

From Jammu and Kashmir Media

A question of needs and compulsions

“Neither Pakistan nor India is prepared to sacrifice its interests for the sake of Kashmiris. Neither of the two countries is prepared to forsake its claim over water of rivers flowing from Kashmir. But the way, their compulsions and need for water, are becoming instrumental for having an accord and implementing it, can their sympathy for Kashmiris not become the reason for resolving Kashmir? But it does not happen, because it is a question of interests not sympathies”, writes the daily *Uqab* (24/06).

Excerpts:

Pakistan’s objection to the construction of reservoir:

“The talks between India and Pakistan over Baglihar project are going on and hopefully there will be a settlement on the issue. More than 60% of work on 450 Mw project, in the first phase of the 900 Mw project, has been completed. Pakistan had raised objections in the very beginning of the project, and Pak experts had examined the project last year and threatened that Pakistan would put its objections before the World Bank. The power house is being built over the river Chenab which flows towards Pakistan. Pakistan’s objection was on the reservoir being built for this project. According to Pakistan, the completion of this water reservoir would mean that Pakistan would get no water or less water for 30 to 40 days in a year, which would cause great hardships to the Pak farmers. Pakistan says it is a violation of Indus water Treaty. Pakistan is of the opinion that neither Kashmir nor India has the right to build such a reservoir on a river that flows to Pakistan”.

Why can’t Kashmir make full use of its water resources?

“The Indus Waters Treaty had been signed in 1960. After the treaty, there were many ups and downs in Indo-Pak relations, and even three wars. But the treaty was not affected. The reason is that not only does Pakistan need this treaty, but India also cannot do without it. Under the treaty, Pakistan’s claim on river water was accepted on those rivers that flow into Pakistan, and India’s claim on river water was accepted on those rivers that came to India . As it is, the rivers that flow into Pakistan, have their sources in Kashmir. The river Jhelum, over which a substantial part of Pakistani population is dependent rises from Kashmir. River Chenab as well as Indus also rise from Kashmir. These rivers are as important for Kashmir as they are for Pakistan. Kashmir faces acute scarcity of power, though there is no dearth of water resources in Kashmir, that could provide cheap power and in quantity that it could sell surplus power (electricity) to earn foreign exchange. But, Indus Water Treaty is the biggest hurdle. Surprisingly, the river Jhelum, that rises from Kashmir provides so much power to Pakistan that the Punjab Province makes full use of it. Yet, Kashmir can not use its water, Pakistan had objected to Uri Hydel Power Project (that is on the Jhelum). But somehow, the problem was settled. Now, Baglihar is a Kashmir project and its completion could reduce the power scarcity to a great extent. If Indus Water Treaty creates a hurdle in this project, it would be the greatest injustice and harassment to Kashmir. Though, as it

is, both India and Pakistan sing about their love for Kashmir. They are prepared to sacrifice everything for Kashmir. The main cause of tension and hostility between the two countries is Kashmir. Pakistan considers itself to be a great sympathizer and benefactor of Kashmiris. So does India. But when it comes to the question of interests, no country is prepared to sacrifice its interests for Kashmiris”.

A stab in the back

“The merciless killing of a senior engineer and his brother, of the company Ircon, engaged in Baramulla railway project, has caused shock waves in the valley and has been condemned by all people, including the secessionists, in very strong words”, writes the daily *Khidmat* (27/06).

Excerpts:

The work on the rail project had been going on at a good pace:

“The people of the valley have yet to see a train. The Valley is deprived of this facility, though trains run upto Jammu. The service could not be extended to valley so far. In fact, 20 years back Congress government had announced the bringing of railway line to Kashmir. The work started on snail’s pace and was stopped from time to time. Consequently, the railway track could come only upto Udhampur. However, during the last two or three years, the work has picked up pace and the target year was 2004. However, Qazigund-Baramulla railway project was taken up separately and Ircon got the contract. The late engineer was returning to Srinagar when the engineer, his driver, a contractor and his brother were abducted by unknown persons. That day, the abductors telephoned the Srinagar office and asked for a ransom of 50 lakhs for release. Next day, the police claimed to have made contact with the kidnappers, and that agreement was being worked out for their release in lieu of some money. The engineer’s driver and the contractor, who were both Kashmiris, were released the next day. And the dead bodies of the engineer and his brother were found in a wasteland area of Shopian”.

