HE farce unfolded just

when things were sho-

wing signs of changing.
When there was a faint glimm-

er of hope. When disenchant-

ment with militancy was finding a voice and when

several former militant leaders

were talking to the Indian

Government in what appeared

to be a rejection of the

Pakistani card. And even as

ordinary Kashmiris appeared to be in a mood to reject

violence as the vehicle for

azaadi and the slogan for inde-

pendence was giving way to

talk of autonomy, they found

themselves being ushered into

another period of alienation

and anger. On May 23, when

elections were held in Bara-

mulla and Anantnag for two parliamentary seats, democ-

racy once again took a severe beating in the valley. Voters

were herded to polling sta-

tions by security forces and forced to cast their votes.

tion, other militant groups had

issued threats to stymie the

process. They succeeded in

some measure: candidates did

The message of security

personnel was this: Cast

your vote, we will be back

not come calling on voters. But

those who did were the men

in olive green. Descending on

village after village in the early

hours of May 23, their message

was the same: Cast your vote.

we will come back and inspect

the marks on your fingers. And

they were there in strength.

ostensibly to guard the 26

candidates, mostly from among

surrendered militants, con-

testing as Independents and

several from the Congress and

the BJP, which put up migrant

Hindu candidates in the hope

of getting them elected on ab-

sentee ballots. The National

to inspect your marks.

In the run-up to the elec-

"We were not even allowed to

drink our morning tea," said

Ghulam Hassan, one of the

crowd of hundreds making its

way to the polling booth in vil-

lage Nehama, adding, "How

can we say no? I don't want to

vote but the soldiers threat-

There were further com-

plaints. Many residents who

were forced to go to the polling booths said that securi-

tymen had threatened that

those who did not vote would

never be allowed to open their

shops again. And as more and

more groups of frightened,

fear-stricken people made

their way towards the polling

stations, it was clear that the

elections after a violence-

punctuated gap of seven years, were being held in the shadow

The thoughts that raced

through Abdul Ghani's head as

he joined the long queue were similar to those of his friends:

the election was being rigged

once again. Kashmir's history

was being repeated. Ballot-

boxes were not being stuffed

like they were in 1987 when

the government run by Farooq

Abdullah had gone overboard

to ensure the defeat of the

Muslim United Front (MUF)

candidates, but as in the past,

candidates were being thrust

on them. The decision was not

theirs and the candidates cho-

sen did not reflect their aspi-

Baramulla and Anantnag saw

unexpectedly high turnouts of

35 and 43 per cent but the

voters came, not to give their

peace and democracy", as

Chief Electoral Officer J A

Khan put it, but only because of

the fear of the gun — a refrain

that echoed through the valley.

"It will be the fairest ever

election. We are not interested

in who wins or loses or

whether the turnout is 5 or 40

per cent," was the assurance

that had been given by Lt-Gen-

eral J.S. Dhillon, GOC, 15

"mandate for the return of

The two constituencies of

ened our lives.

of the gun.

# =F0CUS====

# Kashmir: Voting under Coercion

The feeling of alienation in the valley has been reinforced by the way in which securitymen ensured voter turnout

by Harinder Baweja



Residents queuing up to vote in the shadow of the gun in Anantnag.

They had no choice - for if they could have done as they wished, the turnout would have been 10 to 20 per cent as estimated by the Home Ministry and the intelligence agencies, and not shot up to 50 and even 70 in certain segments.

But the security forcesdriven administration, spurred by a percentage game, came close to achieving a similar turnout as the elections held under normal circumstances. Determined to usher voters out of their homes, they first went for the men while the

afternoon was reserved for the women who were brought out in the 'second phase' — a dead giveaway that people were not coming out voluntarily, otherwise, as Hilal Haider said: "Why would I not come with my wife and mother?" In Tregam, for instance, a polling booth with 956 voters, 30 per cent of the votes had been cast by 11.30 a.m. and not one of these was a woman voter. They were not

the priority until after 1 p.m.

when the troops returned to

the villages, voters' lists in

hand, to bring out the women

and those who had not already

voted. Why troops should be moving around with these lists was a question Khan could not answer, his only reply being. "I have not received any complaints.

