

## Kashmiri separatist leaders detained

AP, Srinagar

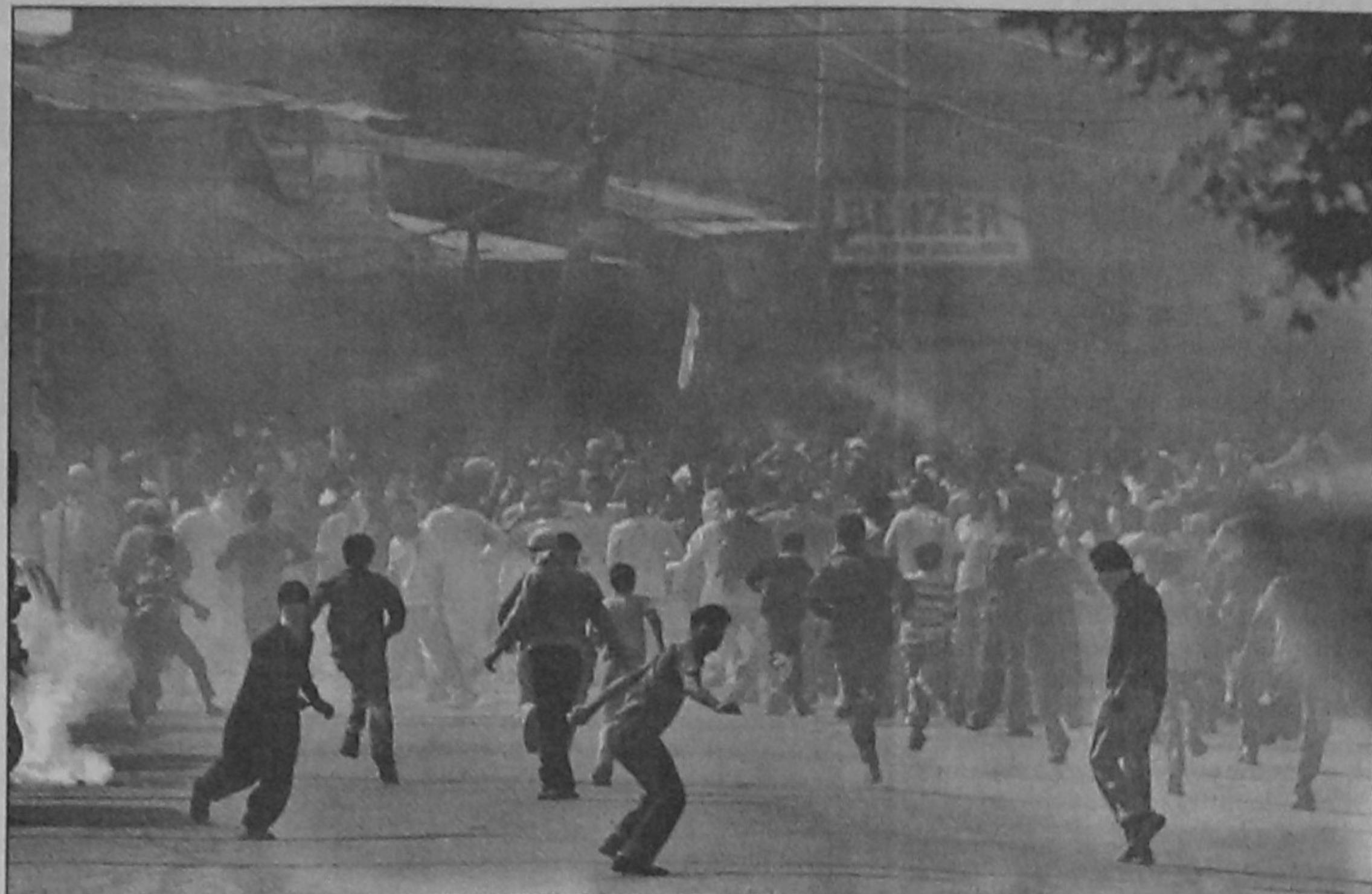
Three top separatist leaders in Indian Kashmir were placed under house arrest Friday to prevent them from leading a march to protest alleged assaults on Muslims, police said.

The leaders of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference, an alliance of nonviolent separatist groups, were detained as a preventive measure, a police officer said on condition of anonymity because he was not authorised to speak with media.

The leaders were identified as Syed Ali Shah Geelani, Mirwaiz Omer Farooq and Shabir Shah.

Separatist groups planned to march in protest to the local UN office after Friday prayers in Srinagar, Indian Kashmir's biggest city.

Muslims claim they are being targeted in Jammu, the only Hindu-majority city in the state, with Hindu mobs attacking their shops and homes and chanting slogans demanding Muslim Kashmiris leave the area. They claim security forces are not doing enough to protect them.



Kashmiri Muslim protesters run away after Indian police fired tear gas shells to disperse a march during the fifth day of a strike in the city yesterday. India's Kashmir valley is facing shortages of food, fuel and medicine as the revolt-hit region is gripped by the worst Hindu-Muslim tensions in decades, locals say.

