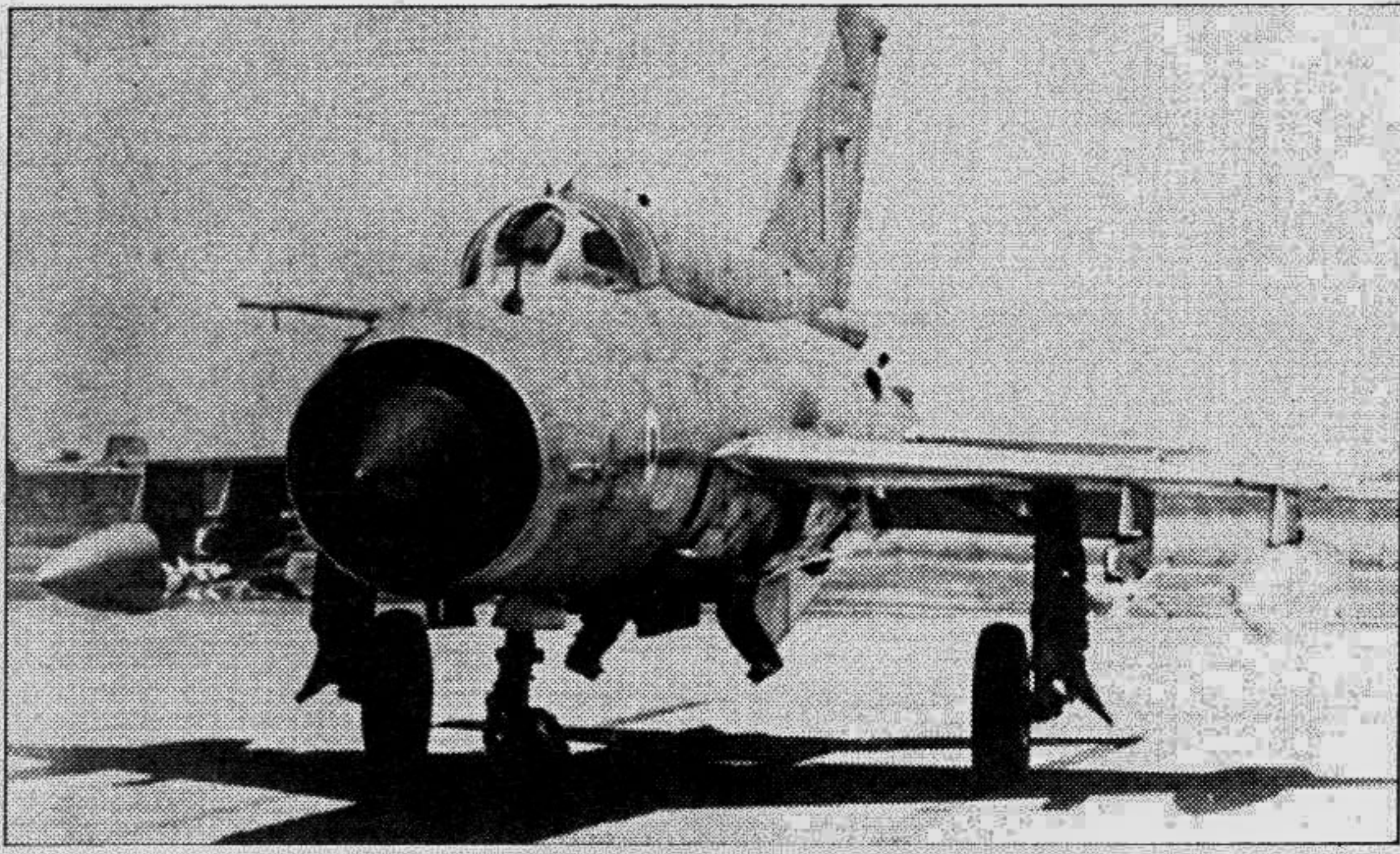


# Red Attack

Indian troops are on full alert following Pak naval plane downing, writes P. Jayaram from New Delhi



Indian MiG that downed Pak patrol plane

INDIAN security forces were on August 10 put on 'full alert' along the 720 km long Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir with Pakistan following the shooting down of a Pakistani naval aircraft after it intruded into Indian air space on the western border in Gujarat.