There was little scope for that for this must have been the only place in the country where polling agents were not present in booths. The polling staff, brought in from Delhi. Punjab and Haryana, all wearing bulletproof vests, were themselves quite surprised at the turnout. Expecting largescale violence, they in turn, after staying in the protective

custody of the security forces, revealed that the voters had been brought there forcibly and, aware of the fear that had gripped the Kashmiris, were quite willing to put the ink mark on their fingernails. Some booths, in fact had separate queues for people who came for the ink mark while other presiding officers painted "Vote Nil" on their wrists. "This is what they want to see and this is what will keep us alive. But this will also turn us away from you Indians. Why can't you just leave us alone?" a dejected Mohammad

Nazir said as he retraced his

steps to his village. It is in this context that the Government will have to consider whether it was right in congratulating the people for what it interpreted as 'enthusiasm'. Given the fact that it was the rigging of the 1987 election that saw the advent of the Kalashnikov in Kashmir, forcing voters into booths is hardly likely to contain the insurgency that was born of a farcical election. When election agents campaigning for the MUF decided to pick up the gun and launch the movement for indepen-

dence. And it is with the use of the gun that the security forces made yet another blunder that has only added to the complexities of the Kashmir crisis. By fielding former militants and giving them allout support, the army and the BSF only reinforced the sense of alienation: for each time these militants resorted to strong-arm tactics — forcibly pulling people out of buses to take them to election meetings and similarly. packing them into trucks which, in turn, drove them to polling stations — the forces looked the other way.

The only time the voters showed any determination was when they rejected the surrendered militants and voted instead for Congress and BJP symbols. "They have been extorting money and harassing us, why should we vote for them especially since they are hand in glove with security

forces?" scores of them said. By encouraging surrendered militants to don the political mantle, the men in olive green are only creating more problem areas for, as one of them agreed. "It will be difficult to persuade them not to return to the militant fold if they end up losing the election." Already, last month, a move was made

The militants have found an emotional issue to try and bring people out of their homes again.

to disarm some of them, leading to dissensions within the ranks, with some of them threatening to go back to their

parent organisations. Having served their purpose by taking on the pro-Pakistan groups and clearing areas which were once dominated by them, the surrendered militants are now behaving like mini warlords, much in the way Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale started off in Punjab. And it is with the help of these surrendered militants that the security forces came up with impressive turnout figures, 50 to 60 per cent in some segments.

Considering their dominance in the valley and the National Conference's decision to avoid the poll process. Kashmir is back at a crossroads, with the people feeling dejected, defiant and alienated. The militants have found an emotional issue - something that the movement had been lacking in the past one year - to try and bring people out of their homes once again. As assembly elections too will be pushed through, what seems to have been pushed instead are the Kashmiris who have only emerged with one feeling — not being given the chance to make their own decisions during an election. The poll percentage has shot up from 5 per cent in 1989 to 40 per cent in 1996 — a figure that represents neither the aspirations nor the will of the people. Nor will it do so. until the new government at the Centre opens a dialogue or reopens the delicate issue of au-

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A voter showing his ink mark to a jawan in Baramulla. Democracy takes a beating

had boycotted the poll.

The troops instilled not confidence but fear and loathing. They were out in strength — the valley crawling with over one lakh of them. drawn from the army, the BSF and the CRPF. That's how the residents of Ananthag and Baramulla woke up that morning when tension ran high and the clouds hung low, casting a bleak shadow over the valley. Still others woke up to announcements from mosques a mohalla elder asking them to proceed to the booths. It was what they had feared and they had little choice in the matter

belied all such claims. As the hours wore on, it became clear that the administration had carefully plotted its strategy. Herding the voters to booths was only the first step in the drama that unfolded under the overcast skies. Rules were flouted and changed to accommodate the numbers lining up in serpentine queues people whose names did not figure on the voters' list were allowed to vote. At some places, they were told who to vote for, and at others, some voters made their anger known by stamping four different symbols at the same time.

the 85th anniversary birth of Poet Sufia Kamal whose lifelong dedication to the cause of the distressed has ultimately been integrated into a national movement for establishment of democratic rights of the people. For her undaunted leadership at all the critical stages of national life she is now being highly esteemed as the 'conscience of the nation' and is highly respected by all, irrespective of caste. creed, sex and age.