## Impeachment could be messy

## Warn Musharraf allies

AP, Islamabad

The ruling coalition won't be able to easily impeach Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf, opposition leaders warned yesterday, while some papers suggested the former army强人 resign to spare the country another messy political fight.

Leaders of the main ruling parties announced Thursday they will seek to impeach the embattled president, accusing him of undermining Pakistan's economy and constitution.

Musharraf dominated Pakistan for eight years and became a close US ally after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, but ceded control of the powerful army last year and has been largely sidelined since coalition parties trounced his allies in February parliamentary elections.

Though deeply disliked by Pakistanis in general, Musharraf has insisted he will serve out the five-year

term he was elected to in a contentious parliamentary vote in October, and he has shown no signs of giving up without a fight after the impeachment plans were announced.

"This decision about President Musharraf's impeachment is going to open a Pandora's box," Mushahid Hussain, a senior figure in the main pro-Musharraf party, told The Associated Press on Friday, adding "it is not going to be easy."

Hussain insisted his party will defend the president, while another Musharraf ally, Tariq Aziz, said the coalition can expect "many legal challenges."

Azim suggested the coalition was not following constitutional guidelines on giving the notice of impeachment. "So any notice given by them for President Musharraf's impeachment can be challenged in the Supreme Court," he claimed.

Meanwhile, leading newspa-

pers suggested the president simply resign and avoid becoming the first Pakistani president to get impeached.

"There is no doubt he will fight back, but given the odds against him and the unity shown by his political opponents inside and outside parliament he would be well advised to decide to bow out gracefully," Dawn, a leading English-language paper, said in an editorial that declared the president's "political fate has been sealed."

The Nation, another top English-language paper, said a voluntary resignation would "save the country a lot of trouble."

Analysts say the ruling coalition, which has struggled with pressing economic and security problems it inherited, is not assured of victory. It requires a two-thirds majority of lawmakers to vote for the impeachment in a joint session of both houses of Parliament.

The coalition parties currently

controls some 236 of the 339 seats in the National Assembly, or lower house, and as many as 51 of the 100 seats in the Senate, or upper house. That leaves it at least six seats short of what it needs to win, although it could gain the support of some of the 29 independent lawmakers and defectors from the pro-Musharraf parties.

Ruling party chief Asif Ali Zardari expressed confidence the coalition would succeed. He declared Thursday that seeking impeachment was "good news for democracy" in Pakistan.

The decision followed marathon negotiations between Zardari and Nawaz Sharif, who was ousted as prime minister in Musharraf's 1999 coup, and leads the second-largest coalition party.

Their alliance forged after the February election victory was at risk of collapse over differences over how to restore judges fired by Musharraf last year and whether to oust him.

## Coalition troops kill 4 women, child in Afghanistan

AFP, Kabul

US-led coalition troops "inadvertently" killed four women and a child in a gun battle in Afghanistan, while an international soldier died separately in a new bomb attack, the force said yesterday.

The civilians were killed Thursday when troops went to an area of central Ghazni province less than 100 kilometres (60 miles) south of Kabul to find a Taliban militant alleged to be coordinating foreign rebels, it said.

"As coalition forces approached a compound, they were threatened by several armed militants," a statement said.

The force responded with small-arms fire, killing the militants and inadvertently killing four women and a child located with them, "it said.

Several alleged militants were killed and three detained, the coalition said.

The coalition regrets the death of these non-combatants, spokeswoman Lieutenant Colonel Rumi Nielson-Green said in the statement. "We are planning to conduct a full and thorough investigation,"

## US weighs military forays into Pakistan

AP, Washington

Top Bush administration officials are urging the president to direct US troops in Afghanistan to be more aggressive in pursuing militants into Pakistan on foot as part of a proposed radical shift in its regional counterterrorism strategy. The Associated Press has learned.

Senior intelligence and military aides want President Bush to give American soldiers greater flexibility to operate against al-Qaeda and Taliban fighters who cross the border from Pakistan's lawless tribal border area to conduct attacks inside Afghanistan, officials say.

The plan could include sending US special forces teams, tempo-

rarily assigned to the CIA, into the tribal areas to hit high-value targets, according to an intelligence official with direct knowledge of the plan.

Such a move would be controversial, in part because of Pakistani opposition to US incursions into its territory, and the proposal is not universally supported in Washington. It comes amid growing political instability in Pakistan and concerns that elements of Pakistan's security forces are collaborating with extremists.

Senior members of Bush's national security team met last week at the White House to discuss the recommendations and are now weighing how to proceed, the officials said.

The top agenda item at the meeting of the so-called deputies committee usually the No. 2 officials at the departments of Defence, and State, plus the intelligence agencies and the National Security Council was to "review and potentially revise cross-border strategy," a person familiar with the session told the AP.