All 16 aboard the aircraft, which carried some senior officers, were reported killed.

A Defence Ministry statement said a MiG-21 combat aircraft of the Indian Air Force (IAF) shot down the Pakistani plane when it acted in a 'hostile manner' on being approached for identification and being signalled to land at an Indian base.

It said the incident occurred at 1115 in the morning when the Pakistani naval anti-submarine warfare and maritime reconnaissance aircraft, called Atlantique, intruded into Indian air space over Kori Creek in Gujarat.

The intruding Pakistani aircraft was detected by IAF ground radars and was intercepted ten km south of the international border. When the IAF fighters closed in to identify and signal the intruding aircraft to force it to land at an Indian base, the Pakistani aircraft acted in a hostile manner by turning into our fighter," the statement said.

"At that stage the Atlantique was shot down by an air-to-air missile which hit the aircraft on the port engine which caught fire," it said.

It said the wreckage has been found by IAF helicopters two kilometres into the Indian side of the international border. The statement said Pakistani aircraft had been intruding into Indian air space and there had been eight such intrusions between May and July.

Major-General P.P.S. Bindra, Major-General General Staff Commanding Northern Command, told IANS that security forces all along the LoC had been put on full alert following the incident to prevent any hostile action by Pakistan.

Forces were also on full alert in Jammu and Kashmir to prevent 'internal sabotage', authorities said.

Pakistan's NNI news agency claimed the aircraft was on routine flight inside Pakistani territory near Badin area in Sindh

province when it was shot down.

It said the plane, of French origin, took off from Karachi naval base and was on patrolling duty.

Information Minister Mushahid Hussain Sayed said the wreckage of the aircraft fell two kilometres inside Pakistani territory and termed the Indian action as unprovoked. He told NNI that Pakistan "reserves the right to respond."

He said the Indian action had escalated the situation as the plane was on a routine training flight and did not enter Indian air space.

He described it as a desperate action by the Indian authorities as Pakistan had shot down two of their military aircraft during the Kargil crisis.

"They might have taken revenge," the minister said.

When asked what action Pakistan was going to take, the minister said that it depends on the ground situation. "We are reviewing the situation. We condemn this extreme action in which 16 innocent people lost their lives," he said.

— India Abroad News Service

# Lankan Battle of Wits

Government-opposition posturing makes mockery of corruption issue, writes Sugeswara Senadhira from Colombo

A propaganda battle between Sri Lanka's ruling alliance and the opposition over bribery and corruption has made a mockery of the main issue and relegated it to the background.

The Presidential Secretariat has announced that it would directly receive complaints from the people as the Presidential Commission on Bribery and Corruption (PCBC) is not functioning due to constitutional hurdles. Not to be outdone, the opposition United National Party (UNP) promptly lodged a complaint with the secretariat against President Chandrika Kumaratunga.

The latest round in the battle of wits began when the UNP, obviously aware that the 12-month countdown for the national elections begins this month, held a 48-hour demonstration against the PCBC, which became non-functional since the government withdrew police officers and the Attorney General's officials assigned to

the Commission earlier this year.

Protestors, including UNP bigwigs headed by Opposition Leader Ranil Wickremesinghe, demanded early action on complaints of bribery against some government leaders and officials of the ruling People's Alliance.

As the government is unable to reactivate the PCBC because of constitutional hurdles, Kumaratunga's office declared that hereafter the Presidential Secretariat would deal with any complaints received from the public. Realising that the government's intention was to take the wind out of its sails, the opposition lost no time in lodging the first complaint.

"It is, however, ironic that I have to lodge my first complaint to Your Excellency against Your Excellency itself," said UNP parliamentarian Rajitha Senarathne in his complaint letter. He referred to his earlier complaint to the PCBC against Kumaratunga's Media

Adviser Sanath Gunathilake on alleged bribery in using his influence to grant a radio and television licence to Channel 9, a joint venture private visual media project. After describing his charges and evidence, Senarathne added, "I am well aware that I am engaging in an exercise in futility. After all, not even the most naive can expect a person against whom allegations are levelled to conduct an impartial investigation against oneself."

