elections. Although there has been some talk of unity after Biju Patnaik and Ramakrishna Hegde had talks with Chandra Shekhar, Ajit Singh and Mulayam Singh Yadav, the emergence of a unified party is highly improbable given the personalities involved. However, if they can agree on seat adjustments in UP it could throw open an election which most pundits say the BJP has sewn up.

There is a large area of common ground between the Janata Dal factions in anti-communalism, Mandal and the long tradition of anti-Congressism in UP which these parties claim to inherit. While the first two platforms make possible an alliance of the backward castes, Muslims and Harijans, it is not clear what shape anti-Congressism will finally take. Anti-Congressism has had to be redefined from time to time and each election has required the Congress party to cast as a different sort of villain: a Brahmin-dominated upper-class party in the early years, anti-farmer in Charan Singh's day, fountain-head of corruption after Bofors and today as a party soft on Hindutva and pro-multinationals.

While a new twist between now and the elections may call for the Congress to be painted with a different brush, for the Janata Dal (B) and Mulayam Singh Yadav's party bracketing with the BJP as a communal party offers the most promise and has the virtue of simplicity in a battle fought on two fronts. Both these constituents of the former undivided Janata Dal take a sharp line on communalism. The Janata Dal (B), thanks to V.P. Singh and some former socialists for whom it is a matter of conviction to oppose the BJP, has found it proper, for instance, despite some internal differences, to suspend the Bombay unit of the party after it came to an understanding with the BJP and Shiv Sena on the mayoral elections. For Mulayam Singh who has a stronger claim just now to the Muslim vote in UP than the Congress it is important to project a strong anti-communal stance. From their bases among the Mandal castes Mulayam Singh Yadav and Laloo Prasad Yadav are wooing the Harijans, the former in alliance with the Bahujan Samaj Party [BSP] and the Bihar Chief Minister by active courting of Harijan leaders whom he is encouraging to become mahants of temples. These are moves on the surface towards a broad coalition of the backwards, Muslims and Harijans, a variant of the kind of alliances Congress leaders sought, with success for a while, in Karnataka and Gujarat, in the 1960s and 70s.

Janata Dal leaders have found that it is not enough to designate the BJP communal. Believing that communal polarisation since December 6 has not left the Mandal castes untouched, some Janata Dal leaders are increasingly trying to characterise the BJP terms as a Brahmin party, a slot in the Opposition's demonopoly hitherto reserved for the Congress.

There are seemingly logical grounds for the coming together of Janata Dal factions as a sort of confederation of Uttar Pradesh chieftains to contest elections. It would be too much to expect them to submerge their individual identities just now. But on what basis would territory be shared? Can a stable coalition government be formed in the event of the confederation winning the largest number of seats? Since the smallest parties have a disproportionate amount of power in coalitions, the number of seats won is not likely to be a workable principle by itself for power-sharing because it does not preclude, as we have seen, destabilising jostling for position among leaders. A rota system of leadership and agreement in advance on sharing office have been tried by coalition parties in some countries and there are advantages in such arrangements for the Janata Dal factions too, given their broadly similar platforms. If key cabinet posts are agreed in advance it might make for less post-election mischief and also make seat adjustments less contentious. If, for argument's sake, Kanshi Ram knows he will be Home Minister whether he gets 20 or 22 seats he might be more willing to concede two marginal BSP seats to another chieftain who has a better chance of winning them.

The essential risk for the Janata Dal factions in aiming for no more than a coalition of like-minded parties is that the Congress could well be the unintended beneficiary. The less the Congress looks like a winner the more Mulayam

Singh Yadav and the Janata Dal (B) will be tempted to concentrate their anti-communalism fire on the BJP. The Congress would then end up having its work of countering the BJP done for it and since, almost by definition, the Congress will always be many things to many people—and today is pro and anti-Mandal at the same time, simultaneously for and against a temple at Ayodhya—it could emerge at a late stage from its stupor to become the second single largest party in UP bidding to form a coalition government with some of the chieftains of the third force. On the other hand, if the Congress is characterised strongly in Janata Dal campaigns as a communal party, it becomes a serious embarrassment for the Mulayam-Janata Dal combine to ally with a 'communal' Congress if the need arises after the election.

Given the complications of the Congress factor, one can see why some Janata Dal leaders are so taken with the idea of a dramatic exit from the Congress like Jagjivan Ram's in the 1970s and V.P. Singh's in the 1980s, exits that simultaneously damaged Congress credibility and boosted non-Congress prospects. But waiting for Mr Arjun Singh could mean waiting right through the UP election and beyond and is no answer to the dilemma.

RSS Think-Tank Called 'Shadowy,' Seen Powerful
93AS0900C Calcutta *THE TELEGRAPH* in English
29 May 93 p 8

[Article by Rajeew Deshpande: "The Saffron Parivar's Shadowy Think-Tank"; quotation marks and italicized words as published]

[Text] They are quiet, nondescript men who could be passed by without as much as a second glance. In fact, there is little to distinguish the handful of men, who form the inner ring of the RSS [Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh] decision-making apparatus, from any ordinary citizen.

As is the case, many of the little-known shadowy figures who preside over the fortunes of the Hindutva brigade are trained in the law and medicine professions. Yet, the prospect of a prosperous career in the courts is not what drives these men to see a saffron future for the country.

"Those of us who are the planners and strategists for the organisation do not wish to be identified as public figures. That is why such men do not hold posts in the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] and are not MPs. The first principle is a certain anonymity," said an RSS pracharak.

United in their single-minded resolve to achieve a final victory for the patient political ideology of the RSS, a small coterie of men with different backgrounds have dedicated their lives to further Dr Keshavrao Baliram Hegdewar's dream. "The RSS does not view things in an immediate perspective, that is why we can take setbacks in our stride," said an insider.

For some members of the charmed circle, such as Mr Baburao Vaidya, the earliest memories of childhood are linked with the RSS. In his seventies, Mr Vaidya is the

closest aide and adviser to the organisation's chief, Mr Balasaheb Deoras. Like others of his ilk, he is outside the RSS working committee.

In fact, while the working committee members—Prof. Rajendra Singh, Mr H. V. Seshadri and Mr K. V. Sudarshan—figure in news reports, they would be quite hamstrung without the vital inputs provided by the half-a-dozen aides.

Mr Vaidya is easily the most important of these assistants. He wields enormous influence as the Sarsanghachalak's right-hand man. Particularly in view of his ill health, Mr Deoras has come to depend more on his aide to gather data and feedback.

Respected within the organisation for his political insight, Mr Vaidya also looks after the publications of the RSS from Nagpur. This is a key responsibility as the pamphlets and books are gospel for the thousands of swayamsevak.

The swayamsevak network is the backbone of the RSS. It provides the willing pool of workers from among whom future leaders are groomed. Nagpur-based Dr A. B. Thatte, also in his seventies, is responsible for keeping this huge machine well-oiled. As the Akhil Bharatiya Pracharak Pramukh, he has unrivalled knowledge of the RSS which does not maintain many written records.

The nature of Dr Thatte's job keeps him on the move and in touch with various workers. He supervises various projects that the RSS assigns to its cadres. An important part of his job is to spot talent which can be used in specific areas.

The other members are relatively younger in their late forties and early fifties. One such member is Mr Madan Das who is based at the New Delhi headquarters of the RSS at Jhandewalan. He assists Dr Thatte and is taking over his mentor's touring responsibilities. While Prof. Rajendra Singh has a high-profile presence at Jhandewalan, Mr Das avoids the limelight.

