

President General Pervez Musharraf is reported to be visiting India on the 16th of this month. He is expected to meet several Indian leaders, including Mr Manmohan Singh, Prime Minister of India and Ms Sonia Gandhi, President of the Congress, which is now the ruling political party of India.

Soon after the Congress came to power, the Indian press published a statement of Ms Sonia Gandhi, that she will make efforts to resolve the Kashmir problem. People from all walks of life, (particularly the Intelligentsia) saw a silver lining over the dark clouds, as they have been eagerly awaiting the normalization of relations between the two countries, since a long time. But, every one knows that this dream will not come true, till the Kashmir crisis is resolved.

Kashmir is cancer of the conflict between the two countries. It has done greatest harm to the development of India and Pakistan. It has directly and indirectly added only to the misery and poverty of the common man in the two countries. It was not therefore without reasons that President General Pervez Musharraf in his first visit

The cancer of conflict

BY GHULAM RABBANI AGRO

to India had emphasized upon the then BJP Government, "The centrality of the Kashmir problem".

This was not a riddle of the universe, that the BJP could not comprehend. The BJP was purposefully playing monkey tricks to appease the fanatic Hindu mind. The destruction of Babri-Masjid and the massacre of Muslims in Gujarat were on its agenda. As the luck would have it, the BJP rule over India is now over.

Ms Sonia Gandhi is now acknowledged as the Kingmaker in India. She has Italian blood in her veins. She is unbiased. She considers India her home and its people (Hindus and Muslims) as members of her family. Like a seasoned politician, she is fully conversant with the norms of democracy. Her cool, calculated and sober attitude to the national problems, is a convincing proof of the fact that she does not believe in tall talks.

Like President General Pervez

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Musharraf of Pakistan. She knows that actions speak louder than words. It can therefore be legitimately expected that despite all odds in their way, the two leaders will succeed to bring peace in the unhappy valley.

Surely, this is not an easy task. According to one estimate, the Kashmir conflict has no parallel in 20th century. There has been blood bath in Kashmir for the past fifty years. Indian soldiers have killed countless innocent men in the unhappy valley, raped their women and burnt their houses. This nightmare has to end. This state of affairs in Kashmir does

not prove India, as the biggest democracy in the world. The reign of terror and democracy are contradictions in terms. On 5th January 1947, United Nations passed the following resolution on Kashmir:

"The question of the accession of the State of Jammu & Kashmir to India and Pakistan will be decided through the democratic method of a free and impartial plebiscite."

On 2nd November 1947, Jawahar Lal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India, in his broadcast to millions of Indians and Kashmiris had pledged that:

"We have declared that the fate of Kashmir is ultimately to be decided by the people. We will not and cannot back out of it. We are prepared to have a referendum held under international auspices, like the United Nations. We want it to be fair and just reference to the people and we shall accept their verdict. I can imagine no

fairer and juster offer".

How sad that in spite of the above solemn commitments, the promised plebiscite in Kashmir has not been held so far. And in utter disregard to the words of Jawahar Lal Nehru, India now behaves as if these commitments were never made. Several Indian leaders openly speak of Kashmir as an integral part of India. Every one knows that concentration of the troops on the Pakistani border (as was done during the BJP Government) are ugly tactics to pressurize Pakistan, which can only aggravate the problem. Sanity must prevail.

Queen Elizabeth of England, in a welcome address to Nelson Mandela, the Great African leader, had made a noteworthy observation. She had said:

"The human-mind is capable of moving the mountains, to make the way it wants"

Surely, Ms Sonia Gandhi is ruling over a bigger territory than Queen Elizabeth. She has to ensure peace in the region. This noble objective can be achieved with the help of a capable and courageous leader like President General Pervez Musharraf of Pakistan.

Addressing a seminar held in memory of the legendary Hamid Nizami, Mr Arif Nizami put forward an interesting viewpoint on the subject of Kashmir. He said the Indians seem to have reached the conclusion that Kashmir is an issue primarily of the Punjabis, and if they can be appeased, this issue will recede into the background. That is why they are working on Punjab. He asked whether NWFP and Balochistan would be allowed to establish the kind of links with Afghanistan and Iranian Balochistan respectively as Punjab is being permitted to institute with Indian Punjab. If the Sindhis invite the chief minister of Rajasthan, will it be acceptable to the powers-that-be? He said Pakistan's foreign affairs are being handled by Musharraf's advisor Tariq Aziz. If he is deputed to bring about peace and understanding between Pakistan and India, he could well achieve the same; however, this will not lead to a solution of the Kashmir dispute.



After keeping half a million troops on Pakistan's border for 10 months, the Indians were able to get border-crossings at the LoC stopped. However, in spite of this, the movement in Indian-held Kash-

How about Kashmir?

BY DR IJAZ AHSAN

mir continues, with both the militants and the Indian military and civilian personnel suffering casualties. This suggests that the uprising is indigenous, and belies the long-touted Indian claims that it was only the fighters from Pakistan and other countries that were keeping the insurgency going. The question is: what should Pakistan do next? As far as dealing with India is concerned, we have done enough for the time being, and need not do much more. We have not only kept our promise to put a halt to border crossings, we have given the Indian army an escape from a situation where the rebellion was proving uncontrollable, by allowing them to build the fence between Pakistani and Indian held parts of Kashmir. Now we should insist on the Kashmiris being included in the talks about the future of Kashmir.

However much the Kashmiris may hate the Indians, the latter are not willing to give up Kashmir. They seem to be willing to do away with military repression, if the Kashmiris are willing to continue in Kashmir within the Indian Union. As the Indians have promoted the bus from Muzaffarabad brings Azad Kashmiris to

Srinagar, it seems unlikely that they would have planned to continue with massacres as usual, as these would then be immediately broadcast to the whole world, bringing a very bad name to India, which has been avoided up to now by keeping both people and media out of Kashmir.

Despite the burning down of the tourist centre at Srinagar and grenade attacks on one of the buses, both governments declared their intention of continuing with the service. Since that date, there has been discussion of more routes, for example between Sialkot and Jammu. Also, a proposal has been mooted to extend the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus route to Rawalpindi, restoring the historical bus route to Kashmir. Further, it has been suggested that trade may be allowed via this route. This proposal needs to be studied objectively. After all, have we not been saying all along that the natural travel and trade routes of Kashmir lie through Pakistan? If then these can be revived, why not?

The one thing Pakistan must avoid at all costs is to give proposal after proposal in the face of stone-wallling by the

Indians. One should never lay one's cards on the table before the other side has made any move at all, in fact even before the game starts. It seems the Indian Army is fed up of killing civilians. There certainly have been a number of reports of soldiers deserting, committing suicides and killing their officers. Because of this situation, the Indians also likely want some sort of settlement. However, we should not spoil matters by giving unilateral concessions all the time to please the Americans, as General Musharraf has been doing.

One thing is certain: we cannot conquer Kashmir. If we could, we should have done as the Indians did in Bangladesh. They did not wait for 50 years for UN resolutions on Bangladesh. They attacked East Pakistan, conquered it, and gave it to the Bengalis. Why don't we do the same thing? Of course because we do not have the ability. As Kosygin said to Ayub Khan, 'What you could not win on the battlefield, you cannot get on the table'. In any case the world will not let two nuclear armed neighbours fight. If such is the case, we should realize that there will have to be some give and take. We, as well as the Kashmiris, should be prepared for some give and take but, I would repeat, without making unilateral concessions, and without being in too much of a hurry.

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