

E-ISSUE

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Editor Pushp Saraf

INTEGRATING FACTORS

Pushp Saraf

Like in mathematics there are several integrating factors in the country.

Democracy is the most effective of them

It has taken time, but our chosen democratic dispensation has gradually generated transparency and through this one can clearly discern an emerging strong and vibrant India. Democracy has taken care to mute ruffled feelings in Tamil Nadu. It has helped restore sanity in Jammu and Kashmir; that had been so blatantly abused in the troubled border State for about three decades. No more can one even think of fiddling with it. There is greater realisation that subversion of the electoral process can be counter-productive. Admittedly, we still have a long distance to travel. Multiplicity of parties is a worrying feature. Another grim reality is that no party or leader can claim to have a base in every part of the country. However, the feeling that we are moving in the right direction is quite overwhelming. We have become an example and a role model for most of our neighbours. The rest of the world is watching us carefully.

Individual integrity is a potent weapon

This point can only be proved with a few examples. In 1996 I met Nawal Kishore Sharma (Governor of Gujarat) who was then the Congress candidate in the Alwar Lok Sabha constituency in Rajasthan. During the discussion I inquired of him: "Who are the Central party leaders coming to campaign for you?" He replied briefly that he had "invited" only Manmohan Singh to address a public meeting. He left it at that. By that time Singh had built a formidable reputation as a successful Union Finance Minister with a remarkably clean image. A veteran politician himself, Sharma had clearly read the situation that the people were looking for a change.

Among Congress politicians Defence Minister A.K. Antony is another leader who carries an excellent impression everywhere.

My friend and former colleague in the *Indian Express* Devinder Sharma, widely known these days for his views on food and trade policy, occasionally keeps inquiring from me about the progress of the *Border Affairs*, well aware that it is one of my three journalistic activities at present.

One day he felt that I should meet Vishnu Bhagwat, the sacked Chief of the Naval Staff. I went to see Bhagwat at New Delhi's India International Centre. He was understandably bitter. Roundly criticising the political class he, perhaps, thought of scoring a hit. Looking straight into my eyes, he asked

me to name any minister in the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) Government who was not corrupt.

Without batting an eyelid, I said: "Arun Shourie." Bhagwat appeared to be somewhat taken aback but was frank enough to acknowledge "you are right".

Nevertheless he was determined to have his say. "Can you name another?" he asked.

"Yes, Jag Mohan". I was again quick. He again nodded his head in approval.

I could notice that there was a turmoil going on in his mind because of the treatment meted out to him. He wanted to convey his feeling of hurt for having been shabbily rejected by the governing apparatus at a crucial stage in his life. I wondered why he did not elicit my views about George Fernandes who, as the Defence Minister, had tormented him.

Actually I was glad that Bhagwat did not ask me for a third name.

Normally we interpret integrity in terms of honest conduct in financial matters. This is no doubt a major component of the virtue. There are also other equally important aspects, like objectivity and courage of conviction. My long experience of the militants and their ideologues in Jammu and Kashmir (including during the peak from 1988 to 1993) is that they too are respectful of the integrity of media persons even though their views are usually at variance. There are greater chances of journalists working in militancy-affected territories running into trouble with the self-serving ruling elite which indulges in outright corruption under the veneer of "mainstream" politics.

Integrity is an individual asset but it has a salutary effect on the overall environment. It can win public approval for those who work in their personal capacities by virtue of the demands of their profession. Likewise a man of integrity at the top can discipline a department or ministry down the line. It is precisely because of his integrity that trenchant critics of the Prime Minister concede that he is not vulnerable to any pressure although he is weak because of the absence of his own political base.

Floating population is common thread

Information technology and business management have done wonders. No more are the national capital, Mumbai and Kolkata the dream destination for millions of educated boys and girls in remote corners of the country. Their new targets are Pune, Bangalore, Chennai and Hyderabad, which have become the international hubs. They find them not only professionally useful but also "healthier" from the point of view of making a living. In fact, they have discovered that the once elusive foreign countries are well within their reach. Surveys have shown that between 30 and 40 per cent of population of many cities is young and floating. Does this not indicate an intermingling of cultures so beneficial for us as a nation?

GUJJARS: ORIGIN, HISTORY AND PRESENT STATUS

Javaid Rahi

In the Himalayan region, Gujjar is considered an important and historical tribe. This tribe has ruled over many princely states in northern India for hundreds of years and left its lasting imprint. Its handsome contribution towards the prosperity of the Himalayan ranges is widely recognised. History shows that Gujjars have always been a prosperous and dignified community. References about them are found in books by Indian, Persian, Arabic and Chinese historians. At times they have been mentioned as belonging to Central India.

That is, however, only one version. There are several other theories as well about their origin.

To trace the origin of Gujjars we have to first interpret the word Gujjar. Till now the expression has been interpreted in a number of ways. A perspective has been forwarded by Prof Abdul Gani Shashi after a detailed study of Arabic and Persian history. According to him, Gujjars share with Baduo tribe of Arab a common lifestyle, way of living and culture. It is believed that Gujjars along with Baduo tribe are associated with Khizir tribe that had left for Koh-e kaf during the era of Christ along with its camels and other domestic animals. According to him, the word Khizir got changed to Garz to Garzar and with the passage of time this tribe came to be called as Gujjar.

Abdul Malik Chouhan in the book "*Tareekh-e-Shahan Gujjar*" at page 49 has described the word Gujjar in a different way.

In the Islamic encyclopaedia, it has been said that the Gujjar community was spirited and courageous and its members were known for their shrewdness verging on despotism in the vicinity of Iran and had destroyed many empires and nations under their reign. That is why they were symbolised first of all by a wolf (*Bhediya*) locally known as Gurj.

Subsequently this word got transformed from Gurj to Gurjur to Gurez and later on again to Gurj or Gujjar or Gurjar. Scholars of the 20th century have evolved another theory according to which thousands of years ago this community moved from a place called Georgia (Georgia/Gurjistan) to India via Afghanistan. Because they belonged to Gurjistan they were called Gujjars. Anthropological surveys of India have authenticated this viewpoint. There is also a belief based on the history of Gujjars and Hindu manuscripts that Gujjars were one of the communities comprising devotees of lord Krishna. Gujjars took Krishna as their ideal and adopted His lifestyle. For a long time they were known for preservation

of cows and it is because of cows that some of the castes of Hindus were known as those owning cows. According to this theory Gaochar (one who looks after cows) were called as Gaujar that later on became Gujjar.

Another perspective is of Chowdhary FayeZ Ahmed written in "*Marat Gujjan Tareekh*". He had consulted several scholars before reaching his conclusion. According to him, when Gujjars used to rule in India, their armies fought with the help of Gurz, that is Gada (weapon of lord Hanuman), which was their symbol. Gada was to later become Gurzar and then changed to Gurjar or Gujjar.

One more perspective is linked with Gurz. History reveals that these people considered cow as their protector and revered cow as their mother. Hence the weapon with which they used to fight was shaped as the head of cow because of which people of other countries called them "Gau-sar" which later on become Gujjar.

An interesting opinion is that Alexander's son had adopted the title of "Gausar". With the passage of time it became Gurji and his children came to be called as Gujjar. But this view is not supported by any evidence.

There are about half a dozen other Gujjar histories like *Shahan-e-Gujjar*, *Gujjar Ithas*, *Gujjar aur Gujri Zaban*, *Tareekh-e-Gujran*, *Gujjar Tareekh aur Sakafat*. It has been mentioned in all of them that the word Gujjar has been derived from Persian word Gauzar which means body builder (*pahalwan*) or fighter. Because this community was famous for its moves and tactics in wars its members were called Gauzar who gradually came to be called as Gujjars. This community is also called Gadjeen. There is a book of Hafiz Abdul Haq Sialkoti titled *Tareekh-e-Gojran* that has banked upon this view.

There is this view also that because of some issues, one community shifted from Grozni area of Russia and entered India after going through various routes. These people were called as Gurozar as they belonged to Grozni only to be christened as Gujjar. This research is authenticated by the presence of some castes in Gujjars based on the names of regions in Russia, for example, Chichi Gujjars from Chechnya, Bajran Gujjar from Bajrania. A historical estimation related to Gujjars is very interesting. When Romans invaded Greece for the first time, the community which countered them was Gracia located on the borders of Greece. Romans called them Grexie, Greece and Gruj to first become Gurjar which eventually Gujjar.

Col James Tod argues that Gujjars are not descendants of Turkey or Arab. He links them to a huge empire. Credited with writing in detail about Rajasthan Col Tod states that Gujjars are Greek and the word Gujjar or Garjar is of the Greek origin. Page 39 of *Tareekh-e-Kokaz* mentions that Gujjars have come from Turkistan, and they are descendants of Noah. According to this view, the word Gujjar is derived from Garji who was descendant of Noah.

R.D Bhandari believes that Gujjar is an important community amongst the various Himalayan communities. History tells us that these nomadic people used

to rule north India at some time. Gujjars entered India in the 5th century A.D. along with Huns, and they are one of the communities of Central Asia.

According to English scholar Kennedy, Gujjars used to worship Sun and they entered India from Iran. In a book titled "*Harsh Chitra*" written in 7th century A.D., it is said that king Harshavardan who was a Hun was given the title of Garjar Praja Graha which meant the brave Gujjar who used to protect his community.

Famous scholar Alexander Cunningham says that Gujjars have been present in India even before Christ. V.A Smith is amongst those scholars who believe that Gujjars are locals. Rana Ali Hussain Chouhan writes in his history that the word Gujjar is derived from the word Gurjar or Garjar, which has been used by Maharishi Valmiki in *Ramayana*

Quite a few scholars agree that Gujjars actually have come from Georgia, which is located in Russia and is often called as Gurjistan.