In this age group, are the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad chief, Mr Bal Apte, in Bombay and two other leaders, Mr Sujit Dhar and Mr Srikrishna Motlag, in Calcutta. While Mr Dhar is a social worker, Mr Motlag is in charge of ideological projecting and training.

Consultations between these various leaders are the basic process by which the RSS decision-making apparatus works. Whenever they meet, the topics of the discussions, which are ongoing, could range from the working of state units to national politics.

Recently, such discussions led the RSS leadership to arrive at the conclusion that the Ram Janmabhoomi issue is now of limited utility and another issue, such as *swadeshi*, should be raised in two or three years.

"Not only policy decisions but deputations of RSS men to various organisations are also discussed," an insider said. In the past, the monitoring of the pracharak system has seen the transfer of Mr Govindacharya to the BJP and Mr Ashok Singhal to the VHP [Vishwa Hindu Parishad].

Another example of this process was seen in the rath yatra undertaken by Mr Murli Manohar Joshi and Mr L. K. Advani in the runup to the December 6 kar seva. An atmosphere of gloom had prevailed in the party in the wake of the restrictions imposed on the kar seva. "It was felt that the Ram Janmabhoomi issue was closed forever. Then someone had the brainwave of these yatra to surcharge the atmosphere," a source said.

The fact that none of the central committee members is either overburdened or indispensable proves the strength of the loose yet closely-coordinated manner of the RSS think tank. The low-profile of the functionaries is perfectly suited to the traditional RSS training which puts the organisation above all else.

All India Radio Said Giving Airtime to Hindu Leader
93AS0900B Calcutta THE TELEGRAPH in English
29 May 93 p 7

[Article: "Sai Baba Pradesh"]

[Text] Congressmen and senior government officials in Andhra have taken to greeting each other with the words, "Jai Sai Ram." One story is this is a response to the BJP's [Bharatiya Janata Party] "Jai Siya Ram." The other is that this is just one more sign of the growing influence of godman Sai Baba. Sathya Sai Baba has fellow Andhraite, P. V. Narasimha Rao, among his followers and being identified as one of his devotees it seems does wonders for the careers of IPS [Indian Police Service] and IAS [Indian Administrative Service] officers in the capital. Congressmen of the state have also found it beneficial to seek salvation with the guru of Puttaparthi.

The All India Radio in the state now broadcasts a daily 15 minute pravachan of the preachings of the Afro-haired godman. This somewhat questionable act of giving a Hindu preacher airtime on state run media is sanctified from the top. The 15 minutes are especially taped and sent to the prime minister's office in New Delhi every day.

Postponed Congress (I) Meet Scheduled for October
93AS0910A Hyderabad DECCAN CHRONICLE
in English 29 May 93 p 1

[Italicized words as published]

[Text] New Delhi, May 28—Consequent to the postponement of the two-day All India Congress Committee (AICC) session and the national convention on Panchayati Raj, which were scheduled to be held at Amethi from Saturday, the Congress today decided to start a nation-wide Panchayati Raj *abhiyan* immediately which would culminate in a national convention on Panchayati Raj at Amethi in October, when the postponed AICC session will be held.

The Congress Working Committee (CWC), which met here today, decided that as the first step of the nationwide campaign for the Panchayati Raj system, State-level conventions would be held. The Congress spokesman, Mr V.

N. Gadgil, who briefed newsmen on the CWC decisions, said the Pradesh Congress Committees (PCCs) might decide to hold district, divisional and regional-level conventions on Panchayati Raj. All these conventions, he said, would conclude at the national convention at Amethi in October.

The two-day AICC session and the national convention on Panchayati Raj, which were scheduled to begin on Saturday at Amethi, were postponed following extensive damage caused to the pandals and other infrastructure due to the thunderstorm and heavy downpour which lashed the venue on Thursday afternoon. Besides the main pandal, where the session was to take place, the compartments where the Prime Minister and other senior leaders were to stay and the media centre were severely affected.

Mr Gadgil said the CWC, which met for more than three hours on Friday morning and attended by all its members except Mr N. D. Tiwari, Mr Gegong Apang and Mr Dorendra Singh, decided that while organising the countrywide conventions, maximum participation by women, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes and other weaker sections of society would be ensured.

He said a time table for the State-level conventions was being prepared. Some of the State conventions would be attended by the Congress president and Prime Minister, Mr P. V. Narasimha Rao. The CWC was also attended by the Minister for Urban Development, Mrs Sheila Kaul, Mr Rameshwar Thakur and Mr Mani Shanker Aiyar, who are not members but were invited because of their association with the Panchayati Raj and Nagarpalika Bills.

Mr Gadgil said that the CWC meetings, henceforth, would be held in the States whenever possible. This was to facilitate greater regional participation in the highest decision making body of the party. In accordance with this, he said, it has been decided to hold the next meeting at Bhopal, the date for which has not been decided.

Muslim Communalism Said Paraded As Secularism
93AS0899A New Delhi INDIAN EXPRESS in English
30 May 93 pp 11-12

[Article by Tavleen Singh: "Time's Up To Expose Unacceptable Side of Muslim Communalism"; quotation marks as published]

[Text] In the classification that the RSS [Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh] uses to distinguish friend from foe I am in that lowest of low categories: a Western educated, English speaking 'secularist'. In RSS demonology the only thing worse anyone can be is the Shahi Imam or Babar himself. I am saying this by way of introduction because it is, alas, necessary in our ancient and 'secular' land to have impeccable credentials if you want to criticize things Islamic. Even if you happen to feel, as I do, that Islamic fundamentalism is as repugnant as the Bajrang Dal is loathsome, it is easier to attack our trishul-bearing mosuque-breakers than to say anything against our Muslim brethren. This is a rather poor reflection on Indian secularism and that is the point.

Ever since we saw the ugly underside of Hindutva in the faces of the demolition squads that performed victory dances on the ruins of the Babri Masjid we have, oddly enough, become even more accepting of the unacceptable side of Muslim communalism. This is dangerous and will, on the long run, harm Indian Muslims.

It is, for instance, politically incorrect to point out that the bomb blasts in Bombay were the work of misguided Muslims who felt that killing more than 350 innocent people was the best way to teach the forces of Hindutva a lesson.

It is even more politically incorrect to mention that this act of communal terrorism has nearly as much support from lower-middle class Muslims as the demolition of the Babri Masjid had from lower middle class Hindus. In fact, especially among certain circles in Bombay, it is easier to meet Muslims who believe that the bombings were a good thing because they amounted to a 'moonh tod jawab,' [fitting answer] to Hindu fundamentalism than to meet Muslims who disapprove of what happened.

An equally disturbing number of Muslims now talk openly of how the community must learn to defend itself, whichever way it can, because the police can no longer be relied on. A remark that I have, of late, heard far too often is: "Next time there are riots we just need the police to stay out of the way and we will be able to fix the Hindus."

Muslim leaders must know that this kind of mood is developing in the community but you almost never hear any condemnation of it. On the contrary, magazines and newspapers that seek to represent the Muslim viewpoint still whine endlessly on Hindu fundamentalism and about such things as Kashmiri Muslims being butchered in Kashmir and Haj facilities being denied to Kashmiris.