HURSDAY, June 20, was

This great lady, Begum Sufia Kamal, was born in 1911 in an aristocratic conservative family of Shaestabad, Barisal. Her father Syed Abdul Bari was a lawyer (Advocate) at Bajitpur. He was a versatile linguist and also 'over-religious' who left his home and family for Mecca and did never turn back. Her mother Syeda Sabera Khatun. had to go to her brother's house where Sufia and her brother Wali were brought up in affluence. But due to social conservatism Sufia, had to go to the Primary school in a boy's dress with her brother. Even then she could not complete her primary education. At the age of 12 she was married to her cousin Nehal Hossain and came to be known as Sufla N Hossain.

Since her early life Sufia was inspired by the poems of testified during the liberation

Begum Sufia Kamal — A Living Legend by Prof Roushan Ara Hoque Nazrul and began to write po-

ems herself. And in course of time she wrote 15 books and some of her books have been translated into English and Russian for which she has got international recognition too. But at national level, she has been more esteemed as a great patriot. Throughout her whole life she had vehemently protested against all oppressions, injustices, violences and cruelty against humanity. During the Language Movement of 1952 she had strongly protested against the police firing on students' processions. She had also protested against disparity and economic exploitation of the then colonial rulers. On the issue of observing the birth centenary of poet laureate Rabindranath Tagore, when the then government took resort to oppression on the intellectuals. Sufia Kamal had strongly protested against it and the strong leadership she had given on that issue had greatly raised her prestige in the eyes of the infellectuals. Since then she has been esteemed as the 'conscience of the nation'. She had also inspired the student leaders during the political movement

The great patriotism of Begum Sufia Kamal had been

Ghoomta Aaina 11:30 Action HFF

1:30 Colgate Gel Yoodle Yo 2:00

EL TV

00:30 Rajesh Khanna Special

01:30 Bachche Man Ke 02:30

Sur Sargam 03:30 Guzara Hua

Zamana 4:30 Dance Dance 5:00

Rajesh Khanna Special 6:38

Bachche Man Ke 7:38 Sur Sar-

gam 8:30 Guzara Hua Zamana

9:30 Dance Dance 10:30 Lakhanr

Advance Booking 11:00 Zero Se

Hero 11:30 Shudh Detergent

Karz 12:00 Asha Bhonsle Special

1:00 Pyar Hi Pyar 2:00 Guzara

Hua Zamana 3:00 Fat Or Fit 3:30

Karm 4:00 Teri Bhi Chup, Meri

Bhi Chup 4:38 Moov Usha Uthup

Show 5:00 Society Navras 5:30

Devotional Music 6:30 Dharmen-

dra Special 7:30 Zaike Ka Safar

8:00 Jawab Do 8:30 Frooti Its

My Choice 9:00 Wonder Wings

Amar Prem 9:30 Fantasy Kal Bhi

Aaı Bhi 10:00 People's Club

10:30 Liberty Public Demand

PTV

8:00am , Tilawat Aur Tar-

juma/Hamd/Nast 8:20 Cartoon

11:38 Hit Pairs

Shakti 2:30 TMM



war of 1971. On 23rd March. '71, dufing the meeting called by Yahya Khan, her strong arguments in favour of provincial autonomy of the then East Pakistan had surprised him. During the entire period of the war she had been confined in side her home under constant vigilance of the occupation army. In her diary she kept records of the critical days of the nation and of her own which has later on being regarded as the most original and authentic record of the Liberation War and were published as 'Ekatturer Diary . The name of Begum Sufia Kamal was at the top of the list of the intellectuals to be killed on the eve of victory in December, 1971 but due to the constant vigilance of the Mukti Bahini the motive could not be materialised. At one stage of the Liberation War a rumour spreaded that Sufia Kamal had been killed by the Pak-Army. Immediately after that the Russian government offered her a plane to go to any safer place she liked. She instantaneously refused the offer

and said that she was not ready to go even to heaven leaving her motherland behind. She kept constant touch with the freedom fighters and used to supply them food over the hind wall of her residence.