Stalling Projects will render people jobless:

“This event can have a deep effect on Kashmir. The non-Kashmiri engineers and other officers, working in the projects, may not be able to continue to work, out of fear. Along with this hundreds of Kashmiri workers employed in the project, will be jobless. The worst thing could be that coming of the rail to Kashmir may remain an unrealized dream. Knowing that Jammu-Srinagar highway, often remains cut off and this affects the supply. Rail helps in not only in carrying of goods but also in people’s travel. The killing of the engineer is virtually damaging the interests of Kashmir. Whosoever has done it, cannot be a friend of Kashmir”.

A Shift in the Dialogue Process

“The Indian President’s address to the Parliament has stressed the importance of keeping the process of negotiations with Pakistan going, and to continue the internal dialogue with Kashmiri leadership. The Indian government has formally announced that negotiations with Hurriyat (A) would be held next month. It was expected that other secessionist groups, besides Hurriyat (A)

would be involved in talks. But, because of the recent events this does not seem to be likely”, writes the *Weekly Chattan* (14-20/6).

Excerpts:

Involvement of other groups in negotiations not likely:

“The grenade attack on Mirwaiz Farooq’s house and his uncle’s killing have made the likelihood of involving other groups less certain. It seems the Centre has stopped considering the matter of inviting extremist elements into the negotiations, though the proposal is still there. For the time being, the Centre seems to have decided to confine the negotiations to Hurriyat (A). Molvi Mushtaq’s (Mirwaiz’s uncle) killing has given rise to many apprehensions. He was shot at, while offering prayers in a mosque. There is widespread grief as well as anxiety because of this killing. From Manmohan Singh to Pervez Musharraf, Jamali and Farooq Abdullah and Syed Ali Geelani, all have mourned the death and sent messages of mourning. The people who gathered at the day of his funeral shouted slogans and were much disturbed. It may be recalled that Save Kashmir Movement has owned the responsibility for this attack. The outfit has alleged that Moulvi Mushtaq was involved in anti-movement activities. On the contrary, Al-Umar militant outfit has condemned the attack and expressed sympathies with the revered family”. Militants’ warning to people involved in peace-process:

“New Delhi government as well as the circles or people involved or connected with the Kashmir issue or affairs have taken a strong notice of the killing. There are suggestions for CBI enquiry into the killing, so that culprits are identified and the reason for this killing is known. Whatever may be the reasons, one thing is certain that this event is a warning to those, including Mirwaiz Farooq, who are involved in talks. It is a warning that the people going or working against the interest of the ‘militants’ will be dealt with. It may be stressed that after the separation of People’s Conference from Hurriyat (A), Mirwaiz Farooq’s Action Committee, is the only political group that has the people’s support, that Hurriyat (A) claims. The sphere of influence of other Hurriyat (A) leaders who participated in negotiations, is very limited. That is why secessionists are concentrating their attention on M. Farooq. By killing his uncle the militants have warned not only Hurriyat (A) but India as well as Pakistan that no force can suppress the militants or relegate them to the background. May be, more facts come to light, but what is important to note is that the attack came at a time, when New Delhi was preparing for negotiations with Kashmiri leaders”.

Mirwaiz Farooq ready to continue negotiations:

“Indications are that if the purpose of the killing was to exert pressure on Mirwaiz and his colleagues, it has failed. Mirwaiz has boldly declared that he won’t be afraid of such attacks and would continue negotiations with New Delhi. It needs to be mentioned, that people of all groups or ideologies, pro-India or pro-Pak, paid their homage to Molvi Mushtaq. Another interesting incident is the coming of Ram Jethmalani to express grief over the killing of M. Mushtaq. But he also met Syed Ali Geelani. He refused to comment after the meeting. But, the news has gone round that Jethmalani has offered him autonomy and an economic package for Kashmir, that was rejected by Geelani. Jethmalani is a very interesting or controversial character, and it seems he had been sent here to feel the pulse of the people”.

Why this restriction on Kashmiris?

“The peace process will be successful only when Kashmir’s natives are allowed to go across the border to meet their friends and relatives without any restrictions. The Chief Minister of J&K (Mufti Mohd. Sayeed) had raised the issue with former Prime Minister and he had assured him of considering the matter. After restoration of relations between India and Pakistan, it has become necessary that the people of Kashmir living on the two sides of the border be allowed to come and go freely”, writes the daily *Alsafa* (20/6).