In the immediate wake of the events in Ayodhya there had been some hope that Muslims would begin to reject leaders who had brought the community to the brink of disaster but, as time has gone by, this hope has been belied. It is true that the Babri Masjid Action Committee [BMAC] finds itself in some disgrace but this is as far as the transformation has gone as can be seen from that fact when the Bombay Police tried to bring peace to the city by banning all prayers in public it was the Muslims, and not the Shiv Sena, who objected. Namaz in the streets should never have been permitted. It was allowed, as usual, because the Congress party wanted to prove that it was 'genuinely secular' and that secularism meant that Bombay's Muslims could, every Friday, block entire streets because it was time to remember Allah. The Shiv Sena responded, when the time was right, by insisting that by the same logic they should also be allowed to hold 'maha aartis' that could block traffic and close down busy thoroughfares. The result, as we know, were riots and the Bombay police was entirely right in deciding that none of this nonsense should be allowed. The Shiv Sena agreed immediately to call off their prayers but the Muslim Ulema (clergy), bred on Congress secularism, protested.

How could namaz be stopped? There were court orders, they said, and permissions from many Congress governments beginning with the time when the honorable Home minister, S.B. Chavan, was chief minister of Maharashtra. By taking this position they achieved the impossible, they made the Shiv Sena look good. Is this what Muslims want?

As a good 'secularist' the word appeasement, so liberally used by the BJP and its friends, gets on my last nerve. The vast majority of Muslims in this country have certainly never been appeased by anyone. They tend to be the poorest of the poor, living in filthy, crowded in the worst ghettos. Their children find it harder than almost any other Indians to get jobs, for ethnic and educational reasons, and life for them has barely improved in the past 40 years. So, appeasement is certainly not the right word. What is, however, going on, with the compliance and support of Muslim leaders, is an attempt to pass Muslim communalism off as secularism. This has to stop if Muslims want to curb rise of Hindu fundamentalism in post-Ayodhya India.

For a start they must accept that if India is not a Hindu rashtra it is also not an Islamic country so Muslims cannot be allowed to do things that Hindus cannot.

So, if Hindus are not going to be allowed to pray in the streets of Bombay then it is about time that Muslims accepted praying indoors as well. If supporting the Shiv Sena is bad, so also is any attempt to justify the actions of the killers who were responsible for the bomb blasts.

There are other things that Muslims need to start thinking seriously about unless they secretly approve of the increasing popularity of rabidly communal groups like the Shiv Sena and Bajrang Dal. There is, for instance, the question of Bangladeshi immigrants. Even the richest, most developed countries in the world do not allow millions of illegal immigrants to pour across their borders. Why should India be expected to turn a blind eye? And, if it does, is it any surprise that parties like the BJP should not make full political capital out of the millions of Bangladeshi Muslims who sneak in? Is it any surprise that they should make communal differences by insisting that only Hindus be allowed in?

Then there is the Kerala government's inexplicable and utterly reprehensible decision to allow a holiday on Fridays in yet another misguided attempt to make Muslims happy. If there are Muslim leaders who are condemning this kind of thing they are not doing so loudly enough.

And, what of the famous Haj flights and the unacceptable sight of 'secular' Congress ministers falling over themselves trying to be photographed with Muslims en route to Haj? This may not be appeasement but it is certainly perverted secularism. If Muslims do not want India to become a Hindu rashtra they must start getting out of the mental ghetto they have wallowed in since Partition.

BJP Claimed Party of Nationalism, Not Fascism

93AS0899B Bombay SUNDAY OBSERVER in English
30 May 93 p 11

[Article by K.R. Malkani: "BJP Detractors Coin New Meaning for Fascism"; quotation marks as published]

[Text] During the Emergency, Oxford don David Selbourne had an interesting encounter with Indira Gandhi. He was one of the very few scholars who were able to meet her during that dark period of India's history. In the course of the conversation, David asked her what she meant by dubbing the RSS [Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh] 'fascist.' She said the RSS were fascists because they were spreading rumors about her. And that, wrote David in his book on the Emergency, was "a very novel definition of fascism."

Today, the general perception in the country is that the Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP] will win the next general election. However, in their desperate bid to somehow avert that course of events, the BJP's detractors have been hurling a variety of abuses at us. The old abuse of our being 'communal' impresses only the abusers. Therefore, they have dug up an abuse of World War II vintage: 'fascist'. However, the problem with that is that it just does not register on the Indian mind. It has no relevance to the Indian situation. For the pluralist Hindu can be no more 'fascist' than a communist can be a democrat.

These friends point to how the swayamsevak stands in a straight line or sit around in a circle to sing in chorus and say: is this not fascism? Well, if standing straight, walking straight, looking straight, thinking straight, talking straight is fascism, then we are fascists—and proud of it.

Coming to politics and programs, is there a single position of the party that comes anywhere near fascism? The BJP wants the 'temporary and transitional' Article 370 of the Constitution deleted, so that all states can be equal in the Indian Union. Is that fascism?

Article 44 of the Constitution says that we should have a uniform civil code in the country. The BJP wants that article implemented. Is that fascism?

Article 30 of the Constitution allows religious minorities to run their own schools with government aid. The BJP wants this facility extended to various sects of Hindu society also. Is that fascism?

The BJP wants the present toothless Minorities Commission to be replaced by a strong Human Rights Commission. Is that fascism?

The BJP wants millions of illegal immigrants from Bangladesh to go home (The PM wants it too). Is it fascist to uphold the citizenship laws of the country?

For several years, the BJP has demanded an end to the permit-license-quota raj. Belatedly, the Congress has come to the same conclusion. But there is one big difference: the BJP wants internal liberalization first and fast, and it wants to hasten slowly with external liberalization. Is it fascist to protect and promote vital national economic interests?

The BJP wants India to go nuclear. The reasons are many: nuclear arms are less expensive than conventional arms; scientific and technological progress are linked to nuclear science; atoms are going to be big business in the years to come. Is it fascist to protect all these vital national interests?

But it will be asked: How about Ayodhya? How about December 6?

Well, something happened in Ayodhya on December 6. It was no part of our plan. We wanted the disputed, depalidated structure to go. But we wanted it gone through the due process of law. Why would we pull it down—and, in the process, have our four governments pulled down—when things were slowly, but surely, going our way? The December 6 incident is a mystery wrapped in a riddle inside an enigma. I hope it is unraveled one of these days—or years.

As far as the violence in Bombay is concerned, even the PM has said it had nothing to do with Ayodhya; and not even our worst detractors have accused the BJP of this violence.

However, as for the Hindu claim to the Ram Janmasthan, we are all for it. We have asked for at least symbolic righting of historic wrongs. Even Arnold Toynbee, the greatest modern historian, wanted major mandirs-turned-mosques to be restored as temples, to remove the eyesores poisoning Hindu-Muslim relations. Was Toynbee too fascist?

So much for politics and programs. How about our performance? In independent India, Congress governments have banned the RSS three times and harassed the Bharatiya Jana Sangh/BJP all the time. We have fought the Congress' cold and hot wars firmly—but peacefully and democratically. As soon as the Jana Sangh was born, Nehru said he would crush it. Jana Sangh president Shyama Prasad Mookerji responded: "We will crush this crushing mentality." That remains our position to this day.

In 1949 and again in 1977, the Congress had to eat humble pie and lift the ban on RSS unconditionally. And there is no doubt that the third ban will also go to the way of its predecessors.

At the end of the first ban, Guruji Golwalkar had said that if our teeth per chance bite into our tongue, we don't go about gnashing our teeth or breaking them; we suffer the pain in silence. He therefore appealed to swayamsevakhs not to have any hard feelings for Congressmen, but to forgive and forget. And that is what we do.

