

Sark-Pee

# NEW AGE

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## On National Integration :

# ALL PARTIES MEET IN THE OFFING ?

★ FROM OUR POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

Of late the problem of national integration has engaged serious attention of all national and secular parties in the country. Ever since the communal riots that took place in Jabalpur, religious fanatics with an eye on the coming general elections, have been raising their shrieking voices in the name of their respective communities. Although they have not succeeded in fomenting trouble on an all-India plane, they have been successful in reviving the ghost of communalism in a fairly big way.

The soaring ambitions of the communalists have dangerous portents for this country. And it is good that this is being realised, though slowly, by the democratic and secular forces. According to the latest information it now seems that the problem of national integration and communal harmony shall come up for discussion in an all-Parties Convention to be convened soon.

THE indication for holding such a Convention was given by the Union Home Minister Sri Lal Bahadur Shastri in the last session of the Parliament. It duly and promptly received the support of large sections inside the Congress, as well as the Communist Party, PSP, and the Muslim Convention held last month in New Delhi.

There has, however, been fairly strong opposition from influential elements within the ruling party who associated themselves with the communal elements. They found that the direct or indirect championship of communalism on the anti-Communist basis as it came handy to overthrow the EMS Ministry in Kerala, was no more possible.

### OPPOSITION FROM WITHIN

They, nonetheless, within the close circles of their ruling coterie adopted the argument that it was unwise and tactless to associate with the opposition parties, especially the Communist Party which was the most enthusiastic about united national crusade.

In the opinion of these blind diehard elements, such a move would give respectability and recognition to the Communist and Praja Socialist Parties and enhance their prestige during the critical election year.

The Home Minister, however did not give up. It is learnt that in consultation with the Prime Minister he

has been seeking high-powered support. He has been in touch with some important Chief Ministers who are faced with the problem in the raw and they have welcomed the move.

A final decision about such an all parties national convention will be formally taken in the State Chief Ministers Conference scheduled to meet on August 10, in New Delhi.

### NEED OF THE HOUR

The decision of the Muslim Convention to put before the Prime Minister the difficulties that the minority community is facing as also the bursting up of the non-Muslim minorities' problem in more than one State, have brought to the fore the problem of establishing some mechanism to tackle the grievances and to guarantee the implementation of the constitutional rights.

It is reliably learnt that the Home Minister will suggest in the coming Chief Ministers' Conference the appointment of an authoritative Minorities Commission. The Prime Minister is also supporting the proposal.

It is being stated that all specific grievances and demands of linguistic as well as religious minorities can be referred to such a Commission which could look into them and make its own recommendations to the Union and State Governments.

New Delhi circles also hope that the setting up of such a Commission could offer an useful way out to the more sensible elements among the Sikhs. The immediate feasibility of appointing such a Commission will also be considered by the Chief Ministers' Conference.

The issue as to how far the rights already guaranteed by the constitution and other official declarations to the linguistic minorities are being actually implemented in practice, came up for discussion in Southern Zonal Council recently.

The decision taken there on the problem of safeguards for linguistic minorities relates to facilities for instruction of linguistic minorities in their mother tongue, use of minority language for official purposes and as a medium of examinations for recruitment to State services. These recommendations, it is learnt, are being considered as a model and are being circulated to other Zonal Councils.

### SOLUTION BROOKS NO DELAY

These decisions, coming after the language trouble in Assam are a sign that the ruling party can no more sit tight over the problem. It is, however, yet to be seen how the coming Chief Ministers' Conference in New Delhi handles these proposals.

The problem of national integration can be toyed with no more. It has to be faced squarely and solved in a principled rational manner. How far the various national secular elements have moved forward will be really revealed as and when the proposed All Parties Convention meets.

(July 19)

# Behind PM's Rush To Srinagar

From Our Special Correspondent

THE current three-day visit of the Prime Minister to Kashmir is invested with more than usual interest and significance.

Despite the strenuous efforts of a section of New Delhi opinion to play down Pakistan President's success in Washington, responsible quarters do not hide the anxiety over the reference to Kashmir in the Kennedy-Ayub joint communique and have begun to warn against the sense of complacency generated by rather naive reports that appeared in the Indian press prior to and during the Pakistani President's US visit.

In the background of high pressure propaganda carried on by the Pakistani leaders against this country and the mounting acts of sabotage inside Kashmir, the situation is regarded in New Delhi circles as one of ominous and sinister possibilities.

Accordingly, instructions were sent out before the departure of the Prime Minister to Kashmir that a comprehensive report about Pakistani sabotage activities and violations of cease-fire be prepared. High Army officers and Kashmir police officials were directed to prepare the report jointly.

A top-level conference of Army and Civil authorities is being held to consider the report and examine all aspects of the Kashmir situation including the question of meeting any major intrusion across the border following reports of Pakistani preparations for a new round of aggression.