Their conflicting views about the origin notwithstanding all scholars appear to be in agreement that that this community had arrived on the Indian horizon between the 5th and 6th century A.D. Anthropologist Cornik has said that through research it has been found that there is no major difference between the faces of Gujjars with that of ancient Indian communities.

Gujjars have ruled over Gujarat, Bhopal, Kannauj and Ajmer, among other areas, from the 5th century to the 14th century A.D. *Rajtarangni* reveals that Gujjars used to rule over surrounding areas of the Kashmir Valley.

History has it that with the fall of Gupt kingdom Gujjars registered a rise. But they were limited to north India. With reference to the history of Rajasthan, it has been revealed that Gujjars have been residents of Jammu and Kashmir since the 3rd century A.D. However, some scholars are of the view that Gujjars entered J&K in the 10th or 11th century.

Kashmiri Scholar Motilal Saqi has written in his thesis "*Gujjar Pratihara*": "Harishchandra and his three generations had ruled between 550 A.D -640 A.D. After that kings of royal family had ruled till eight generations. Thus, North India was under the control of Gujjars for 300 years."

Scholar Jamil Jalbi of Pakistan has written in his book "*Urdu Adab ki Tareekh*" at page 79: "One form of Urdu language is found in Gujarat which is called as Gojri or Gujarat dialect." There are historical accounts of the Gujjar community entering India as conquerors and dividing its southern occupied areas into three parts: the biggest was called as Maharath, second as Gujrath and the third as Swarath. The conquerors from Turkey found it difficult to pronounce Gujrath so they modified it to Gujarat.

One usually finds the proof of presence and rule of Gujjars in Kashmir from the details of external aggressions. Mohammad Ghaznavi attacked Kashmir twice but he failed on both the occasions. Many kingdoms came up in Kashmir from 1038 A.D to 1326 A.D. Tung Rai Gujjar was the commander-in-chief

opposite Ghaznavi. This was the period when King Tarlochan Pal Khattana sought refuge in J&K.

Sarvari Kasana writes in his essay "*Jammu Kashmir par Gujiron ki hakumat*" about the acceptance of Islam by Gujjars. In 1301, Shahmir Gujjar was made a minister in the royal court of Kashmir. He had already adopted Islam. Shahmir sat on the throne of Kashmir as Wazir Shamsudin. The proof of his being a Gujjar can be traced in chapter Kashmir of "*Ain-e-Akbari*". It is also written that Shahmir considered himself as descendant of Pandavas. Four sons of Shamsudin were rulers of Kashmir. One of them had ruled over Lohar Kot which is now known by the name of Loren. K.D Maini in "*Tareekh Thingyach*" writes that in the 18th century Thingyach was ruled over by Sango Gujjar who was a brave king.

Gujjars have ruled from Gujarat, Jodhpur, and Kathiawad to Ballia. This entire area was known as Gujjar Desh. Chawada and Solanki Gujjars have ruled over Deccan Gujarat from 610 A.D to 942 A.D. The Central Institute of Indian Languages, Mysore has prepared a grammar which mentions that Gujjar left the plain areas after their decline and shifted to the Himalayan regions. These people used to attack enemies while remaining hidden in hilly areas, but this trend could not last long and slowly they became the inhabitants of these regions.

Many kings in J&K had enlisted Gujjars as criminal tribes so that they could snatch power from them and prevent them from being autonomous. Different kings used to keep an eye over Gujjars who were there in their army. Each kingdom called Rajputs and Sikhs and other martial communities from Punjab and settled them around Gujjar-inhabited colonies to protect themselves against attacks from Gujjars.

Even today in the whole of J&K wherever Gujjar colonies are located one can find some houses of Sikhs and Muslim Rajputs which verify policies of earlier kingdoms. During the Sikh and Dogra periods the landed estates and subdivisions went to the others while Gujjars got only meadows.

During the Dogra rule Gujjars were not participative and they could not reach or acquire a high position in proportion to their population. As a result, the views of Dogra Rajput rulers were also not different from the earlier rulers. However, later on three to four Gujjars got access to the King's council.

To remove backwardness of Gujjars and to bring awareness in them, the Gujjar-Jat Conference was established in 1931. This conference went to different places in J&K and awakened Gujjars socially, politically and culturally and directed them towards education. In 1947 thousands of Gujjars were massacred in Jammu and surrounding areas and those who escaped went to Pakistan but the majority of Gujjars from Thingyach, Rajouri and Kashmir didn't shift and stayed put. After partition Gujjars remained negligent and ignorant. They were neither in power nor they had anyone to speak up for them.

The decade of the 1970s saw a new turn when the State Government allotted a special budget of Rs. 13 crores for the development and progress of

Gujjars by setting up a Gujjar consultation board. This board's suggestion led to the establishment of Gujjar hostels and Gujjar *kanuniyan* (settlements) to bring about political and educational awareness among Gujjars. The Union Government gave the status of scheduled tribes to Gujjars on April 19, 1991. It is only after that that their real development has been possible. At the political level, Gujjars still are not that aware but their inclination towards education is flourishing. They still have to wage a long war to acquire seats in the State Legislature.

In a nutshell, we can say that Gujjars are emerging as a distinct cultural, political and social identity as a whole. They have to cross many landmarks and there is every reason to hope that they will succeed in their endeavours.

Socio-cultural characteristics of Gujjars of J&K

Gujjars are rich in terms of cultural heritage. They have an edge over other communities of the State so far as a distinct cultural identity is concerned. Gujjars have their own language Gojri which is an offshoot of the Indo-Aryan school. They have their own costumes, traditions, food habits, lifestyle, and arts and crafts which vary from area to area.

Bakerwal Gujjar men mostly wear shalwar kameez, vaskat/angoo and pagheri (headgear) while their women folk wear long gown called jubo/ pheerni/ shawal/ cap and jotti jora.

Dodhi Gujjars wear pagh /kameez and tehmad while their ladies wear shirt with strips choridar shalwar and jotti.

The favourite dishes of Gujjars are maki/ bajra ki roti, ganhar/sarson ko sag, lassi, kalari, karan, amongst others. Gujjars are mostly vegetarians.

Banhara Gujjars mainly live in "kullas" made from special type of grass while Bakerwals live in temporary doharas and inamboos. Settled Gujjars mainly live in "Kothas"

J&K has five big sub-tribes of Gujjars which include:

1. *Banhara/Dodhi Gujjars*: Dodhi Gujjars presently inhabit areas of Jammu, Udhampur, Kathua and Doda. Their main business is dairy products.
2. *Bakerwal Gujjars*: This sub-tribe resides almost in every district of the State in substantial numbers. However, mostly they are the residents of Kalakote, Reasi, Newshehra, Bandipore, Shopian, Kulgam, Pahalgam, Tral and Uri.
3. *Alahiwal Gujjars*: They have migrated from the frontier province of Pakistan and are mostly nomads.
4. *Kanhari Gujjars*: This sub-tribe has migrated from Swat and Hazara areas presently in Pakistan. Nowadays a good number of them live in KalaKote in Rajouri District.
5. *Semi-nomad Gujjars*: One more sub-tribe of Gujjars is primarily of those who have by and large prominently settled in various parts of the State.

There are almost 150 castes /ghots of Gujjars in the State out of a total of 900 castes of Gujjars spread over the sub-continent. A sizable

population of Gujjars reside in every district of the State. However the data provided by official agencies is at variance with ground realities. Linguist G. A. Greorson has mentioned the number of Gojri-speaking people in 1901 as 130000 while as per the census conducted in 1931 the number of Gojri-speaking (Gujjars) people has been recorded as 217762. In 1961 census this number has decreased and mentioned as 209227 citing the migration of Gujjars to Pakistan as the reason.

District- wise population percentage of Gujjars					
Poonch	Rajouri	Jammu	Kathua	Udhampur	Doda
Rural=48.4 Urban=5.6	Rural=47.2 Urban=5.6	Rural = 9.3 Urban=2.1	Rural = 17.1 Urban=1.1	Rural=28.2 Urban=1.5	Rural= 17.3 Urban=1.0
Srinagar	Budgam	Anantnag	Pulwama	Kupwara	Baramulla
Rural=17.2 Urban=0.1	Rural =9.6 Urban= 0.3	Rural=17.0 Urban=0.2	Rural =13.7 Urban= 0.0	Rural = 18.2 Urban= 2.9	Rural = 18.5 Urban= 0.4

Keeping in view the pathetic condition of the Gujjar tribe, the State-level Gujjar Bakerwal Advisory Board was constituted in 1973-74 .The Board's main aim and objective is overall and multi-dimensional development of Gujjars.To set right social, economical and educational scenario the Board has taken several steps for Gujjars which include the establishment of 13 Gujjar hostels, Gujjar colonies for settling the members of the tribe at different places, repair of seven major migratory routes of Gujjars, promotion and development of the Gojri language and literature and establishment of Gojri Section in the Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Arts, Culture and Languages, allotment of shops near district headquarters, providing stipend, free uniform and books to Gujjar students, mobile schools and hospitals for nomadic Gujjars and Bakerwals and reservation for Gujjar students in professional colleges, .

Gujjars, as stated earlier, were accorded schedule tribe status on April 19, 1991. During the past 12 years the Union Government has implemented tribal sub-plan on broader bases resulting in the overall development of Gujjars.

Role of NGOs

The number of NGOs working for Gujjars and Bakerwals is very small.A few of them like the Gujjar Desh Charitable trust,Tribal Research and Cultural Foundation and Gujjar Bakerwal Conference are working for the development of the downtrodden community.