The second ban in 1975-77 was, if anything, even more cruel. Eighty percent of those arrested during the Emergency belonged to the Sangh Parivar. They faced the challenge firmly, but peacefully. Describing the underground movement in India as the 'only non-Left revolutionary force in the world,' THE ECONOMIST said in its December 4, 1976 issue. 'It is dominated by tens of thousands of RSS cadres, though more and more young recruits are coming... and its platform at the moment has only one plank: to bring democracy back to India.'

THE ECONOMIST added: "The movement is getting full support from the people—it is being financed by 60,000 to 70,000 small contributions; some 30,000 men on the wanted list are given full protection and not a single one has been caught because of an informer; clandestine literature is being printed and delivered all over India. Political consciousness thus raised, a spark can set the revolutionary prairie afire."

Even A.K. Gopalan, the late Marxist MP, was moved to say about the RSS in 1976: "There is some lofty ideal which is capable of inspiring such deeds of bravery and stamina for sacrifices."

Basically these accusations come from three quarters—Congressmen, communists and some columnists. And the reasons for their opposition are also clear. Since 1947, Congressmen have virtually run a one-party dictatorship. They do not want to lose their monopoly over power.

The communists had hoped to succeed the Congress. They are shocked to see the BJP leave them far behind in the race. So these ex-Moscow patriots just don't know what to do next. In one breath they call us fascists, in another breath they quote Swami Vivekananda. But none of these tricks is doing them any good. They remind you of the dog in the manager, which rightly belongs to the cow. And the BJP cow will no doubt get it—all this yelping notwithstanding.

Some foreign friends—journalists and diplomats—also tend to misunderstand us. They have a genuine problem on their hands: they don't have anything even remotely resembling the Sangh Parivar. So when they find us firm and disciplined, they reach into what verbal repertory they have, and think we are some kind of fascists. It is like mistaking a rope for a snake.

Some of them could even be uncomfortable with a strong nationalist India; they would not be able to make a BJP India dance to IMF tunes. But that is another story. India is a soft State; we want it to be a strong State, not a hard State. And we shall do it.

The BJP is the party of Indian nationalism—a party above caste, above class, above creed. If it is fascist to be nationalist, we are fascists and proud of it.

Reductions in Tax, Import Duties Announced*93AS0943A Hyderabad DECCAN CHRONICLE
in English 8 May 93 pp 1, 6*

[Article: "IT Limit Raised to Rs 30,000"; boldface words as published]

[Text]

Duty Reliefs: 5-Year Tax Holiday for New Units

New Delhi, May 4: The Finance Minister, Dr Manmohan Singh, on Tuesday announced some reliefs in direct and indirect taxes which are expected to result in a net revenue loss of Rs 125 crore to the Centre and Rs 304 crore to the States.

Moving the Finance Bill for 1993-94 in the Lok Sabha, the ministers stated that with a view to mitigate the effect of inflation, the exemption limit of personal income tax is being raised from Rs 28,000 to Rs 30,000, which meant a tax relief of Rs 400 to all taxpayers. Taking into account the increase in the ceiling for standard deduction to Rs 15,000, announced in the budget speech, taxpayers earning only salary income would, henceforth, not have to pay tax if their income is below Rs 45,000, he said.

The limit for deduction under Section 80 L in respect of income in the nature of bank interests, dividends and so on is being raised from Rs 7,000 to Rs 10,000. This concession would particularly help retired persons who have substantial income from investments in financial assets.

Dr Singh stated that the five-year tax holiday proposed in the Finance Bill 1993 in respect of new industrial undertakings located in backward States or set up for the generation of power is applicable if the undertakings start generation on or after April 1, 1993, but before March 31, 1995. Since a new unit set up in response to this tax holiday might take more than two years to commence generation on account of a longer gestation period, a government amendment is being moved in order to ensure that the tax holiday is available to units which commence generation at any time between April 1, 1993, and March 31, 1998.

The Finance Minister, however, did not immediately accept the request made by several States that the tax holiday should be given to units set up in all backward districts.

He explained that the holiday was available to only those States in which all the districts were industrially backward and, as a result, the State was unable to mobilise resources for industrialisation.

For other States, fiscal support in the form of a 25 to 30 per cent deduction for new industrial undertakings has been available since April 1, 1991.

However, Dr Singh assured the members that the government would explore methods for enhancing fiscal support for new industrial undertakings in industrially backward districts of States, which are not, as a whole, classified as backward.

He would appoint a group to look into the matter, Dr Singh said.

Dr Singh said in indirect taxes, he was making certain modifications in customs and central excise duties in those sectors of the industry where it is required urgently.

On caustic soda, the exemption from countervailing duty is being removed now because of the difficulties being faced by the domestic producers. In the case of specified equipment for manufacture of caustic soda based on membrane cell technology, import duty would be reduced from 40 per cent to 35 per cent.

To make iron and steel industry competitive, Dr Singh recalled that he had reduced in the budget, the import duty on specified refractory raw materials including dead burnt magnesite from 70 per cent to 30 per cent in respect of certain grades not made in India. Since there were apprehensions that this reduction might adversely affect domestic industry, he proposed to adjust the import duty on such refractory materials upwards from 30 per cent to 50 per cent.

Dr Singh said in the budget he had raised the import duty on steel melting scrap from 10 per cent to 15 per cent as part of rationalisation of import tariff for iron and steel.

He had received various representations from the secondary steel sector for reducing this duty. In order to give some relief to the mini steel plants, Dr Singh said he proposed to reduce the duty from 15 per cent to 12.5 per cent.

Referring to the reduction of import duty on several items of capital goods to 35 per cent, Dr Singh said to encourage the growth of automobile component manufacturing industry, the reduced duty would be extended to moulds, jigs, fixtures, dies and so on for the manufacture of auto components which are currently attracting 50 per cent duty.

Specified components and parts of motor vehicles bear a concessional import duty of 50 per cent.

To give further stimulus to domestic manufacturers of automobile components and parts, Dr Singh said, he proposed to reduce the import duty on specified goods, mainly used in the manufacture of automobile components from a general level of 85 per cent to 50 per cent.

Dr Singh stated that over the past 22 months, the government had embarked on a far-reaching programme of economic reform to restore the health and dynamism of country's economy and set this nation on a sustainable path of economic growth to raise the living standards of all the people, especially the poor. Such reform was long overdue and the programme of reform would take some years to implement. "We will have to overcome many obstacles before we reach our goal," he said.

He reiterated that the government must continue the process of fiscal consolidation, as "it was critical for keeping inflation in check and reducing pressure on our balance of payments (BoP). Over the past two years, we have reduced the fiscal deficit very substantially. For

1993-94, it is estimated at 4.7 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP). Next year we plan to reduce it further to four per cent or less," he said.

Stating that central to the programme of economic reform is tax reform, he said the tax structure was unduly complex, economically unjustifiable in many respects and unsatisfactory in its administration. The ills of this tax system, as well as the necessary remedies, have been convincingly analysed by Raja Chelliah Tax Reform Committee. "Following the recommendation of the committee, we have embarked on a comprehensive reform of both direct and indirect taxes in this and the last budget," he said.