After the liberation. Begum Sufia Kamal became the first president of the Women's Rehabilitation Centre of Mirpur and tried her best to rehabilitate the tortured women of the war. Under her leadership she had formed the Mahila Parishad for the the purpose of advancing the women's causes, to redress their grievances and to achieve equal rights for them.

After the brutal murder of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in August, 1975 Begum Sufia Kamal fearlessly protested against it. Since then she had been giving leadership to all national movements for the establishment of democracy. During the national movement of 1990 she had played a vital role by joining the Mute Procession during curfew. The destruction of the Babri Mosque by the BJP-VHP activists in India had created a great impact on her mind. She along with 16 leading intellectuals of the country issued statements in different dailies protesting against the communalism in India. She had also organised a strong resistance

against similar communal uprising in Bangladesh. Even at the octogenarian stage of her life, and after serious illness, she had declared her solidarity with the nation-wide movement for the cause of democracy during 1995-96. As the first President of

Bangladesh-Soviet Friendship Society, since its inception, she has been working for friendship between the two countries. She had created strong feeling against distortion of the history of Liberation War by the anti-liberation forces and tried to revive the spirit of the War in the minds of the younger generation. For this she is respected by them as 'Desh Janani' or 'the mother of the nation'. She has become an international figure for her literary, social and political roles. She has been honoured with 34 awards and sanads at home and abroad. Of them Bangla Academy Award, Ekushey Padak, Begum Rokeya Award, and Member of Congress (USA). Club of Boston, Bangladesh Society of New York Award, etc. are most important.

On her 85th anniversary of birth we all pray for her better health and longevity so that this great lady may lead the nation towards right direction for some more years.

## The Daily Star Entertainment Guide

Saturday 22nd June (All programmes are in local time. We recommend programmes printed in bold. There may be changes in the programmes).

#### BTV

3 80pm Upening Announcement At Guran 3:10 Recitation from the Tripitak 3:15 Movie of the Week 4:00 News in Bangla 5:00 News in Bangla 5:25 Banshori: Folk Songs 6:00 News in Bangla 6:05 Angirka 6:38 Moner Mukure 7:00 News in English 8:00 News in Bangla 8:30 Mati-o-Manush: Programme Based on Agricultural Development 9:00 Anirban 10:00 English 10:30 Shasthakatha: Health Programme 10:35 Drama Series: Dynasty 11:30 News in Bangla 11:35 Tomorrow's programme summary 11:48 Close down

#### BBC

6:00am BBC World News 6:20 Britain In View 7:00 BBC World News 7:16 Newsnight 8:00 BBC World News 8:20 Window On Europe 9:00 BBC World Headlines 9:05 Correspondent 10:00 BBC ' World News 10:20 Face To Face 11:00 BBC World News 11:20 Window On Europe 12:00noon BBC World Headlines 12:05 1:00 BBC World Headlines 1:05 The Tourist 2:00 BBC World News 2:30 Time Out: Tomorrow's World 3:00 BBC World News 3:30 Time Out: The Travel Show 4:00 BBC World Headlines 4:05 Horizon 5:00 BBC World News 5:20 Britain in View 5:50 Earth Report 6:00pm BBC World Headlines 6:05 Under The Sun 7:00 BBC World News 7:20 This Week 8:00 BBC World News 8:36 Time Out: Film '96 9:00 BBC World Headlines 9:05 Correspondent 10:00 BBC World News

Dynasty on BTV tonight at 10:35. 10:30 Time Out: Auction 11:00 Bang VJ Alessandra 4:00 Frame BBC World News 11:28 This by Frame Week 12:00mn BBC World News