The Government and NGOs have to do a lot more work which ought to include:

- (a) *Educational reforms*:There has to be a campaign for increasing the number of students in 13 Gujjar Bakerwal hostels. More hostels are also needed for both boys and girls at block and tehsil levels as incentives for nomadic tribes. The other required measures are: residential schools on the pattern of Kendriya Navodyaya Vidhyalas, increase in mobile schools and fixing accountability for teachers working in them, appointment of local staff, more

stipend for students, provision of more seats in technical and professional colleges and setting up mobile adult education and anganwari centres.

- (b) *Socio-economic reforms*: Establishment of sales centres for wool, dairy and mutton products in district and tehsil headquarters; providing high-breed sheep, goats, buffaloes and horses to Gujjars; steps to boost folk arts and crafts including the provision for easy loans; providing fertile agriculture land away from the Line of Control and the International Border; creation of cooperative societies for Banhara and Bakerwal Gujjars; milk plants for optimum use of available resources; insurance cover for nomadic people and their cattle; making available basic facilities like water and electricity in hilly areas; training to hone agricultural skills and road connectivity,

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What is violence?

“Violence is not merely killing another. It is violence when we use a sharp word, when we make a gesture to brush away a person, when we obey because there is fear. So violence isn’t merely organised butchery in the name of God, in the name of society or country. Violence is much more subtle, much deeper.”

POLITICS, PERCEPTIONS PERSONALITIES

Ahmad Rashid

Assembly elections in the State are a year away. Political parties of all hues including those against the polls are already out in the open with the campaign to woo people to their sides. There is a possibility that the elections may be held earlier — sometime around May or June next year instead of when they are scheduled in September-October 2008. On the face of it the early conduct of electoral exercise is being necessitated because of religious reasons. September-October is the fasting month of Muslims. It will be preceded by the two-month long (July-August) pilgrimage to the holy Amarnath cave: it leaves little scope for security forces to pay attention to any other activity all the more so the elections which have mostly faced resistance by the militants and their ideologues.

These days the ministers spend most of their time with common people along with the leaders of their respective parties (in public meetings, social or official functions) rather than in their cosy offices in the Civil Secretariat.

Ghulam Nabi Azad : high on rhetoric

Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad is in the frontline of the battling political brigade. He is more often seen in public these days. He dares to tread even the interior parts of the Capital city of Srinagar which have remained out of bounds for the mainstream politicians earlier. He is different in just another way as well. He talks less of politics and more of governance. Good administration is what he calls is the theme of his government. "I want to be known as performing Chief Minister rather than an emotional blackmailer", is his oft-repeated slogan. Azad talked about launching a massive campaign to rout corruption which he described as the bigger enemy than even terrorism. Dozens of senior and lower rank officers have been entrapped by the State Vigilance Organisation (SVO) for being involved in the messy business of corruption.

The campaign, which appeared to be well intentioned in the beginning, is losing its appeal for being "too selective". A common grouse is that the big fish are being left out despite all their dirt and filth while smaller ones are being netted. Transport minister Hakim Mohammad Yasin is a case in point. A committee of the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Council investigating into alleged irregularities in appointments and allotments of the custodian property has found him misusing his position and power when he was the Revenue Minister between November 2002 and November 2005. The committee, headed

by Prof Bhim Singh of the Panthers Party, has recommended “appropriate action under law” against the Minister and other officials of the Custodian Department involved therein to “uphold the dignity of the democratic institutions and rule of law”. The committee also sought cancellation of all the appointments and allotments and asked for referring the case to the SVO.

The Committee was constituted last year by then Legislative Council chairman Abdul Rashid Dar after some members highlighted the wrong-doings on the floor of the House.

The report says that the Custodian Department allotted land and flats at Hyderpora, Majid Bagh and Barzullah in Srinagar and Wazarat Road in Jammu violating all norms and regulations against nominal premiums. “They are mostly the relations of the Minister, MLAs, bureaucrats and well wishers of the authorities of the department be that of the Minister in-charge (Hakim Yasin) or Custodian General”, the report says. “Residential particulars (of the allottees) have been deliberately withheld to keep their identity secret so that it should not be made public who they are and whose relations are they,” it added.

One of the beneficiaries, Ms Afshah Rasool, has been shown as resident of the Central Jail, Jammu. Two Hurriyat leaders namely Mirwaiz Umar Farooq (chairman of the moderate faction) and his close associate Bilal Gani Lone of the People's Conference have also been allotted land at Sadrabal and Sanat Nagar in Srinagar.

Hakim is accused of allotting Dachan House at Gagribal to his daughter-in-law Dr Wasia after Rs. 182494 were incurred on its renovation. He is also accused of changing the leasehold rights of a piece of land at Haft Chinar from one K K Kohli to Ali Mohammad Kabu, whose full particulars were not available in the records. The Minister has transferred illegally another piece of land measuring 8.11 kanals in favour of three persons at Hyderpora in Srinagar.

The House Committee says that 96 appointments made in different disciplines in the Evacuee Department were “illegal, unconstitutional, malafide and totally arbitrary”. The report was tabled in the House on August 24, 2007 when the Legislative Council was in session but wasn't listed for discussion.

A buzz in political circles in Kashmir is that the Chief Minister's “*chuppi*” (silence) on Hakim is for a serious political consideration. Hakim is being prepared to play Judas for People's Democratic Party patron Mufti Mohammad Sayeed in the coming Assembly elections. He has already launched a vituperative campaign against Mufti and his party for “misleading people by raising emotional and false slogans”. Hakim has moved out of his Khan Sahab (in Budgam district) base and is busy in spreading the tentacles of his party People Democratic Forum (PDF) to other parts of the Valley. He has dished out the same political slogans — dialogue with militants, resolve Kashmir and similar other planks — as were employed by the PDP in the 2002 Assembly elections. Hakim is trying to send out signals of having “goodwill” among militants as well. Azad's image as a crusader against corruption suffered another jolt when reports of “unfair” deal between his younger brother Sajjad Ahmad Bhat and the Jammu Development Authority (JDA) surfaced recently. Sajjad got a big hall at a prime location in Jammu clandestinely allotted in his favour.

An “A” class contractor in the State Forest Corporation (SFC) he had described himself as an “unemployed” person while applying for the JDA allotment.

The Chief Minister cancelled the allotment after a newspaper spilled the beans. However, the damage was already done. People tend to think that he would have never acted had the scam not become a public knowledge.

Mufti Mohammad Sayeed: new tactics

For his part, the PDP patron is working on a new plan. Despite facing embarrassing situations for his “pro-separatist” voices on several occasions he is unlikely to shun this approach. Nothing has unnerved him, not even taunts by separatist leaders that he is simply indulging in “gimmickry”. In fact, he has increased his area of influence in the separatist camp and is poaching on it for finding candidates for the upcoming elections. Well-informed sources say that Mufti has succeeded in convincing two senior functionaries — one each from the rival factions of the Hurriyat Conference — to join his flock. The duo, however, wants the matter to be kept a “secret” for the time being. Shoukat Kar, a prominent social activist from Tral, has already joined the PDP.

It is no secret that Mufti has sounded election alert among his cadres much in advance. The extraordinary activity on his part has made the political scene quite alive.

This does not mean the end of problems for Mufti. He has his own worrisome share of them. Two seniormost leaders of the PDP — Muzaffar Hussain Baig and Ghulam Hassan Mir — are not comfortable with him. Baig and Mir both are founder-leaders of the party. But they are sulking. Their complaint is that Mufti does not give them their due. Mufti recalled them from the State Cabinet quite unceremoniously. Mufti dumped both by vetoing their choice of candidate for chairmanship of the State Legislative Council. Baig and Mir favoured senior leader and MLC Nizamuddin Bhat, who enjoys formidable reputation for integrity, for the coveted post. Mufti and his daughter and PDP president Mehbooba put their weight behind Ghulam Nabi Lone who was eventually elected as the party’s nominee to be unanimously chosen as the Council chairman.

This has driven a wedge in the PDP — north versus south. Mufti and most of his men belong to south Kashmir while Baig, Mir and Nizamuddin are from north Kashmir. There is a feeling among the north Kashmir leadership of the PDP that regional considerations are ruling supreme in the organisational functioning of the PDP.

Some insiders say that both Mir and Baig could raise a banner of revolt any time against Mufti. That does not seem to bother Mufti for, Baig and Mir themselves are not pulling well and have contradictory pursuits, which will little allow them to get together against Mufti. If at all there is a possibility which can’t be ruled out at this juncture that Mir may join Hakim Yasin to take on Mufti in the next year’s elections. Mufti has angered another senior minister and founder-leader of his party — Qazi Afzal — recently. Mufti asked Qazi against his will to resign from the Cabinet in protest against the Chief Minister’s decision to relieve him of the forest ministry.

Qazi held the charges of forests and housing and urban development. He complained to the Chief Minister that the forest ministry was run by some “outside hands” (insinuation applied to Finance Minister Tariq Hameed Qarra, a close

confidant of Muftis, who had earlier held the forest portfolio) and senior officers of the ministry were not taking him seriously. The Chief Minister relieved Qazi of the ministry and himself took the charge to bring about discipline. This infuriated the PDP leaders, particularly Muftis. They put pressure on Qazi to resign from the housing and urban development ministry to impress upon the Chief Minister to give back the forest ministry. Qazi promptly submitted to the party discipline but Azad refused to accept the resignation. Muftis are now putting pressure on Qazi not to go to office unless the forest ministry is restored to the PDP.

