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THE TARGET: JAISH

## Terror outfit once crushed in Kashmir, now in revival effort

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE** NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 26

IN TUESDAY'S airstrike in Pakistan, India targeted a camp of Jaish-e-Mohammed, the terrorist group responsible for the attack that killed 40 CRPF men in Pulwama. The attack and the target underline the return to relevance of the outfit.

In recent years, Jaish chief has Masood Azhar sent two of his nephews to Kashmir: Talha Rashid was killed in October 2017 and Usman Haider in 2018. On Tuesday, the government said the Jaish camp struck by the airstrike was headed by Maulana Yousuf Azhar alias Ustad Ghouri, Azhar's brother-in-law. Yousuf was one of seven Pakistani nationals who had organised the hijacking of flight IC-814 to Kandahar in 1999. In exchange for the hostages, Masood Azhar (arrested in 1994) and two others were released from jail.

### Rise, fall, revival

Jaish is the newest terror group operating out of Pakistan; it was launched in 2000 with men from the Harkat-ul-Ansar which had already carried out major terror strikes in Kashmir. The first was the 1995 abduction of six western tourists through its front Al Faran, carried out with the aim of securing the release of Azhar and Harkat commander Sajad Afghani.

Jaish's first major strike, in 2000, was also the first suicide bombing in Kashmir and altered the trajectory of militancy. A young local recruit blew up a car at the entrance of the Army's 15 Corps in Srinagar. Later that year, Jaish sent another suicide bomber (a UK national) to the entrance of Army's 15 Corps with a explo-

sives-laden car. In October 2001, Jaish attacked the J&K Assembly, so vicious that Pakistan was forced to condemn it. India managed to get Jaish listed as an international terrorist outfit by the UN that month.

On December 13, 2001, Jaish carried out the Parliament attack that pushed India and Pakistan into an eyeball-to-eyeball military situation. On December 26, 2001, Washington declared Jaish a foreign terrorist organisation.

Then Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf, under international pressure, launched a crackdown. Pakistan banned Jaish in 2002, but Azhar renamed Jaish as Khudam-ul Islam and then as Al Rehmat Trust as a cover for terror activities.

Jaish split in 2002. This is when Azhar's family members became vital to its functioning. Pakistan sided with the US in Afghanistan and Azhar's group hatched plots to kill Musharraf, who survived two attempts in December 2003. This provoked a crackdown, with several Jaish men arrested and hanged by the Pakistani military. Azhar was put under house arrest.

The killing of the entire Jaish top brass in Lolab in 2004, after Indian intelligence

sleuths lured them into a trap, routed the outfit in Kashmir. The group didn't

emerge for the next 10 years. Its revival began with a strike on a military camp in Kupwara in 2014, and the launch of 'Shaheed Afzal Guru fidayeen' squads. Major attacks include those in Pathankot and Uri in 2016.

### The founder

Masood Azhar was born in Bahawalpur, Pakistan, on July 10, 1968, one of 12 children of schoolteacher Bakhsh Shabir; the family ran a dairy and poultry farm. In his book The Virtues of Jehad, Azhar writes that his father had Deobandi leanings. "One of my father's friends, Mufti Sayeed, was working as a teacher at the Jamia Islamia at the Binori Mosque in Karachi. He prevailed upon my father to admit me to Jamia," he wrote.

Azhar joined Binori madrasa and was later given a teaching job. Pass-outs from Binori madrasa played a vital role in formation of Taliban in Pakistan besides Harkat-ul Ansar, later named Harkat-ul Mujahideen, the predecessor of Jaish. Leaders of Harkat had great influence on the madrasa. "A leader of Harkat-ul-Ansar, commander Akhtar, had come to invite the principal of the madrasa to visit Afghanistan. The principal, Mufti Ahmadur Rahman, suggested that Azhar should participate in the training course of jihad," Azhar writes.

Azhar is said to have failed to complete his 40-day military training at a Harkat camp in Afghanistan. He still joined the war against the Russians and was injured. Harkat appointed him head of the department of motivation, and he started editing Harkat publications.

Azhar's first terrorist act was against the Pakistan Army when he questioned the role of a contingent (which was on a UN mission) against a jihadi group in Somalia. Azhar also met Sajjad Afghani who would become Harkat's Kashmir chief, later killed in India.

When Harkat decided to operate in Kashmir in 1994, a new group was created by merging Harkat-ul-Mujahideen with splinter group Harkat-e-Jihad-e-Islami. Soon Azhar became Harkat's general secretary, and its best orator. Harkat introduced foreign cadres, especially Afghan war veterans, into Kashmir.

In his mission of recruitment and fundraising, Azhar visited Zambia, Abu Dhabi, Saudi Arabia and the UK. His meeting with Mufti Ismail of a Southall mosque was followed by visits to Mongolia and Albania. He also visited Nairobi and Kenya.

from Dhaka as a Gujarat-born Portuguese national, Wali Adam Issa. He left for Deoband with two Harkat men from Kashmir. In Srinagar, he met Harkat commanders Sajad Afghani and Amjad Bilal. Azhar and Afghani went to Anantnag, where they were arrested on February 10.

In 1994, Azhar flew into New Delhi

## SIMPLY PUT QUESTION & ANSWER

# Why Balakot is a watershed

The first time India has used airpower, and its first venture this deep inside Pakistan. The precedent also raises new challenges before the two countries in responding to each other



In this photo released by the PMO, Prime Minister Narendra Modi chairs a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security in New Delhi Tuesday, following the Indian Air Force's strike on a terror camp in Balakot. PTI

**SUSHANT SINGH** NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 26

### In what ways is the Indian incursion a watershed event in India-Pakistan engagement?

First, Tuesday's airstrikes by the Indian Air Force establishes a new threshold between the two nuclear neighbours for an Indian response to a terror attack. So far, India has either chosen to put diplomatic pressure on Pakistan (after the 26/11 Mumbai terror attack), mobilise its armed forces (after the 2001 Parliament attack) or conducted limited ground-based operations (after the 2016 Uri attack) but has never used the Air Force, that too inside Pakistan.