### STAR PLUS

2:00 BBC World News 2:30 Time Out: Top Gear 3:00 BBC World News 3:25 Window On Europe 4:00 BBC World News 4:25 This Week 5:00 BBC World News 5:20 CHANNEL V to the Bottom of the Sea 11:30

The Wild Wild West 12:30 Movie: 7:00am Asian Top 20 VJ Nome 9:00 Big Bang Weekend VJ Alessandra 10:30 Billboard US Countdown 11:00 Nonie Vision 2:30 The Ride VJ Trey 3:80 Rewind VJ Sophiya 4:00 House Of Noise VJ Luke 5:30 [V] 1's 6:00pm The Vibe Weekend VJ Luke 8:00 BPL Oye! 9:00 The Ticket 9:30 Timex Time Pass 11:89 Videocon Flashback 11:30 Club X VJ Sophiya 12:00mn

12:20 Face To Face 1:00 BBC

World Headlines 1:05 Horizon

House Of Noise 12:30 The Ticket

1:86 The Ride VJ Trey 2:86

Music Update Tokyo 2:38 Over

The Edge VJ Sophiya 3:30 Big

Face To Face

6:30am Voltron 7:00 Dungeons and Dragons 7:30 Around The World in 80 Days 8:00 Count Duckula 8:30 Saber Rider & The Star Sherrif 9:00 Capital Critters 9:30 Zoo Life With Jack Hanna 10:00 Katts & Dog 10:30 Voyage

"The Boy in the Plastic Bubble" 2:30 Movie Classics : "Private Life of Henry the VIII" 4:30 Super Bloopers & New Practical Jokes 5:30 Movie Television 6:00pm Fantasy Island 7:00 The Wonder Years 7:30 The Addams Family 8:00 The Simpsons 8:30 Bay watch 9:30 Star Trek: The Next Generation 10:30 L A Law 11:30 Code 3 12:00mn COPS 12:30 Mystery Movies: B L Stryker 2:30 Movie Sherlock Halmes The Master Blackmailer 4:38 Movie TV 5:00 The Sullivans

5:38 Andros Target

Semi Finals From Seoul, Korea Feed Times HK Local Time 12:38 1996 College World Series Men's Championship Game Semi Finals 3:00 High 5 III 3:30 NBA Inside Stuff 4:00 Trans World Sport 5:99 World Wrestling Federation Action Zone 6:00pm Asia Sport Show 6:30 1996 Ciba Asia Cup Badminton Semi Finals From Seoul, Korea 12:00 NCAA Outdoor Tracke & Field 1:30 **World Wrestling Federation Action** Zone 3:00 1996 College World Series Men's Championship Game The Final 5:30 High 5 III

STAR Sports

6:00am The Asian Football Show

7:00 Live 1996 Ciba Asia Cup

#### STAR MOVIES

7.38 Romance : Romantic Under taking? (Arabic Subtitles) 9:30 Western : Frontier Marshall 12 (Arabic Subtitles) 11:30 Comedy Hot Rock (Hindi Subtitles) 1:30 Adventure : Beneath The Planet of The Apes 12 (Hindi Subtitles) 3:30 Classic : Blackmail PG '(Hindi Subtitles) 5:30 Adventure Curse of The Crystal Eye 15 (Hindi Subtitles) 7:30 Family: Time Warrior : Eggs from 70 Million Years BC (Hindi Subtitles) 9:00 Bollywood 9:30 Battle Cries: D Day, The Sixth Of June 12 (Hindi Subtitles) 11:30 Comedy: The Adventures Of Priscille Queen Of The desert 18? (Hindi Subtitles) 1:30 Fright : The Dark Half 18 (Hindi Subtitles) 3:38 Thriller : Mansignor 18 (Hindi Subtitles) 5:30 Action : Enigma 18 (Hindi Subti-