The Finance Minister stated that the full programme of tax reform would be implemented by the end of the Eighth Plan, but the final objective was clear. "We will move to a tax system which is simple, has a wide base with moderate rates of tax, is well administered and, most important, promotes economic efficiency, growth and equity. Necessary measures will include extension in the coverage of Modvat to new areas, phased reduction in customs tariffs, elimination of wasteful and complex exemptions in customs and excise, steps to improve and modernise the administration of all major taxes and gradual progress to a full value added tax system in consultation with State governments. Broadening the base of taxation is essential for continuing with the process of rationalising rates of customs and excise duties and for implementing the corporate tax recommendations of the Tax Reforms Committee," he added.

[Box, p 1]

Highlights of Duty Reliefs

Some of the important duty reliefs proposed by the Finance Minister are:

Other new proposals of the Finance Minister are:

- Import duty on modules and sub-assemblies for manufacture of telecom equipments reduced from 85 per cent to 60 per cent to encourage indigenous production.

Import duty on diffused silicon wafers reduced from 75 per cent to 35 per cent to encourage indigenous manufacture of certain electronic components. In addition, countervailing duty as applicable on such silicon wafers will be levied. Facility of set off under Modvat for this countervailing duty is already available.

Import duty on industrial diamonds in dust or powder form reduced from 85 per cent to 40 per cent ad valorem, to provide relief to domestic cutting tool industry.

Excise duty on ceramic sanitaryware of porcelain or china reduced from 45 per cent to 30 per cent.

Limit for exemption from excise duty in respect of unregistered smallscale units increased to Rs 30 lakh. In the budget, it was raised from Rs 7.5 lakh to Rs 10 lakh. The enhancement of the limit would benefit a large number of smallscale units.

In the budget, import duty on metals had been reduced generally, but that on their raw materials, namely ores and concentrates, was not reduced in all cases. Now import duty on ores and concentrates would be generally reduced to a level not higher than the duty payable on the unwrought metals.

Basic customs duty on certain life saving drugs and equipments reduced to 10 per cent from the general level of 85 per cent.

Import duty on grand parent poultry stock reduced from 40 per cent to 30 per cent to improve the quality of Indian poultry stock mainly for boosting exports.

To give further stimulus to domestic manufacturers of automobile components and parts the import duty on specified goods, mainly used in the manufacture of automobile components, are proposed to be reduced from a general level of 85 per cent to 50 per cent.

Parliament Panel on Commerce Issues First Report

93AS0917A Madras THE HINDU in English 11 May 93
p 6

[Text] New Delhi, May 10—The parliamentary standing committee on commerce today warned that the country was becoming "a dumping for imported goods" in its ongoing quest for the globalisation of India's foreign trade.

In its first report, analysing the demands for grants of the Commerce Ministry, tabled in Parliament by its Chairman, Mr. I. K. Gujral, the committee cautioned the Government, particularly the Commerce Ministry, about the moves of some developed market economies to dump their products such as di-ammonium phosphate (DAP) fertilizer and PVC resins in India.

Stating that the outline of the export-import policy (Exim) had in reality furthered India's imports, the committee said the emphasis on deregulation and access to raw materials, intermediates, components, consumables and capital goods should not lead to "neglect of our indigenous industries."

Adverse Effect

It said the recent liberalised import policy had affected indigenous industries as in the case of integrated circuits, caustic soda units, paraxylene plant benzene projects and paraffin wax.

While integrated circuits (ICs), for instance, were allowed to be imported with import duty reduced from 110 per cent to 50 per cent, the committee said, indigenous manufacturers of ICs had to shell out 75 per cent import duty on raw materials, viz. silicon diffused wafers, which was the main raw material constituent for ICs. Thus, the imported finished goods were made cheaper, affecting indigenous electronic component industries, it said.

It said Cochin Refineries was stated to have stopped the manufacture of benzene as a result of the reduction in the customs duty and a liberalised policy. In another case,

Indian Petrochemicals Limited had to shut down its paraxylene plant with a capacity of 46,000 tonnes per annum, following reduction in the tariff rates from 85 to 40 per cent. In this regard, it said the import value of paraffin wax between April 1992 to February 1993 was Rs. 65.33 crores.

Selective Imports Needed

The committee was of the firm view that to protect the indigenous industries the import of capital goods should be "selective" and when required essential components only should be permitted.

Pointing out that unrestricted imports were bound to adversely affect the country's balance of payments and self-reliance which was the stated objective of the Exim policy, the committee said the policy needed to spell out this aspect in unambiguous and clear terms.

While emphatically stating that the present policy of "unbridled imports" was already aggravating the BOP [expansion not given] position, the committee said that in order to monitor the imports, including dumping, on a continuing basis, a high-level committee of officers should be set up. Alongside, it suggested the introduction of some discipline in the matter of domestic oil consumption so as to bring down the import bill.

Deploring the unfolding of an overwhelming tendency in favour of import culture in the country, the committee said this had spread "consumerism, leading to weakening of self reliance."

Need To Push Up Exports

The committee said that with the mounting debt trap in which the country found itself and its export share in the total world trade being not even a miniscule 0.5 per cent, there was a strong case for pushing up exports.

It said exports must grow at 20 to 25 per cent per annum in dollar terms to achieve external viability as half of the country's foreign exchange reserve was loans which meant higher debt-servicing.

The committee said the export culture must seep down to the grassroot level of administration and should be allowed to grow in an atmosphere free from "red-tapism, corruption and procedural bottlenecks".

Erratic Performance

It said the devaluation of the rupee, liberalisation of imports and partial convertibility should have yielded across-the-board buoyancy to exports, as those were the objectives of these policy measures. "But what we see is a very erratic and differentiated performance, whether it is the question of unit value realisation or whether it is the question of export earnings of a sector," it said.

It said a comparison of the imports of principal commodities during April 1991 to January 1992 with those during April 1992 to January 1993 showed that the value of imports had an across-the-board rise. Thus the bulk imports had gone up in dollar terms by 15.4 per cent, imports of pearls, semi-precious stones by 14 per cent, imports of machinery by 22.9 per cent and the imports of

"others" (the residual bucket of various commodities) by 18.1 per cent. The result of this has been the trade deficit which had reached the level of \$3.5 billions during April 1992 to February 1993, the committee said.

Export Processing Zones

Referring to export processing zones and export-oriented units, the committee asked the Commerce Ministry to examine the rationale of their continuance in view of the recent reductions in customs tariffs, full convertibility of the rupee on trade account and the virtual open general licence (OGL) regime of imports.

It said infrastructure constraints were coming in the way of growth of the internal trade and prospects of growth would be dismal if expeditious actions was not taken by the Government. It recommended that periodical reorientation workshops be held for lower level officers who were placed at such vantage positions as customs, banks, ports to infuse them with the new spirit of liberalisations.

It said the country's industrial sector needed to earmark allocation on research and development and quality control. The Government should look into complaints and evolve a suitable standard for exports to ensure that Indian export products conformed to global specification.

As one of the reasons for slow agro exports was the substandard packaging of agro materials, the committee asked the Government to take steps to improve packaging procedures so that they could withstand the strains and stresses of air and sea journey and meet the requirement of global markets.

States' Involvement Needed

Stating that there was need for closer involvement of the States also in the export activity, the committee said each State Government should be allocated additional funds to the extent of at least five per cent of the export earnings from the units located in those States and this amount could be utilised by the States for development of infrastructure like ports, roads, power generation required for export production.

Referring to market development assistance (MDA) the committee said the allocation on this count should be enhanced and linked with the quantum of exports. On export credit, it said the representatives of trade and commerce must be associated in the discussion so as to enable them to put forth their case properly.

