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PANDIT RETURN

NC's dangerous game-plan

Special Correspondent

JAMMU: Not deterred by the series of massacres of minority Hindus, first in Kashmir Valley and more recently in Jammu Province, ruling National Conference continues with its machinations for return of displaced Pandits.

As the din caused by gruesome carnages in Prankote and Chapnari is yet subsiding, the ruling party has again embarked on its manipulations with displaced Pandits.

A delegation of recently floated Pandit organisation, All Kashmiri Migrant Association, lead by one Sh Roop Krishan Raina is currently on a visit to Kashmir Valley to seek support and goodwill of

the majority community for the early return of Pandits. This visit has reportedly been arranged by Sh Bhushan Lal Bhat, a member of the Legislative Council who is also accompanying the delegation. This newly created outfit appears to have full patronage of the ruling National Conference. The delegation has reportedly visited the districts of Anantnag, Pulwama, Srinagar and Budgam.

As per a press releases of the organisation, the delegation with actual connivance of the administration is meeting Kashmiri Muslims at various places. The delegation claims to have received an overwhelming response.

However, it has been conspicuously silent on the exact attitude of the Muslim majority in the Valley on the issue of return.

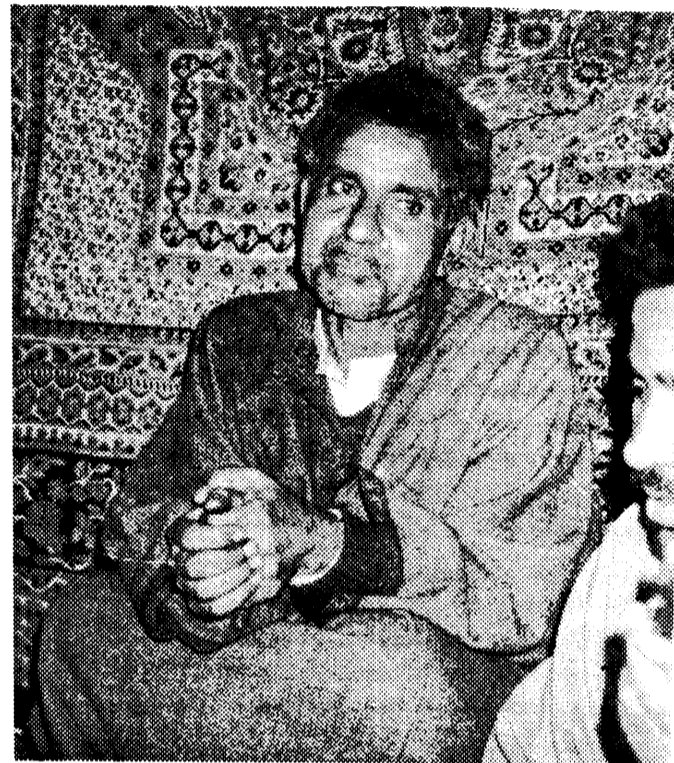
As per one of the members of the delegation who wants to be anonymous, state government is spending lavishly on the visit. He, however, informed that most of the members of the delegation have joined it just to utilise this opportunity to solve their personal problems in the Valley

One more Pandit outfit Kul Hind Nove Soan Kashmir, also floated few years back around the time when the democratic process in the state was initiated, has also visited Kashmir valley for the same purpose recently. This delegation while appreciating the warm reception accorded to them in Kashmir, however accepted that majority community there failed to assure them of safety on return. This organisation lead by one SL Pandita is also, as per reports, receiving active patronage from the state government.

In the meantime, the minister of Medical Education and younger brother of the Chief Minister, Sheikh Mustafa Kamal, has initiated a process for seeking the return of displaced doctors to the Valley.

Through a government notification advertised in a local daily, Mustafa Kamal was to address the displaced doctors in Medical College Auditorium on 15th July 1998. However, when just twenty doctors turned in, the venue of the meeting was hurriedly shifted to the conference room.

Surprisingly, Principal Medical College Srinagar and Director Health Kashmir



The survivor of Sangrampora massacre. "Return of National Conference brought doom on us". --K.Sentinel Photo

Valley were absent giving rise to speculation that the exercise is currently being pursued more for publicity than anything else. Sh Kamal sought the voluntary return of Pandit doctors to Valley. However, the main reason which he underlined for his seeking their return was the deteriorating state of health services and medical education, there.

"Majority community doctors go to overseas countries to earn petro dollars. Many amongst the staff of Medical College have gone out and we have a danger to get derecognised if this number is not made up," said Dr Kamal. As per him the field of Health Services was also suffering. He particularly appealed to the "doctor couples" amongst Pandits to return and help the government in rendering effective care at Primary Health Centres. The Minister however made a cryptic remark on the situation in the Valley and said "You should not go by press reports either on deterioration of law and order or

even the improvement of situation."

The displaced doctors did not commit anything to the minister and through their representative informed him that they will respond to his offer after taking into confidence all other doctors who had chosen not to attend the meeting.

However, one of the attending doctors posed specific questions to the minister. "Do you want doctors to go with or without families? Do you want us to be in Barracks or government accommodation or our own ancestral homes? Do you want us just as the military man?" Minister chose to avoid specific answers. However, he assured the doctors that government will not initiate any coercive measure for the return.

The displaced doctors appeared to be hurt on the reasons which the honourable minister put forth seeking their return. "They want us to return to hold their collapsing health infrastructure

(cont. on P11)

Margi-ISI tieup portends trouble

KS Correspondent JAMMU

Close to the Pakistani ISI's renewed initiative of strengthening links with Naxelite and Lankan Tamil groups, the news of ISI forging ties with Anand Margis has put the security agencies on an alert.

If sources within the security setup are to be believed, Anand Marga's conman and the notorious Purulia arms-drop absconder, RANDY, recently visited J&K. The sources refused to divulge the details as the investigations are on and details are awaited.

This is believed that the Margis propose to set up an outfit here with objective of recruiting local youth in arms trade & training. Informed sources also revealed that the Anand Margis had attempted to float a regional

outfit some fifteen years ago in Jammu. The members of the outfit had also unsuccessfully tried their luck in the Assembly elections. At that time, the attempt failed to click. This time, it is believed that ISI has agreed to provide necessary funds through their agents in Kashmir and Randy's visit aimed to formalize the entire tie-up.

The sources also revealed that the intelligence agencies failed twice in apprehending Randy when he successfully visited Anand Nagar in W.Bengal to attend the Dharma-Chakras organized there and has been evading the sleuths successfully for last two years.

It may be added that Anand Marga believes that India is a multinational state and that small nationalities have an equal right to independence.

A Historic role awaits Sentinel

Dear Sir,

To reach the designated destination the Pandits have a long way to go and there is a limited time to cover the distance. Every single day of the continuance of the "status quo" is a day against the Pandits and a day lost of them to reach their goal i.e., a homeland or Panun Kashmir. The massacres of Sangrampura, Gool, Wandahama Prankot, Chapnari and many other mass murders and the predictable complicity of the authorities must serve as a final warning for the Hindus about their ultimate fate, should they helplessly continue to live under a system where murderous mujahids rule. I am hopeful that the Sentinel will play a leading role in awakening the people of India and mobilizing the minorities in Kashmir for putting an end to the tyranny spearheaded by the National Conference and its communal leadership. Indian masses should be made fully aware that the process of elimination of Kashmir's demographic diversity began the

day the Abdullah led National Conference assumed power in 1948. As a result of this forced transformation, secularism in J&K was given a new meaning whereby Kashmiri secularism-brutal sunni style Islamization + corrupt NC separatist rule + termination of Hindus and other minorities + suppression of Indian nationalism.

LETTERS

The expected changes in policies and strategies towards Kashmir after the BJP came to power remain as illusive as before. The conditions of the minorities, particularly the KPs, have never been more precarious and the periodic mass murders of Hindus go on. Why the BJP is reluctant to use power and military for destroying the centers of the Pan Islamic terror is rather puzzling. It is equally astonishing that like the Congress and the United Front Government, they have sought an unholy alliance with the NC and its opportunist leadership. Such a marriage of convenience is fraught with dan-

gerous consequences both regionally and nationally. At best the BJP-NC marriage will aim at wiping the Kashmiri Hindus out of existence forever. Nationally, by shaking the faith of the masses in the power of the ballot, it will bring about the end of the Indian democracy as we know it.

Disregarding the expediency and reprehensible trade by these political merchants the brave Hindus must fight to finish and not allow the NC and its allies to preside over the liquidation of Pandits from Kashmir. On the contrary for liberating Kashmir, establishing freedom & equality for all, and assuring that J&K remains with out any conditions an integral part of India, the NC and its communal agenda will have to be buried for ever. Towards realizing that historic goal as also for establishing Panun Kashmir I hope the Sentinel and its readership play a meaningful role.

- **Dr. Jagan Kaul**

National Advisor
Indo-American Kashmir Forum USA

Kashmir Sentinel

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(1-7-98---15-7-98)