Excerpts:

A delegation from Pakistan participated in Sindhu Darshan celebrations:

“While inaugurating Sindhu Darshan festival at Leh, the Chief Minister Mufti Sayeed said that he was in favour of ‘dismantling’ the wall of hatred between the two countries and to allow free movement. He assured that he was making his efforts in this regard. Contact removes suspicions and adds to affection and love. This time, three Pakistani citizens had come as a group to participate in Sindhu Darshan celebrations. Sainyi Saddadam was heartily welcomed, when the organizers introduced the guests from the neighbouring country. Mr. Sainyi is the religious head in Sindh province of Pakistan. Before this, Pakistani citizens would come either in official capacity or in a delegation. With the restoration of relations between India and Pakistan, New Delhi and Islamabad, opened the borders for each other. During SAARC Conference, India’s former Prime Minister embraced Pakistan’s President and both countries decided to have mutual cooperation in trade and business. Moreover, there was talk of opening of Srinagar-Muzaffarabad road. The people of Kashmir warmly welcomed the improvement of relations between the two countries and offered their good wishes and cooperation”.

Kashmiris facing restrictions on travel across border:

“The participation of guests from Pakistan on the occasion of Sindhu Darshan, is a good omen, in the context of Indo-Pak relations. When that country was divided in 1947, a demarcation line was set across Kashmir, now being called border or LoC. Thus, a ‘wall’ was constructed between the people of PoK and Kashmir. Thus, brother was separated from sister or even a husband from his wife. The 56 years old hostility between India and Pakistan is changing into friendship, new bonds are being made, but the people of Kashmir continue to be in anguish. When the Prime Minister talked about opening of Srinagar-Muzaffarabad road, there was a wave of happiness among the people of Kashmir. But, the Centre seems to have relegated the project to the back burner, and the possibilities of its opening are dim. LoC is a prohibited place for Kashmiris. If anybody tries to cross the LoC, it will be a case of infiltration, and he can face death. Though New Delhi and Islamabad have a system of issuing passports and visas to their citizens, but Kashmiris have to wait for years for passport. During the present year, ten lakh tourists are expected to visit Kashmir, and tourists include foreigners also. But, a native or a resident of Kashmir can not go to Muzaffarabad from Uri. After 9/11 the world’s political scenario has changed. Developed countries are extending hands of friendship to developing countries. A new union or cooperative is being formed. There has been a positive change in the peoples thinking in India and Pakistan, and people from the two countries have good wishes for each other. Even

Sindhu Darshan is a new milestone in the improvement of Indo-Pak relations. This festival brings a message of love, brotherhood and friendship. But, Kashmiris aren't able to see their brothers across the border".

No unanimity of views

"As soon as possible, the Hurriyat leaders should try to bring about a unanimity of views and remove the grievances of the people. Otherwise, the people will be forced to protest against differences within Hurriyat. So far, the people have been waiting for the leaders to reform themselves on their own. They hoped the leaders would restore the unity of the political platform. They are waiting impatiently and exerting pressure on them", writes the daily *Aftab* (17/06).

Excerpts:

Differences are personal and not ideological:

"With the passing of time, the differences among Hurriyat leaders, mostly personal are becoming unimportant. The majority of the people want unity among Hurriyat leaders, because they feel that this has been harmful for the people. Though, the differences were never based on ideological issues or approach. In fact, there was never any unanimity of views or ideology among the Hurriyat leaders. Whenever any leader desires, he makes a union with other people, and even creates differences because of personal need. Geelani's stand is that the negotiations between New Delhi and Hurriyat (A) will not yield tangible results, and nor can these negotiations help in resolution of Kashmir issue, then he must be aware that his political opponents also have the same thinking, and they are aware and do indicate towards 'that. They, too, say, Kashmir issue can't be resolved through these negotiations. Thus, evidently, the differences between the leaders, are of personal nature. Differences of personal nature cannot be of much importance. Consequently, the people do not give any importance to these differences".