The use of airpower has been taboo between the two countries, especially after both became declared nuclear powers in 1998, because of the dangers of escalation. While Pakistan has threatened retaliatory action, the fact remains that a major red-line about use of airpower has been crossed by India now. Restrictions around the use of airpower are best illustrated by the Kargil War, when the Vajpayee government allowed the IAF to be used, but did not allow it to cross the LoC. As much as it was about respecting the LoC and highlighting Pakistani incursions, it was also about the escalatory dangers of using airpower.

A more important reason making it a watershed is the extent of incursion. Indian operations after the 1971 War have always been limited to the Line of Control and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, never venturing into mainland Pakistan. As India considers PoK to be Indian territory illegally occupied by Pakistan, and LoC is a militarily active border manned by the two armies, military action there has been considered somewhat acceptable.

This airstrike also sets a precedent for future action by India: use of airpower in mainland Pakistan against terror camps. If it is Balakot today, it could be Bahawalpur or Muridke tomorrow. This new template for Indian response is going to create a public clamour in India after every terror incident to punish Pakistan, another reason that makes

## **SURGICAL STRIKES 1.0** The Indian EXPRESS AMERICAN DE STATEMENT TO **INDIA STRIKES**

ON SEPTEMBER 29, 2016, India announced that the Army had carried out surgical strikes in the early hours of the day to destroy seven terrorist launch pads along the LoC. This was the first time that India officially acknowledged a military strike in Pakistanoccupied Kashmir.

**THE ARMY** said significant casualties had been inflicted on the terrorists and those providing support to them. The strikes came 10 days after the September 18, 2016 attack by Pakistani terrorists on a military base in Uri, which left 18 soldiers dead. Prime Minister Narendra Modi had vowed that the attack would not go unpunished.



it a real watershed in the history of the bilat-

eral relationship. The Foreign Secretary has called it an

military preemptive action". What do

"intelligence-led operation" and a "non-



Pak Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi (right) heads an emergency meeting in Islamabad. Via AP

## these expressions mean?

The Foreign Secretary was taking the care of asserting that the targets had been carefully selected, based on hard intelligence inputs about the presence of terrorists in the camp. This intelligence would be from technical inputs (via satellites), or communication intercepts or human intelligence sources on the ground. By calling it an intelligenceled operation, the government was trying to send a message to the global audience that the airstrikes were not done at some arbitrarily chosen place but were part of a wellconsidered action.

The phrasing of "non-military preemptive action" was important for two reasons. Given that use of airpower inside Pakistani mainland territory is bound to be considered an act of war, India by calling it non-military wanted to reassure everyone that it is not such an act. That India chose not to target the Pakistan military or civilians but a terror camp was an important part of the Indian argument for preventing any escalation by the Pakistani side.

The words "preemptive action" were to suggest that the airstrike was not an act of revenge or retribution but an act of self-defence to prevent a likely terror attack in the future. All these phrases point to an effort to couch the action in terms that have a de-escalatory tone, giving Pakistan the space it may need to de-escalate.

Pakistan has called India's action "grave aggression" and warned of an "appropriate reply". What form could

Any step that Pakistan takes from here on as an "appropriate reply" would be escalatory in nature, which could beget a further response from India. While Pakistan will try and make a diplomatic case against India, it is unlikely to carry any weight because of its track record in dealing with terrorist groups. Any military action outside the LoC will be an act of war, and hitting any non-military target is fraught and could make the situation even more difficult for Pakistan.

Having wrested the initiative, India would have placed its armed forces on the highest alert, which takes away any element of surprise that Pakistan would want in conventional warfare. It may intensify its shelling along the border.

### Having taken this leap, what are the key challenges for India?

The real challenge is of an escalation matrix. Essentially, this means that the Indian armed forces will now have to be prepared for a full-spectrum of conflict. Politically, India is heading into elections

and the BIP has done well to tone down the Diplomatically, it is the challenge of deal-

ing with the US, China and Russia, which are interested in a settlement with Pakistan and would advise both the countries to exercise restraint. While that restraint is now being asked of Islamabad, in case of a Pakistani mil itary misadventure against India, that restraint would also be sought of New Delhi.

### The surgical strike after the Uri attack did not prevent the Pulwama attack. If there is yet another attack, what could India's response be? The purpose of a military action after a

terror strike is either compellence or deterrence. While compellence refers to India's demonstration of military and political will to compel Pakistan to change its ways of patronising terror, deterrence refers to a fear of punishment to stop Pakistan from supporting another terror attack in India. The air strike in Balakot is a strong signal that India can hold the threat of action as a coercive tool and use the diplomatic offensive to demand compliance from Pakistan.

THE THEATRE: BALAKOT

## A 6-acre training camp for 600 terror recruits, run by Masood Azhar's kin

RITU SARIN&

**NIRUPAMA SUBRAMANIAN** NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 26

THE EXPECTATION of the Pakistani establishment that the Jaish-e-Mohammed's headquarters in Bahawalpur would be the obvious target of the Indian retaliation for the Pulwama terrorist attack, led to a large number of Jaish cadre being "congregated" at the organisation's main training centre in Balakot, top security officials have told The Indian Express.

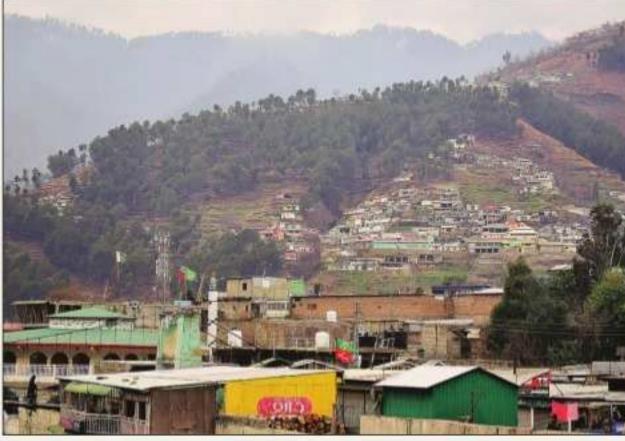
Balakot is in the Mansehra district of Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. It is 63 km north of Abbottabad. (where United States special forces killed Osama bin Laden in May 2011), 200 km from Islamabad, and 40 km north-west of Muzaffarabad, the capital of Pakistan Occupied Kashmir.