In his complaint, Senarathne gave a transcript of an alleged recorded conversation between Gunathilake, a film actor who became a very influential member of the power caucus described as Kumaratunga's "kitchen cabinet", and businessman Lakshman Hulgalle who acted as the agent for Channel 9. In the tape recording, Gunathilake reportedly says the President has approved the Channel 9 proposal as the person behind it "is one of our people."

— India Abroad News Service

# How's That, Third Umpire?

Kashmir conflict was truly complex, as ABMS Zahur writes on how a third party comes in Indo-Pak diplomacy

THE two-month-long battle of the Kargil heights appears to be over as per announcement of Indian caretaker government prime minister, though fresh reports of heavy shelling by Pakistan in certain areas inside the Line of Control (LoC) are coming out.

Indication is that a group of Mujahideen have not responded to the appeal of Nawaz Sharif for withdrawal from the India-held Kashmir.

The defeat of Pakistan in 1971 put her in an extremely hopeless situation. At that time her greatest problem was to obtain release of her 93,000 soldiers from Indian prison.

With loss of territory, prestige and the basis of her state, she was in a desperate situation to seek moral and material support from any source. With heavy dose of economic help and cooperation from states friendly to her, she could survive economically. Thus, time was not ideal for Pakistan for any effective negotiation in the Simla accord and the study of line of demarcation in Kashmir could not be done properly.

Twelve years later, India took advantage of this situation and occupied hitherto certain ill-demarcated areas in Kashmir.

Immediately after the Simla accord, there was anti-refugee riot in certain cities in Pakistan (Karachi, Larkana, Nawabshah and Hyderabad). The provincial government of Sindh openly declared that any attempt by the central government to settle the Behari refugees from Bangladesh would be strongly resisted. In a coup, army overthrew the civilian government of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.

Bhutto was executed on charge of murder. The death of Bhutto made it easier for the military junta headed by Gen. Ziaul Huq to stifle the people's movement for attaining democratic rights. On Afghan frontier she was disturbed by the start of Afghans' armed struggle for freedom from the pro-Russian government to set up some sort of democratic order.

In Iran, autocrat Shah was overthrown by a popular pro-Islamic movement for establishing Islamic democracy free from western influence. While US lost its control over Iran totally, USSR involved itself directly in a losing battle against the Afghans. Emergence of this situation encouraged Pakistan to extract maximum benefits from US through gaining the status of a 'Frontline state' in the Afghan crisis. Massive supply of US arms for Afghan rebels definitely improved the stock of Pakistan's arsenal. Economically also prolonged Afghan war was attractive because of massive economic aid for Afghan refugees by the western world.

However, Afghan crisis resulted in deterioration of law and order situation in Pakistan, particularly in the NWFP and Karachi because of huge influx of Afghan refugees. It may be relevant to point out that majority of Afghans lived on looting and plundering. On the diplomatic front the gain of Pakistan was that while the former pro-Russian government was very friendly with India, the new government is more friendly with Pakistan.

With the establishment of a fundamentalist government in Iran the fundamentalists in an around Iran started gaining strength. With the crushing of Iraq by US and its allies the fundamentalists got more congenial atmosphere to thrive. With the takeover of Afghanistan by the fundamentalist Taliban the position of the fundamentalist was further consolidated.

With the dismissal of the government of Benazir Bhutto and the return of Muslim League in Pakistan the fundamentalists gained further. It is now abundantly clear that Pakistani fundamentalists maintain close relation with the fundamentalists of Iran and Afghanistan. It may not be difficult to assume that Nawaz Sharif cannot ignore the desire of the fundamentalists in major issues.

Despite Nawaz Sharif's repeated denials of Pakistan's involvement in sending the infiltrators in India-held Kashmir across the Line of Control (LoC),

it is certain that Pakistan gave leadership to organise the Mujahideens for their capture of certain part of India-held Kashmir.

It appears that Pakistani premier was tired of three things:

(a) India's insistence on solving Kashmir crisis through bilateral discussion avoiding the 1948 security council resolution for a plebiscite.