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1. Smt. Danwati Raju, R/o Wazir Bagh, Srinagar; Presently at H.No: 567 Sec:4 Gangyal Jammu 29/8/98.
2. Smt. Lilawati Kalu W/o Late Sh Sham Lal Kalu, R/o 51, Ganpatyar; Presently at Lane No: 2 Buta Nagar, Jammu 28/8/98.
3. Smt. Somawati Tingloo W/o Sh Shamboo Nath Tingloo, R/o Kulgam Anantnag; Presently at Judicial Quarters Ambphalla, Jammu 1/7/98.
4. Sh. Dina Nath Bhan, R/o Manigam Ganderbal; Presently at 32/C Bhawani Nagar, Janipur, Jammu 26/8/98.
5. Sh. H.N. Dhar S/o Sh Mahanand Joo Dhar, R/o Jawahar Nagar, Srinagar; Presently at 35, Ashok Nagar, Canal Road, Jammu. 2/7/98
6. Sh Dina Nath Koul S/o Late Shyam Lal Koul, R/o 51 Ganpatyar Srinagar; Presently Lane No: 2 Buta Nagar, Jammu. 1/7/98.
7. Sh. P.N. Santoshi S/o Lt Krishan Dass Khar, R/o Martand Kashmir. 2/7/98.
8. Smt. Deviki Razdan; Presently at 1-5/9, Trikuta Nagar, Jammu. 30/8/98.
9. Sh Shamboo Nath Lahori S/o Late Kishan Lal Lahori, R/o Batpora Shapian; Presently at 59/60 Shejhar Co-operative Makarpura Baroda Gujrat. 1/7/98.
10. Sh. Vishamber Nath Raina, R/o Batapora Kanichawa; Presently at C-67 Govt. Qtr. Topesherkhania, Jammu. 2/7/98.
11. Smt. Mmeenakshi Koul D/o Lt Bushan Lal Kaul, R/o Amnoo Kulgama; Presently at behind Migrant Qtrs. Muthi Phase-II, Jammu. 3/7/98.
12. Sh. Kashi Nath Bhat S/o Late Mukund Bhat, R/o Verinag, Kashmir; Presently at H.No: 161 Lane-2 Pamposh Colony, Janipur. 4/7/98.
13. Smt. Meenawati W/o Late Kashi Nath Bhat, R/o Fatehpura Anantnag; Presently at D-25 Lane-4, New Mahivir Nagar New Delhi. 2/7/98.
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15. Smt. Indrawati W/o Late Jaia Lal Bhat, R/o Bomai Sopore; Presently at Govind Nagar Munshi Chak, Talab Tillo, Jammu. 3/7/98.
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28. Sh. Kanth Ram Shah, R/o Village Salamatwari, Kupwara; Presently at Qtr No: 253, Mishriwala Camp, Jammu. 8/7/98.
29. Smt. Tulsi Devi W/o Late Jagar Nath Kantroo, R/o Fatenpora, Anantnag; Presently at H.No: 58, Lane No: 2, Adarsh Nagar, Bantalab. 9/7/98.
30. Sh. Soom Nath Bhat S/o Late Shiv Ram Bhat, R/o Mangal Gund Kokernag; Presently at Migrant Qtr Nagrota, Jammu. 7/7/98.
31. Smt. Shiela Kaul W/o Late Omkar Nath Kaul; Presently at 23-B, Bhagwati Nagar, Jammu. 11/7/98.
32. Sh Jia Lal Raina S/o Late Balbader Kisso, R/o Karan Nagar, Srinagar. 7/7/98.
33. Sham Lal Bhat S/o Lt Sh MJ Bhat, R/o Bhag Jogi Lanker, Rainawari, Srinagar; Presently at 51-A, Pkt-A-3 Mayur Vihar, Phase-3, New Delhi. 10/7/98.
34. Smt Indrawati Dassi (Bagar Jigri) W/o Lt Sh TN Dassi of Anantnag; Presently at Khanlara Road, Near Govt. School, Dharmshalla (H.P.) 9-7-98.
35. Sh Mohan Lal Raina, R/o Trisal, Pulwama; Presently at 43-Neelam Colony, Toph Mode, Jammu. 13-7-98.
36. Sheelaji (Bentathil), 23-B, Bhagwati Nagar, Jammu. 11/7/98.
37. Sh Jagan Nath Mattoo, R/o Malik Bhag, Zalndar Mohalla, Srinagar; Presently at 44/1, Vivek Vihar, Opp. Soap Factory, Paloura, Jammu. 12/7/98.
38. Sh Triloki Nath Koul (Bobu Jee) S/o Lt Sh Tota Koul, R/o Sirru Pattan; Presently at H.No: 434, Sector-5, Channi Himmat, Jammu. 11/7/98.
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- EDITOR

Blunting of counter-insurgency instruments

KS Correspondent

It took a long time for the State and the Central governments to appreciate the dimensions of insurgency in Jammu and Kashmir state. Even the mass exodus could not shakeup the iceberg of Indian state. In the initial months of 1990 when hundreds of Hindu families were pouring out of Valley many a senior politicians and bureaucrats termed it as a 'panick reaction'.

'Once the state was geared up to some action, it took not less than four years to develop some basic instruments to fight the proxy war. Creation of counter Insurgent Groups, Village Defence Committees, Special Task Force in the armed police of the State, active involvement of army and paramilitary forces, and increased leverage provided by constitutional measures like extension of Disturbed Area Act to Kashmir valley started bearing fruits. Initiation of a demo-

cratic process and return of an elected government was a cumulative effort of these counter insurgency strategies.

However, the handling of situation after the assembly elections is only a sad story. The ultimate goal of all these counterinsurgency measures eventually made out to be the installation of only an elected government.

For last two years, we have observed a gradual blunting of all these strategies; and it is no surprise that insurgency has now engulfed the entire state in a big way, threatening displacement of minority pockets in other parts of the state.

Village Defence Committees (VDCs) were supposed to be part of a broader strategy to develop a people's movement against terrorism. Making people aware of the nature and objectives of terrorism and acts of sabotage, as well as equipping and training the people to defend themselves constituted the broader spectrum of activi-

ties envisaged.

However the entire concept was reduced to creation of a few ill-equipped and untrained groups who ultimately became soft targets. A strategy which was aimed at improving the safety of citizens ultimately increased their vulnerability. Recent attacks on VDCs in Dessa are glaring example.

Efforts are already on to disband even these committees. Both Congress and NC leadership have started a subtle campaign in this direction. State Congress leaders were able to convince the central delegation of Congress party lead by Mr Sibte Razi to take a stand against VDCs. NC leaders down the line are not far behind their counterparts in Congress in campaign for the same cause.

Counter Insurgent Groups operating in the state, who had played the leading role in not only fighting terrorism but also creating an atmosphere for holding of elections in the state, have suffered worst during last two years. Defections were engineered in these groups by the ruling National Conference.

Subversive elements within the administration have effectively reared up their heads and are influencing decisions at all levels. A systematic campaign of harassment, victimisation and intimidation has been launched against counter-insurgent groups within the state.

That these groups have suffered lot of casualties at the hands of terrorists, who have unleashed a campaign of vengeance against them, is just a pointer to the fact that the trend has been reversed within a year. The upper hand which counter insurgents had is already lost. The landmine blast in June in the Valley killing five Ikhwan commanders has only underscored vulnerability of counter insurgents.

The more organised counter insurgent group lead by Liaqat in South Kashmir stands already demoralised. Under the articulate and committed leadership of Liaqat this group had earned a lot of respect from the people. Liaqat claims

to have declared a war on Pakistan in Anantnag. He is clear about his objective and said, "I do not want to see my son take the gun like me. I want to tell the people of Kashmir that Pakistan is their real enemy".

this task force and has distinguished himself in fighting terrorism in Kashmir Valley was transferred the very first day the elected government assumed power.

The feeling in the members in the task force is grow-



Cache of arms and IEDs recovered by the security forces in Kashmir. --K.Sentinel Photo

But after having joined BJP, his tone is that of demotivation. "Nationalists are being sidelined and are taken for granted; while elements trying to indulge in double-speak on Kashmir's relation with the rest of the country are appeased". He does not hesitate in accusing BJP for being no different and persuing totally incoherent policy on Kashmir.

Kuka Parray, founder of first ever counter-insurgent group has not overcome the shock of killing of his closest associates by Hizb-ul-Mujahidin. He feels betrayed by the government which has launched a vilification campaign against counter insurgent groups.

Interestingly, State government is yet to come out clean as to how more than a crore of rupees earmarked for rehabilitation of surrendered militants has been spent. Increasing demoralisation and lack of commitment from government may force these groups either to join back the terrorist mainstream or give up and abandon Kashmir for ever.

The state of affairs in the Special Task Force in Jammu and Kashmir Police is not different. It was after a lot of persuasion that some committed policemen offered themselves for the task force.

Farooq Khan who is one of the frontline officers of

ing that the present government does not acknowledge their contribution at all. State government continues to sleep over the proposed dismissal of 200 government officials who were found collaborating with militancy.

Many police officials who were alleged to have supported terrorism in one way or the other are reportedly said to be main beneficiaries in case of transfers and promotions.

Subsequent to Wandhama and Prankote massacres, the state of affairs in army and other paramilitary organisations, operating in the state, has become the focus of criticism. Large scale infiltration is being attributed to the rampant corruption within these organisations.

That one of these organisations tried to misinform, as per newspaper reports, no less a person than the Union Home Minister and tried to dissuade him from visiting the site of carnage, has seriously undermined their credibility amongst the people.

However, the most serious development is the confusion regarding the state of deployment of armed forces in the state. Governments, both at the centre and state, have not been able to answer why the army picket was lifted from Wandhama.

Similarly, analysts are (cont. on P11)

State BJP at loggerheads with centre

KS Correspondent
JAMMU

The state BJP leadership seems at loggerheads with the central leadership on the issue of centre's approach to ethnic cleansing of Hindus and its tacit support to the Farooq Abdullah government.

It is clear now that entire State BJP leadership felt embarrassed when after the Chapnari massacre the Union Home Minister Sh.LK.Advani refused to meet the demand of the State Unit for declaring District Doda as a disturbed area. Reportedly, Sh. Advani had remarked "What difference shall it make?"

It may be recalled that during the 'Save Doda Campaign' which was launched by BJP in 1996, Sh. Advani himself had courted arrest for declaring Doda as a disturbed area.

Not happy with Sh. Advani's reply, the State BJP

Chief D K Kotwal demanded immediate dismissal of Farooq Abdullah government for its inability to stop religious cleansing of minorities and its failure on all fronts.

Prof. Chaman Lal Gupta, MP from Udampur-Doda, demanded stern action against state government and charged that some Ministers and legislatures of National Conference were hand in glove with the separatists.

In a Press Conference jointly addressed by the BJP Mahila Morcha Vice President, Sh. D.K. Kotwal, State Chief and Vaid Vishnu Dutt MP, the leaders said that they would not even feel shy of taking cudgles with the central leadership to save the minorities from a death-trap.

It is reported that the State BJP has prepared a detailed memorandum on the issue and shall take up the matter with BJP National President during his visit to Jammu on 28th July.

"Rise of Fundamentalism - a challenge to the world community" - Boddaert

JAMMU: The European coordinator of the prestigious non-governmental organisation International Association for Religious Freedom visited Jammu recently to assess the plight of internally displaced Kashmiri Pandits. The coordinator Rev. Peronne Boddaert visited the refugee camps in Jammu on 9th July, 1998 and had a detailed meeting with prominent Kashmiri Pandit intellectuals and leaders at the press club, Jammu.

During her visit to the Mishriwala and Muthi Phase II camps, Peronne Boddaert talked to the people there. She entered their hutments and herself judged the living conditions in these camps. She later on expressed to the Pandit intellectuals, her astonishment on how these displaced people were made to live in what could be the place for Quadrapeds.

The two hour meeting of prominent Pandits on 10th July with Ms Boddaert focussed primarily on various aspects of ethnic cleansing of Kashmiri Pandits. Dr MK Teng leading political analyst of the state chaired this meeting. Amongst other prominent Pandits present in the meeting were Dr Ajay Chrungoo, Chairman of Political Affairs Committee of Panun Kashmir, Prof BL Fotedar, Prof MK Raina, Prof BL Zutshi, Prof Munshi, Sh ON Pandita, Dr. Agnishekhar and Sunil Hali.

Dr MK Teng set the tone for the proceedings before he undertook the chairmanship of the meeting. In the informal opening remarks he conveyed to Rev. Boddaert in unambiguous terms the basic nature of the crisis of Kashmir. Dr Teng emphasised that the Kashmir issue was essentially the outcome of rise of

Islamic fundamentalism and its militarisation in the region.