The Indian Air Force hit Jabha Top, a forested hilltop where the Jaish-e-Mohammed had its camp.

Indian intelligence agencies have over time compiled an impressive dossier on the activities of the jihadists who have been trained in the Balakot camp. There is a lot of information, including copious lists of Jaish cadres, and plenty of photographic evidence of militants moving around the complex, their exercise halls, ammunition dumps, firing range, and so on.

The training camp is described as being spread over six acres, with enough space to accommodate 600 cadres. The last "passing out" of militant recruits at Balakot, according to intelligence officials, was attended in April 1, 2018 by Mufti Abdul Rauf Asghar, the brother of Jaish founder Maulana Mazood Azhar.

In the complex distribution of portfolios and responsibilities among the members of his family following the creation of the Iaish. Azhar had assigned the task of overseeing the Balakot training centre to his brother-in-law Maulana Yousuf Azhar. This was mentioned by Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale in his media briefing on Tuesday.



Balakot in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. AP

The Indian dossier on the Jaish also contains photographs of Yousuf Azhar, and of the vehicle used by him for doing his daily rounds of the hilly training grounds and firing ranges at Balakot.

Balakot has symbolic significance for Jaish. It is the burial place of the Barelvi revivalist leader Sved Ahmed Shaheed and his associate Shah Ismail Shaheed, who were killed in Balakot in May 1831 while fighting the subcontinent's first — albeit unsuccessful — jihad against the army of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The Jaish training camp in Balakot is named after Sved Ahmed Shaheed.

By all accounts, the activities inside the Syed Ahmed Shaheed Training Camp became more organised, and the numbers of Jaish cadres getting training there swelled after two nephews of Masood Azhar were killed by security forces in the Kashmir valley within the span of a year.

The first was Talha Rasheed, son of Azhar's brother-in-law Abdul Rasheed, who was killed in an encounter in Pulwama in November 2017, and the other was Usman Haider, the Maulana's other nephew who was killed in Tral in October 2018. It is to be recalled that Usman Haider

was the son of Ibrahim Azhar, one of the hijackers of IC-814, the hijacking that had led to the release of Masood Azhar himself from prison in India almost two decades ago.

Balakot, and indeed the entire Mansehra district, has been central to the Pakistani security establishment's jihadist project. The area has a very large number of mosques and madrassas, and this is where the first camps were set up to train jihadists for the Afghan war and later, for Kashmir.

Close to Balakot is Garhi Habibullah, where the Hizbul Mujahideen is reported to have a training camp. Back in 2005, the monthly Pakistani magazine Herald had published a report on the restarting of various jihadist training camps in Mansehra district after having been shut for a couple of years in the aftermath of 9/11.

## WORDLY WISE

WAR IS WHAT HAPPENS WHEN LANGUAGE FAILS.

— MARGARET ATWOOD

## **The Indian EXPRESS**

∽ FOUNDED BY ∽ RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

## THE NEW RED LINE

India signals resolve to push the envelope on the deterrence imposed by nuclear parity to defend itself against terror

HE SUCCESSFUL STRIKE by Indian Air Force jets against a training camp for Jaish-e-Mohammad militants in Balakot in Pakistan has set a new metric, etched a new red line, in the fraught relations between the two neighbours. With this, India has signaled its willingness and ability to push the envelope on the deterrence imposed by nuclear parity in order to defend itself against terrorist groups waging a proxy war in Kashmir and elsewhere in its territory on behalf of the Pakistan Army. Unlike the surgical strike that followed the September 2016 Jaish attack in Uri, which was planned and conducted by India's Army across the Line of Control in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir, this aerial strike targeted a camp atop a mountain in Balakot in Mansehra district of Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, making it the first operation of its kind since 1971.

India's government had promised a response to the February 14 Jaish-e-Mohammad attack against a CRPF convoy in Kashmir that killed 40 jawans. By calling it a "non-military pre-emptive" strike against the Jaish which was planning more attacks across India, the government has underlined the message that this was a defensive act. That it was a strike on terrorism, not Pakistan. This is further reinforced by the fact that it was the country's top diplomat who made the formal announcement of the Indian action, and that he described it as an "intelligence-based" operation. The careful choice of words, meant to convey that the strike was nothing less than what India described, but nothing more than that either, showed a sobriety that this delicate moment demands of a responsible power.

It is now the time to build on this and reach out across the world to convey the unequivocal message that India continues to seek a resolution to its issues with Pakistan through diplomatic means. Pakistan may be unwilling, it may allow or even help the JeM to get back on its feet after this attack. But that only means that India's diplomatic work is not yet done. External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj travels to Beijing this week to attend the Russia-India-China foreign ministers' meeting, and to Abu Dhabi later to represent India as the "guest of honour" at the Organisation of Islamic Conference foreign ministers' plenary. At both places, India must underline the important role that friends of Pakistan can and must play in dissuading it from using terrorists to achieve its strategic objectives. Pakistan must be cautioned about the diminishing returns of such a policy and of India's determination to ensure that the costs will only mount.

## AFTER BALAKOT

There is diplomatic work to be done abroad. The OIC is an apt forum to make a beginning

HE FIRST EVER invitation for Delhi to address a ministerial gathering of the Islamic nations is an important breakthrough in independent India's diplomacy. Delhi certainly appears to have outsmarted Pakistan, which has for decades sought to block or undercut India's outreach to the Islamic nations. The back story with Pakistan at the Organisation of Islamic Conference is nearly half a century old. India was invited to participate in the founding conference of the OIC at Rabat, Morocco in 1969, but Pakistan compelled the Conference to "disinvite" India. Rabat has been one of independent India's worst diplomatic humiliations. Since then, Pakistan has repeatedly used the forum to target India on Kashmir. The OIC, with its provocative pronouncements crafted in Pakistan, became a permanent headache for Indian diplomacy, becoming more intense in moments of crises with Pakistan of the kind that is playing out since the Pulwama attack.