(b) India's all out effort to annex the India-held Kashmir permanently as a part of Indian territory; and

(c) prolonged bad feeling against India due to Kashmir dispute resulting in positive hindrance to developing strong trade relations and maintenance of huge army (more than half a million as regulars) through depriving the common mass from receiving adequate health care and education and other infrastructural facilities.

The frustration of Sharif prompted him to participate in the adventurism in Kashmir by the Mujahideens to draw the attention of the international community so that some sort of solution may be obtained for this half century old dispute. Thus he approved the project for capturing a part of India-held Kashmir by the Kashmiri Mujahideens. In accomplishing the task the Pakistani intelligence completely befooled the much publicised Indian intelligence.

In flushing out the infiltrators from tiger hills India had to resort to military and diplomatic tactics. Militarily it proved very costly for India. A prolonged limited war in Kargil would have been quite burdensome for India economically. In addition, it was highly undesirable for the BJP politically. Thus Atal Behari Vajpayee was anxious to end the war (undeclared) as early as possible. Pakistan, on the other hand, could not anticipate such a step from India.

They wanted to draw the attention of the international community to the apparently forgotten Kashmir dispute. Furthermore, supporting this kind of struggle was certainly not desirable in their present economic crisis and success of the Mujahideens will ultimately strengthen the position of the Jamaat supporters.

Russian support of India in the Kashmir crisis is understandable because of her historical relationship with India. The deviation of USA and China from the original positions needs some analysis for a clear understanding. US A knows fully well that India and Pakistan can ever settle the Kashmir dispute all by themselves. They need the assistance of a third party for it. She does not like two things in the area — the growing influence of China and fundamentalism in Afghanistan.

On the other hand, China also does not desire growing influence of Islamic fundamentalism and she is convinced of the fact that helping Pakistan openly in the Kargil crisis may encourage the Islamic fundamentalists in USSR, always friendly to more liberal Islamic states, does not support fundamentalism. She already paid heavy price at the hands of Islamic fundamentalists in Afghanistan.

Thus the situation in Kargil could not evoke any sympathy for Pakistan either from USA or from China or from USSR. It does not appear to be the diplomatic skill of India. It is because of the rising common enemy of both the east and the west i.e. fundamentalism, which could isolate Pakistan at this hour.

The national election of India is to be held in September-October this year. In case of a victory of BJP and its allies there will be three developments: conclusion of CTBT, 2) early start of dialogue between India and Pakistan with participation of USA (openly or secretly) as a mediator for a long term peaceful solution of Kashmir dispute and 3) an appreciable increase in India's defence budget. If Congress and its allies win, the first two developments will be delayed but the third will be accomplished in time.

The author is Joint Secretary (Retd), the Government of Bangladesh.

# Nepal's Double Trouble

Healthcare improvements are critical for Nepal, warned the World Bank. Vasantha Arora reports

THE World Bank has warned Nepal that its rapid population growth will make improvements in healthcare even more critical in the near future.

The World Bank's new study, "Nepal: Operational Issues and Prioritisation of Resources in the Health Sector," says the Himalayan kingdom's population could double in 35 years, resulting in ever more pressure on an already weak health service. Regional disparities in health indicators and healthcare are also large in Nepal.

Life expectancy in the Kathmandu district, for instance, is 74.4 years — much higher than the 57 year life expectancy of the average Nepali.

In contrast, life expectancy in the remote mountain district

of Mugu in the mid-western region is only 37.4 years. One area that needs immediate attention is public spending on healthcare, says the report. Nepal spends only \$1.8 per capita a year on healthcare (\$3.1 per capita when donor funding is taken into account). Public spending remains at about one-fourth the level needed to provide a package of essential health services in a developing country, according to the report.

Allocations to primary care in Nepal have actually declined in recent years, from 77 per cent to 57 per cent of total sector spending over the 1990s. "This trend must be reversed if the unfinished agenda of controlling communicable diseases and improving maternal and child health services is to be completed," says the report.

Many of Nepal's difficulties in the health sector are associated not necessarily with funds, but with weaknesses in institutions, governance and the political will needed to undertake serious reform, says the study.

Poor absorptive capacity in the Ministry of Health has inhibited both donor and government agencies from investing in the sector. During the past 12 years, as much as 20-40 per cent of the ministry's already low development budget remained unutilised.