Sh ON Pandita during his brief presentation made it clear to the visiting representative that the problems of Hindus were essentially linked to the process of Islamization. He remarked that problem in Kashmir will never be resolved through some solution arrived at between India and Pakistan, as most of the people believed. According to him the permanent solution to the Kashmir issue in general and Kashmiri Pandits in particular depended primarily on the response of modern world to the menace of Islamic fundamentalism and the challenge posed by it to pluralistic societies.

Dr Ajay Chrungoo informed the representative that the genocidal process inflicted on Kashmiri Pandits has no way subsided with their exodus from Kashmir valley. Kashmiri Pandits were the targets of terrorists as well Muslimised administration even in their exile in Jammu, he added. Quoting specific instances supporting his argument, he further informed the visiting dignitary about the processes still in vogue in Kashmir valley to give finishing touches to the cleansing operation unleashed by terrorists. He further that since 1989, hundreds of ancient Hindu temples have either been destroyed or damaged, besides the looting and burning of the abandoned Hindu properties.

Prof. BL Zutshi discussed in detail the problems of displaced students and the impact of exodus on the education of students. Prof Munshi wondered as to how the developed world was ignoring the rise of Muslim fundamentalism particularly in South Asia.

Concluding the meeting Rev. Peronne Boddaert acknowledged that the rise of fundamentalism was a challenge to world community. She assured the persons present that she would submit a detailed report to the headquarters of her organisation in Oxford and would also write to the ambassador of Holland in New Delhi about her impressions of the plight of Pandits in camps and otherwise.

Avoid travel to J&K - says Tourist Advice London

JAMMU: Even while the state and central tourist ministries are taking some consolation and credit for increased tourist traffic to the Kashmir Valley, the western governments are yet to withdraw adverse tourist advice to their citizens planning visit to India.

Indian foreign offices have been unable to compliment the efforts of Tourist Ministry in view of large scale terrorist activities in the state. The spate of massacres recently, has severely impaired the image of Jammu & Kashmir as a possible tourist spot. Fed by their own information channels the Western Foreign offices in India are not at all convinced about the safe tourist prospects in Kashmir valley. In fact all those who insist Kashmir is safe for tourists have been termed as touts.

In a communication the

Tourist Advice Unit Foreign & Commonwealth office London has reported, 'visitors to India should be aware of travel touts who will try to convince them that it is safe to travel to the state of Jammu & Kashmir. No matter how convincing these touts appear to be, their advice should not be followed. We strongly advise against travel to this state.'

Observers are surprised as to how Union of India has embarked upon a programme of increasing domestic tourist flow to the state. Indian tourists are at a graver risk than foreign tourists, according to many analysts. The spate of massacres directed against minorities should make government of India realise that the terrorist groups have no inhibitions at all, they argue. The ignorant masses should not be made tools for a pub-

licity campaign of 'peace' returning to Valley.

According to reliable sources, non-interference of terrorists in the tourist traffic is only a temporary concession provided to that part of Kashmiri population which survives on Tourism. Deterioration of economic conditions of this section had caused resentment against terrorist operatives in the Valley. However many Kashmir watchers believe that the non-interference is only temporary.

As a contrast European advisors on tour & travel are unwilling to put their citizens to any risk. The communication from London clearly states, "There is a serious risk of kidnapping. Avoid travel to all parts of Jammu & Kashmir apart from Ladakh and even there avoid sensitive border areas where there has recently been trouble".

RETURN ISSUE

KPs question wisdom of Government

KS Correspondent

JAMMU: The cabinet sub-committee held a meeting on 3rd July under chairmanship of Mr Ali Mohd Naik, Revenue and Relief and Rehabilitation Minister, to discuss the return of Kashmiri migrants to the Valley. The committee decided to convene next meeting immediately to chalk out the return plan.

Meanwhile, this correspondent interacted with several exiled community brethren to elicit their views on the return plan. Generally, people questioned the wisdom of government for speaking of early return when the atmosphere in Valley is quite hostile. They held state government responsible for the massacres of Sangrampora, Wandhama and fresh exodus as governments drum beat on return. Without taking cognizance of ground realities to these incidents. Fresh exodus of KPs has been reported from many pockets in Valley including Brah, Ranipora and Dyalgam (Anantnag) and Pinglana and Choodrigund (Pulwama). "How can government fa-

cilitate return of KPs when the mercenaries are roaming openly in rural areas intimidating Pandits, in their view KAFIRS, to leave Valley," said a fresh KP migrant on condition of anonymity. He said that mercenaries are even moving in Indian Army uniforms and administration is in knowledge of it, but criminally silent for political reasons. Most of Kashmiri Pandits accuse government for roping in certain touts from the community and ignoring genuine KP leadership and organisations on the sensitive issue of return plan. They charged government for organising politically motivated visits of these touts to Valley at the cost of state exchequer and alleged that money changes hands in the name of social dialogue. The community is even apprehensive that state government may succeed in getting funds from central government in the name of rehabilitation plan and siphon them after facilitating symbolic return of few vested interests.

Reacting to the cabinet sub-committee meet, Mr Kuldip Raina, General Secretary Pa-

nun Kashmir, said that such routine meetings are organised to show government is functioning. How can government think of return at this juncture when Farooq Abdullah, Chief Minister J&K, himself recently admitted that situation was not conducive for return of Hindus and even desisted his partyman from raking up the issue on public platforms as the same has proved counter-productive for the community. Mr Raina further said that permanent solution to the rehabilitation of KPs lies in the political reorganisation of the state.

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WITH COMPLIMENTS OF

PT. SATISH KOUL
C-13, Sector-15
NOIDA

Major infiltration bid by ISI

Pak Firing along LOC

Our Correspondent

JAMMU: Entire Line of Actual Control in Kargil, Baramulla-Kupwara areas and Rajouri Poonch are witnessing continuous moderate to heavy shelling by Pakistan. The heavy firing started towards the end of last month and assumed alarming proportions during the first week of July. Firing is continuing even though relatively at less intensity since then. Major infiltration bids were made by Pakistani ISI to sneak in terrorists including foreign mercenaries under the cover of heavy shelling.

Unprovoked heavy shelling disrupted the life in Kargil town. Firing assumed dangerous proportions towards the end of June and continued till first few days of July. Artillery shells hit the government building causing extensive damage. According to reports almost entire population in the town fled to safer areas during the peak days of firing. Many such people are yet to return for fear of resumption of shelling by Pakistan. 25 people had lost their lives when Pakistani army resorted to heavy fire in October 1997.

Fresh tension in Kargil town started on Sunday, 28 June, 1998 when a civilian died due to the bursting of a shell. The worst effected areas in the sector have been villages of Goma, Kakasar and Silshik.

According to Lt Gen Krishen Pal the aim of the firing in this sector was to target Kargil town and Kargil-Sgr highway. One person was killed when a shell hit a vehicle on the Kargil-Sgr highway.

There was particularly heavy firing in the Keran and Gurez areas along the LoC. A police post near river Neelam in Keran was completely destroyed. However, there are no reports of any policeman suffering any injury. Heavy shelling forced people to remain indoors and many of them fled towards the forests for safety. Reportedly Pakistani army has built new 150 bunkers along LoC.

Firing started in Uri, Tangdar, Machil, Gurez etc around June 23, 1998. A passenger bus was hit by firing at Kamalkot in Uri sector and a shop was also damaged. Worst effected villages have been Bagtore,

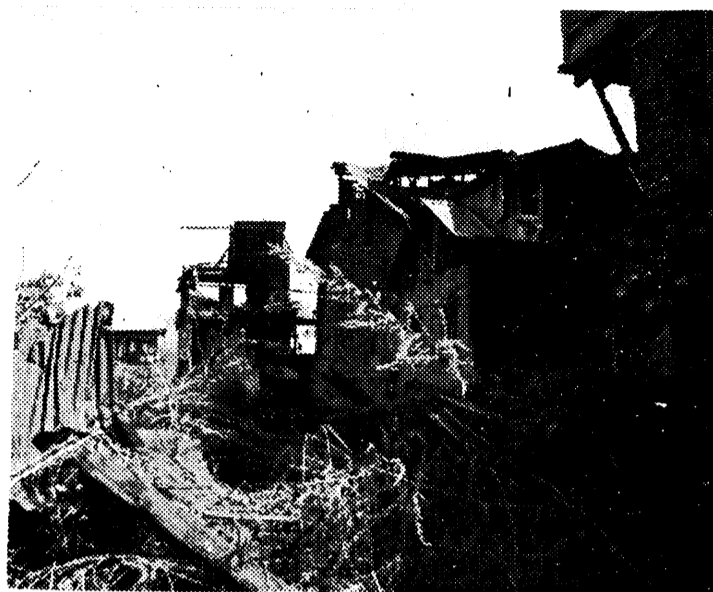
Thatbbal, Iz marg, Kanzalwan and Badwan.

Five persons including three security personnel were killed in Gurez on June 25. 15 houses were damaged due to shelling. In the worst phase of shelling army was seen asking local residents to shift to safer areas. Army also provided food and shelter to people who had fled to safer areas.

The minister of state for Home Sh Mushtaq Ahmad Lone alongwith Divisional Commissioner of Kashmir Sh SL Bhat and DIG Baramulla Sh SP Vaid visited the effected areas of Gurez. The minister declared an ex-gratia relief of Rs one lakh each for the kin of Azad Ahmad Haray and Rehman Hajaam who got killed in the Bagtore village of this area.

Two ladies, Meerjan of Titwal border village and Zulikha of Kamalkote were also killed in the firing. In total 15 civilians were injured in Titwal area. The injured Rashida Banoo Akhtar and Zahoor were reported to be in critical condition.

A power generating unit in Tangdar was hit by Pak firing and rendered



disfunctional, plunging the entire area into darkness.

Six residential houses were damaged by firing in Ajas. Firing also continued in Nanja, Marza, Sandhu and other areas along LoC in Jammu sector.

ISI planned major infiltration to sneak terrorists into Indian territory during the intense firing along LoC. Major infiltration bid by 18 Afghan mercenaries was foiled by timely intervention by the army in Keran sector on June 30. Eight foreign mercenaries were killed in this encounter. One infiltrator was captured alive while rest escaped back. Four army jawans

were injured in the operation.

Another major infiltration bid was foiled by security forces in Nowgam area on 3rd July. In the Bangus valley of this area a big contingent of terrorist tried to infiltrate to the Indian side. Noting the movement the 6 Dogra jawans carried out an operation to foil the attempt. The heavily armed terrorists fired back and the encounter lasted for 3 days.