That the Indian foreign minister can now walk into the OIC and address it as a guest of honour is an important inflection point in India's engagement with the Muslim world. The government of Pakistan could not even publicly protest against the invitation to Swaraj, for the initiative has come from one of Islamabad's closest partners — the United Arab Emirates. It has strong support from Pakistan's other long-standing allies like Saudi Arabia and Turkey. The invitation also reflects the altered perceptions of Pakistan and India in the Middle East and beyond. In the 1950s and 1960s, Pakistan was seen as one of the natural leaders of the Muslim world. Today it is seen as an economic supplicant looking for dole from oil rich nations. India, in contrast, is seen as a major economic partner by all the key Islamic countries.

For Swaraj, the OIC meeting provides a big opportunity to explain the origins of the current crisis with Pakistan, the rationale behind the preemptive attack on the Balakot terror camp, and Delhi's repeated efforts for peace and reconciliation with Pakistan. Beyond the immediate, Swaraj can build on the fact that most Muslim countries are threatened by violent religious extremism and are open to long-term security cooperation with India. Delhi must focus on converting this diplomatic breakthrough into sustained institutional engagement with the OIC, including a possible observer status in the organisation. India's formal engagement with the OIC, however, is unlikely to stop Pakistan from taking advantage of India's internal troubles. As Delhi begins to leverage the new goodwill in the Islamic world, it must also renew the process of healing in Kashmir.

## WHISPER NO MORE

The Oscar to a documentary about menstruation is an important step towards the breaking of an unsanitary silence

DOCUMENTARY ON a group of Indian women fighting patriarchy for the right to hygiene and dignity, has just won an Oscar and, rightfully, the nation is rejoicing. It is not often that women from the global south get a voice on as big a platform as the Academy Awards, especially if they hail from impoverished, rural backgrounds as do the protagonists of Period. End of Sentence. But this win is being celebrated in large part because it has thrust onto the global stage a conversation that was — and continues to be in large parts of South Asia — a whispered one.

Because that's what you have to contend with when you grow up female in South Asia: The belief that menstruation is not a normal biological function. It is a shameful secret, wrapped in a newspaper and slid discreetly across the counter by the chemist. It is an abomination that offends the gods and pollutes the kitchen, and it makes women weak and inferior to men. This is the belief that has denied women, especially in rural India, access to sanitary products, forcing them to make do with cloth rags, sand and saw-

dust, imperilling their health and damaging their dignity. The Oscar win couldn't come at a better time. In the last year alone, the conversation about menstruation has become louder and more public. There was the film *Pad Man* which sought to normalise period discourse. The Sabarimala controversy, too, centred squarely on the rights of menstruating women, has made clearer than ever before how many women — and men — find menstrual taboos restrictive, discriminatory and plain tedious. With *Period...* now grabbing the baton, the race towards the end of such beliefs and practices can only get quicker. There must be no more whispering — only loud, impassioned arguing for equal rights to health and dignity.

# Decisive and restrained



IAF operation has established air strikes as an effective tool of deterrence in sub-conventional warfare

ARJUN SUBRAMANIAM

IN A CALIBRATED, decisive and yet restrained show of force, the Indian Air Force (IAF) converted Prime Minister Narendra Modi's promise of punitive action into reality as it pounded jihadi training camps in Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir (PoK) in a series of coordinated air strikes in the wee hours of Tuesday. Seen in isolation from a contemporary conflict scenario, air strikes in counter-terrorist operations are the preferred first option across the Western world for a few reasons.

First, they are safer than committing boots on the ground. Second, the seductive technological capability of precision allows for pinpoint targeting and the possibility of carrying out effective decapitation missions against terrorist cadres. And lastly, air strikes are no longer seen as escalatory mechanisms in a sub-conventional conflict. India's hesitation in the past to use airpower as an effective tool of deterrence in sub-conventional operations had its reasons and some of them may well have been justified. However, this writer has for long argued that while many of these reasons — responsibility, restraint and escalation — may hold true while conducting sub-conventional operations in the hinterland, different paradigms have existed in Jammu and Kashmir ever since Pakistan raised the tempo of its covert war by employing proxies like the Lashkare-Taiba (LeT) and Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM).

Through the Nineties, the IAF argued that it had the capability to hit terrorist camps in PoK and that this ought to be a critical element of a clear punitive policy, which many Northern Army Commanders have suggested. Successive governments, however, failed to bite the bullet and continued with reactive response strategies that eschewed the use of air power because of a lack of understanding of what air power could and could not do. During the Kargil conflict, the IAF wanted to hit the logistics lines opposite the Kargil area that would choke supplies India's hesitation in the past to use airpower as an effective tool of deterrence in sub-conventional operations had its reasons and some of them may well have been justified. However, this writer has for long argued that while many of these reasons — responsibility, restraint and escalation may hold true while conducting subconventional operations in the hinterland, different paradigms have existed in Jammu and Kashmir ever since Pakistan raised the tempo of its covert war by employing proxies like the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM).

but was held back with restrictions to not cross the LoC. Similarly, in 2002, the IAF conducted some strikes, albeit without crossing the LoC, during the closing stages of Operation Parakram when Pakistan made some effective incursions in the Neelam-Gurez sector. It is believed that the IAF had options ready after the 2008 attack, but the overarching need to be seen by the world as a "responsible and restrained" state saw India baulk at the use of force. Tuesday's action, when viewed through

the prism of the issues discussed above, answers a few long-standing dilemmas and raises a few questions. The first is that there seems to be an emerging understanding within the strategic community and the political establishment that offensive air power can be employed as a credible tool of punitive or proactive deterrence, a policy that has been attributed to the more muscular national security posture of the Modi government. Does this constitute a crossing of the Rubicon or is it just a decisive operational response? The Rubicon, a point of no return, has always been in the mind of our strategic establishment and one only hopes that this enhances their understanding of the utility of air power as a kinetic tool of statecraft that can be employed with restraint. For the IAF, I am sure it was an opportunity to walk the talk and demonstrate what it has been training for years in the sub-conventional domain.