The Hurriyat leaders have lost the support of the people

"Nevertheless, the differences, personal as it seems, are causing damage to the political interests of the people, and adding to their woes and sufferings. Their difficulties are surmounting day by day. It is in the fitness of things that Hurriyat leaders rise above their personal differences (or feelings) and create a unity. They must realize that this state of affairs is causing great dismay to people. The spirit and the enthusiasm, with which people used to support the Hurriyat leaders, have waned. The leaders must realize that they have lost the confidence (as well as support) of the people, because of these differences, based on personal issues. The situation has come to a stage, when a specified group, with vested interests is giving support to one faction of Hurriyat. The same is the case with the other faction – only that group is giving support, that supports the leader of the faction on one side, but publicly opposes both factions of Hurriyat. This, surely, is a tragic state of affairs. The people are stressing the need for unity, and as soon as possible".

After all, what do they want?

“His leadership has never been accepted by the people of Kashmir, nor will they do so now. What kind of a leader is he? It was better for him to be a member of the collective leadership, and then he could have served the people. Even while being associated with Jamat Islami, he was a prisoner of his own self. First he divided the Hurriyat into two factions, and now he is working at dividing Jamat. What sort of a service to the nation is this?”, writes the daily *Uqab* (19/06).

Excerpts:

The leaders with ‘decrepit thinking’ use all tactics to keep the leadership with them:

“There are different kinds of people in the world. There is one kind of people, who close all ‘inlets’ to their mind, close their eyes and do not accept the changing reality. Such people become an obstruction in the nation’s road towards progress, and prosperity. The other kind of people imbibe all good influences, perceive the situation, and take the people towards progress and prosperity. Muslims in general, have been unfortunate in having more leaders of the first kind and the people of subcontinent have suffered because of such leaders. In Kashmir, such Muslims are dominating the scene, who are unaware of their surroundings and are walking with eyes closed, and even asking people to walk with a blindfold and they would automatically reach the destination. Such obsolete and retrogressive thinking has ‘torn’ or ‘shredded’ the movement into pieces. Had these people handed over the reins of leadership to new generation, the situation would have been different. But the elders did not want it, and the young generation remained spectators only. These people with decrepit thinking were successful in thrusting their leadership on the people; whether it was Syed Ali Geelani, or Molvi Abbas Ansari, Prof. Gani Bhat or late Abdul Gani Lone. They kept the ‘leadership’ with them, whatever the circumstances were, using all kind of tactics and thus rendering the ‘movement’ into tatters”.

Leaders without base, and practically isolated:

“Nobody supported Syed Geelani yesterday, and nor is anybody prepared to support him today. Moulvi Abbas, is, as he was, alone. Prof. Bhat is as isolated today as he was yesterday. Yet, they are all sitting on the ‘throne’ of leadership. Whereas one group, posing as representatives of people, is engaged in negotiations, the other group refuses to participate, trying to make themselves more important. Syed Geelani had no importance except that he was leading Jamat Islami. Jamat is a large organization, spread throughout the State and has influence everywhere. But today even Jamat is not supporting Syed Geelani. So he is compelled to float a new organization. What can he gain by that? Will he be able to lead Kashmir towards ‘azadi’?”

Let government reform itself

“The people, no longer, want to be mere spectators, and bear everything calmly. The times have changed. Those, who are in power, or running the administration, should perceive and understand people’s sentiments and wishes. They should not continue to have the foolish idea of being in a position to dominate people. Our sincere advice is that government should reform itself, otherwise, power will slip through”, writes the daily *Nida-I-Mashriq* (19/06).

Excerpts:

The coalition partners are indifferent towards people's problems:

“The different partners of coalition government seem to be busy in increasing their sphere of influence, so as to be in a commanding position. Consequently, no attention is being paid towards people's problems and difficulties. As such, problems are multiplying and becoming more and more complicated. The political leaders could have afforded this luxury, if the administration had been alert, effective, and accountable (may be honest also). But, as ill luck would have it, every government that comes to power, makes promises to work for the welfare and progress of the people, but practically does nothing of the sort. The higher officers are busy in helping their kith and kin, nobody bothers about common people. In fact, there is worst kind of dishonesty and cheating in the administration. The people's rights are stamped under the shoes”.

The government has failed on all fronts:

“The people are not bothered about Mufti Sayeed's problem with the ministry, whom he would like to stay or whom to drop. The people want a solution of their problems, redressal of their grievances, and removal of injustice, and stopping of excesses. They want basic things, drinking water, power supply, better roads, sanitation and health care. In spite of being in power for 20 months, the government has failed on all fronts. Not only that, but even the people's sentiments are being hurt”.