Qazi Afzal represents all-important constituency of Ganderbal, where he defeated National Conference (NC) president Omar Abdullah in the 2002 elections. Keen observers say that by curtailing the stalwart like Qazi, Mir and Baig, Mufti is trying to hold his sway over the party before the elections.

There is another school of thought which says that Azad has moved against Qazi of his own accord at the behest of the NC. This theory gains credence because of the realities that Azad would any day prefer NC patron Dr Farooq Abdullah to Muftis and the Abdullahs have no reason to be fond of Qazi who can again block at least the younger Abdullah's bid to enter the Assembly.

Farooq Abdullah: counting chickens

After his son Omar Abdullah's evident failure to retain the family's political ascendancy, Farooq Abdullah is back on the Kashmir scene. On many occasions in the recent past he has openly declared that he is again his party's candidate for the post of the Chief Minister. The NC did strive to drum up support for Farooq's return to active politics on September 8 on the death anniversary of party legend Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah but, much to the chagrin of its leaders and cadres, not many people turned up on the occasion.

Farooq had bid adieu to local politics in 2002 after transferring his family's legacy to Omar. The NC patriarch had since then been vying for some space in the national politics. In the process he could get to the Rajya Sabha but his most cherished dream to make it to the office of President or Vice-President of the country remained unfulfilled. Sources say that he used all his good offices and means to convince the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) for considering his candidature for the office of the Vice-President.

On the other hand, Omar despite being young, energetic and having gained good understanding of situation could not deliver at the local level. Under his leadership, the NC not only lost power but he himself lost from his family bastion Ganderbal to Qazi who was not so widely known at that time. Omar could not pull well with the leaders and cadres of his party also. With no local grooming (Omar has been brought up and educated outside the State), he could not identify himself with the party and its heritage. Insiders say that apart from his own failure to get accommodated at the Centre, it was this president-party gap in the NC that left no option for Farooq but to announce a comeback even though it may be for helping his son out of a difficult situation.

But things seem to have changed much for the NC patron. It is not as easy for him to regain the past glory. Actually he has never reached his peak

of 1983 when he had vanquished a charismatic and powerful Indira Gandhi in a bitterly-contested battle that marginalised even the Bharatiya Janata Party (then Jan Sangh) in its strongholds in the Jammu region.

Who else can be better aware of the prevailing scenario than Farooq himself? He is one of the few politicians who personally know everybody who is anybody in all three regions of the State. Insiders say that Farooq too is thinking of not contesting from Ganderbal again. He instead is trying to find out some safe constituency in Srinagar which has been by and large a NC territory at least till the eruption of militancy. A NC thinktank has suggested him to try his luck from Sonawar assembly segment. This seems to be a very new development. It was generally believed that Farooq would go to Ganderbal and Omar would be shifted to Sonawar. This arrangement still remains the most convincing if the idea of Farooq's return to the State has to click.

In contrast to his son, Farooq frequently targets Syed Ali Shah Geelani, chairman of the hard-line faction of the Hurriyat Conference, for his "inflexible stand". He recently held Geelani responsible for all the bloodshed in the Valley. Farooq's ire against Geelani is incomprehensible for many people. They say that Geelani, who stands for Kashmir's accession with Pakistan, is no immediate rival of Abdullah. The NC faces threat to its political authority from none other than the PDP. Close observers say that Farooq's diatribe against Geelani may be meant to achieve dual objective. One is that it reinforces the NC's traditional opposition to Geelani and his brand of religion-based politics. The other is that any criticism of Geelani can only be music to the ears of New Delhi.

Syed Ali Shah Geelani: better alone

Geelani's parent organisation Jamaat-e-Islami has restricted its activities to religious areas only. The Jamaat has almost closed its political chapter in the name of concentrating on social and religious activities. The rival faction of the Hurriyat led by Mirwaiz Umar Farooq has to prove itself on the ground although it continues to hog publicity through emphasis on dialogue and intellectual discourses. Mohammad Yasin Malik of the Jammu-Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) is focussing on his chosen line. He has recently concluded a Valley-wide campaign — *Safre Azadi* — for involving the people of Kashmir into dialogue between India and Pakistan, which has ceased to take place for obvious reasons of political upheavals in Pakistan. Shabir Ahmad Shah, another separatist stalwart and chief of the Democratic Freedom Party (DFP), has been out of action for ill-health for the past two months.

But the never-say-die man as Geelani is has launched a lonely battle against pro-election forces in Kashmir. This fact was acknowledged by none other than Health Minister and senior Congress leader Mangat Ram Sharma in a public function at Ganderbal recently when he said, "Kashmir is an issue till Geelani is alive. He is an aged man and his health is also not good. He will die within next two or three years. With him, the issue of Kashmir will also die".

One is not certain whether the Health Minister known for his double-edged tongue has uttered his remarks in lighter vein or seriously. But the fact remains that Geelani avails himself of every opportunity to reach out to the

people. The main theme of his public addresses and statements is to persuade people to stay away from elections. He recently held massive rallies at Sopore, Pulwama, Shopian and Kulgam where thousands of people gathered.

Geelani's refrain is: "The PDP and NC are two faces of the same coin. They have no sympathy with you. They only want your votes. But I appeal to you not to fall prey to their propaganda. Boycott the elections. If you turn vote for polling, India would play it in international forums as the people's mandate for Indian rule."

Mirwaiz Moulvi Umar Farooq: left alone

The Mirwaiz's zeal of holding dialogue with both New Delhi and Islamabad is considered realistic. It is in tune with gathering desire for peace in the sub-continent. The problem, however, for him is that the discussions between India and Pakistan have got stuck in the middle. Whatever the reasons for this he finds himself and his associates having been left to fend for them. Why should New Delhi be found wanting in such a situation?

There is a possibility that sooner rather than later the Mirwaiz may find him virtually alone. Sources say that some of his supporting parties may plunge into the election fray and New Delhi is equally banking upon them while ensuring that he is not unnecessarily hurt. New Delhi's obvious objective is to ensure that fence-sitters in the separatist camp switch over to one or the other mainstream outfits. The Mirwaiz's consolation is that he retains his family's area of influence in the important downtown Srinagar. He has proved it through his supporters who have not allowed Geelani to enter his territory even to express sympathies with victims in a fire. A well educated young man he has not created hurdles in the way of Yasin Malik while the latter opened his office in his pocket-borough. The incident is enough to reveal that he is keeping a watch on the situation in his own way. In any case he along with Yasin Malik are the only two young persons who have given the impression that they are learning after having been suddenly driven into situations of which they were not the authors.

Ashok Khajuria: so far so good

Young Ashok Kharjuria, present president of the Bharatiya Janata Party in the State, is perhaps the only one on the opposition spectrum holding the Chief Minister accountable for every word. He has certainly made an impact. He has shown an amazing capacity to hit the State Government where it matters the most whether it is an issue of corruption or anything else. This was least expected of him as he was considered a David in a company of Goliaths. Much to his credit he is focussing only on governance which matters to one and all regardless of faith or caste. Some of his seniors are not happy is an open secret. The reason for their discontent is understandable: How can they afford to be guided by someone whom they should be showing the path? It is a malady afflicting all parties. The BJP in the State is a bigger sufferer. This erodes the party's influence which, as it is, is limited to a few urban constituencies in the Jammu region for reasons only too well known in the country's only Muslim-majority State.

(with inputs from Pushp Saraf)

HOW BUDDHISM SURVIVED ACROSS THE HIMALAYAS

Nawang Tsering

Ladakh has been described as “little Indian Tibet” by western travelers in the past. And after this region was opened for foreign tourists in 1970s, it has received several new names “Hermit Kingdom”, “Land of Lamas”, “Moon Land”, and “Roof of the World”. Once a small independent kingdom it was conquered by the Dogra rulers of Jammu in 1883 and with Independence of India in 1947, Ladakh remains attached to Jammu and Kashmir.

Historians are unanimous in saying that Buddhism was introduced in Ladakh during the reign of emperor Kanishka in 2nd Century A.D., the time when Buddhism was carried to Central Asia by the Buddhist missionaries. This view is strengthened by the discovery of archaeological evidences found at several places of Drass, Suru, Mulbak, Sod, Padum, Sani, Kargil, Leh and Digar areas of Ladakh. The coming of Nagarjuna and the rise of Mahayana Buddhism in 2nd century was an eventual period in the history of Buddhism in India. It was also the period of growth and development of Gandhara/Kashiri art. The beautiful bronze statues of the Buddhas and Bodhisattavas with their eyes inlaid with silver and mouth with red copper are the distinctive characteristic features of Gandhara arts.

A few monasteries in Ladakh have owned such bronze as well as sandalwood statues of Avaloketesvaras, Maitias, Shakyamuni Buddhas. Ladakh having an advantage of proximity to Kashmir, had received everything that was made and created in Buddhist Kashmir, but when Kashmir ceased to be the Buddhist region, the neighbouring states of the Himalayas turned towards Tibet.

A native faith known as Bon religion was active before Buddhism came to Tibet in 7th century A.D. during the reign of Tibetan King Songtsan Gampo. Bon faith has been traced to Stonba Mivo Sherab, a legendary figure around Kailash-Mansarovar areas. Some of Bon practices like oracle, miracle, black magic and astrology, among others, are still pervasive in Tibet and regions of trans-Himalayas. During the twilight of Buddhism in India, a number of Indian pandits migrated to Tibet and Himalayas. Under the supervision of Acharya Shanta Rakshita and Kamalashila, Khrisong Detsan, the 2nd pious king of Tibet, built the first monastery in Tibet and introduced Sangha Community in 8th

Century. These Indian Acharyas had undertaken translation of Buddhist texts from Sanskrit into Tibetan language. However, Bon followers gave tough resistance to Buddhist mission of India Acharyas. On the advice of Acharya Shanta Rakshita, king Khrisong Detsan invited Acharya Padmasambhava from India to quell Bon uprising.