When PM Modi announced that he has given a free hand to the armed forces to act after the Pulwama attack, he was criticised for abdicating political responsibility for any military action — his critics failed to distinguish between reality and rhetoric. I will argue that what he meant was he would give full freedom to the armed forces to ideate and plan for multiple options without imposing any restrictions, but the final green signal would obviously come from the PM himself. The fact that the air attack plan is said to have been explained in detail by the air chief to the raksha mantri, and that PM Modi monitored the attack in real time, reflects that there was good synergy between all stakeholders in the operation.

The IAF must be commended for not engaging in mission over-reach, considering that it does not regularly conduct such operations and unlike many reports in the popular media that the Pakistan air force goofed up its air defence response, I will argue that the surprise element and the timing may have caught the best air forces by surprise. It was a mission well-executed and from the first statement issued during an MEA briefing and subsequent statements from the NSA, it is assessed that significant damage was caused to the target systems chosen.

Whether there will be consequences is too early to say and depends on numerous variables — China will condemn the attacks, but is likely to advise restraint. They have too much at stake with the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). The West will be cautious in any criticism, but as always, focus on the nuclear dimension as a means of diffusing tension. The internal situation in Pakistan and its precarious economic condition may preclude the possibility of any escalated conventional response. What remains is continued subversion and prosecution of its time-tested covert war using proxies as a low-cost option, albeit with a changed flavour. An outside chance, of course, is a Eureka moment that brings home the realisation to the Pakistani deep state that war of any kind is a losing proposition for the country as its asymmetry vis-a-vis India grows. In the meantime, India cannot afford to let its guard down. War as we know it is not an option but full-spectrum and hardened deterrence is an absolute necessity. The radars must keep churning.

The writer is a retired Air Vice Marshal from the Indian air force and a strategic commentator

## MEMORIES STIRRED BY PULWAMA

Where childhood ends and fear begins

SHALINI LANGER

THE SAW MILL at the start of the lane. In my growing-up years, the beginning and end of my summer holidays were marked by this mill, a few metres from my grandparents' house in Jammu. It was never much, just an open shed with a tin roof. But in the dusty, sweaty summers, it carried a hint of the hills.

It was also an odd entity in that neighbourhood. Passing by, we could see what seemed like giant machines whirring and hear the wood being shaved, sliced and hauled. The whiff of the fresh shavings, the irritation in the throat if you swallowed one by mistake, the sharp edges of some spilling onto the road, and the horses lugging the wood in carts, leaving a trail of dung.

When we were grown up enough, we heard another story about that mill. How my aunt's eldest child, on her way to college, had come under the wheels of a cart there. She didn't survive. My aunt never talked about her "most beautiful one". Unlike our angry times, I heard no one blame the mill, whose Kashmiri owners remained respected neighbours.

Years passed, the cousins got jobs and moved out, the grandparents' house became larger and yet smaller, its grounds holding more cars than grass, our days got somehow shorter, while the mill disappeared. Overtaken by grass, its machines left to rot in a bolting city that it was too slow for.

I have struggled to hold on to its memory, as to the memory of the Jammu of my childhood, a Jammu untainted, for me, by hatred. A Jammu where my mother and

Could one enter a tunnel (jawahar) an Indian and leave it an anti-national? Did something change in the air at Banihal, marking this 'border', where a cousin once treated me to a sumptuous lunch, in quarters he shared with families from all over India, there to build a railway line to Kashmir? Maybe I was shielded from it, or maybe I was just blind to the Jammu that has now emerged, picking what it wants from its partner.

aunts spent hours agonising over the thinness and softness of each other's exorbitant Kashmiri shawls, and proclaiming expertise over the embroidery. A Jammu that would be tied for me with the kangri carried by my grandfather under his clothes (an art lost with that generation) and the kahwa slurped over gossip — the only time we were allowed "tea" by a mother guarding our "fair" looks. The kahwa would help wash down the yakhni, whose fragrance still filled the room, while the mothers swapped recipes of Kashmiri haak saag.

Years later, owning more shawls than she remembers, my mother never passes by a Kashmiri shawl shop — always the most crowded in any market — without picking one up, and demanding a discount. "Hum bhi wahin ke hain," she says. The shopkeeper smiles back. I ran into one such shopkeeper in Old Jerusalem, of all places, and no, the story didn't play out any differently.

What is Jammu about me, and what is Kashmir? Where does one end, and the other begin? Could one enter a tunnel (Jawahar) an Indian and leave it an antinational? Did something change in the air at Banihal, marking this "border", where a cousin once treated me to a sumptuous lunch, in quarters he shared with families from all over India, there to build a railway line to Kashmir? Maybe I was shielded from it, or maybe I was just blind to the Jammu that has now emerged, picking what it wants from its partner. A Jammu creaking under the vehemence of family WhatsApp groups. Ironically, the Pulwama attack spurring

that vehemence again brought me back those lost years — if only briefly. The Pakistani killed in the Rajasthan jail in its aftermath belonged to Sialkot, the town my maternal grandfather left behind during a time of another terror — Partition. Settling in a Jalandhar lane with his bride, my nana built a small business whose one chain goes across the border even today. As Karachi Bakery came under attack in Bengaluru, I remembered my mother talking about a dessert he got back from his travels: Karachi halwa. She pulled out that memory one day suddenly, while biting into a sweet — years after he had died. To us children, he was a tall man with a booming voice, who would always get something for us to eat — mostly patties from a local bakery, that he called bakarkhani (a word with roots from Central Asia to Bangladesh). Later, I could never read *Kabuliwala* — about the tall Afghan with a booming voice, whose pockets always had goodies — without remembering him.

Pulwama has now given me another memory. The 20-year-old who carried out the attack worked at a saw mill. I imagine him driving into the CRPF convoy, and in the blast that follows, I see my saw mill blow up – up go the machines, that table where they sliced the wood, the shavings, the horses, and down they come in a million little pieces. To be never put together again.