"What the deputies committee has raised is, given the possibility that political fragmentation in Pakistan is going to continue, do we need to change our strategy?" the official said. He and other current and former officials spoke on condition of anonymity because sensitive foreign policy matters are in play.

## Suu Kyi's party hails 1988 uprising as 'turning point'

AFP, Yangon

The top agenda item at the meeting of the so-called deputies committee usually the No. 2 officials at the departments of Defence, and State, plus the intelligence agencies and the National Security Council was to "review and potentially revise cross-border strategy," a person familiar with the session told the AP.

"What the deputies committee has raised is, given the possibility that political fragmentation in Pakistan is going to continue, do we need to change our strategy?" the official said. He and other current and former officials spoke on condition of anonymity because sensitive foreign policy matters are in play.

"This anniversary marks an important historical turning point in Myanmar's politics. People will never forget it," Nyin Win, spokesman for her National League for Democracy (NLD), told AFP.

August 8, 1988 -- a numerically important date known as 8.8.88 -- marked the beginning of a student-led uprising that drew hundreds of thousands of people into the streets of cities and villages across the country.



PHOTO: AFP

Myanmar protesters shout anti-military slogans as they display portraits of Myanmar's opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi during a demonstration to mark the 20th anniversary of the 1988 pro-democracy revolution, in New Delhi yesterday.

## Musharraf impeachment bid an 'internal' matter: US

AFP, Washington

Pakistani leaders to decide on a way forward to succeed as a modern and democratic country."

The spokesman added that Washington and Islamabad "remain close allies in the war on terror, and will continue our close ties with the democratically elected government of Pakistan."

Pakistan's coalition leaders announced earlier Thursday the decision to seek the impeachment of Musharraf, the former head of Pakistan's military and a key US ally since he seized power in a 1999 coup.

"Our expectation is that any action will be consistent with the rule of law and the Pakistani constitution," Gallegos said.

"It is the responsibility of

the US-led coalition to bring about a political transition in Pakistan," he said.

The US-led coalition has been

working to bring about a political transition in Pakistan," he said.

The US-led coalition has been

working to bring about a political transition in Pakistan," he said.

The US-led coalition has been

working to bring about a political transition in Pakistan," he said.

The US-led coalition has been

working to bring about a political transition in Pakistan," he said.

The US-led coalition has been

working to bring about a political transition in Pakistan," he said.

The US-led coalition has been

working to bring about a political transition in Pakistan," he said.

The US-led coalition has been

working to bring about a political transition in Pakistan," he said.

The US-led coalition has been

working to bring about a political transition in Pakistan," he said.

The US-led coalition has been

working to bring about a political transition in Pakistan," he said.

The US-led coalition has been

working to bring about a political transition in Pakistan," he said.

The US-led coalition has been

working to bring about a political transition in Pakistan," he said.

The US-led coalition has been

working to bring about a political transition in Pakistan," he said.

The US-led coalition has been

working to bring about a political transition in Pakistan," he said.

The US-led coalition has been

working to bring about a political transition in Pakistan," he said.

The US-led coalition has been

working to bring about a political transition in Pakistan," he said.

The US-led coalition has been

working to bring about a political transition in Pakistan," he said.

The US-led coalition has been

working to bring about a political transition in Pakistan," he said.

The US-led coalition has been

working to bring about a political transition in Pakistan," he said.

The US-led coalition has been

working to bring about a political transition in Pakistan," he said.

The US-led coalition has been

working to bring about a political transition in Pakistan," he said.

The US-led coalition has been

working to bring about a political transition in Pakistan," he said.

The US-led coalition has been

working to bring about a political transition in Pakistan," he said.

The US-led coalition has been

working to bring about a political transition in Pakistan," he said.

The US-led coalition has been

working to bring about a political transition in Pakistan," he said.

The US-led coalition has been

working to bring about a political transition in Pakistan," he said.

The US-led coalition has been

working to bring about a political transition in Pakistan," he said.

The US-led coalition has been

working to bring about a political transition in Pakistan," he said.

The US-led coalition has been

working to bring about a political transition in Pakistan," he said.

The US-led coalition has been

working to bring about a political transition in Pakistan," he said.

The US-led coalition has been

working to bring about a political transition in Pakistan," he said.

The US-led coalition has been

working to bring about a political transition in Pakistan," he said.

The US-led coalition has been

working to bring about a political transition in Pakistan," he said.

The US-led coalition has been

working to bring about a political transition in Pakistan," he said.

The US-led coalition has been

working to bring about a political transition in Pakistan," he said.

The US-led coalition has been

working to bring about a political transition in Pakistan," he said.

The US-led coalition has been

working to bring about a political transition in Pakistan," he said.

The US-led coalition has been

working to bring about a political transition in Pakistan," he said.

The US-led coalition has been

working to bring about a political transition in Pakistan," he said.

The US-led coalition has been

working to bring about a political transition in Pakistan," he said.

The US-led coalition has been

working to bring about a political transition in Pakistan," he said.

The US-led coalition has been

working to bring about a political transition in Pakistan," he said.

The US-led coalition has been