Padmasambhava's miraculous appearance in Tibet demoralised Bon forces of native faith. His majestic appearance had great impact on the minds of Bon followers. While many of them converted to Buddhist fold, some powerful ones had given sects among Buddhist pantheons. Padmasambhava was the major source of cultural history of Land of Snows, who introduced tantric form of Buddhism in Tibet and neighbouring areas of Himalayas.

Predominance of tantra

Buddhist Tantra which has become predominant in entire Tibetan cultural region is known as Lamaism or Tibetan Buddhism. Originated in India, Buddhist tantra and its art was transplanted in fertile soil of Land of Snows between 7th and 12th century A.D. Some believe that the practice of Tantric Buddhism is a continual movement since the days of historical Buddha Shakyamuni himself while the others say that it was a later development. Tantra in India has brought a revolution in Buddhist history in understanding it in new perspective. It is a daring movement as regard to attaining Enlightenment. It is Buddhism graduated through Theravada, Mahayana forms of Buddhism. In Tibetan terminology, Tantra is called '*rgyud*', a continuity. It is continuity of sanity and sympathy of the previous great vehicles of Theravada and Mahayana. The basic four doctrines known as "four great seals" of pervasive suffering, impermanence, egolessness and *nirvana* are never forgotten and run through Theravada, Mahayana up to Vajrayana so is called '*rgyud*' (continuity). On Theravada level of doctrine, the practitioner emphasises control of senses, and at Mahayana level, control of mind through understanding the *sutra* tradition of *tripitaks*.

Tantra is the culmination of previous vehicles, the expression of celebration from all physical and mental fetters. Monotony discipline of Theravada and perpetual waiting for aeons of Mahayana to attain the final goal, do not find favour with tantric Mahasiddhas. Tantra is the shortcut path. At any point, any moment in person's lifetime, he may get breakthrough what he or she has been seeking for through courage, commitment and unconditional surrender to one's own teacher. Every human being according to tantra is possessed of Buddhanature, the "*tathagatagarba*". This Buddha nature has to be sought within oneself. Tilopa and Naropa in India and Marpa and Mila Raspa in Tibet are the few examples who have attained Enlightenment within one's lifetime. Tantra is sacred. It is also extremely secret meant for selective practitioners of highest mental and spiritual

aptitude. Tantra cannot be understood by reading texts or listening lectures. It is not a philosophy, nor a religion and not even spiritualism, it is personal. Tantra practices are carried out under the guidance of a teacher. Esoteric transmission is handed down through teacher to students and person to person. Books are dead letters without a teacher. Esoteric symbolism of sexual couples is meant to emptying emotions of pride, passion, hatred and aggression. According to tantra, these negative forces are energy. This energy is exploited to transmute from one nature of object to another nature of object. On the level of such understanding, no distinction is made between *sansara* and *nirvana*.

Glory of art

Indeed, a glory of a nation or community is not measured by wealth or arm power but its art and culture. One important aspect in understanding Tantra is its visual art captured on thanka-paintings, fresco-paintings and in concrete structures displayed in monasteries. Ubiquitous presence of esoteric structures of male and female forms is the creative process of Bodhicitta. Monasteries of Lamaist influenced regions are filled with such esoteric symbolism. These religious arts that have developed are the result of interaction between Indian and Tibetan pandits, Yogis, travellers, pilgrims, academicians and even traders. Execution of these exquisite visual art objects is the knowledge belonging to 3rd phases of Buddhism underlined as Vajrayana Buddhism.

Rinchen Zangpo, the great translator, was the chief architect of renaissance of Tibetan Buddhism in Tibet. New movement called *gsangsnag gsar-gyur* (“new translation school”) commenced in his time. He was a scholar, a translator, a temple builder, a practitioner and a tireless traveller Prof. Tuci says: “Rinchen Zangpo’s name will be remembered for ever connected to one of the most important periods in the history of Tibetan Art”. He built hundreds of stupas and temples in the Himalayan regions of Tibet and India among which Tholing in Tibet, Alchi in Ladakh and Tabo in Spiti are the monuments extant in present day world.

Important role

Monasteries have played an important role in art and spiritual growth of Buddhism. These monasteries have not only been centres of learning of Buddhist philosophy, history, literature and language but also sanctuaries for Buddhist paintings, and sculptures along with other connected fields. Five major Buddhist sciences namely language (*shabda-vidhya*), logic (*hetu-vidhya*), metaphysic (*adhyadmik-vidhya*), art (*shilpa-vidya*) and medicine (*chikitsa-vidhya*) have become courses of study in these monasteries. Lamas in these monasteries study Vinaya, Abidharma, Pramana, Madhyamika and Vijyanadava philosophy.

As for monasteries of Ladakh, they have founded and flourished between 12th to 18th centuries when this region enjoyed independent kingdom. All

successive kings of Ladakh during those periods gave support and they earned the title “Dharmaraj”. With the collapse of the kingdom in the second quarter of 19th Century, source of material support to these monasteries came to cease. Patches of land which were donated by those kings to monasteries failed to meet even the meagre necessities of these monasteries. Number of lamas in these once flourishing centres started dwindling and no cultural and artistic development worth the name was undertaken. In absence of any spiritual and academic activities, a few learned lamas migrated to Tibet and those who were receiving higher education in Tibet preferred to stay on in Tibet never to return to their homeland.

However, things changed by the 1959 event in Tibet and traditional border between Tibet and India came to cease. With the help of the Union Ministry of Culture, Gonpa schools opened in 30 monasteries and 900 young lamas received education. Established in 1959, the Central Institute of Buddhist Studies, Leh carries on extensive study in works of Panditas of ancient Nalanda.

Kashmir's contribution

Around 10th – 11th century, Ladakh formed one of the three provinces of Ngari-Khor-gsum in the vicinity of sacred Mount Kailash-Mansarovar in western Tibet. Each province was ruled by three prince brothers, the descendant of Tibetan kings, Langdharma was the last powerful king. Himself a Bon follower, he persecuted Buddhists and for 70 years Buddhism faced total eclipse in Central Tibet. The old Tibetan empire collapsed when Langdharma was murdered. In the absence of a central authority several smaller provincial states had risen. The provinces of Ladakh, Guge and Purang were carved out of this disintegrated kingdom of Tibet which never again reunified under the same dynastic rule.

These remote provinces of Ladakh, Guge and Purang were immensely poor and politically insignificant. Even king Langdharma and his court could afford not to pay any attention to them. His Buddhist persecution campaign in central Tibet was, therefore, not significantly felt in this part of the Himalayas. Quietly Buddha *dharma* kept on simmering not to be blown away by the Buddhist hunt of Langdharma.

Eshes Od, the great grand nephew of king Langdharma was a pious king of Guge province. Inspired by the life story of Buddha's renunciation of his wife, a son, and the throne of Kapilvastu, Eshes Od too give up his family, power and whatever little worldly comforts the small kingdom could afford on him. He wanted to become a Buddhist monk and for that Buddhist code and conduct demanded prerequisite of four senior monks but such qualified men were not available in his realm.

Eshes Od solved this problem by going to the statue of Lord Buddha and kneeling in front of the image he took vow of a monk. His two sons also followed this step of his father and became monks. Making the monk vow was

not enough for the monk king as daunting task lay before him. The state of the *dharm*a in his kingdom made him very unhappy. The kind of *dharm*a practices prevalent there were far from standard teachings of Lord Buddha. The teachings of simplicity and purity of life were relegated to the background and were replaced by practices of sorceries, oracles and miracles. The king felt ashamed to find that his kingdom was infested with idlers in religious garb. He resolved to restore the law, which his forefathers had brought from India, sent 21 young boys to Kashmir to study the *dharm*a. Of them, however, only one man survived while others perished of exhaustion, adverse climate conditions, mountain sickness and other diseases.. Meanwhile, Eshes Od built Tholing monastery in Guge, the capital of the kingdom following the model of Vikramashila Vihara of Bengal. Unlike others, this Mandala-shaped monastery was built on the flat ground. Tholing held the same status in ancient times that Lhasa has for Tibet.

Eshes Od did not rest on his laurels of construction of monastery and sending pupils to Kashmir. He decided to invite pandits to his kingdom from India to usher in more reforms. Ngari Dipangkara Shriyana of Vikramashila Vihar of Bengal was one of the greatest Buddhist masters. To ensure that Shriyana accepted the invitation, Eshes Od began campaign to collect gold. In his gold hunt campaign, Eshes Od was captured and imprisoned by the army of Turk and asked to pay huge ransom to secure his release. The ruling king — his nephew — rushed to negotiate the release of his uncle from Turks' imprisonment.

When Eshe Od heard that the king was preparing to pay ransom out of gold he had collected. Eshes Od said, "I am an old man now, don't give the gold to Turk instead send it to Vikramashila to invite Shrijyana of Bengal." Eshes Od thus gave his life to invite the great master.