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## FEBRUARY 27, 1979, FORTY YEARS AGO

New Face For Janata THE JANATA PARTY treasurer, C B Gupta, bowed out of the leadership contest on "technical grounds", naming the erstwhile Congress For Democracy (CFD) leader, Raj Mangal Pandey, as the pro changers' candidate for the chief ministership of Uttar Pradesh. Pandey now faces the ministerialists' nominee, Banarasi Das. The meeting of the Uttar Pradesh Janata Legislature Party is slated to be held tomorrow to elect a new leader to succeed Ram Naresh Yadav as chief minister of Uttar Pradesh. Yadav had resigned after having lost the vote of confidence in the party by nine votes on February

TARAPUR SNAG

A FRESH ATTEMPT will be made during the talks the US Deputy Secretary of State, Warren Christopher, will have in Delhi to break the deadlock between India and the United States over the question of supply of nuclear fuel for the Tarapur atomic plant. Two shipments — of 16.8 tonnes and 19.8 tonnes — of nuclear fuel are long overdue from the US. The application for 16.8 tonnes of fuel has been blocked in the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission, which has been putting off a decision for one reason or the other. The application for 19.8 tonnes of nuclear fuel is pending with the US State Department and is yet to be sent to the NRC.

VIETNAM'S STRENGTH THE CHINESE DEPUTY vice-prime minister, Deng Xiaoping said the war with Vietnam would end in about 10 days, *Kyodo* reported. He said the Vietnamese had expected help from "those who pulled the string behind them". In an apparent reference to the Soviet Union, he was reported to have added, "If we are afraid of that, other people would think we are soft. When we made up our mind (to fight), we kind of thought let's see ourselves if the Chinese had a nervous breakdown". Answering a question, Deng said the war with Vietnam would end sooner than it had with India in 1962 because, according to him. "Vietnam is stronger than India".

# THE IDEAS PAGE

## WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"India and Pakistan need to stop beating the drums of war and seek a way out of confrontation."

—THE GUARDIAN



# Small town, cleaner future

Big cities should learn how to implement waste separation effectively from small, mid-sized Indian cities



BY ISHER JUDGE AHLUWALIA AND ALMITRA PATEL

CYNICS OFTEN POINT out that old habits die hard. They tell us that it is going to be impossible to get residents of Indian cities to keep different types of waste separate. Yet, we know this is essential for municipalities to find a sustainable solution to the problem of solid waste management.

But there is some good news. Small and mid-size cities and towns of India are showing the way on how to manage solid waste by getting communities to segregate waste and keeping the waste streams separate. In this column we share experience from our visits to some of these cities including, in particular, Suryapet and Karjat. Effective leadership in these cities and towns has found simple and sustainable solutions to the problems of solid waste management which still elude our metropolitan cities.

The earliest and the best success story was of Suryapet, a city in Telangana, located 136 km east of Hyderabad, with a population of a little over one lakh. In 2003-2004, there was no external funding, no NGO and no resident welfare associations. A single individual, S A Khadar, the commissioner of Suryapet municipal corporation, demonstrated personal leadership which made a big difference. He managed all of the Suryapet's wet and dry waste (32 tonne daily at that time) on a half-acre site within the city, earning a gross income of Rs 1 lakh per month from vermi-composting and recycling. There was no need for a landfill. Khadar saheb began by winning the hearts of his sanitary workers by prompt satisfaction of minor demands, such as granting leave and/or reassignment of workplaces. Next he wooed the residents, one mohalla or street or commercial area at a time, by organising daily meetings on morning rounds from six to nine am before beginning his office work. Residential pockets that gave 100 per cent unmixed waste earned token gifts.

Even more impressive and crucial was the municipal corporation's visible commitment to transporting segregated wastes for ease of separate processing. The commissioner got banks to fund new tractor-trailers (which can

unload waste mechanically) for self-help groups by guaranteeing their monthly repayments to banks from the city payments to their SHGs for waste collection services. The tractors moved punctually and dependably along lanes, stopping at every six-seven houses to collect unmixed waste. The same teams swept the roads, so they had the incentive to do efficient collection without spillovers during the process of collection.

The tractor trailers first offloaded the wet waste which was stabilised for two weeks by stack-composting – composting in vertical heaps that require less space and are piled off the ground for natural air circulation, without manual turning. This was fed to vermi-beds where quality vermicompost was in good demand, earning the municipality Rs 45,000 per month.

The tractor trailers had high wire-mesh compartments for different categories of dry waste which was offloaded at the inner city sorting shed. Eight waste-pickers on city payroll further separated the wastes for daily sale. This is what normally happens informally at the rear of all waste-buyers premises. The sale of recyclables generated additional earnings of Rs 55,000 per month.

Open drain cleaning was done in the afternoons. Soggy silt went directly into a wheelie-bin and then into a dedicated leakproof collection vehicle which unloaded the silt and the debris for widening the road shoulders of all radial roads.

The Suryapet experience clearly shows that citizens can be incentivised to give wet and dry wastes unmixed when they see clear administrative will and primary collection vehicles designed to accept and transport wastes unmixed. The universal complaint of city officials that residents do not cooperate is often an excuse for their own lack of will, vision and action.

A second inspiring example of what human leadership can do, is found in Karjat, a small town in Maharashtra with a population of close to 30,000. Ramdas Kokare was appointed commissioner of the municipal council of Karjat in end-2017, arriving with a fine reputation for making tiny Vengurla (population of 13,000 and floating tourists 5000) a dump-free town. Public expectations of him must have been high. Within two days of joining, Kokare strictly enforced Maharashtra's ban on plastic carry bags. These are now replaced by sari-cloth bags which cost Rs 6 per bag. Handcart vendors use bags made out of newspapers. What is amazing is how he persuaded Karjat residents, already enjoying doorstep waste collection, to cooperate in giving 36 kinds of waste separately on different

days of the week! This is probably a global first. Many progressive cities abroad have different bins for wet-dry-garden waste and rearate categories of waste regularly being purchased and removed.

The secret of the success of Kokare and Khadar, is passion and daily personal supervision, both going around the city every morning before office hours to meet, persuade and exhort citizens to cooperate. In Karjat, after initial warnings, doorstep collectors refuse to collect mixed waste and also report the person. The same evening, an official comes and grills the person on where they dumped their uncollected mixed waste. Such intense individual effort is especially required at the start. Once word gets around, cooperation is easier.