#### ZEE TV

5:30am Inforainment (TMM) 6:00 News 6:30 Jagran 7:00

ZED-Management 8:00 ZED-8:30 Khabrain 8:45 Visitors Book Naya A To Z 8:30 All Out for No 9:10 Phool Khushboo 9:25 Das tarkhwan 9:40 Mehman 10:05 Loss 9:00 Bournvita Quiz Contest 9:30 Bhajans 10:00 Ad Mad Aap Ki Anwar Magsood 10:30 Show 10:30 Gaane Anjaane English Film: Tarzan 10:55 Milli 11:00 Captain Cook Shahi Dawat Naghma 11:00 Khabram 11:10 11:30 Cartoons 12:00 Philips Meri Pasand 11:35 Janua 12:55 Top Ten 1:00 Tol Mai Ke Bol Quran-E-Hakeem 1:02 Bismillah 1:30 Asian Sky Shop 2:30 Nero-1:15 Grind 2:05 Lazwal 'Ep 31' 2:55 Husool-E Insaaf & Sports lac Ashiana 3:00 Positive Health Show 3:30 Zaike Ka Safar 4:00 Coaching 3:20 TV Encyclopaedia No Problem 4:30 TVS Sa Re Ga 3:40 Sports Time 4:05 Daastakar Ma 5:00 Galaxzee 5:30 Gane 5:05 Medicine 5:25 Computers Anjane 6:00 Commander 6:30 6:20 Aiou Courses 7:00 English Tumbare Live 7:00 FLU 7:30 Sur News 7:20 PTV Music Library Taal 8:00 Helpline 8:30 Maa 9:00 Asian Paints Yaadon Ke Rang 9:30 Tara 10:00 Tanaay 19:30 The News Round Up 11:00

Break For Headlines News 10:00 Khabarnama & Commercial News 19:35 TBA 11:55 The Flash Point 1:05 Urdu Feature Film: Khas Khabrain Close Down SONY ET

7:30 Virsa Pakistan 7:55 Ghazal

Uss Nave Sairee 8:25 Dentonic

World Of Sports 8:45 Anita 9:00

### 8 30 am K at Dr Ne Karr 9 00

Tamion Ki Baarat 930 Cine Mature Hinds Feature Film 12:30 Jagir 1:00 Siddhi 1:30 Kaash

#### 2 00 Sunday Ki Sunday 2:30 The Nirleg Rasor Show 3:00 Khoya Khoya Chand 3:30 Movie Mania

4:30 Humse Barkar Gong 5:00 Rangeela Re 5:30 Mere Massege Meri Geet 6:00 Aaina 6:30 Video CD Premier 7:00 Good Shot 7:38

Feature Film 11:30 Jadugaar 12:00 Pehchan 12:30 Humse

#### Jai Bir Hanuman 8:00 Surt-Wheel Of Fourtune 8:30 Cine Prime-Hindi

Barker Gong 1:00 Hospital 1:30 Aahaat 2:00 Kuch Dil Ne Kaha

#### 8.10am Shastriyo Sangert 8.20

Binodon 8:30 Gaan Sudhu Gaan Adhunik 9:30 Darshaker Darbare 10:08 Light Music 10:15 Rajanikanter Gaan 10:30 ETV Prog. 1:00 Aparadhi 1:30 Gaan Sudhu Gaan 2:00 Chalachchitre Rabindronath 2:25 Pratihinsa 3:30 Bengali Tele "lay Show 5:05 Dhitang Ohitang dole 5:30 News 6:00 Ankur 6:30 Western Classical Music 7:00 Saptahiki 7:30 Bangla Sambad

DD 7

8:00 Chor Chor 8:25 Uru Katu Madna 9:00 Jeevan Setu 9:30 Katha O Kahini 10:00 (Drama) 10:30 News and Bengali Sambad

#### ZEE CINEMA

8:30 Tarana 9:00 Hit Hai Fithai 9:30 Pavitra Papi 12:15 Shooting Shooting 12:45 Manzil Manzil 3:30 Na Jane Kyon 4:00 Ram Bharose 6:45 Geet Gaya Pathar one 9:30 Songs 10:00 Commando 12:15 Anbaan 12:45 Param Dharam

#### TOM and JERRY