Seven terrorists got killed on this day; subsequently 3 more terrorists were killed and on 5th July, one more terrorist was eliminated. Six

(cont. on P11)

Peace is returning but Kashmir is slipping away

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

SRINAGAR

Paddy fields are green and the farming community is busy planting the seedlings. The usual convoy of security trucks and jeeps has depleted and frequency of its movement reduced. The green hoardings and signboards in Urdu have given way to multi coloured hoardings in English.

Iftikhar Ahmad, a Government officer has been quite exuberant after visiting Pahalgam with his family. Another officer, Farroq Khan is happy that his daughters have joined computer courses and move around freely. Kashmiris in Srinagar on the whole seem confident and are happy that the days of terror and ransom shall by and large be over.

Mengha Ram (real identity not disclosed), a Hindu who owns a Dhaba (an eat-point)

in Srinagar maintains that peace would return but ensuring a future for his family would be impossible, here. His neighbour, Madan Kumar, who is from Jammu and owns a tea-shop believes that Hindus shall never be able to return as nobody is interested in their return. He says that he stayed back here during the early nineties, like some other non-Kashmiri Hindus, for his petty business interest and that the militants have never bothered him. When asked why his family was not there, he said that it was for security reasons and that even in future he would not contemplate to bring his wife and kids to Kashmir.

Harish Kumar and Surinder Singh, two businessmen from Jammu, whom this correspondent met at the busy boulevard on the Dal Lake, said that during their next visit, here, they had planned to bring their fami-

lies as the insecurity and terror of previous years was not there. When asked how did they visualize return of displaced Pandits, both were categorical that it seemed impossible. Whereas Harish maintained that the social milieu in Kashmir had become communalized with little space for minorities, Surinder was of opinion that Pandits of Kashmir, who had tasted the free and democratic environment of India with ample space for growth and development, had lost interest in their return to the valley.

Manzoor Ahmad, a houseboat owner was feeling upbeat as his houseboat has remained occupied for almost one month. He is happy that travel agents from Katra, Jammu, Delhi and Ahmedabad have been successful in attracting domestic tourists to Kashmir. He also hopes that the numbers

of tourists would go up next year.

Contrary to this hope of return of normalcy to the valley, some highly placed sources in the security setup believe that 'peace may be returning but Kashmir is slipping away from India'.

They said that ISI which was losing sympathy among Kashmiris had instructed its cadres to relieve the locals and build pressure in the Pir Panchals in the Jammu region. This, the sources said was a multi-pronged strategy of earning the goodwill of Kashmiri Muslims and at the same time of affecting ethno-religious cleansing in the up-

per reaches of Doda, Udhampur, Rajouri and Poonch.

These officers strongly claim that in case the trend is not defeated, it would be impossible to secure the ethnically cleansed valley of Kashmir and the Muslim majority districts of Jammu for India.

These high ranking police and military officials who would like to remain anonymous, resent the administrative and political inaction even after change of guard at the centre and blame the political leadership of lack of vision and perspective on Kashmir.

CORRIGENDUM

1. With due apology, we inform that in the interview published in our edition of June 1-15, 1998, the name of the personality interviewed was erroneously printed as Beers Von Paul. The real name of Mr. Paul is Beersmans Paul. We regret the error.
2. The Vol. & No. of the last edition too have been erroneously printed as Vol.5 and No.3. The same may please be read as Vol.4 and No.4.

Editor

Kashmir Sentinel

Don't miss this opportunity!

The Hon'ble Prime Minister of India is slated to meet Mr. Nawaz Sharif in Colombo during the SAARC Summit. He has made it clear that India is ready to talk with Pakistan on all issues including the bilateral issues. The time has come when the two countries should get involved in the serious business of negotiation and settlement of long pending issues, including Kashmir.

Pakistan seemingly is caught up in its own game of sponsoring terrorism and is not in a position to retreat. It is exporting militarized fundamentalism of Islamic variety across the globe. The vested interests in the Pak army junta and in ISI would never allow the Political leadership to emerge clear. On top of it, it has become a pawn in the hands of American and Chinese geopolitical interests. Ideologically it is opposed to India and for that matter to the entire secular democratic dispensation.

India on the other hand is a throbbing democracy with growing global market interests. Notwithstanding the vitriolic criticism by opposition, the BJP is committed to a secular agenda and has shown no inkling of dithering on the state's avowed objectives. It has definitely retrieved India from a slumping foreign policy and pushed up its sagging morale, no matter if the G-5 countries are showing initial hiccups to recognize its might.

Time has come when the two countries no longer can delude themselves with worn out hopes and wishes. Better would be to recognize and appreciate each others position with an open mind. This is an opportunity which should be utilized to its full to make their position clear to each other.

Again, Pakistan which is already facing an uphill task under the declared sanctions, should not miss this chance of beginning a sincere dialogue to sort out its problems with India. India should be in a better position to help it build its economy and help in its industrialization. In such a scenario, it is well advised not to get struck up with minor irritants, like its stand on Kashmir.

A closer coordination between the two countries on their nuclear programmes; signing of a pact between the two on no first strike; a beginning on resolution of the Kashmir issue; and a closer economic and scientific exchange would not only help reduce an uncalled for arms race in the South Asia, but would herald a new era of growth and development in the subcontinent. It shall also leave little scope for the Big Brother players to meddle in the strategically located crescent beginning from Pamirs and stretching from Afghanistan to the Tadjijs.

- Shambendra Arma

Perspective

Kashmir Agenda of Indian

By Prof. M.K. Teng

The British were no votaries of the Indian Unity and in the negotiations with the Indian leaders preceding the acceptance of the partition of India, they kept the door open, for the Princes, to form a third, fourth and even a fifth estate in India, which in the new balance of power, between the two Dominions, could be ensured independence from either of the Dominions. Conrad Corfield and the Political Department of the Government of India as well as the Secretary of the State, were determined to keep the States apart from the division of the British India and the transfer of power to the two Dominions. Conrad Corfield was the head of the Political Department of the Government of India, which looked after the British relations with the States. Jinnah acclaimed the determination of the British Government to keep the Princes out of the partition.

The Princely States were not subject to the division of the British India and were not in any way connected with the creation of the new Muslim State of Pakistan. The lapse of Paramountcy released the Princes from the British tutelage and they were ensured the right to determine the future of their States by the British which assumed effect with their withdrawal from India. Pakistan, had no right to any claim upon the Princely States which did not form a part of the British India. The Indian leaders in fact, should have decisively claimed the States as a part of the colonial empire liberated from the British tutelage. They knew that Princes were only the shadows of their British masters, and they would neither dare to join Pakistan nor remain out of India, after the British had boarded their ships for home. The Indian leadership made no efforts to save the State of Kalat, where the ruler refused to accede to Pakistan and sought the help of the Indian leaders to save him from being swallowed by the

League. Kalat was eventually smothered into submission by the continued pressure of the British, who backed Pakistan to acquire the States, contiguous to its territories which incidentally, included Bahawalpur as well.

Jinnah and the other leaders of the Muslim League had greater stakes in the states ruled by the Muslim Princes than they had in the Muslim majority of the Jammu and Kashmir State. They sought to keep the option open for the Muslim rulers to join Pakistan. And they did not close the option for the ruler of Jammu and Kashmir either. Infact, they offered to support Hari Singh in case he decided to opt for the independence of the State. Hari Singh saw through the game and refused to be used as a pawn in the British-League plan to keep the Muslim ruled States out of India.

east Punjab from the west Punjab, besides keeping in view the future of the district of Amritsar which would be almost isolated into an island of Indian territory in the west Punjab. Amritsar was by no means a Muslim majority district and it could not be separated from the east Punjab for its significance to the Sikh Community.

Amritsar symbolised the principal centre of the Sikh religion. Sikhs were by far the more important of the parties to the partition of the Punjab, because, a major part of their population was uprooted from the West Punjab where their main assets and lands were located. Secondly, the most sacred of their religious shrines were situated in the Muslim majority districts, which could not be retained in the east Punjab. Gurdaspur formed the most strategic flank of the district of Amritsar.

The ruler of the Jammu and Kashmir State, too, had his own interests in the final delimitation of the new boundaries of the east and the west Punjab. Several of the Hindu

leaders in the Punjab, among them notably Sir Shadi Lal and Bakhshi Tek Chand, kept him intimately informed of the proceedings of the Boundary Commission. The British were apprehensive about him, but through many of his British contacts, he had managed to convince the Political Department that he would not take any precipitate action, which would bring him into conflict with Pakistan. Hari Singh, did not hide his interest in a balanced border with India and Pakistan and open access to the two Dominions. He conveyed to the British Resident and the Political Department a veiled threat that he would be forced to deal directly with the Indian government, if any attempts were made to isolate his State in the boundary demarcation of the Punjab, irrespective of the consequences his actions would have.

The Muslim Commissioners, Justice Din Mohamad and Justice Mohamad Munir insisted upon the division of the Upper Bari Doab, with a view to assume control over the Ravi canal head-works at Madhopur and encircle the district of Amritsar and also cut off the fair weather track between Madhopur and Jammu.

The Radcliffe award was announced three days after the transfer of power. Expectedly, Gurdaspur was included in the east Punjab, Pakistan raised a hue and cry on the decision of the Boundary Commission, though the accredited Muslim members of the Commission had committed themselves to accept the award.

Accession to Pakistan was the last act Hari Singh was prepared to accomplish. He was ready to accede to India, provided India accepted the accession of his state. On the same conditions, the Indian government had offered to the other Princes. The Congress leaders dithered, for they were unsure of the turn of events which would take place in Hyderabad, and the other Muslim ruled states, includ-

Partition-II

ing Junagarh and Bhopal, where the rulers were dead set against the union of their states with the Indian Dominion. The Nawab of Bhopal, under pressure of his people and unable to muster courage in case of a conflict with India, yielded and acceded to India. The Congress leaders were fearful that if Jammu and Kashmir acceded to India, Junagarh and Hyderabad would accede to Pakistan. The Nawab of Hyderabad made no secret of his intentions to keep his state out of India.

Hari Singh realised that in any such eventuality, the Congress would repeat history and sacrifice him for a bargain, which secured Junagarh and Hyderabad, for them. There is enough reason to believe that a section of the Congress leaders favoured a settlement based upon the partition of the British India. But a larger section of the Congress leadership disapproved of such a step. Hari Singh was secretly advised to defer his decision to accede to India, till the British had left. He utilised the influence of his Prime Minister, Ram

The Jammu and Kashmir State was contiguous to both India and Pakistan and had hundreds of miles of contiguous border with east Punjab and the Punjab Hill States, which had already decided to join India. Pakistan's propaganda has considerably clouded the real facts of the division of the Punjab. The division of the east Punjab from the west Punjab was not subject to the whims and caprice of the League leaders. They could not be ceded all the territories in the Punjab on which they laid their claim. They perpetrated a myth that the inclusion of the claims, was aimed to open up Jammu and Kashmir to India.