The committee also analysed the export problems of such commodities as tobacco, tea, rubber, handlooms, handicrafts and suggested some remedial measures to boost the exports of these important items.—PTI

Commercial Relations With U.S. Discussed

93AS0916A Bombay *THE TIMES OF INDIA* in English
13 May 93 p 12

[Text] The Times of India News Service, New Delhi, May 12—The commerce minister, Mr Pranab Mukherjee, told the Rajya Sabha yesterday that there was no need to take

unilateral action against the U.S. for placing India on the Special 301 list regarding patents protection.

The minister said any retaliatory action against the U.S. would be considered only if the latter imposed punitive duties on Indian goods. He said the U.S. government had constituted a task force to determine punitive action against India on any violation, but so far no punitive action had been taken.

The CPM [Communist Party of India Marxist] member, Mr M. A. Baby, wanted the minister to state whether the government has considered taking any retaliatory measures against the U.S. He demanded that a joint parliamentary committee be constituted to find out the opinion of all sections of the parties.

The minister said the government was keen on strengthening the multilateral arrangement to decide matters of this nature. He said: "I am hopeful that it is possible to resolve the impasse."

Mr Mukherjee said the U.S. was a major trading partner of India and 16 per cent of India's trade was with that country. He said India had informed the U.S. that the issue be sorted out at a multilateral level where negotiations were taking place under the auspices of the GATT.

On the Dunkel proposals, the minister assured the house that the country's interests would not be compromised. The government, he said, had not taken any final decision on the proposals and would take the views of trade unions and farmers' organisations before coming to the Parliament for a detailed debate on the issue.

He said it was not correct to say that the Dunkel proposals on agriculture were totally against the interests of the country. The draft had proposed that the subsidy element should not be beyond ten per cent and that the country should import at least three per cent of its foodgrain requirement. He said barring sugar, tobacco and groundnut, the product specific subsidy in about 20 other agricultural commodities in the country was less than ten per cent.

The minister said the government would continue negotiations on patent laws to ensure that the country's interests were protected.

For exports promotion, the minister said the best strategy would be to step up exporting fruits and vegetables substantially to earn foreign exchange. He said about 35 per cent of the fruits and vegetables produced in the country went waste for want of storage facilities.

Initiating the discussion on the working of the ministry of commerce, the SJP [Samajwadi Janata Party] member, Mr Yashwant Sinha, said the country faced a great danger from the Intellectual Property Act and the Special 301 of the U.S. He wanted the government to stand up to "the U.S. blackmail" and take a policy initiative to protect the interests of the country. He wanted a parliamentary committee to be constituted to study the Dunkel proposals.

Mr Sinha said there was a need for a fresh look into the commerce ministry which in the name of exports promotion contributed to imports promotion. He wanted firm by firm, product by product and market by market approach to boost exports.

Mr Jagesh Desai (Congress) wanted the contribution of the small scale units in exports increased.

Mr Ramdas Agarwal (BJP) wanted the government to give more attention to the promotion of exports.

Professor M. G. K. Menon (Janata Dal) said the measures taken by the government were not adequate to increase exports. He wanted better coordination between different ministries and the state governments so as to boost exports.

The CPI member, Mr Chatruranan Mishra, said the policy of the government after the liberalisation was not in the interests of the country and had led to nation into debt trap. He wanted a five-year plan to be formulated to repay the debt.

Spring Target for Wheat Procurement Achieved

93AS0909A Madras THE HINDU in English 18 May 93
p 6

[Text] New Delhi, May 17.

Though the Government wheat stocks were low at 2.89 million tonnes by the end of February, the official procurement agencies have achieved the target of 100 lakh tonnes in the current rabi season so far.

The buffer stocks, which were 11.04 million tonnes in June 1991, dwindled to 6.73 million tonnes in June 1992 and to 2.89 million tonnes in February, 1993, against the cumulative off-take of wheat through the PDS in April-February, 1992-93 of 7.16 million tonnes. The meeting of the target for procurement this season, therefore, will be a shot in the arm for the Government, as it is not in a mood to import wheat.

According to official estimates, Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Delhi, the State agencies and the food Corporation of India (FCI) have together purchased more than 90 percent of the mandi arrivals.

Procurement of wheat in Punjab was 57 lakh tonnes and is expected to reach about 63 lakh tonnes. In Haryana, the purchase so far of 30 lakh tonnes of wheat, against a target of 20 lakh tonnes set for the season, may well be a record for the State.

In Uttar Pradesh, over 10 lakh tonnes of wheat has been procured so far, against three lakh tonnes purchased during the corresponding period last year, according to an official note. In Rajasthan, and Madhya Pradesh the State agencies have already purchased 2.03 and 1.02 lakh tonnes respectively, against negligible procurement last year. In Delhi 17,764 tonnes have been purchased by State agencies against nil purchases last year.

The better than average procurement this season is attributed to the increase in the minimum support price, which is Rs. 330 per quintal. The procurement will last till June, 1993.

Middle Level Bankers Benefiting From Crisis

93AS0878F Madras *INDIAN EXPRESS* in English
20 May 93 p 13

[Article by Vishal Bakshi: "Crisis Boon for Middle-of-Road Bankers"]

[Text] While the industry and the brokers community are crying hoarse over the crisis in the primary capital market, there is at least one section of the market which is not complaining at all: the middle-level merchant bankers and a few enterprising brokers.

With top level intermediaries in the capital market becoming very choosy and cautious while accepting the proposals of companies to manage their issues, the not-so-well known merchant bankers and brokers suddenly find themselves with more work.

The reason: companies whose issues are not being accepted by the top-level merchant bankers due to the uncertainty prevailing in the primary capital market have found willing suitors in the lower-rung merchant bankers.

Officials at leading public sector merchant banks say that they have deliberately decided to shun managing of issues of companies which do not have a strong track record or whose promoters are relatively new entrepreneurs.

Merchant bankers like Industrial Credit & Investment Corporation of India (ICICI), Industrial Finance Corporation of India (IFCI), SBI Caps, PNB Caps and JM Financial are by and large accepting issues of companies which have a fairly sound track record.

Surprisingly, there are quite a few companies planning to raise money through public issues in the near future though the number would have been manifold had the majority of issues not flopped in the recent past, according to merchant bankers.

Says a senior official at PNB Caps: "We are still getting enough proposals from companies to manage their public issues but we have become much more strict due to the prevailing uncertain conditions in the market."

But why are the second-rung merchant bankers accepting issues of companies which are being rejected by the top-level merchant bankers? Says an official of SBI Caps: "They (the second-rung merchant bankers) are not established merchant bankers and, therefore, do not have much reputation at stake. Even if the issue fails, they will be paid their fee."

The merchant bankers argue that good issues would get subscribed irrespective of the fact whether the company or its promoters are well known or not.

Along with these merchant bankers, a few enterprising brokers have also found an easy way of making a fast buck by purchasing shares in public issues at a discount.

Merging Plans of Domestic Airlines Viewed

93AS0878I Madras *INDIAN EXPRESS* in English
21 May 93 p 8

[Article: "The Permanent Tenants of Delhi"; quotation marks as published]

[Text] New Delhi—Fascination for government bungalows is understandable. Almost all of them are located in posh areas with ideal surroundings and ample space giving you a feeling of princely living. It is little surprise that influential people who cease to be eligible for these 'sarkari bungalows' do not want to vacate them and look for some pretext or the other to retain them.