There are other cities with innovative approaches to solid waste management. In Namakkal (population of 55,000) in Tamil Nadu, pushcart collection workers have been manually separating mixed waste into wet and dry, daily at the doorstep of each household, rather than attempt behavior change. Years later, Raichur (2.3 lakh population), Warangal (6.15 lakh population), and Kolar (15.3 lakh population) have redesigned their pushcarts to enable them to carry half a dozen bags on the cart so that dry waste can be sorted then and there for easy sale without the need for a sorting centre. Alappuzha United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) for its decentralised system of waste management. In these and many more small towns, the secret of success is meticulous micro-planning, committed leadership at the administrative level and receptive and engaged communities. The objective is clear

Big cities scoff at small towns leading the way and claim that their own waste volumes are unmanageable. But even in large metropolitan cities, populations of most wards are smaller than of these towns. Decentralisation and effective use of delegated power at the ward level are crucial if micro-planning and implementation is to work with cooperation from RWAs. Only then can we find collective solution to the challenges of solid waste management in our larger cities.

Ahluwalia is chairperson, ICRIER and former

According to the article, populist schemes

include farm-loan waivers and Rythu

our economy and politics". It also asserts that

leaders of all political parties are to be

blamed for the messy economic and politi-

cal situation of the country today. It adds that

poll promises. Wake up 'We the people of

India'! Give a DECISIVE VERDICT (sic) against

jects, and separate days of the month or year to collect e-waste or discarded household furniture and appliances. But Karjat is the first town where we have seen regular weekly collection of so many separate items. Kokare must have intensely motivated and trained his waste collection staff to demand and sustain such achievement. The large shed at the former dump is now full of sep-

in Kerala was recently recognised by the — a litter-free, bin-free and dump-free city.

chairperson of the high-powered committee on urban infrastructure and services. Patel is member, Supreme Court committee on solid waste management

Bandhu grants to big farmers, subsidised canteens, free laptops, free saris, baby/mother kits, wedding grants, free TVs, old-age pensions, unemployment allowance, reservations for castes and communities, free energy and pump sets to farmers, free land for housing even before the construction of houses, free education schemes, free cycle schemes for girls, free health schemes, etc. The article claims that by "indulging in such farcical free sops, populists — left-wing, centrist and right-wing — are... not only making a joke of democracy, they are also disrupting

the emergence of "regional satraps", who are mostly authoritarian or autocratic and have no regard or respect for liberal institutions. The ballot in 2019, it contends, will involve two competing ideas of modern India — dynasts vs nationalists. It exhorts the reader: "Do not fall prey to competitive populism. None of them will honour their pre-

## Remembrance and foreboding

In the last five decades, the complexion of India's confrontation with Pakistan has changed



K M Chandrasekhar

AMID WAR CRIES, memories flood my mind of wartimes past. In 1961, the Chinese streamed into the Northeast and marched relentlessly towards Tezpur, driving back an inadequately armed, ill-equipped Indian army, used to years of peace and a threatfree environment. Those were the days when India believed Jawaharlal Nehru was invincible. And, indeed, he strode the globe like a veritable colossus in the Fifties, the founder and leader of non-alignment, the creator of the Panchsheel contract with China, the votary of global peace and disarmament. I recall the large advertisements and headlines in the newspapers and periodicals of the day proclaiming, "When Nehru leads, victory is ours."

We, as a nation, have progressed much since those days but we have not recovered from our colonial obsession with the concept of infallibility of individual leaders, regardless of the fact that the founding fathers of our Constitution have given us, in their wisdom, a Westminster model of parliamentary democracy, where leadership is collective, where responsibility resides in the Cabinet as a whole rather than in any one person or his office. When the time came to find a scapegoat, the unpopular defence minister took the blame even though it was Nehru who had proclaimed on October 12, 1962, that he had ordered the Indian army to clear the NEFA areas of Chinese invaders. The king could do no wrong then and the king can do no wrong now.

When we first went into a regular war with Pakistan, I was in college. India's prime minister was a mild-mannered man, quite the antithesis of his predecessor, liked by all and worshipped by those who worked with him. The western front with Pakistan was opened up at several points as "surgical strikes" were made into Indian territory. Pakistan demonstrated superior firepower and armoury, acquired from the US at the height of the Cold War. The decision was boldly taken to use air power and the balance was restored. We lived in Delhi and there was the frequent threat of air attacks. Black sheets were stuck against windowpanes to keep the light out to delude enemy warplanes. In each locality, residents formed groups and took turns walking up and down the streets with stout sticks in their hands to keep opportunistic thieves at bay. Air-raid sirens would blare out occasionally and fear prevailed until the threat passed.

In college, there was a frenzy of excitement. NCC training had been made compulsory after the 1961 war in the hopeful but mistaken belief that marching up and down in heavy army boots a couple of days each week would make soldiers of us. Rumours of all kinds were floated with alacrity, less speedily and less pervasively, no doubt, as there was no social media, no news channels, not even TV. When the war

ended, Lal Bahadur Shastri once again showed his mettle. At Tashkent, he had the courage to make peace with Pakistan. I recall newspaper pictures of the man, dwarfed completely by the huge, hulking figure of his Pakistani counterpart, shyly shaking hands with him. It takes a great deal of courage to make and maintain peace. It is easier to let things go their own way and start a fight, to join in the jingoistic war-mongering cries of irresponsible people who never expect to fight or be hurt themselves. The soldiers can go and fight and lose their lives, we can sit on the sidelines and watch the fun. After the war, we can make patriotic noises and do little, insignificant things for soldiers. Shastri died the next day and the course of Indian history changed.

1971 was different in that it was a war that was politically-crafted and patiently led. The simmering discontent in East Pakistan had been sharply watched and unobtrusively supported. The plans for intervention had been carefully laid out over a period of months. War was started when the occasion was right, when we were completely ready, when political factors were in our favour, when the Pakistani political world itself was riven with dissension and strife. India swept through the eastern half of Pakistan and made inroads into the western part. This time, the surrender did take place and Bangladesh was born.