The division of the Punjab was entrusted to an independent Boundary Commission which the British constituted and which was headed by an Englishman, Sir Cyril Radcliffe, a lawyer of con-

siderable repute. Besides its Chairman, the Commission constituted of four other members, two of them Din Mohamad and Mohamad Munir represented the Muslims, Mehar Chand Mahajan represented the Hindus and Teja Singh represented the Sikhs.

The Commission could not follow standards different in demarcating the Muslim majority regions in the west of the Punjab and the Hindu majority regions in the east of the Punjab. Pathankot, was a Hindu majority Tehsil and it could not have been included in West Punjab by any stretch of imagination. The district boundaries were not strictly adhered to by the Boundary Commission as the basis of the division of the Punjab. There was evidently no reason why a Hindu majority Tehsil, which was contiguous to the Punjab Hill States, should have been excluded from the East Punjab.

Pathankot apart, the whole of the district of Gurdaspur was strategically important from the view-point of a defensible Indian border. It was a major consideration which the Boundary Commission recognised in demarcating the boundaries of the Chander Kak, to reassure the British officials in India and at home in Britain, that he would prefer to assume a neutral position in between India and Pakistan.

Within days after the announcement of the Radcliffe Award, Hari Singh issued instruction to widen the Jammu-Madhupur fair-weather track into an all weather road. An understanding was reached between him and the states ministry that India assistance would be made available for the construction of the road. Pakistan was not unaware of the developments in the state and information about the construction of the road reached Pakistan the same day Hari Singh's instructions were issued.

The author retired as head of Political Science Department, Kashmir University and is an internationally reputed expert on Kashmir issue.

From Here & There

Of Progenies & Dynasties

by MNT (Pseudonym)

The South Asia has the distinction of generally being ruled, with a few exceptions by widows or orphans of those who might once have led these countries. They do of course get the seal of approval of "the people" in one form or the other. Soon thereafter they settle down to either calling the shots from positions of power, or wielding of Parliament or state legislature. It has happened in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Pakistan and of course in India. Now political offices are sought to be kept "in the family". All this is done in a correct democratic manner though some might churlishly give it pejorative names like dynastic democracy.

Our own state of Jammu & Kashmir has not lagged behind and we now have political dynasties side by side with political workers. The latest is Omar Farooq, son of Farooq Abdullah, grand son of redoubtable Sheikh Abdullah, adorning the Lok Sabha. He is on the back benches for the present but, judging from what one has seen of him from the Lok Sabha's press gallery and also else were, it will not be long before he moves up front to the treasury benches. Not only does he have the family tree to push him forward but also his personality, an asset which should surprise no one coming as he does from fine Kashmiri and European stock. He has a second string to his bow which is his splendid way with words. But above all he has politically a deep commitment to Kashmir being an integral part of India and he appears dead set against militancy. Given his youth and lineage of leadership this is an excellent plus point which others, more senior to him in his own party would do well to emulate but with a degree of sincerity.

Unfortunately in a genre where one falsehood is a

lie, two falsehoods are lies and three falsehoods are politics, he may not find it easy to stay away from the common throng for too long. Instead of giving sound leadership to his youthful generation for which he appears to be well endowed, he might fall for power & pelf which are the hall marks of his father's generation. That would be a pity!

Unfortunately in a genre where one falsehood is a lie, two falsehoods are lies and three falsehoods are politics, he may not find it easy to stay away from the common throng for too long.

At the other end of the same spectrum is Ajatshatru, son of Dr. Karan Singh grand son of Maharaja Hari Singh. Dr. Farooq Abdullah took him to his government and gave him a portfolio considered highly important for a new comer. Are there any two families which have had generations of so much animosity as Abdullah's & Karan Singh's? Nowhere compared to what they did to each other, Shers and Bakras of yore might be said to have been close chums! Yet look to how they have reconciled out of "enlightened self interest". The two processes were distinctly separate and underlined political change, which led to different consequences.

If these stalwarts can come to terms with the changing circumstances, why can't I and my Muslim neighbour in Kashmir do it? One feels that those of us who were forced out of our homes need perhaps not despair after all! Or has reconciliation, like wealth, power and prestige, to be restricted only to some notable families?

While on the subject of progenies of important people, there are two who

hold leading positions in Pakistan. One would expect them to be less rabid in their anti-India howling day in and day out at least in token of remembering how Indian leaders bailed out their progenitors. Benazir Bhutto, who needs no introduction, is advocating a preemptive strike against Indian Installations. Fortunately she cannot give the nefarious idea her full attention as she is up to her neck to trouble facing charges of stashing away crores of poor Pakistan's money in foreign, mostly Swiss banks.

The other dignitary is the foreign minister Gauhar Ayub Khan who is one step ahead of his Prime Minister in denouncing India. Both Benazir and Ayub have been bad mouthing India in most virulent language after the Pokhran tests in May. Ayub is the son of Ayub Khan, who heralded the era of Military coups in Pakistan terminating that countries' democratic experiment in its infancy. He launched an attack on India in 1965 and Lal Bahadur Shastri taught him a lesson when Indian troops marched towards Lahore. But later at Tashkent Lal Bahadur handed back vast chunks of territory including strategic Haji Pir Pass to Ayub Khan so that he did not lose face completely with his people. About half a decade later, Mrs. Indira Gandhi repeated the gesture of generosity in Shimla. Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto was in tears when the talks were nearing a break down but returned home an exultant hero after hoodwinking the Indian Leader with false promise. Instead of remembering these gestures which catapulted their ancestors to glory through the mercy of Indian leaders, both Gohar and Benazir are in the vanguard of Pakistanis wanting to destroy India. That is gratitude for you!

The author is a journalist of national repute

Advani's J&K package lacks imagination

By Harish Khare

NEW DELHI, June 25: Rather ceremoniously Mr LK Advani travelled to Srinagar. His impressive entourage included a number of senior Central Ministers, besides the obligatory contingent of Home Ministry bureaucracy. If the Union Home Minister's desire was to demonstrate once again that he was exclusively in charge of the Kashmir policy in the Vajpayee government, the visit was an unqualified success. If the idea was also to send a message across that the Union government would not be pushed around on the Kashmir issue, Mr Advani performed adequately. He also managed to soften his own image as a Hindutva fundamentalist. With feeling he observed, "my mind is determined to bring peace and cheer to Muslims and Hindus alike. Peace is indivisible, just as Indianness is indivisible." Well spoken.

But if the idea was to tell and convince the people of Jammu and Kashmir that the

new government would bring a new imagination to bear on the "challenge of separatist terrorism in Kashmir", then Mr Advani's visit did not add up to much. For one thing Mr Advani has opted to put all his eggs in the Farooq Abdullah basket, a basket whose credibility is crumbling by the day; for another, Mr Advani chose, once again to ignore the cause of the durability of the militancy—public alienation.

In Mr Advani's own words, his "new strategy" rests on "four pillars — deepen the democratic process in the State, isolate the militant ups from the people, respond proactively to effectively neutralise the militants' hostile plans and galvanise developmental programmes." This "new strategy" does not substantially go beyond Mr Advani's own statement of May 18 in New Delhi in which he had categorically demanded that Pakistan should roll back its hostile activities in the

troubled State, and had unveiled a "pro-active" policy.

However, what is more curious is Mr. Advani's discovery that "never since the birth of the current phase of militancy in the State in 1989 has the relationship between the central and State governments been as cordial as it is today." He has publicly patted the Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister, for appreciating the "new strategy as well as its operational components," Mr Advani has allowed himself to be seen as endorsing the National Conference regime and its many deficiencies and excesses.

To the extent Dr Abdullah has come to cultivate an intolerance for all non-National Conference political opinion in the Kashmir valley, Mr Advani's patronage could only embolden him to discourage and sabotage any proposal "to deepen the democratic process". In the context of Jammu and Kashmir the only meaning of "deepening of the

democratic process" would be to entice and involve the whole spectrum of political opinion in a democratic give and take.

As for as responding "proactively" against the militants is concerned, Mr Advani prefers to believe that he is espousing a new policy. He is categorical in denying this means the option of "hot pursuit". Minus this his "pro-active" stance does injustice to all those security forces and agencies which have been flushing out militants—though without making much of a song and dance about it. Protestation of a new catchy headline. Mr Advani's real challenge would be to weed out collaborative elements in the security forces which enable the militants to cross the line of control.

Mr Advani also would like everyone to believe that he is first to understand the importance of "developmental" component. On the contrary, every government in New Delhi has in recent years pro-

moted and funded any number of developmental packages. For example, the then Prime Minister, HD Deve Gowda had announced an elaborate developmental package after his visit to the State in February 1997. Earlier the Bhuvnesh Chaturvedi Team that visited the State in July 1995 had talked eloquently of the "rejuvenation" of the "developmental administration".

What remains to be seen is how Mr Advani proposes to "isolate militant groups from the people". So far the Union Home Minister has not made one single statement that can be interpreted to mean holding out a promise of dialogue or discussion with those who have reason to challenge New Delhi's authority. Rather Mr Advani is threatening to use his guns. In the process the Union Home Minister is clubbing the democratic dissenter and the reformed militant with the insurgent.

Courtesy THE HINDU

Foreign hostages in Kashmir

The mystery continues

Binoo Joshi (IANS)

SRINAGAR: Every possible effort to trace the four foreign tourists abducted from the southern mountains in the Kashmir valley three years ago has failed.

While officials, tired of an endless search, are keen to close the chapter, the hope of friends and relatives of those abducted has kept the case alive.

The four tourists were taken hostage along with two others from Lidderwall near Pahalgam on July 4, 1995. John Childs escaped and Norwegian Hans Christian Ostroe was beheaded. But Donald Hutchings of the US, Paul Wells and Keith Mangan of Britain and Dirk Hasert of Germany remain untraced.

"I simply want to know whether my son is dead or alive", Bob Wells, father of Paul Wells, pleaded with villagers at Dabran, a small sleepy village in southern Kashmir, 55 km from here, on the 500th day of his son's captivity.

Bob Wells was acting in a

film being shot there on the four hostages. But his words were from his heart and the emotions real.

Dabran was where authorities suspect the hostages were last seen on December 4, 1995, the day the army and foreign mercenaries were engaged in fierce gun battles. Abdul Hamid Turki, the leader of Al-Faran, the group that abducted the foreigners, and three of his comrades had died in that exchange of fire. The army had claimed the operation as a "big success".

But exactly a week later, Al-Faran, believed to be a front of the Islamist Harkat-ul-Ansar, claimed it had none of the foreign tourists with it. "Three were taken into custody and the fourth had gone missing," it alleged. The charge was denied by the army.

Panic buttons were pressed. But consolation surfaced with some vague reports suggesting a sighting of the hostages in mountainous part in Jammu and Kashmir, where a separatist insurgency and mind-

less terrorism has left over 20,000 dead in the past eight years.