Though a full-scale attack from Pakistan is not considered probable at this stage, Pakistan has been organising sabotage and infiltration on a large scale for some time past, according to authoritative sources.

The reports have reached here that five thousand guerilla soldiers are being trained in ninety five centres in Azad Kashmir area under the direct supervision of the Pakistani Army.

A Pakistani soldier who was captured during the recent raid on the Uri sector of the Cease-Fire Line is reported to have disclosed to the Indian authorities that recruits from all parts of West Pakistan are receiving training in these centres and are sent across the Cease-Fire Line into the Indian territory to organise sabotage and subversion in Jammu and Kashmir State.

The clash on the Uri sector in the last week of

June was the biggest of a series of raids from the Pakistani side so far, and resulted in an encounter lasting over seven hours in which there were casualties on both sides.

Official reports show that number of Pakistani raids on the Cease-Fire Line have greatly increased. During the months of May and June alone there were as many as 34 raids in which seven Pakistani raiders were killed and fourteen injured.

Both the Indian Army and the State Police are reported to have been further strengthened in the Forward areas to deal with such raids. The Government of India is also learnt to have alerted the United Nations Observers stationed in Kashmir.

While India has so far not expressed any dissatisfaction with U.N. observers, cases have come to the notice of India of Cease-Fire violations by Pakistanis, not being dealt with.

The high-level Conference, in Srinagar in the presence of the Prime Minister, will thoroughly review the position and further necessary measures will be chalked out to meet the Pakistani designs.

Besides taking security measures, Government of India is also closely studying the Kennedy-Ayub joint communique and the utterances of President Ayub wherein he has claimed that US President has undertaken to take up the Kashmir issue with Prime Minister Nehru.

In contrast to the earlier complacency, opinion in New Delhi is greatly disturbed over the reports that more formidable American arms might be poured into Pakistan in the coming months.

Government of India has always strongly objected to arms aid to Pakistan. But before making any public protest over the latest reports of stepping up of arms aid to that country, Government of India is understood to be seeking elucidation of the USA Administration's attitude through diplomatic channels.

The over-all feeling in official circles in New Delhi, however, is that President Ayub has largely succeeded in his mission and his Washington trip has only helped to further poison Indo-Pak relations.

This, it is pointed out, will also cast serious doubts on the sincerity of the Kennedy Administration's protestations of a new attitude towards India.

















# RUSH AID TO FLOOD VICTIMS!

## CPI Statement

The Secretariat of the National Council of the Communist Party of India has issued the following statement to the press:

"THE Communist Party of India expresses its deep anxiety and concern at the widespread floods that have recently occurred in Kerala, Orissa, Tamilnad, Maharashtra and Mysore. The floods have wrought havoc and there have been heavy losses in property and life. After Kerala, heart-rending tales of deaths are now coming from Poona.

"Our Party sends its sympathies to the families of those who have lost their lives as a result of the floods and shares popular concern about the victims of this calamity.

"It is high time that in view of the recurrent, and in some cases, controllable but uncontrolled floods, the Government reviewed the entire situation and took the most effective measures to control the floods. The problem is one

that needs to be confronted and tackled with all possible preventive measures that science and engineering may offer.

"The need of the hour is of course the fullest mobilisation of resources for the relief and rehabilitation of the victims. In this respect great responsibilities naturally devolve on the State and Central Governments and our Party would urge upon these authorities, particularly the Central Government to do their utmost.

"At the same time, the Party appeals to the people throughout the country generously to contribute to flood relief funds. In this great work the efforts at the official and non-official level must be properly co-ordinated so as to achieve the maximum possible results in relieving the distress and suffering of the unfortunate millions who have been hit by the floods.

"The situation in the affected areas demand united efforts on the part of the public as well as such coordination."

## DELHI EXPERTS' VIEWS

★ From Our Special Correspondent

Never before in living memory have such devastating floods done so much damage in so many parts of the country, and at about the same time. Daily press is full of news of how life that flew its normal course for Indian humanity, has become a tearful tragedy in these flood-affected areas.

THE economic loss to the nation has been colossal. No responsible official spokesman is prepared to give out any estimate of the losses. Some idea of the grievous economic loss suffered by the country can be had from the fact that the loss in tiny Kerala alone may add up to over Rs. 100 crores.

Everybody is shocked. The foremost question that is being posed from all around is:

What have India's planners been doing during the last two Plans that the country finds itself so helpless to face up to the flood menace, despite huge sums spent over our giant multi-purpose irrigation and power projects and so on?

The official experts make the following key points to explain the present havoc:

● The report of the High-Level Committee on floods was circulated to the State Governments more than a year ago. It is the first centralised effort to deal with the flood problem on a country-wide basis. However, the State Governments initiated no comprehensive measures in any of the areas which had been marked out as "flood areas".