Meanwhile, private "out-of-pocket" expenditure for healthcare is climbing and now equals \$7.4 per capita. At these levels, private expenditure accounts for 70 per cent of the total public and private costs (\$10.5 per capita a year), the study says.

— India Abroad News Service

# Making Pakistan Ungovernable

There's no dearth of men in Pakistan who can purge the sports of gambling, greed and other evil while keeping politics at bay, says Kunwar Idris

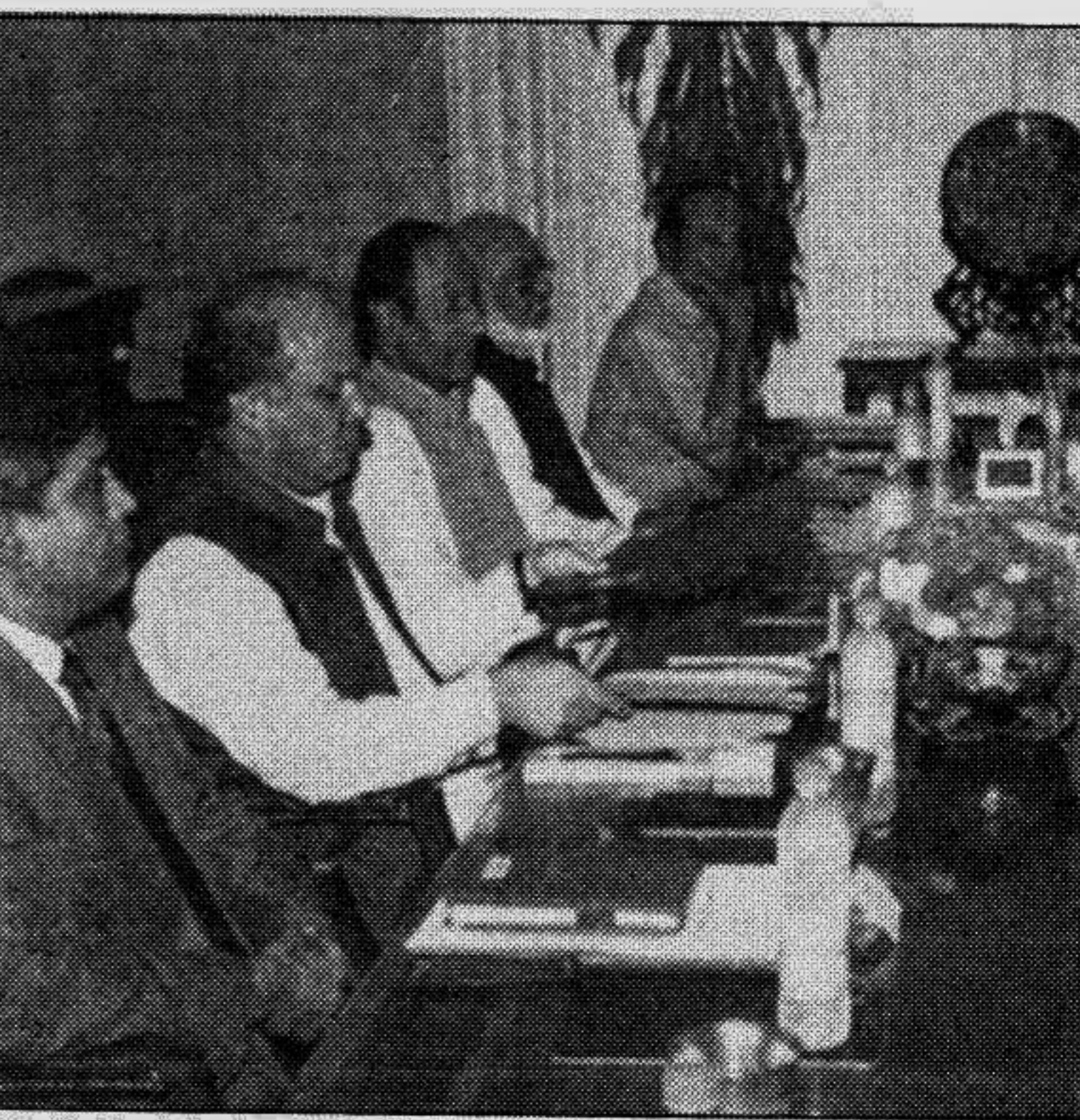
ALL the lip-service is to better standards of governance to ensure greater accountability and transparency and less corruption. Young itinerant Ahsan Iqbal makes a good living preaching that gospel and hopes continue doing it till the year 2010. Hardly a day however passes when a standard is not abandoned for political gain.