It is high time the rulers realize their responsibilities:

“If the officers of the administration think that they are doing a great job, by taking care of high security zone areas, VIP's security by spending government money or keeping the VVIP's happy, by assuring regular supply of water and power to their homes, by providing jobs to their own relatives, and thus they would continue to rule the roost, they are mistaken or suffering from a delusion. Nothing is hidden from the people, and when time comes they act. It is high time that the coalition government realized that it is bound to solve people's problems and lessen their worries. If they show sincerity and seriousness in their job, show honesty, and remove corrupt and dishonest officers, purge the administration of 'dirty' elements, they will surely be doing a great service. To provide an honest, accountable and transparent administration, is a must. There are many examples where the ministers of the government gave much publicity to their 'noble designs', but practically flouted the rules, violated the norms and committed irregularities. The people want result-oriented action, that can ease people's trouble some situation”.

[Translated from Urdu by J. L. Raina)

Message of the Militants

“On the Black Saturday afternoon some one claiming from a group that calls themselves as Al-Nasreen lobbed a grenade into Hotel Poornima at Pahalgam that left four tourists dead and around twenty more injured. A few hours later another bomb attack on civilians at Handwara also left around a dozen of them wounded”, reports *The Kashmir Times* (15/06).

Excerpts:

The outfit Al-Nasreen accuses the tourists of spreading polluted culture:

“These figures, by themselves, do not sum up into any thing apparently very serious. Many more people get killed in the valley almost every day. The Saturday attacks might have killed four and injured a couple of dozen, but have effectively scared away thousands of tourists already in Kashmir or planning to come here. The valley has been visited this summer by more tourists than ever in the last fifteen years. Almost all hotels are full, the promenade surrounding the Dal remained crowded till mid-night, while tour operators, dealers in Kashmiri products and sikharawalas were busy round-the-clock making money, as never before in recent years. The general impression was that the dark days of bombs and bloodshed are finally over and that the militants might have decided among themselves to leave the tourists alone, while concentrating their attacks only on the security forces. The Al-Nasreen, not a well known outfit accuses the tourists of spreading polluted culture and so wants them to go. Many of them might have also thought that ease and relative affluence would leave the Kashmiris slowly reconciled with the existing status quo. So, the economy should be hurt so that an impoverished population, felt angry with the government for failing to protect their interests, might prove to be a better recruiting ground for them. Probably, supply of volunteers from across the LoC might have been adversely affected in recent months and that impels many of them to search for supporters, locally”.

An understanding with Pakistan and the consideration of people’s wishes:

“The militants operating in the valley do not have a central high command and it will not be wise to expect all of them behave according to any collectively accepted plan. But, one thing is again very clear that they still retain the capacity to strike where and when they like; and this becomes possible only when alienation is wide and deep among the common people. If, of late, there is some decrease in the frequency of their attacks it is obviously because of the reduced level of support from Pakistan and the fencing of a major portion of the LoC. Yet, the locals and those ‘guest militants’ still present here can manage to get exact information about the movements of the army and BSF vehicles and officials in advance. So, let us listen carefully to the message of the militants and cease making wishful inter-pretations of their behaviour. An understanding with Pakistan is essential but certainly not enough. Kashmir belongs to the Kashmiris and the militants, in their own way, are asking us to remember that, at every step toward a settlement, the people of Kashmir have to be consulted and listened to”.

Traumatized Valley’s southern part eaten up by narcotics

“Smoke billows out of shrunk nostrils of Rafiq like dark monsoon clouds and cloaks upper part of his face including his sunken pair of eyes as if his gaze does not want to embrace the world around him. He is a twenty five-year old from a comparatively well off village, Dialgam, shorn of all joviality of life. Reason: Acute depression. Rafiq’s is not the only case”, writes Hamid Ullah Dar in *Kashmir Images* (17/06).

Excerpts:**Young boys and girls have become addicted to drugs:**

“A major chunk of the masses in Anantnag now resort to drugs, narcotics and sedatives to ensure timely solace, even if it means premature death. Not to speak of young boys, even girls and women have turned to illegal and prohibited use of drugs. It is important to note that charas and poppy cultivation has increased manifold in recent years in South Kashmir, paving way for more youth to get addicted to narcotics. Fear psychosis is almost universal in this part of Valley. ‘We are sandwiched between guns and the deafening sound of arms has taken our right to live according to our whims and fancies’, says Tadabur Ahmad, a government employee”.