● In the earlier two Plans most of the projects were mainly irrigation and power projects, and only incidentally or indirectly were they meant to tackle flood control. On the whole a very disproportionately small amount was sanctioned during the earlier two Plans for a specific and vitally necessary flood-control measures.

After the bitter experience of the latest floods, official experts very strongly stress that the Third Plan allocation of Rs. 80 crores for flood protection is totally inadequate.

● A distinctive feature of the floods this year has been that they spread out to

vast areas in the Southern States which had not been marked out as the usual "flood areas".

The New Delhi specialists are of the view that real big floods in these areas cannot be adequately dealt with by pre-planned flood-control measures.

They however concede that the flood damage can be considerably reduced by what are called "administrative methods", for example, well organised system for forecasting the floods to warn the people in time, so that life and property can be saved, through timely evacuation to safer areas.

They press that the South needs immediate stream-lining of the present meteorological forecasting arrangements, which proved both inadequate and ineffective in the present crisis.

The New Delhi experts also stressed that Assam, North Bihar, Orissa, North Bengal, East U. P., Punjab and Andhra are the areas most vulnerable to the flood havoc, and that it is in these areas that the flood-control measures during the Third Plan must be concentrated upon.

## High-Level Probe Needed

Need for a high-level review of certain problems—both of an administrative and policy nature—posed by the floods in different parts of the country is felt here in highly placed official circles.

DURING his visit to Kerala, Sri Hafiz Mohamed Ibrahim, Union Irrigation Minister, was told by the Kerala Government that they held the Madras authorities responsible for the heavy floods in the river Periyar, and would demand adequate compensation.

The release of water from the Periyar Dam, without due notice to Kerala, according to the State Government, was against established practice. Further, it is also stated that the manner of releasing water from the dam was such as to cause sudden damage to the regions below.

### Playing With Lives

Water from the dam was all of a sudden let out when it had reached a level of 152 feet whereas the authorities could have started letting out water at a much lower level.

The issue is likely to be raised in the Southern Zonal Council meeting at Bangalore on July 21. The issue which

is engaging attention of the Central authorities is whether some form of consultation between the States concerned and the Centre can be devised to avoid similar situations in future.

The hair-raising decision of Orissa's Chief Minister, Sri Bhojanand Patnalk, in contravention of technical advice, to store water in the Hirakud dam up to 629 feet—only one foot less than the optimum of 630 feet—has also given rise to a great deal of concern.

It is noted here that if the Hirakud dam had given way as a consequence of the Chief Minister's directive, the result would have been an unprecedented calamity for Orissa.

### Rash Decision

In brushing aside the most competent technical advice on the issue, Orissa's Chief Minister was taking an unprecedented risk for comparatively small gains, it is pointed out.

The release of water from the dam, after it had attained the level of 590 feet, as advised by experts and laid down by the engineers who constructed the dam, would have raised the level of water in Cuttack and Puri by two or three feet. The danger from this would be much less as compared to the risk involved in the Chief Minister's decision.

Whether a Chief Minister can over-rule technical advice in the face of such dire consequences, is a moot question posed in certain official circles here. While it is unlikely that this issue will be discussed on the formal plane, the need for some form of unwritten convention on such matters is acutely felt here.

The breach of the Fanshet dam, which is yet under construction, resulting in the flooding of Poona is considered by dam experts to be the result of serious negligence. Surprise is expressed here that waters should have breached the dam in the construction stage.

The practice is to divert the waters through specially built channels while a dam is being constructed. Some failure seems to have taken place in the diversion mechanism resulting in the breach of the Fanshet dam. (I.P.A.)

## POONA FLOODS

"The floods in Poona, unlike in other places, were not due to natural causes, but man-made." This is the firm opinion of the Parliamentary Board of the Samyukta Maharashtra Samiti which met in Nagpur on July, 16.

IN a resolution adopted at that meeting, the Samiti has demanded an open enquiry into the causes of the flood. The resolution further says that the enquiry should cover the type of materials used in constructing the dam and arrangements made to protect it.

"Similarly," the resolution goes on, "it is not enough to entrust the work of rehabilitation and reconstruction in the flood affected areas to the officials. The Government should take the help of the people in this work."

"It was due to the failure of the authorities to collect all information about the impending floods and passing it on to the people and thus keeping them warned in time about it, that has resulted in such heavy loss of life and property."

Comrade S. A. Dange, President of the Samiti's Parliamentary Board speaking to pressmen said that it was the callousness of the officers and their failure to see the gravity of the situation that is responsible for the floods in Poona and the calamity following it.

Despite the fact that they knew about the disaster that was going to overtake Poona twelve hours in advance, they did not alert people and ask them to go to places of safety. On the contrary, people were told that there was no ground for fear.

Dange has said that the authorities and the Government machinery had failed to gauge the gravity of the situation and to take people into confidence.

Very soon the Parliamentary Board of the Samiti is going to Poona to pay a visit to the flood affected areas.