In an effort to assemble a government which he can head, Adviser Ghaus Ali Shah has issued an ultimatum to all public servants that they shall have to go unless they listen to the Muslim League workers and cooperate with them. In simpler, cruder terms he wants them to serve the interest of his party not of all people. To raise the number of his voters in the legislature from 15 to 55 the officials — police, irrigation, excise and all — shall have not merely to serve the Adviser's supporters but to harass his opponents as well. Very few will choose to go. The banishment from ranks for non-compliance can be long and costly. Such is the ruthless tradition now. Transfer or OSDship are small mercies of a forgotten past.

The adviser will be well advised to advise the officials to listen to, and redress, the grievances of all people whatever their political affiliation, even if they are hapless disenfranchised. That would raise the credentials of the public servants and also bring Mr Shah greater support in the assembly and among the people.

But the politicians have their own values and judgment. A note among them privately declared that half the election is won depending on whether a candidate has or hasn't got posted the officials of his choice ranging from canal supervisor to SHO to deputy commissioner in his constituency. He may be right. That is why we had longer, and perhaps happier, spells under periods of Martial Law than under elected governments. The people have started believing that good governance, which to them means no more than security and justice, is not possible when the politicians are in power. The Adviser's threat to the officials will only strengthen that belief.

After devastating the legislature, administration, judiciary, and to a lesser extent the military, politics has now invaded sports. Both our prime games — cricket and hockey — have now



The Cabinet that governs Pakistan

gone under politicians and their henchmen in official agencies. Hockey, cricket and squash have introduced Pakistan to the world far more favourably than its leaders or diplomats. The faults of the players can be corrected without involving them in politics. The course being followed would inevitably end in political affiliation, rather than playing skill becoming the chief criterion in the selection of the players as it is for the ministers.

There is no dearth of men in public life who can purge the sports of gambling, greed and

other evils while keeping politics at bay. The responsibility should be entrusted to them before the players like the officials become allies of politicians and those who don't cease to be players.

All Pakistanis look for an opportunity to go abroad. The Prime Minister, past and present, are no exception. They get the flak because they are needed more at home and expense of their mammoth entourages is on the treasury.

The papers now report that an aspiring religio-political Prime Minister who shares the same travel passion would be

going to Europe for a month and then to Australia and New Zealand for a similar duration. That shows how dull is the country even for clerics. Perhaps foreign travels of all public figures should be subject to accountability. After all it costs foreign currency to the country even if it is their own money. That is a requirement of transparency as a part of good governance. Not those in power or waiting to come into power should also be accountable for whatever they do or fail to do. For that we need a bureau, at least as independent as the su-

perior courts.

Ten foreign service officers are being promoted to the highest grade of public service. The promotions, unprecedented in number, seem to be intended to dispel the impression that our diplomats had failed in projecting the national viewpoint on Kashmir during the Kargil war. If they hadn't then the cause of failure has to be found elsewhere, for failure undoubtedly it was.

Yet another, more plausible, reason for the large scale promotions may be found in trying to restore the foreign service to the prime position it once enjoyed. For the first two decades the top position holders in the superior services' competition opted for foreign service. Then, as preferences and values of the candidates changed with that of the society as a whole, the police, customs, income tax forged ahead. Yet another damper was the foreign service having only one secretary while the second-rated civil service and even lesser services had a larger number.

The foreign service needs virtuous and versatile men more than the services at home for international relations is our Achilles' heel as Kargil and cricket have shown. The concern on promotions however is on the circumvention of the selection procedure as reported in Dawn of 2 August. Even if all those selected are deserving, an impartial scrutiny by detached men could have brought forth some one who was more deserving. The arbitrary selection is a departure from good governance at the highest level.