There are more than a dozen people falling in this category who have not vacated the government accommodation long after they became 'ineligible' and the allotments from the General Pool were cancelled. To top it all, some of them have even stopped paying the rent due to them.

The ex-ministers, ex-MPs and other VIPs in whose names the bungalows were allotted and who have to vacate them include the family of late Darbara Singh, Indrani Devi (widow of Jagjivan Ram), Vasant Sathe, Mohsina Kidwai, Pt Ravi Shanker, Vyjayantimala, M. F. Husain, Naresh Pugalua, Ratnakar Pandey, Ram Avdesh Singh, Jagjit Singh Aurora, V. N. Gadgil and Jitendra Singh. The elite list includes two cardiologists, Dr R. K. Caroli and Dr P. D. Nigam, the latter has got a stay from the High Court.

According to information made available to Parliament, arrears against Darbara Singh's family are Rs 10,28,081, Vyjayantimala owes Rs 3,32,042, Ravi Shanker Rs 1,03,492 and Dr Nigam Rs 2,07,168 against which he got a stay order from the High Court. The Government has yet to finalise the rental liability of Indrani Devi.

It is learnt that Dr Caroli, who was attached to Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital, then Willingdon Hospital, was allotted the bungalow from the General Pool, 9 Gurdwara Rakabganj Road. When he retired, the bungalow was allotted in the name of his wife, who is also a doctor. She retired in 1992 and now the family has sought the allotment of the same bungalow in the name of Dr Caroli's mother-in-law, who is the widow of a freedom fighter. Dr Caroli is a practising cardiologist having his clinics in Friends Colony and in East Patel Nagar; it is understood.

Dr Nigam who is at present occupying a Type VI accommodation retired quite some time back. His wife, who is also a doctor, is attached to the ESIC [expansion not given].

Vyjayantimala had sought continuation of allotment saying that she was likely to be nominated to the Rajya Sabha while Vasant Sathe has mentioned medial grounds for continuation. The bungalow with Mohsina Kidwai was allotted to one member of Parliament but he could not move in as it has yet to be vacated.

The Government has been able to get 45 bungalows and flats vacated while 31 are still in 'unauthorised' occupation. The allotments in all these cases has been done according to information available and steps are being

taken under the Public Premises (Eviction of Unauthorised Occupants) Act to have these premises vacated.

A senior official in the Ministry, when contacted, countered, "What moral right do you have to write about others when your own colleagues refuse to vacate the bungalows and flats when they own palatial houses and flats right here in the Capital?"

There are 93 journalists who have been allotted government accommodation and some of them have become ineligible but have not vacated the premises. There are about 50 of them who are said to be owning their own bungalows or flats which bring them fabulous rents.

Narmada River Valley Development Project Acclaimed

93AS0898B Secunderabad DECCAN CHRONICLE
in English 28 May 93 p 8

[Article by Radhakrishna Rao]

[Text] It was billed to be one of the biggest and most ambitious multi-purpose development projects in the world, the U.S.\$12 billion Narmada Valley development plan embracing the controversial Sardar Sarovar project and envisaging the construction of 30 big, 135-medium and 300 small dams across the mighty Narmada River flowing through a major part of central and western Indian plains, has instead turned into an epicentre of an excited multi-national environmental debate.

The World Bank which had committed U.S.\$450 million for the project on which India has already sunk as much as U.S.\$1.4 billion has agreed to release further instalment of U.S.\$200 million—U.S.\$250-million has already been disbursed—only after India fulfills certain conditions on the rehabilitation of the tribal evacuees.

The World Bank is planning to send a mission to India to monitor closely the progress in the implementation of the agreed plan. Of course, the Government of Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra—the beneficiaries of the project have radically restructured their rehabilitation plan for those uprooted by Sardar Sarovar Project (SSP) following the terse recommendations of an independent

Commission that went into the environmental and social aspects of SSP at the behest of World Bank. But the World Bank is far from satisfied.

It may be recalled that the stunning observations made by Morse Commission had created world wide revulsion against the project. The 363-page report of Morse Commission laments that there have been virtually no efforts to properly resettle and rehabilitate 1,20,000 [as published] tribals uprooted by the project.

As it is, the Morse Commission report provided fresh ammunition to environmental groups across the world to step up their campaign against SSP. We are appalled and angry at the hypocrisy of the world said Mrs Aditi Sharma of the Survival International in London. "Never was there such strong and independent evidence against the project," continued Mrs Sharma.

In New Delhi, hundreds of tribal and non-tribal activists shouting slogans against SSP marched to the World Bank Office and urged its officials to withdraw financial support to the project.

World Bank Vice President for South Asia Joe Wood, said the bank team which visited India last year was particularly concerned with the environmental and social problems that had arisen due to the construction of SSP. However, the Indian Government is keen on completing the project schedule by the year 2005. While the Indian Minister for Environment and Forest Kamal Nath lobbied for the project in Europe, the Finance Minister Manmohan Singh pleaded for the project in Washington.

As things stand now, World Bank is expected to take a final decision on the funding of the project in a few months. Mr Ashish Kothari of Save Narmada agitation has threatened to hold black flag demonstrations against the World Bank officials coming to India for negotiation on SSP.

The Narmada Sagar Sardar Sarovar Project (NSSP) when completed is expected to irrigate more than 3 million hectares of land besides providing 1450 MW of power. Furthermore, it will provide municipal and industrial water to several cities and towns spread across western India. The vast canal system of NSSP project is planned to have computer controlled gates and a range of sensors which will measure soil moisture, rain, snow-melt and humidity.—NPA

Joint Production of Light Combat Planes Considered

93AS0942A Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA in English
6 May 93 p 7

[Article by Dinesh Kumar and N. Suresh: "Tie-Up With West Likely"; quotation marks as published]

[Text]

LCA Production by 2003

New Delhi, May 5. India is considering collaborating with a western aerospace company for joint production of the indigenously-designed light combat aircraft (LCA), which is expected to be test flown in mid-1996.

Defence ministry sources said the involvement of an established aircraft maker in the production stage would help reduce the developmental cost and also open up avenues for export, thereby making it commercially viable. In addition, this move is expected to provide Indian experts valuable experience, apart from expediting the project.

Significantly, sources ruled out joint production partnership with Russia, which has been the largest supplier of aircraft to the Indian Air Force (IAF). Similarly, the government is not enthusiastic about any tie-up with Israel, even though that country is keen for closer co-operation in the defence sector.

The nations being mentioned for production tie-up for the project are Britain, the U.S., Germany and France, since all these nations have been involved in the LCA project in its initial stages.

The Russian option is being ruled to avoid any possible discontinuities in product support, keeping in view the ongoing political and economic developments in that country. The IAF continues to face difficulty in ensuring supply of adequate spares for its large fleet, a majority of which are of erstwhile Soviet origin.

Although Israel's LCA project on the Lavi had reached the prototype stage in a short span of seven years in the 1980s, the programme is currently in a state of suspended animation, mainly due to shortage of funds and pressure from the U.S.

In view of this, the government is not keen to pursue Israel's offer to help with LCA's development. Besides, Israel is steadfastly opting for upgrading of aircraft, since it involves quicker and easy money.

The LCA project has faced inordinate delays, largely due to phases of funding shortages and also the fact that India was taking on an ambitious, state-of-the-art fighter project on its own without any outside help and without previous experience. The only indigenously produced fighter aircraft has been the HF-24 (Marut) which had to be grounded owing to serious design flaws.