The flicker of hope drawn from reports of sightings however died, soon. Naseer Jangrayal apparently a top activist of Harkat-ul-Ansar and once associated with hostage takers, in May 1996 on his arrest near Srinagar told his interrogators that the hostages were "dead".

He said they were shot by their abductors after the death of Hamid Turki in December, 1995. He claimed that the four were buried in Magam Rakh, a densely forested area in Southern Kashmir which was 100 km from the place they were abducted.

Langyayal said Al-Faran members felt the hostages had become a "liability" for them. The terrorists were shifting from one place to another frequently. They had neither got any ransom money nor did the government appear inclined to release Masood Azhar, a Pakistani national and an ideologue of the Harkat-ul-Ansar. He was ar-

rested in February 1994.

Hours after taking the foreigners hostage, the abductors, in a handwritten note in Urdu, had demanded release of 21 extremists—a majority of them foreign mercenaries facing charges of murder or conspiracy to murder. During subsequent negotiations they brought down their demands to the release of only Azhar.

The Jammu and Kashmir Governor KV Krishna Rao firmly ruled out the release of any extremist. "I cannot open the flood-gates for abduction of foreigners," he said.

Rao had learnt his lessons from December 1989, when five Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) extremists were released in exchange for the abducted daughter of then Union Home Minister Mufti Mohammed Sayeed. Thereafter, official statistics reveal, more than 7,500 abductions have taken place in Kashmir.

The second thing Rao had put his foot down on was the launch of a military rescue operation. "I did not allow

that for that would have endangered the lives of the hostages," he had said..

The government had come under intense pressure to rescue the hostages following the murder of Norwegian Hans Christian Ostroe in August, 1995. Special teams from Scotland Yard and the US Army had arrived to launch the rescue operations.

But rescue plans were given up as their governments realised that any such operation would mean instant death of the hostages.

In fact, hostage-takers reportedly did get wind of the rescue plans. They set a 24-hour deadline for August 28 that year. But the press note containing the threat was withdrawn when then State Police Chief Mahendra Nath Sabharwal appeared on television to declare: "No military offensive is on the anvil." That, it is believed, saved the lives of the hostages that day.

The strategy was to keep the hostage-takers involved in
(cont. on P11)

COMMEMORATIVE STAMP RELEASED

Bhagwan Gopinathji centenary celebrations conclude



Commemorative stamp on Bhagwan Gopi Nath Ji released by Mrs Sushma Swaraj-Union Minister for Communications.

KS Correspondents

JAMMU : The centenary celebrations of Bhagwan Gopi Nath Ji concluded here at the Bhagwan Gopi Nath Ji Ashram Udhaywala on Guru Purnima 9th, July 1998. The devotees true to the tradition offered a 'Pushp Archana' to their Guru on the day. However the befitting climax of the multifarious socio-cultural activities initiated by Bhagwan Gopi Nath Ji Trust to mark the centenary year of the Guru, was the release of the commemorative postal stamp of Bhagwan Gopi Nath Ji at New Delhi on Friday 3rd July 1998. The stamp was released by the Honourable Minister for Communications Smt Sushma Swaraj at the FICCI Auditorium in New Delhi. The BJP MP from Doda-Udhampur Parliamentary constituency, Prof Chaman Lal Gupta was the guest of honour while as Sh PN Koul ex-Chief Secretary of J&K presided over the function.

Thousands of devotees thronged the premises of auditorium and in a spiritually surcharged atmosphere the devotees pledged to carry the spiritual message of Bhagwan Ji to the future generations. The authorities of the postal department found themselves in an unenviable position when they could not fulfill the demands of the public who were ready to purchase the stamps. The event was unique in the sense that Bhajwan Gopi Nath Ji becomes the first saint of Kashmir in whose memory Indian Postal depart-

ment released a commemorative stamp.

Bhagwan Gopi Nath Ji Trust has played a leading role during the torturous years of exile for the entire displaced population from Kashmir valley. Rising to the occasion the trust appears to have broadened the scope of its mission which previously was essentially spiritual and to some extent revolved round some charity projects. Its main agenda of activity in exile has certainly become more 'social' in nature as is evidenced by the type of activities it undertook during the centenary year of Bhagwan's birthday celebrations.

The 'Charity Projects' which the Trust handled prior to 'exodus', now encompasses activities like scholarships to the students, medical help to the displaced persons suffering from serious ailments. Schemes of monetary or other help to widows and orphans have got a new impetus when the 'Trust' decided to help such students who are needy and wanted to pursue their professional or routine education. Many brilliant students who were in dire economic straits could not have pursued their educational or professional careers, but for the timely intervention of the Trust. During the centenary year the Trust increased the amount as well as the number of such scholarships. The number of schemes of help as per Ashram sources have gone up by three times.

Throughout the centenary year, programmes for cultural

regeneration were organised. Centenary discourses addressed by eminent scholars like Late JN Koul Kamal, Dr BN Pandit, Prof ML Kokaloo, were organised on subjects like 'vedantic philosophy expounded in Panchastavi, 'Kashmiri Shivism' etc. It created a new atmosphere of interest in religious and philosophical pursuits. Trust also organised a National Seminar on spiritual heritage-contribution of saints & mystic poets' in Jammu on 29th March 1998. Eminent scholars participated in it, Susan Waltars from Bengal attended the programme as the chief guest. The Trust has already initiated work on publishing a book on the centenary discourses as well the papers presented in the seminar.

Musical concerts in the form of Bhajan Sandhyas and Kavi Sammelans involving exiled artists and poets were also organised during the centenary year. This was beside the mediational workshops and essay and painting competition for children. Trust also organised blood donation camp.

These multifarious activities initiated by the Trust have generated a new hope and an atmosphere of confidence amongst the displaced population. The collective celebration of important festivals like Shiv Ratri, Nav Ratra, Zang Treya, Hura Ashtami etc. have helped in putting a healing touch on the battered and wounded cultural identity of Kashmiri Pandits subsequent to their forced exodus.

Places connected with Kashmiri Pandits in Lucknow

Dr B.N. Sharga

Bhola Nath Ka Kaun: It is a well built by Pandit Bhola Nath Ganju who was brother of Pandit Daya Nidhan Ganju for providing drinking water to travellers during the Nawabi period. This famous well is located on Abdul Aziz road near Rani Katra which had a big concentration of Kashmiri Pandit families during the rule of Nawab Asaf-ud-Din (1775-1997).

Municipal Girls Inter College: This girls institution was established by Pandit Suraj Narain Bahadur in 1904 exclusively for the education of the girls of Kashmiri Pandit families living in Kashmiri Mohalla. Pandit Suraj Narain Bahadur apart from being a sub-judge was a great social reformer of his times and was the brother-in-law of Rai Bahadur Shyam Manohar Nath Sharga. Pandit Suraj Narain Bahadur's eldest son Pandit Chand Narain Bahadur was Professor of English in Sri Pratap College, Srinagar (Kashmir).

Sharga Parks: This part was established in 1918 in Kashmiri Mohalla due to the efforts of Rai Bahadur Pandit Shyam Manohar Nath Sharga who donated both land and money for the development of this park to the then Lucknow Municipal Board. Rai Bahadur Sharga Saheb apart from being a District Judge was a great scholar of English, Urdu, Sanskrit, Persian and Arabic Literature. He was also an Urdu poet of repute and used to pen down his Urdu couplets under the pen name 'Sagir'. He was great philanthropist and built a "Shadikhana" in Kashmiri Mohalla in 1941 for the exclusive use of the biradari members for marriages and other social function.

Daya Nidhan Park: This most important park of the old city is located in Lalbagh locality. It was established in 1914 by Pandit Jagpal Kishan Ganju in memory of his father Pandit Daya Nidhan Ganju, who was Tehsildar of Lucknow when the British took over the administration of Oudh after the sepoy mutiny of 1857. Pandit Daya Nidhan Ganju was one of the richest Kashmiri Pandits of those days and the entire Lalbagh area was practically

under his ownership. He used to command a great respect among the biradari members during his life time.

Jagpal Kishan Ganju Lane: The lane which connects the main road of the Lalbagh with the ancestral Haveli of Pandit Daya Nidhan Ganju is known as Jagpal Kishan Ganju Lane who was son of Pandit Daya Nidhan Ganju, and was a 'raise' of his times.

Jagat Narain Road: The main road of Golaganj locality is known as Jagat Narain Road. It was named after Pandit Jagat Narain Mulla who was a legal luminary in the first half of the 20th century and became a minister in the interim government before 1947. He was father of Justice Anand Narain Mulla. The ancestral Haveli of Pandit Jagat Narain Mulla is located in Rani Katra locality of old Lucknow but later on Pt Jagat Narain Mulla shifted from Rani Katra to Golaganj around 1910 and started living in a palatial red building which is now popularly known as 'Red Gate Hotel'. He appeared as a government counsel in the famous Kakori conspiracy case.

Chakbast Road: The main road which connects the historic Kaiserbagh Complex with the Crossing of Balrampur Hospital is known as Chakbast Road. It was named after the famous Urdu poet and scholar of the 20th century Pandit Brij Narain Chakbast. The original house of Pt. Brij Narain Chakbast was in Kashmiri Mohalla where he formed at Kashmiri Young Men's Association to bring reforms in the Kashmiri Pandit community. He also established a well-equipped Library with rare books and manuscripts in Urdu and Persian languages in Kashmiri Mohalla for the exclusive use of the Kashmiri Pandit boys just to enable these to acquire latest knowledge on various subjects so that the boys of the community would occupy important positions in the society to enhance the prestige of the community by maintaining the glorious traditions of the past established by our ancestors.

Prem Shanker Sharga Marg: An important road in (cont. on P11)

News

Briefs

Ch. Aslam takes over as PCC chief

JAMMU : Unable to break the stalemate among Mufti Mohd. Sayed, Ghulam Nabi Azad and Ghulam Rasool Kar, Central Congress leadership has forced a hitherto lesser known Gujjar leader from Jammu Ch. Mohd. Aslam as state PCC Chief.

This is for the first time that the PCC Chief's post has gone to a Jammu based leader and it is also for the first time that a Gujjar leader has been elevated to such a position. It is also being seen as a desperate attempt by Congress to win Gujjar support which suffered a serious set-back when the Gujjar stalwart Mian Bashir joined the National Conference on the eve of elections in 1996.

Even though the three factional leaders have not publicly opposed the elevation of Ch. Aslam, the factional fights are far from being over.

In its first salvo of expressing dissatisfaction, the ex-PCC President GR Kar embarrassed the national leadership of Congress party by demanding increase in the number of UN observers to the State. Mr. Natwar Singh Member of CWC has rebutted the statement and has denied any support to such utterances.