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JUDICIARY RAISES QUESTIONS FOR CBI TO ANSWER

Ahmad Rashid

The ghost of sex scandal that rocked Kashmir last year has come haunting again. The Jammu and Kashmir High Court on October 8 ordered magisterial proceedings against a sitting Cabinet minister, two former ministers and seven others, three of them senior police officers, for their alleged involvement in the sex scandal. Justice Bashir Ahmad Kirmani, in his 199-page judgment, directed the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), which was investigating the infamous scandal, to place all records/evidence/materials available regarding Cabinet minister Hakeem Mohammad Yasin, Senior Superintendent of Police Ashkoor Wani, SSP Sheikh Mehmood, Deputy-Inspector General (Police) Niyaz Mehmood, legislators and former ministers G.H. Khan and Yogesh Sawhney, Nissar Ahmed Sheikh, Manzoor Naik, Prithipal Singh Goja and Amit Amla before Chief Judicial Magistrate, Srinagar, within six weeks; along with detailed report thereupon, "who shall examine the same for considering taking cognizance of the offences as may appear to be made out whatever against them under appropriate provisions of law, or for passing such orders as appear to him to be proper and lawful".

Justice Kirmani also directed the CBI to conduct "speedy and focused" investigation in cases of M.Y. Khan, former Chairman of Jammu and Kashmir Bank, "Raj" Tickoo the then Vigilance Commissioner (presently Director-General Prisons) and Zahoor Ahmad Malik, whose names have also figured in the case diaries of the CBI submitted to the High Court. The CBI has also been asked to conduct fresh investigations in respect of all those persons who have been named by the girls involved "as mentioned in various status/action reports by them against whom no action has been taken due to reportedly insufficient materials". The investigating agency has also been asked to establish the identity of "Gora-Chitta (white-skinned) commissioner" who allegedly had sex with a minor girl in an official hut at Chesma Shahi. The court has also sought further interrogation of Sabeena (the kingpin of the scandal), Deputy Superintendent of Police M.Y. Mir, Shazia alias Azra and Muzaffer Handoo along with municipal councillor Manju.

The infamous sex scandal surfaced in Kashmir in April 2006 with the circulation of a nude picture of a teenaged girl on mobile phones in Srinagar. Several politicians, senior bureaucrats, police and security forces officers were found involved in the scandal, which led to massive and violent protest demonstrations across the Valley. An irate mob ransacked the house of Sabeena,

a woman of Chinkral Mohalla in Habbakadal (Srinagar) who was alleged to be the kingpin of the racket. The Jammu and Kashmir High Court took suo moto notice of the case and admitted it as Public Interest Litigation. The Kashmir High Court Bar Association was made a party. Sensing the public mood, Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad ordered a CBI enquiry. The High Court asked the CBI to submit case diaries and status as also action reports to the Court regularly.

The CBI arrested and subsequently charge-sheeted two former ministers Ghulam Ahmad Mir (Congress) and Raman Matto (PDF), senior IAS officer Iqbal Khanday, a DIG of BSF and 14 other persons in the court of CJM Srinagar. The case, on the directions of Supreme Court, was later shifted to a court in Chandigarh, where all the accused are facing trial. With this the CBI had closed the case saying there was no sufficient evidence against others whose names had figured during investigations. Justice Kirmani, however, observed that records do not justify the basis for the CBI to have applied closure.

Taking a serious note of the records and evidences mentioned in the status/ action reports of the CBI, Justice Kirmani noted: ***“After grasping the situational scenario, depth of its potential to destroy the moral fabric, and the magnitude of its future implications, I feel duty bound to warn the state apparatus of extremely hazardous repercussions for the system if the questions posing themselves through this case are not effectively answered and answered now. When ministers misbehave, legislators break law, civil servants become uncivil and police officers plunder, the scenario becomes quite frightening. In their safe dwellings and offices guarded at the cost of public exchequer they indulge in sin and savagery at the strength of the State power vesting in them and with promises of providing jobs and help to needy they ravage all norms of public, political and official life. By doing so they simply subvert the system from within by breeding discontent, and destroying public faith in institutions of governance and wilfully create and promote unlawful, unethical and immoral channels of approach for characterless and cunning prompting the vast majority to hate the system. Visibly they are more dangerous than those challenging the system from outside who can be identified and taken to task. But the “worthies” deliver sermons in serene gatherings, decorate the dices, shake hands with excellencies; fly and hoist the national flag, rub shoulders with honourable people, and then indulge in disgraceful activity to bring disgrace to all these institutions, occasions and personalities and escape action under cover of their authority. No doubt they are only few, but they tarnish all those belonging to their creed and thus owe answers to them too”***.

Following are Justice Kirmani’s observations about some of the key persons:

Hakim Mohammad Yaseen:

He has figured in the statement of Sabeena, as also of one of the girls in her independent statement, but has been let off by the CBI for the reason that the girl stated to have been sent to him for illicit sex by Sabeena, could not be traced and the mobile number attributed to him by other girl was not found his. For noticing

his case we may start with the relevant part of the statement of concerned girl Gulshan @ Pepsi, pertaining to him;

“Sometime in the end of year 2004, Sabeena told me that she can get a job for me with the help of one powerful minister whom she knows very well. She asked me to bring my certificates. Accordingly, I along with Sabeena went to Tulsi Bagh. In Tulsi Bagh we went to the house of Hakim Mohammad Yaseen, minister. It was evening time. We both met Hakim Mohammad Yaseen at his residence and discussed about the job and handed over copies of my certificate to him. He assured me that he will get some job for me in the near future. Sabeena went to the adjacent room and thereafter the minister had sexual intercourse with me. Thereafter, he told me that he will let me know later on about the job. The minister did not give any money to me. I do not know whether Hakim Mohammad Yaseen paid any money to Sabeena or not. Sabeena also did not pay me anything. The minister had given his residential telephone number to me. Subsequently, I spoke to him about the job, but he did not give me any job and finally started evading me. After six days of the aforesaid incident, my husband was released from Kot Bhalwal Jail, Jammu. I can identify the residence as well as the room where Hakim Mohammad Yaseen had sexual intercourse with me.”

This statement appears to have been discarded by the CBI because some mobile number of which she talked has not tallied. Further as per report of 20.09.06 Sabeena is stated to have admitted having sent one Nuzhat @ Shabnum to him. This is what Sabeena says in this behalf and how she came in contact with Hakim Yaseen: “Dr. Javed of Classical Hospital, Hyderpora crossing, Srinagar introduced me with Hakim Mohd Yaseen, Minister. He wanted to have friendship with me. In fact he wanted to have sex with me but I did not allow him to do so. Once he wanted that I should provide him a beautiful girl. I took Nuzhat @ Shabnam R/o Dalgate who is presently residing in Shivpora to Circuit house near Radio Kashmir. He had sex with the Nuzhat in one room where I was made to sit in adjacent room. He paid Rs.5000 to me, out of which I paid Rs.4000 to Nuzhat in the presence of minister. This incident is also of about 2-3 years back”.

About the doctor mentioned in the statement Hakim has stated that; “On being asked I state that I know Dr. Javed of Classical Hospital Hyderpora, Srinagar since 2002 and even prior to that. He often visits my house to meet me. I have normal relation with him and his purpose of visits to my house used to be either for some work or courtesy call. I categorically state that at no point of time, any girl or lady visited my residence along with Dr. Javed.” This is the response of minister.

Now the response of said Dr. Javed may also be quoted as registered by him in his statement of 11.07.2006. He says: “On being questioned, I further state that I know Hakim Mohammad Yaseen, who is presently Minister for Food and Supplies. Possibly, I had introduced Sabeena to the said minister in the New Secretariat where he sits. I cannot say as to what type of relationship, said minister had with said Sabeena. I also state that Sabeena is the same lady who is figuring

as the kingpin of Srinagar sex scandal case. I can identify both Sabeena and Hakim Yaseen, minister, if shown to me.”

However regarding the girl Nuzhat mentioned in Sabeena’s statement, CBI has stated that she could not be traced. Another girl of the same name denies her involvement in her statement of 4.7.06, as under: “Upon being asked, I state that I am not aware where Classic Hospital is located and I do not know any Dr. Javed. I do not know of any lady by the name of Ms. Sabeena whose name is figuring in the Srinagar sex scandal case. I further state that I do not know any political leader of any party including PDP and have never met Hakim Mohd Yaseen, the minister. I categorically state that, I never indulged in any immoral act with any person.”

My observations regarding untraced girls would follow in due course, but meanwhile I don’t find any reason from record as to why the minister was not subjected to identification by Gulshan @ Pepsi or Sabeena. The one suggested by CBI is that since the minister was a public figure he was a known face, so identification would not be proper. One really does not find any logic in the plea, particularly while already public figures like Raman Mattoo and G.A. Mir both of whom are ex-ministers had been got identified by girls.

Ghulam Hassan Khan:

This person has been a minister at the relevant time and is alleged to have been indulging in illicit sex, but has been left out by CBI because of the reported denial of concerned girl of having had sex with him. This case may be noticed with Sabeena’s statement, recorded on 31.05.2006, wherein she states: “Once I received a telephone call from one Ghulam Hassan Khan r/o Shopian, PDP minister. He also wanted a girl from me. I contacted Shakila a police constable r/o Usmana Colony, who is presently working in security. I took her along with me to the Circuit house near Radio Kashmir where Ghulam Hassan Khan was sitting. It was evening time. He took both of us in a room in the Circuit House. I was made to sit in the bath room whereas he had sexual intercourse with Shakila in the room. He paid Rs.1000 to Shakila and Rs.200 only to me. He told me that he knew Shakila earlier also. We both left Circuit House at 9 p.m. This incident is also of 2-3 years back.”

This statement has been excluded from consideration in view of the relevant portion of Shakeela’s statement recorded on 23.07.2006 in presence of the District Judge, to the effect that, “on being questioned, I state that it is incorrect that I had sexual intercourse with Ghulam Hassan Khan, PDP Minister in the Circuit House through Sabeena who had allegedly taken me there. It is also incorrect that the said Minister had paid Rs.1000 to me and Rs.200 to Sabeena.”