The only time I ever went to Pakistan was immediately after the 1971 war. IAS officers have to go through a period of military attachment and my group was attached to the army inside Pakistani territory, in the Shakargarh sector on the banks of the river Ravi. We lived in tents and were made to toil hard from dawn to dusk. Overall, it was an unforgettable experience. The army sends its best cooks to forward formations and the food was literally out of this world. In those days, those of us who had ceased to be teetotallers, had the added incentive of being able to consume large quantities of alcohol. I still remember a beautiful afternoon relaxing on rubber dinghies on the river Ravi, then shallow and placid, drinking beer and consuming an enormous amount of snacks. We were half-a-century younger and digestion was correspondingly strong.

Are we seeing war clouds on the horizon again? In the last five decades, the complexion of war with Pakistan has changed In conventional warfare, we probably have a decisive edge but any protracted war at this point of time is unlikely to remain conventional. From what I have read, the nuclear arsenals of the two countries are more or less evenly matched. The growth of technological capacity has brought in its wake the possibility of cyber attacks of various kinds. War, therefore, will not be limited to the soldiers. It has the potential to affect millions of human beings and its aftershocks could linger for many years.

Posturing is unavoidable in a pre-election situation but mature reflection and reasoned thinking on all sides is needed to go even one step beyond this. Knee-jerk reactions and inflammatory statements can create havoc of unimaginable proportions. It isn't just a game of cricket any more.

The writer is a former Cabinet Secretary

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## HANDLE WITH CARE

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Anxious

in Itanagar' (IE, February 26). The angry protests over a committee report regarding Permanent Residence Certificate (PRC) to six non-tribal communities reinforces the sensitive nature of the identity issue in the Northeast. The BJP may have its own reasons to press for the Citizenship Amendment Bill but the fact remains the party's recklessness is alienating it from people in the region. The demographic issue in the Northeast has always been a complex one and utmost caution should be exercised in intervening in it. Vijai Pant, Hempur

## DEBATING PEDAGOGY

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Pedagogy and politics', (IE, February 26). The constitution of the Bharatiya Shiksha Board (BSB) to standardise Vedic education is an encouraging development. Incorporating elements of modern education into our traditional system of learning holds promises for more inclusive teaching and learning. Imported ideas and concepts have their limitations. Education must be founded on indigenous wisdom to be relevant. Sudip Kumar Dey, Kolkata

TIME FOR SANITY THIS REFERS TO the article, 'View from

## LETTER OF THE WEEK AWARD

To encourage quality reader intervention, The Indian **Express offers the Letter of** the Week award. The letter adjudged the best for the week is published every Saturday. Letters may be e-mailed to editpage@expressindia.com

or sent to The Indian Express, B-1/B, Sector 10, Noida-UP 201301. Letter writers should mention their postal address and phone number.

THE WINNER RECEIVES **SELECT EXPRESS PUBLICATIONS** 

the Valley' (IE, February 22). As the Lok Sabha elections inch closer, the political class seems hesitant about giving any statement on the Pulwama attack that might be construed as controversial. At the same time, however, aggressive actions like stopping water to Pakistan may do more harm than good.

Sanidhya Jain, Ujjain

# VIEW FROM THE RIGHT

EVER-WAR

IN THE CONTEXT of the attack in Pulwama and its immediate aftermath, the editorial in Organiser claims that while the entire nation stands with soldiers and calls for vengance, the usual suspects are asking for "peace talks". The editorial also claims that the narrative of "Kashmiri students being attacked all over Bharat was systematically built", forgetting the fact that the students who were being questioned "either celebrated the killing of soldiers or shouted pro-Pakistan slogans".

"If all this was not enough, the caste categories of bravehearts were also (re)counted by sick minds," the editorial says. It adds that after the Pulwama attack, the army has already started operations in the Valley and the government is exploring diplomatic, economic, and military options for action across the border. What is missing in this battle of nerves is the grasp of the "real nature of the war"and "a pro-Bharat narrative around the same", the editorial contends. It adds that

"the war has been going on since Partition" and only the instruments of war have been changing: "The enemy enters as regulars, irregulars or terrorists." The editorial adds that internally, an intellectual cover has been created through the skewed narratives of human rights and Kashmiriyat and the Hurriyat and stonepelters are an extension of Pakistan's aggression. It adds that "in tune with the peaceful aspirations of Bharat, every Prime Minister has explored some ground for dialogue with Pakistan but what they received in return was backstabbing. Pulwama is followed by the Kartarpur initiative as Kargil was followed by the Lahore initiative. For Pakistan and its stooges in the Valley, this is an existential war and violence is an integral part of it."

It also says that "at this critical juncture, we have to come out of the 'stable Pakistan is good for us' mindset."

## How's the josh?

AN ARTICLE IN *Panchianya* claims that two recently released films — Uri:The Surgical Strike and Gully Boy — "give a fitting reply to all those who had raised questions over the surgical strike conducted two years ago" and to those who "after the Pulwama terror attack alleged that Muslims are not safe in India". The article asserts that the success of

Uri:The Surgical Strike has shown a mirror to those political parties, NGOs and journalists who were calling the surgical strike a fake. The film's total box office collection so far has been Rs 230 crore, according to the article. "In the movie, when an army officer before the surgical strike operation asks his team, 'How's the *josh*?', then not just the team members on screen but the audience too respond — 'high, sir!'" the article claims. This film "is an example how a movie can play a strong role in expressing the sentiments of common people against any anti-national negative propaganda".

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The article then claims that when the government reacted to the Pulwama incident, a handful agenda-driven journalists and intellectuals started creating the bogey that Kashmiris and Muslims were no longer safe in the country. But "on February 14 Gully Boy was released in which the lead characters were Muslims". "It can be said that if anti-Muslim sentiment existed in society the film would not have been successful," the article claims.

## **DEFEAT POPULISM**

AN ARTICLE IN Organiser says that populism is on the rise, which inextricably links politics to society with an adverse fallout on the economy and long-term national security.

pretenders masquerading as... saviours." Compiled by Lalmani Verma