Amarnath Yatra gets underway

KS Correspondent
JAMMU

The annual month long pilgrimage to holy Amarnath started with first batch of yatri's proceeding to Pahalgam, the base camp, from Jammu on 5th July. Thousands of yatri had the darshan of "Ice Lingam" till date. The yatri coming from nook and corner of the country, complained of hardships they faced in getting registration.

Meanwhile, the yatri had a providential escape when security forces recovered three live IED's from Sadhu Parao, Pahalgam on 8th July. The timely detection of bombs averted a major tragedy. It will not be out of place to mention that just some time back a high ranking official appeared on electronic media exhorting people to come and visit

Pahalgam as the area had been sanitised of militants. Contrary to his boasting, militants showed their presence despite fortification of the area in wake of yatra.

Yet another carnage of Hindus in Doda

DODA : Close on the heels of Mr Advani's assurance to the people, "Govt. will not allow repetition of Prankot and Chapnari," at Doda followed by a high level meeting to chalk out strategy to fight militancy, militants gunned down four Hindus at Samani (Bhaderwah) in Doda district. The victims had gone to a nearby jungle to collect firewood and were reportedly massacred by militants after confirming that they belonged to minority community. Militants even struck again at Champnari, the carnage site of marriage party, kidnapped one Moolraj and killed him after interrogation. Meanwhile, four Army personnel were killed and thirteen others injured in a fierce gun battle with militants at Surankot (Poonch). During last fortnight at least seventeen civilians and fifteen Army and security personnel got killed in militancy related incidents. The dead include an Assistant Commandant BSF and a Junior Commissioned Officer (JCO) while Mr Munir Khan, Commandant JKAP 7th Battalion, survived an attempt on his life.

Jagan Kaul condemns massacre

STATEMENT

We strongly and unequivocally condemned the latest massacre of a Hindu Wedding party in the remote village of Champnari in Doda District of Jammu province in which more than 26 people were gunned down by Pak-trained mercenaries and the hired killers of the Pan Islamic movement. At this stage when the J&K Govt. has miserably failed to protect the lives of the loyal citizens we urgently demand that the Indian Govt. must immediately step in and promulgate presidential rule in Kashmir and place the areas heavily infested by the Islamic terrorists under the direct control of the Indian Army. The army must be given freedom in discharging its responsibility of combing the entire area for flushing out and destroying the agents of death. It would be absolutely useless and even counter productive to entertain illusions that the ruling National Conference and its impotent leadership will restore normalcy in the state. The fact remains that the National Conference and its Govt. represents a significant force behind the Kashmir imbroglio. Any independent investigation could prove without a shadow of doubt that the net outcome of the NC policies and actions during the last 50 years has been the brutal Islamization of Kashmir. The treacherous and anti-secular role of the NC and its leadership must not

be under estimated. The Sooner New Delhi recognizes the prevailing ground realities brought about by the NC led "forced transformation" of Kashmir the sooner it will find a solution for the internal communal crisis of Kashmir.

The Indo-American community had hoped that with the change of Govt in New Delhi the fate of the Kashmiri Hindus might receive a degree of special attention and their safety and security would improve. There are strong indications though that even the BJP Govt. has remained unsuccessful in enforcing law and order in Kashmir state and its promise of "giving a taste of their own medicine to Islamic mercenaries" remained unfulfilled. The massacre at Champnari marks the 3rd major mass murder of Hindus during the BJP rule in India. We ask-how long the genocide of Hindus will be allowed to continue? It seems clear now that the change of Govt. has not brought about the change in policies and conditions and the murder of Hindus routinely continues. Even the testing of the "earth shaking" nuclear devices (five of them) has not put an end to the on

going genocide of Hindus in Kashmir and the terrorists remain undeterred. This is time that the Vajpayee Govt. develops a firm and result yielding policy for restoring normalcy in the state even if that requires taking punitive measures like destroying the terrorist camps across the border and taking the "proxy war" against India back to where it came from.

Where are these self proclaimed champions of "peace and Human rights" when the Hindus of Kashmir are being murdered in such large numbers with a remarkable regularity. The Pan Islamic movement and its front line foot soldier, Pakistan, have been targeting and destroying the Hindus of Kashmir for the last 11 years and the leaders of the so-called "civilized world" have not done a "damn thing" to stop this death and destruction. By remaining silent and ignoring these mass murders which have cost tens of thousands of Hindu lives these prophets of the New World Order are inevitably becoming an accomplice to the latest genocide of the 20th century. Such a callous indifference on the part of the world leaders must receive universal condemnation.

Plan to check 'ethnic cleansing' in Kashmir

SRINAGAR: Security Forces in Jammu and Kashmir will carry out pre-emptive strikes against armed extremists to foil their "ethnic cleansing" plans state Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah has declared.

According to Mr Abdullah, the recent massacres of Hindus in Prankote and Dhaki Kote in Hindu majority Jammu were calculated to terrorise members of the community. Mr Abdullah said the killings were part of a design to extend the "ethnic cleansing" which the extremists had first carried out in the Kashmir valley in the early years of the nearly decade-old separatist insurgency.

Over 300,000 Hindus, known locally as Pandits, have fled their ancestral homes in the Valley. They are unwilling to return despite attractive rehabilitation package offered by Mr Abdullah's government after it took office two years ago following six years of Central rule. "The massacres of Hindus in the Jammu region are clearly aimed at ethnic cleansing," Mr Abdullah said.

He said the goal of the extremists is to make the river Chenab the "dividing line between Muslim-dominated areas and the Hindu parts of the state." "But, we will not allow this to happen," he asserted.

The Chief Minister said his government was making fresh efforts to persuade the Hindus to return to the Valley. "We are preparing for that," he said, but declined to spell out details for fear that any publicity would be "damaging".

He said he was being extra cautious this time because whenever his government had spoken of restoring Kashmiri Hindus to their homes in the Valley, the extremists had struck. He said there would be no more such risks. "I don't want my people to be killed any more."

Courtsey : IANS

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Preference will be given to displaced migrants from Kashmir Valley.

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Selection of recipients will be on the basis of merit-cum-means principle.

If the applicant is already in receipt of financial assistance from other sources, details of the same should also be given.

National Conference continues its Dangerous Game

(cont. from P1)

and not as a matter of right. They are not at all concerned about the basic issues which lead to our displacement," said one of the doctors after the meeting.

Meanwhile, the displaced doctors have decided to call a general body meeting of all doctors to discuss the issue. They also have decided to involve the displaced employees forum as the issue concerned the entire displaced employees from Valley.

As per reports, employees belonging to the Education Department have also been sounded informally about the intentions of government to seek their return. The Regional Engineering college in Jammu has also reportedly been informed about the eagerness of government to close it in Jammu.

NC move on return surprises many

The latest government moves with regard to return

of Kashmiri Pandits have surprised many a Kashmir watchers.

Dr Farooq Abdullah, while delivering the presidential address of the provincial committee of National Conference in Kashmir on July 6, 1998, had asked his partyman not to rake up the issue of return of Kashmiri Pandits on Public platforms. He said that although the National Conference advocated for return of Hindus to their homes such well meaning gestures had created trouble for the community in the past. He categorically stated in this meeting that at present, situation in Kashmir was not conducive for return of Pandits to their houses.

Ironically, in the same meeting National Conference of Kashmir asked the government to extend relief to Valley-based political activists who were forced to shift from their native villages due to militancy on the pattern of migrants who had left

Kashmir.

Many of the Kashmir analysts believe that National Conference, notwithstanding its public rhetoric, is pursuing a plan of destabilisation of Kashmiri Pandits. They argue that in absence of any confidence building measures party is clearly underlining its preference of not a long term viable return but only a symbolic one. As per the Relief Commissioner, government is planning to construct 700 pre-fabricated two room sets with a kitchen and bath during the year 98-99. These houses will be constructed around Anantnag or Srinagar.

Meanwhile, reports about fresh displacement of Kashmiri Pandits from Kashmir valley continue to pour in. Even Congress leader Mufti Mohd Sayeed accepted that around 40 Pandit families had been displaced from his Anantnag Parliamentary Constituency recently.

Displacement from hitherto such areas where Pan-

dit continued to live during the worst phase of militancy have started baffling the administration. Hutmoora village near Mattan, had a Pandit population coexisting with Sikhs and Muslims till recently. Local Muslims, a few years back, had intervened to stop the Pandit/Sikh population from leaving after a Sikh was killed by the terrorists. The Muslim population had assured their security for future.

However, Muslim villagers recently approached these minorities and told them that they were no longer in a position to assure them security and advised them to migrate to safety.

Another batch of eight families messers, Kashi Nath Raina, Nand Lal Raina, RK Raina, AK Raina, KL Raina, Darshan Raina, PN Raina and ML Raina of village Brah 'Kuthar' of district Anantnag reached Jammu. These families were facing threat to their life subsequent to Wandhama massacre. One Krishen Jee Thaploo of the

same village is missing for about last four months and it is feared that he might have been killed by the militants.

While as government has once again made its intentions clear about the early symbolic return of Pandits, it continues to ignore the pleas for evacuation of illegally or fraudulently occupied Pandit properties in Valley. In the recruitment drive in which around 25 thousand youth have reportedly been employed, Pandit employment in govt services is almost not existant. As per reports around 300 Pandits have got employment in state services for last 9 years while as during the same period more than 3000 displaced employees have retired.

This renewed activity of state government has thrown Shivers down the spine of many Pandit leaders as they suspect that one more carnage of hapless Pandits may be provoked by these measures.

Blunting of counter insurgency instrument

(cont. from P3)

baffled as to why security forces were withdrawn from terrorist infested areas of Jammu, particularly from areas of Doda. Escalation of violence is being attributed mainly to this factor

There were 8 Bns of army, 6 Bns of BSF, 5 Bns of CRPF and 2 Bns of IRP in Jammu province in 1996. In 1998, there are just 9 Bns of army with just 4 Bns of CRPF. Even after the recent Chapnari massacre two battalions of CRPF were withdrawn to provide cover for Amarnath yatra.

Violence statistics in the area show a steep rise. In first six months of 1998, 60 civilians have been killed, 62 injured and there have been around

150 militant related acts in the pvince. During the entire year of 1997 only 69 killings with 74 injured took place in the same area. In 1998 significant displacement of minorities, around 1000 families, has already taken place to safer areas.

Chief Minister appears to be beseeching Central government for more security forces. State BJP implicates Chief Minister for state of affairs. Silence of Union Home Ministry on this issue has raised more doubts than dispelling any.

As the 'cleansing operations' by Pakistani sponsored terrorist are assuming dangerous proportions, the main counter-insurgent instruments stand blunted.

Foreign hostages in Kashmir:

(cont. from P8)

negotiations through the wireless and at the same time to mount international pressure on Pakistan, which was believed to wield influence over Al-Faran. Successive Pakistani Prime Ministers, Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif, appealed to the kidnappers to release the hostages as did then UN Secretary General Boutros-Boutros Ghali and heads of governments of the US, Britain and Germany.