Before further examination, it may be pointed out that from 31st of May when Sabeena implicated Khan, till 23rd of July when the statement of Shakeela was recorded, no action whatsoever appears to have been taken by CBI despite lapse of seven weeks, nor has anything been reported to explain the lack of action till then. I may also add that in most of the cases left out, there are

considerable gaps of time between incriminating statements and the denials made later with no action taken in between for which no plausible clarification is available on record even while this Court persistently impressed upon CBI to take lawful action in furtherance of investigation in view of statements recorded, by which time the denials were not there. However, regarding Khan, the matter does not end with denial of Shakeela, whatever its worth. It is attended with statement of one Mohammad Yousuf Malik, the receptionist of Government Circuit House where Sabeena, alleges she went along with Shakeela. He says that, "on being asked, I state that Gulam Hassan Khan, MLA was occasionally staying in the Circuit House. After going through the entry registers for the period December, 2003 to April, 2004 I state that Gulam Hassan Khan has stayed in the Circuit House as per details given below....." and after giving details of his stay at the Circuit House during 2003 and 2004, he has proceeded to say that, "on being asked I further state that the conduct of Gulam Hassan Khan was not satisfactory as so many girls/ladies were visiting his room while he stayed in the Circuit House. I am unable to state about identity of any such girl/lady."

In addition to this statement is the statement of Naseer Ahmed in charge the Government Circuit House recorded on 11.06.06. Relevant portion is as under: "Gulam Hassan Khan was the then Social Welfare Minister and so many ladies were visiting his room, while he was alone in the room of the Government Circuit House." With this statement read with that of Sabeena, Khan has been left out. Again in this case also, no steps appear to have been taken to have Khan and concerned place identified by Sabeena.

Yogesh Sawhney:

This person is a MLA, and has been the former sports minister. About him, along with two more persons, CBI has stated that they outraged Sabeena's modesty and molested her on different occasions but she declined to give a written complaint against them. On examination, I however find that all the three do not figure at same level, while other two are mentioned by Sabeena, as having taken her in their cars at different times and caressed her without any physical contact, the allegations against this person are quite serious. In her statement recorded on 04.06.2006, in presence of Moulvi Javed Ahmed, District Judge, she has narrated the following:

"I further state that I know another Mr. Saini (sic) of Jammu who was perhaps 'Sports minister' and from PDP party. He had an official residence at Gupkar, Srinagar, near the official residence of ministers G.A. Mir and Raman Mattoo. On one day, he telephoned me and asked me to visit his residence. I questioned him, where he got my telephone number and then he revealed that he got it from his fellow minister. He also told me that he would also be helpful to me and so asked me to come to his residence. I could not go to him that night but went to see him at his insistence on the following morning. I also took the particulars of relative of mine to pass on to the minister for her appointment as 'Anganwadi' worker at Budgam district. I gave the particulars to him. He promised to do the job and told me that he was in a hurry to go to Jammu and that he will return after one week and that I should see him then. He also disclosed that he was having his residence

at Gandhi Nagar, Jammu and he gave me telephone numbers of Jammu also. After one week I again received a telephone call from the minister and he told me that he was coming to Srinagar and will also bring appointment order of my relative. Two three days thereafter, he again talked to me and told that he has come to Srinagar, along with his family, and asked me to bring food also for them. Accordingly, I prepared food (meat and fish), packed the same in a hot case and went near 'Jan Bakery' shop at Dalgate where his driver in white Ambassador car was waiting for me as per the instructions of the minister. I sat in the said vehicle and was carried to his residence at Gupkar, Srinagar. There, I had to wait for the minister to come till 8 pm. In the meantime driver offered me cold drinks etc. At about 8.40 PM the minister came there and took me to a room on the first floor, where he had some wine and then forcibly raped me. He tore my clothes also. He did not give me any appointment order, nor paid me any money but promised to marry me. He also threatened me not to disclose the incident to anybody; he is a strong man and get me punished for disclosure. My tiffin carrier (hot case) in which I had taken the food is still with him. This incident is one year old. I state that I can identify all the places where the girls and myself had visited for sexual purposes as stated till date. I can also identify the persons whom I have named till date in the matter of sexual exploitation of the girls."

The detailed statement ex-facie contains a rape charge and there is nothing on record to suggest why it was not taken note of by CBI even if the lady did not agree to write it down; particularly while she had signed the recorded statement in presence of a District Judge, nor does any effort appear to have been made for having him and the concerned place identified by Sabeena. Cumulatively, therefore, I feel that this aspect of the case has not even been properly acknowledged.

Mohammad Yusuf Khan:

This person is the former Chairman of J&K Bank who has been mentioned by Sabeena in her statement as having been using girls for illicit sex. Let us notice her statement recorded on 04.06.06, as aforesaid pertaining to Khan;

"I also know one Yusuf Khan who was earlier the Chairman of J&K Bank. He had his office near TRC (Tourist Reception Centre). On one day, he telephoned me and asked for good looking girl. I took Azra @ Shazia along with me and went near TRC, where from he himself took Shazia along with him to some other place, which I do not know. He told me that he will send my share through Shazia and I came back. Later Shazia remained with him for the whole night and she told me that Yusuf Khan had paid Rs.10000 to her for the said night. Shazia gave me only Rs.1000. Subsequent thereto, Shazia @ Azra started going to him directly. I know that Yusuf Khan had given Shazia @ Azra a new Santro Car. Shazia @ Azra also used to supply other girls to Yusuf Khan."

The statement does not appear to have impressed CBI, who found that the concerned girl Shazia @ Azra denied the same and thus let him off. Before proceeding ahead, we may notice the denial of Shazia also recorded on 22.06.2006, in presence of Abdul Wahid, District Judge, as follows; "In March, 2003 I wanted to start a boutique for which I needed a loan. One girl whose name I do not

remember used to come in the institute where I was doing my computer course. On my asking, she told me that she was working in J&K Bank. I asked her to arrange loan for me from her bank. She asked me to visit their bank i.e J&K Bank, Head office near TRC Srinagar. I went to the above bank. The girl took me to the Chairman of the bank, Mohammad Yousuf Khan (M.Y. Khan) and introduced me to him that I was known to her and wanted loan. M.Y. Khan told me to collect a form and referred me to one of his officers for completing the formalities required for taking the loan. I contacted the officer and as per requirement, I filled up the form. The residential proof and a guarantor was also required which I could not produce. On this M.Y. Khan told me that I cannot get the loan without completing these formalities, and after enquiring about the loan amount which I told that I required only Rs 30000 he told that they were having some funds for widows etc, and he could arrange the money from that fund for me. On my affirmative reply, he initially gave Rs.10000 and afterwards four instalments of Rs 5000 on the 1st day of each month. After about 2-3 instalments, the bank was closed when I had to get the next instalment and I wanted the money immediately, I telephoned M.Y. Khan for getting the money on the same day. On this, M.Y. Khan asked me that the bank was closed and if I want money, I need to visit his house and also intimated his address. I reached to his house in Gupkar Road, Srinagar where he offered me tea etc and gave me Rs.5000 as the next instalment. On that day he also gave me diary and calendar of J&K Bank. I took the total amount of Rs.30000 from. M.Y. Khan but he never took my signatures on any paper. On being asked I am to state that M.Y. Khan has never misbehaved with me nor done any immoral act with me. Rather he was treating me as his daughter. He did not know that I was in the flesh trade. Sabina did not know M.Y. Khan rather she came to know about him through me only when I told her that he is a very good person and has given me Rs.30000.”

I would abstain from commenting upon the contents and connotation of this statement but it however appears to be surprising that CBI ended up the matter with this statement and did not feel the necessity of acting further to get a clearer picture of the matter for which Shazia's statement itself suggested many lines of approach. Incidentally Khan also does not appear to have been subjected to identification parade before Sabeena or confronted with whatever materials were available with CBI. This case also appears to have suffered inapt investigation.

Tikoo:

This person has reportedly been the State Vigilance Commissioner on relevant date whose full name is not mentioned in I.O's (Investigating Officer's) list of involved persons named by Sabeena. He has however been referred to by concerned girls as Raj Tikoo, and let off by CBI as his involvement was reportedly denied by the concerned girl. We may first notice the relevant part of Sabeena's statement recorded on 31.05.2006, in presence of Moulvi Javed Ahmed, District Judge, which runs thus; "I once received a telephone call from one Vigilance Commissioner Tikoo, whose office was at Old Secretariat. He also wanted to have a girl from me. He was having a residence at Sonawar area near Radio

Kashmir. I took Shagufta, code name Sanobar D/o Rafiq to his house.....The Vigilance Commissioner gave me Rs.2000 and he paid Shagufta Rs.4000. It was day time and I came back leaving Shagufta there who later told me that Vigilance Commissioner was very happy for having intercourse with her.

This girl Shagufta codenamed Sonobar does not appear to have been examined, nor is anything coming forth from the record whether any effort was made to trace/examine her. However another Shagufta d/o Rafiq Ahmed R/o Ompora Bugam w/o Suhail Ahmed of Lal Bazar who has been examined on 10.06.06, has also mentioned this officer as follows:

“...One day, I was taken by Sabeena to the residence of Raj Lal Tikoo, Vigilance Commissioner near Burnhall School, opposite Sher-e-Kashmir Cricket Stadium. Tikoo wanted an English speaking girl from Sabeena, that is why he did not like me and we both came back. Raj Lal Tikoo gave some money in an envelope to Sabeena in my presence but I do not know how much amount he paid to her”.