However, last week, the LCA project got a boost with the Prime Minister, Mr P. V. Narasimha Rao's announcement in Parliament, of the government's decision to approve the next crucial phase of the project.

Sources explained that this involves a firm commitment to provide nearly Rs 1,800 crores in the next few years for this crucial phase, which involves development of two prototypes to be test-flown in mid-1996 and early 1997.

The two prototypes will use home-built airframes with wings made from composite materials and will be powered by imported General Electric GE-404 engines. The LCA is slated to be fitted with the latest avionics technologies, fire control and weapon delivery systems, and electronic warfare equipment.

India has already bought 11 GE-404 engines from the U.S. under a bilateral contract signed between the two countries in 1985-86. However, the imported engines will be replaced by the indigenously-developed Kaveri engine, which is expected to be ready by 1997-98.

The rationale behind the use of an imported engine in the initial stage is to validate the performance of the airframe, designed for the first time here. After this stage is over, it will be easy to go ahead with the testing of the aircraft using the Kaveri engine.

The Kaveri engine's performance would be validated separately by fitting it on to another proven aircraft. This way, scientists hope to allay any fears of the IAF and increase confidence about the performance of the new aircraft. Such a step, scientists say, would also reduce the risk of any failure of the aircraft during the testing stage.

The LCA project was conceived to be completed in five phases. Phase one was related to 'feasibility study' and was completed between 1983 and 1986. British Aerospace, a French company, AmDBA, and the German aircraft maker, MBB, helped the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) with the study.

The 'project definition phase' followed the feasibility study and was completed in 1990. The French company helped DRDO with this phase. The ambitious project has now entered its most crucial third phase of 'full-scale engineering development' (FSED).

This will be carried out in two stages. Stage one involves building of two prototypes and simultaneous development of on-ground facilities. This is to be followed by production of more prototypes by integrating the proven technologies of stage one.

The critical technologies involved here are the design of a stable configuration, fly-by-wire technology for piloting, avionics and radars with electronic warfare capabilities.

The fourth phase involves limited series production of the aircraft, followed by the final phase of setting up capabilities for mass production of the fighter aircraft, which is expected to fructify between 2003 and 2005.

In the long run, the LCA is expected to replace the aging 1950's vintage MiG-21 fleet which forms the backbone of the IAF. The IAF's 400-odd MiG-21 fleet comes in three variants—the Type-77 (for air defence role), the Type-96 (for ground attack role) and the Bis (multi-role).

However, the MiG-21 fleet is already facing the threat of being phased out by 1995, unless upgraded with advanced avionics, weapon delivery system, etc.

India disbanded manufacture of the MiG-21 about eight years ago and is instead assembling the more advanced MiG-27, which comes in both the ground attack and air defence variants.

The IAF is keenly pursuing the case for upgrading the MiG-21 fleet in a time-sensitive frame with the aim of enhancing its operational life for another 10 to 15 years, by when the LCA will be ready for free-flow production.

But keeping in view problems of resources, the uncertainties involved in a first-time attempt of such a sophisticated project, and the need to keep the LCA comparable with aircraft available to India's adversaries, a complete replacement of the MiG-21 fleet will not be easy.

Sex Determination Tests To Destroy Females Called 'Rampant'

93AS0879J Calcutta THE TELEGRAPH in English
16 May 93 p 1

[Article by Seema Paul: "Foetus Doctors Out To Make a Killing"; quotation marks as published]

[Text] Hissar, May 15: Ultrasound vans have replaced the biscope in the Jat belt of Haryana and Rajasthan. So rampant is sex determination in this region, that people calling themselves doctors have literally taken the service to the doorstep.

While Parliament has not yet found time to enact a law to ban sex determination, these doctors in Haryana are minting money. Apart from running clinics in prominent towns like Hissar and Bhiwani, they also travel to tiny places like Mahendargarh, Narnaul, Loharu, Chidawa and Jhunjhunu (the last two in Rajasthan) to offer their services. For Rs 500 to Rs 700, these mobile doctors tell women the sex of their unborn foetus.

What happens to a female foetus is written literally on the wall: the road from Delhi to Rohtak, Hissar and Bhiwani is full of advertisements of abortion clinics.

Census figures also confirm this trend: against the national average of 927 females per thousand males, the 1991 census found there were only 865 females per thousand males in Haryana. This is even lower than the female-male ratio in 1901 when the first census was conducted (867 females per thousand males). Haryana, in fact, has the record of having the second most adverse sex ratio among Indian states after Arunachal Pradesh.

The specialist who has made a name for himself in this region is Dr Mahendra Kamboj of Hissar, who has acquired such a reputation that people refer to him as "Hissar walle doctor." He has set up clinics in the neighbouring towns of Rohtak and Meerut and even Delhi, which he visits once a week in his "ultrasound ambulance."

Modelled on the former Haryana chief minister, Mr Devi Lal's "rath," the rear of the air-conditioned ambulance has a folding bed, a bar, toilet and a water tank and in the front is his clinic. The front portion has provision for an ultrasound machine and a folding bed on which a pregnant woman can lie down for a test.

This van travels from village to village, doing ultrasound tests. Dr Kamboj denies that sex determination is done in this van. "It is my junior who travels in it and he does diagnostic ultrasound for ailments like kidney and gall bladder stones and not sex determination," he claims. Sex determination, he says, is done exclusively by him and his doctor wife, Renu Kamboj, at their various clinics.

Another doctor from Hissar who goes around in his Maruti car with a portable ultrasound machine for sex determination tests is N. K. Kakkar. General secretary of the Hissar branch of the Indian Medical Association, Dr Kakkar unashamedly demands that the government should give him and the others in his field an incentive for playing "a useful role" in family planning by helping people to "eliminate unwanted daughters."

Bhiwani's Dr Vikram Sood, too, has converted his Maruti into a mobile sex determination clinic. He travels to towns like Narnaul, Mahendargarh, Loharu, Chidawa and Jhunjhunu and offers his services in small private clinics. A large number of his clients travel from villages to these clinics for ultrasound tests and at least 30 per cent to 40 per cent of them, Dr Sood admits, are interested in finding out the sex of the foetus at the end of the third trimester.

250 Abortions a Week

Hissar, May 15: Almost all women in Haryana who go through sex determination tests have the foetus aborted once they find out it is female.

Dr Mahendra Kamboj of Hissar, who claims that nearly 500 women visit his sex determination clinics in Hissar, Rohtak, Meerut and Delhi every week, feels that mostly those families who do not want a daughter seek to find out the sex of the foetus. And he adds categorically: "Almost all—99 per cent—of the women head for the abortion clinics when they discover that they are going to have a daughter."

Going by the average national sex ratio of 50:50, it can be assumed that approximately 250 of his 500 weekly clients would be carrying female foetuses, and going by his word, they prefer abortion to a female child.

These shocking figures relate to just one doctor in Haryana; and there are many other sex determination specialists like him.

Dr Kamboj charges on an average Rs 600 for sex determination through ultrasound, and at 500 clients a week his monthly income works out to Rs 12 lakhs.

"The latest census shows that there are only 861 females per thousand males in Hissar—one of the lowest sex ratios in the country. The national sex ratio is 927 females per thousand males."

According to Dr Kamboj, half his business is in Hissar alone, which means he gets 250 clients weekly here. Assuming again that half the foetuses he tests are female, it means 125 female foetuses are aborted every week in Hissar once Dr Kamboj has determined the sex. And there are four other doctors in the same business in Hissar whose clientele is smaller.