Nothing worked.

Appeals, persuasions, international pressure and even the announcement of a reward of one million rupees for any information on the hostages bore no fruit. If the hostages are alive, they are going to enter the fourth year of their captivity. Their families have still not lost hope.

(Courtesy: Himalayan Mail)

Major infiltration bid by ISI

(cont. from P5)

of those killed were foreign mercenaries.

The terrorists were reported to belong to Tehrik-i-Jehad and one of the terrorists killed was identified as Abdul Ahad Dar of Pallapora, Handwara, who as per his identity-card was the Battalion commander of this outfit. Large quantity of ammunition was recovered from the site of encounter which included 7 AK 56 rifles, 18 magazines, 7 hand grenades 1 pistol, 14 MG, 2 wireless sets and large quantity of ammunition.

Search in Rashanpora Kupwara yielded 7 disposable rocket launchers, 17 rockets, 4 remote controlled devices, 10 kg of RDX besides ammunition.

Another infiltration bid was foiled in the Majakot area of Rajouri. Three terrorists were killed when they tried to sneak in. As per reports many new trained mercenaries might have sneaked into Indian territory under cover of heavy firing along the entire LoC. About 5000 trained terrorists are said to be waiting to infiltrate.

Places connected with Kashmiri Pandits

(cont. from P9)

the Model House locality is now famous as Prem Shanker Sharga Marg. This road was named after Pandit Prem Shanker Sharga whose daughter Mrs Shanti Bhatt was a Municipal Corporator of this ward for a number of years. Pandit Prem Shanker Sharga was a wasikedar of Oudh. His brother Dr Uma Shanker Sharga was Principal of the Government Agriculture College, Kanpur in 1960s.

Sapru Marg: The road which connects Ashok Marg with Shahoajaf Road and on which the State owned Gomti Hotel is situated is now known as Sapru Marg. It was named after Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru. Though basically Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru was a resident of Allahabad, but due to his outstanding stature a road has been named in his honour in Lucknow. Moreover, he used to visit Kashmiri Mohalla very often to participate in the functions and deliberations organised by the Kashmiri Young Men's Association under the patronage of Pandit Brij Narain Chakbast to guide the younger generation of the biradari.

Raj Guru Lane: The house of Pandit Raj Nath Ruggu who was 'Kul Purohit' of Mrs Indira Gandhi, is located

in Katra Bizen Beg lane, which connects his house with the main locality, is now popularly known as Raj Guru lane. He was popularly known as Raja Bhai among his 'Jijmans'. He also acted in a couple of films which were produced by the famous Kailash Studio of Lucknow in 1950s before it was closed down on the instructions of the then Chief Minister of UP, Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant who was somehow very allergic to cinema industry. The author is President Kashmir Pandit Association, Lucknow.

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'Situation worse than grave, bordering on disaster' - MM Khajuria

Sh MM Khajuria has been one of the most distinguished civil servants of the state. He retired as the Director General of the Jammu and Kashmir Police. We reproduce here excerpts of a detailed interview with him on the security scenario.

Q: How do you view the overall security scenario in the State?

A: Overall security scenario is very disturbing one gets the feeling that people in Delhi are not comprehending the implications of what is going on and where it is ultimately going to lead to. The disaster in J&K will cost the nation heavily and they will not be forgiven for that.

Q: Can you elaborate on your assessment of the security scene in the State?

A: Before Gori was test fired there were definite signs of decline of terrorist activities in Valley. Local recruits were scarce. Pakistanis were pumping more of their own people, and those of other countries like Sudan, Afghanistan etc. There were reports that people offering to join Pakistani army had to serve a stint of six months in Kashmir, whereafter they would qualify to be taken into Pakistani Army.

Post Gauri came Pokhran-II which gave them a jolt. And when Chagai explosions came the whole situation changed. And now reports are that they are finding it lot easier to get local recruits. The morale is much better as we can see from the number of strikes they are able to execute these days. So to what extent we are able to respond to this situation and what the state and central governments are doing is a matter of conjecture. But there are certain reports which should cause concern.

Q: What are these reports?

A: One is that instead of augmenting the security forces at this critical juncture for which Chief Minister has been demanding, advocating, beseeching and even threatening. The security cover is said to be thinning. It is impossible to justify it and it would be a case of criminal negligence of worst kind on the part of National leadership if they are indulging in some kind of game at this juncture.

Q: But situation has been like this for quite a long time..

A: It is grave in the sense that we had come quite some way in

quelling the militancy in Valley. If we had not quelled the militancy in Doda, Rajouri, Poonch and other areas of Jammu, at least we were able to hold their activities upto a particular level. Present government in centre in recent times were crying hoarse about Doda. They launched an all India movement to save Doda. Their senior leaders came out on streets and gave an impression that they are really concerned.

However things have gone worse when they are in power. When you get a feeling that they are not expressing concern in tangible terms, with transparent action on the ground which tantamounts to improving morale of the people and ensure that the security forces perform harmoniously and coordinatedly, situation can be something worse than grave, bordering on disaster.

Q: That means the civil and political rights of minorities are virtually non-existent. Have the human rights groups taken cognisance of this situation?

A: Who is bothered! The so called 'Lunatic Liberal Fringe' is only bothered about the human rights of terrorists. Common man has, perhaps, no human rights. After Prankote massacre I recall a lady journalist had come from times of India and she had spoken to the women victims of Prankote tragedy. They gave her the shameful details of the manner in which they were molested. In the presence of their husbands they were raped and the journalist reported it in the press. Did anybody raise a little finger in this country?

Q: There is a talk about 'pro-active' policy. What are your views about it?

A: After Prankote massacre and Pokhran-II there was a talk about 'Proactive Policy' in dealing with Pakistan in J&K. It did us some damage at the international level but produced no benefits to anybody here. When you are talking of proactive policy in J&K and at the same time demanding the withdrawal of population from the international border where security forces are well entrenched, what sort of message are you giving.

Q: We have seen massacres of Hindus taking place at regular frequency after Sangrampora. Is it a new terrorist strategy?

A: I think what is most important is that we should stop thinking about this situation in Jammu & Kashmir as an entirely Pakistan related issue. Pakistan is an important factor, it is in-

terested in grabbing Jammu & Kashmir and its national interests are involved. But that is only a part of it. The major element is the Pan Islamism. Even before they got going in Kashmir sometime in 1988, the letters went around to the minority community. At that point

INTERVIEW



of time Punjabi Hindus and not Kashmiri Pandits were the targets.

Q: In his recent visit Union Home Minister declared the four pillars of his so called new policy on Kashmir. What is so novel about it?

A: It is difficult to describe whether it is the old wine in new bottles or the adulterated version of the old wine in new bottles. We do not see any evidence of declared '4 pillars' of this main policy being installed anywhere. What is happening in Rajouri and Poonch? A few thousand people dying here and there does not matter. This morning we have information publicised that at least 5000 persons are ready at the borders to infiltrate. How many people have been coming and going? How and why?

Somebody must answer this. Till the nation demands answers and heads roll I think we will continue to live in the same kind of insecurity.

Q: Last 3-4 years there has been lot to public pressure for creation of people's defence committees. Government for sometime now has created village Defence committees. Has the creation of these committees given the desired result?

A: I had something to do with creation of these Defence committees. And I must say that the entire concept of mobilising people's support to fight terrorism was distorted. A village Defence Committee was intended to be an organisation of village elders-the responsible people, who will take on the responsibility of ensuring peace, harmony and security in their respective areas. They will have an armed component which will

also be integrated into the overall security set up. In communication with nearest security post these committees would operate. They had to defend themselves and the places where they live including the places of worship. This concept was reduced to having a few armed men with '303' rifles and no communication.

Q: In your view how should they operate?

A: For instance in Prankot, how much time did it take for the nearest security post to learn about the incident. Can't this country afford to have a small wireless sets with the VDCs connected with nearest picket. In fact the battalion concerned can even do with a Hind World War type of a cranking phone with VDC. You have to report daily at a particular time and if you don't, the concerned officer will worry. The strategies are outdated.

Tell me for God's sake if the Home Minister can fly to Prankote why can't a company of troops also be flown there. Pakistan, if you recall in sixties when they had trouble in Bulochistan, used their airforce. What are we shy-off?

Q: There are many terrorist camps across the LoC and as per reports thousands are ready to infiltrate. Do you think retracting from commitment of 'Hot Pursuit' was a greater blunder?

A: What I suggested is not a case of hot pursuit. Why are we forgetting that occupied Kashmir is our own territory. You will not be entering Pakistan if you enter occupied Kashmir to destroy camps. I must very respectfully submit that they must first make it certain what they want to do and then open their mouths. Don't open your mouth and put your both feet into it.

Q: There is talk about corruption within security organisations...

A: I think time has come when we should stop treating the security forces as some kind of a 'holy cow'. We are all accountable to the nation and so are the men wearing 'Khakhi'. First requirement is to find where is the connivance and ensure that it is stopped. If infiltration is taking place we have to make our security forces and other agencies accountable. We have also to understand that certain areas on our long borders are inherently porous. So something more has to be done. And I have always advocated that population along the borders has to be mobilised. Just imag-

ine lakhs of eyes and ears tuned to look for an alien.

Q: What is your concept of developing people's movement to fight terrorism?

A: We are talking of a Proxy-war. Have we done anything which remotely looks like that we are fighting a war. The idea of village defence committee was distorted. And now they are talking about disbanding the committees.

You have first to educate people about the nature of terrorism. Then we have to organise people for variety of reasons including self defence. Existing Village Defence Committees are at a great degree of disadvantage. The minimum that needs to be done is that their weapons should match the weapons of terrorists and they should have effective communication.

Q: Talk of disbanding of Village Defence Committees again brings us to the question of subversion what should be done about it?

A: When you talk about subversion within the set up you have to look specifically and not to paint everybody with same black brush. You will be surprised to know that the only time when anybody was dismissed for anti-national activities, was during the times of GM Shah, I was Director General JKAP at that time. Two of them who were dismissed I can straightway pointout. One was Azam Inquilabi and other was Prof Abdul Gani.

Q: Kashmiri Pandits being relatively better educated have somehow been able to focus some attention to their problems. But the displaced Hindus in Doda, Rajouri, Poonch or other parts of Jammu are illiterate, and ignorant. Their problems seem to be lost in the din of political gimmicary!

A: Qualitatively there is difference between problem faced by Kashmiri Pandits, and these people. One is that in case of Pandits population was totally adverse. Whereas in the areas of Jammu population proportion is not that adverse. The answer does not lie in Home Minister or somebody else saying that they have to go back.

They have not run away and want to live in their homes. Pandits wouldnot have left if they had necessary guaranties of security. The government must see that they are (a) defended by security forces and (b) they are in a position to defend themselves.