All the instances recounted here span but a few days. The blows to governance are so frequent and serious that those delivered to them might soon discover that they have made the country ungovernable for themselves.

Courtesy: The Dawn of Pakistan

# The President at Centre Stage

by V. K. Madhavan Kutty

RIGHTLY so when India is ruled by a Government which has lost the confidence of the house of representatives. Both the Congress-led alliance and the BJP-led alliance found it impossible to provide alternate setups and that led to a caretaker Government and elections.

The President was great when he did not ask the Congress(I) and its allies to come forward and asked them to move a no-confidence motion against the Vajpayee government and prove the majority of the Congress claimed. But the President became a disgrace when he asked the Vajpayee Government to prove its majority after the AIADMK withdrew its support. The President's decision to ask Mr. Vajpayee to continue till the election was over was even interdicted by some quarters as denying the opportunity to form a Congress-led coalition that would have naturally become the caretaker govern-

ment.

When the President gave the Congress president, Mrs. Sonia Gandhi, more time to convince him of her claim to majority, it was interpreted by the BJP and others as favouring the Congress as asking Mr. Vajpayee to seek a vote of confidence was seen by the Congress and others as favouring the BJP. All such reactions were motivated. The President was aware of this and the people at large wanted him to be independent and impartial.

Again the President was great for the BJP when he refused to accept the advice of the Union Cabinet to dismiss the BJP Ministry in Uttar Pradesh led by Kalyan Singh. But later when he turned down the recommendations of the Union Cabinet and the advice of the State Governor to dismiss the Rabri Devi Government in Bihar, the President was partisan in the eyes of the BJP. Political parties and their leaders are always subjective

when assessing the President's decisions and not in the larger interests of democracy.

Favouring the imposition of President's rule under Article 356 while in power and opposing it while in the opposition, irrespective of their professed ideologies and past declarations, is a classic example.

At a time like this, the role of the President is both difficult and delicate. It is true that there is no mention of a caretaker Government in the Constitution, but it is also true that the President is sworn in to preserve, protect and defend the Constitution. Maybe titular, but he is head of the executive. Mr. K. R. Narayanan has already made it clear that he will function as a working president, by which he means that all decisions taken by him will be keeping view of duties, not only to preserve the system but to protect, preserve and defend the Constitution for which

he was elected. The President has powers, but he has also the responsibility to respect healthy precedents. If only the present caretaker Government realised this much of the present controversies which look motivated could have been avoided.

From the very beginning, certain members of the Vajpayee Government and the BJP and the forces supporting it, had some reservations about Mr. Narayanan. Whether it is caste or the region he hails from is difficult to say. But ever since the BJP-coalition Government came to power at the Centre they have found fault with Mr. Narayanan on many occasions. If not the party leaders, their henchmen were involved in this. Even before the BJP-led Ministry assumed power, there were whispering campaigns against his family's nationality and religion etc. But they did not stick as his

credentials cannot be questioned. But the BJP and the forces behind it continue a policy of harassment.

The Government has taken more policy decisions after it was voted out than while in power. More decisions are taken after losing the confidence motion and an unusual hurry is evident in implementing them. It should have been otherwise. This hurry maybe due to fear of not getting back to power after the elections. Or more particularly to send a message to the electorate that the Government took important decisions and the President stood in the way or else due to the feeling that the President's role could be made difficult in the event of their getting back to power. Behind all this an attempt is also seen to avoid the Parliament.

The office is not a post office. It is not relevant how many references have been made by the President to the Government. At this time, when the life of a

caretaker Government is longer than ever before, it is only natural that more issues are raised before the President. No President can afford to ignore it, particularly in a system like ours. Is it not his bounden duty to invite the attention of the Government and seek clarifications? He did exactly so with regard to the atrocities committed on minorities, apparent interference with judicial appointments and policy decisions with regard to Indian Airlines, Telecoms policy etc.

Mr. Narayanan is capable of performing such duties as entrusted by the Constitution. It is unfortunate that the Head of State be dragged through such controversies, as this cannot possibly help healthy relations between the President and the Government and will be detrimental to the growth of a healthy democracy, and of course healthy relationship between the President and the Prime Minister.

Courtesy: The Hindu of India



Tranquility violated