There is nothing on record to suggest that with difference in place of residence etc, both these names reflect the same girl. While giving further details of the girls and persons involved in the case she has at page 6 of her statement, stated that Bunty named English-speaking girl went to “Raj Tikoo”. This officer incidentally has not been examined like others nor does any effort appear to have been made to have him identified by Sabeena, who in her statement had categorically said that she could identify all the persons to whom and places where she took or sent the girls for illicit sex, nor does this “Bunty” named girl appear to have been looked for/examined. The investigation in this case therefore appears to have been left half way.

Niyaz Mehmood and Sheikh Mehmood:

These two officers have been left out by I.O, for the reported reason that in statement of the girl namely Nelofar whom they are alleged to have used sexually contradictions were found, and after check of documents they were absolved. So, in the first place it would be proper to notice the statement of the girl recorded on 12.06.2006, in presence of the District and Sessions Judge Moulvi Javed Ahmed. The girl has been a lady police constable and after preliminaries this is what she stated about the DIG:

“About six years back, SSP Niyaz Mahmood, then posted as SSP Security at Srinagar, promised me a job (on daily wages) in security for my brother when I approached him for the same. He asked for an application. Accordingly, I went to his office along with an application of my brother near Sher-e-kashmir Park, Srinagar. He then persuaded me for having sexual intercourse with him, also assured that if do so he will give me an appointment letter. Under the enforced circumstances, I had to compromise and then he had sexual intercourse with me. Fifteen days after, he gave me the appointment order for 90 days for my brother who availed of the same. Another occasion I had with him at his Chhanni residence at Jammu when I was at Jammu along with Darbar Move. In fact, I was introduced with Niaz Mahmood, SSP by one lady namely Atika..... Now, she has constructed a house at Janipur, Jammu. She used to go to him, as told by her

to me. She had told me to approach Niaz Mehmood, SSP for job for my brother. Presently Niaz Mehmood is DIG at Jammu.”

Regarding Sheikh Mehmood, her statement runs thus: “I also happened to see Sheikh Mohammed, SP, SOG, Srinagar for settlement of dispute with my husband, Abdul Qayoom, who was an ASI at that time working in SOG. He directed me to come to his residence at Shivpora, Srinagar. I went to Shivpora to his residence. It was summer time six years ago. He offered me tea etc. and thereafter did sexual intercourse with me to which I submitted. He later on created more problems in between my husband and me. I had to visit him twice again to Shivpora when he had again sexual intercourse with me. Then I stopped going there.”

This lady has also alleged sexual intercourse with her by Raman Mattoo who is already facing trial at Chandigarh, and her allegation must be a part of the case against him. On basis of the statement, the I.O, vide his “further line of action” on 21.07.2006 proposed verification/identification of the places where these two officers had sexual intercourse with the lady and whether in view of her statement any offence was made out against them. Thereafter he proposed to subject them to arrest and interrogation. About the DIG he however found that he had provided 89 days job to the brother of the lady, who was recruited on regular basis thereafter. On his proposal, the I.O reportedly received instructions for ascertaining veracity of the lady’s statement, and to identify the places where these officers had sex with the lady, and look into the connection of these places with the officers. This appears to have been followed by further statement of above mentioned Nelofar recorded in presence of one Manzoor Ahmed Bhat, driver State Bank of India on 2.8.2006, wherein she stated that Niyaz Mehmood had sexual intercourse with her in his office (SSP Security) located near SK Park Srinagar. The office building had since been dismantled, but she could point out the place where the building used to exist. She also offered to point out the Shivpora house where Mehmood had sex with her, if she was taken to Shivpora. Again at this stage it may be noticed that under interim order of 25.06.2006, as already quoted hereinbefore the investigation agency was under express orders to take effective steps in view of statements on record against all persons involved, but nothing happened.

Mansoor Ahmed:

This person is mentioned in the statement of Sabeena, recorded on 04.06.06, in presence of Moulvi Javed Ahmed, District Judge, wherein she has admitted having sent two girls namely Shazia @ Azrah and Sonia @ Muskan to him for illicit sex; but he has been left out by CBI on the ground that Shazia denied the same, while the other girl could not be traced. To start with this case, I may notice the relevant part of Sabeena’s statement which goes thus: “I know one Mansoorwho is SP in J&K Police and who resides in Police Colony, Srinagar. One lady named “Lali” of Shivpora had introduced me with him. He is also fond of the girls. He demanded good looking girls from me and I had first taken Azra @ Shazia R/o Dalgate to his residence at Police Colony in the late evening in the

year 2004. I left Azra at his residence for the whole night and I came back. He paid Rs.6000 to Azra but he didn't pay anything to me but promised that he will get my money recovered from "Dalaal" who had usurped my money. Thereafter, another girl named Sonia @ Muskan R/o Soura was also taken by me to Dalgate from where Mansur SP took her along with him to Hariniwas for having sex with her; Mansur SP, was posted in Hariniwas at that time, as told to me by him. At Hariniwas Mansur had sex with her during day time and Sonia was paid Rs.2000 or Rs 3000 by him as disclosed to me by Sonia. I was not paid anything by him as he kept an assuring me that he will get my money back. I can also identify his residence at Police Colony, Srinagar. I can also identify Mansur SP, if shown to me"

About Sonia @ Muskan, CBI says she could not be traced, while in her main statement recorded on 10.06.2006, Shazia @ Azra also does not say anything regarding this person. At the same time there is nothing to suggest as to what weight did CBI attach to Sabeena's statement relating to this person, and why was it discarded outright. It is also not known as to why this officer was not subjected to identification parade like DIG Padhi and other police officers involved when Sabeena had categorically stated she could identify him and all the places where she met him.

THE VERDICT

"In conclusion, therefore, and for all that has been said in preceding paras, I feel that magisterial proceedings for consideration regarding taking cognizance of offences under penal laws in appropriate cases is required to be ordered besides having further fresh investigation done in other cases

"Accordingly I order that:

- a) The CBI shall place all records /evidence/materials available regarding Ashkoor Wani SSP, Sheikh Mehmood SSP, and Niyaz Mehmood DIG; G.H. Khan, MLA and former minister; Yogesh Sawhney, MLA and former minister; Nissar Ahmed Sheikh; Manzoor Naik; and Hakim Mohammad Yaseen the sitting cabinet minister; Dr. Pritipal Singh Goja and Amit Amla before CJM, Srinagar, within six weeks from now; along with a detailed report thereupon, who shall examine the same for considering taking cognizance of the offences as may appear to be made out whatever against them under appropriate provisions of law, or for passing such orders as appear to him to be proper and lawful.
- b) The CBI shall conduct further, speedy and focused investigation in cases of M.Y. Khan former Chairman of JK Bank, Raj Tickoo the then Vigilance Commissioner and Zahoor Ahmad Malik.
- c) The CBI shall also conduct fresh investigation in respect of those persons named by Sabeena or any of the involved girls as mentioned in various status /action reports by them against whom no action has been taken due to reportedly insufficient materials.
- d) They shall also establish the identity of the "Gora-Chitta commissioner" mentioned hereinabove, and conduct further lawful interrogation of Sabeena,

Deputy S.P M.Y. Mir, Shazia/Azra and Muzaffer Handoo along with the councilor Manju mentioned hereinbefore.

- e) Status report by CBI be filed in the two cases FIR No. 80/04, P/S SR Gunj, and FIR No. 5/04 of P/S Magam when the matter comes up next.
- f) The DGP of J&K shall form a Special team of police officers with reputed integrity to be headed by a DIG for exclusively dealing with the cases of illicit sex traffic and drug trade in whatever form; and cases relating to drug abuse.
- g) He shall also immediately provide security to all persons named in this order, especially the girls mentioned herein.
- h) Suitable police action against hotels named in the statements quoted and those figuring in challans produced be initiated under appropriate provisions of law.
- i) The Govt. shall undertake a rehabilitation programme for all girls/women involved or dragged into sex trade, through Department of Social Welfare and Women's Development Board.

Nothing herein shall preclude the investigating agency to conduct fresh investigation or to have the test identification parades repeated in cases of persons who have been released for want of proper identification, if circumstances obtaining so warrant.

The matter be again listed on 26.11.2007. All connected CMPs stand disposed of in terms of this order, except Robkar 4/06, wherein separate orders are passed herewith. Copies of this order be furnished to Advocate General, the counsel for CBI, Chief Secretary and DGP of the State for requisite follow up action in accordance with foregoing directions.

The Registrar Judicial shall keep all the papers furnished by CBI from time to time, status report and photocopies of statements in a sealed cover with the file, with an index of the contents pasted on it. The sealed envelop shall not be opened otherwise than under express orders of the bench. Moreover during proceeding on this case I have received some letters containing allegations against certain person, which be placed on file for being handed over to CBI for action."

**The writer is a senior journalist based in Srinagar.*

High standard

Please allow me to compliment you on maintaining a very high standard of the contents, the breadth of coverage of topics. The wire-ups are short and precise and yet comprehensive. I have kept all my copies of the *Border Affairs* as reference material for future use.

— **Dr Sudhir S. Bloeria**
Chairman,
Committee for Examination of
Demands for New Administrative
Units, Jammu and Kashmir.
3, Manda Hills, Jammu-180001.

Importance of Bhoti

Another very important piece is on the Bhoti language by Nawang Tsering, Principal, Central Institute of Buddhist Studies, Leh (J&K). The author has revealed the rich heritage of this language that is a living language unlike many other ancient languages. His plea for its inclusion in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution deserves to be considered very seriously by the concerned quarters. It is being published here with the courtesy of *Border Affairs*, a journal of research and commentaries, edited by Pushp Saraf, a senior journalist. This could be of interest to readers who have not known much about this language.

— **Anees Chishti**
in *Alpjan*

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— **Karan Nagpal**
Via E-mail.

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