

From the front page...

Probe payoff...

“The charges, being of serious nature, need to be probed in order to arrive at truth which can be then shared with the general public. Without any specific details the finger of suspicion is being pointed towards all mainstream politicians. This has caused enormous damage to the institutions of democracy in the state and has allowed forces inimical to the democratic processes here to paint all mainstream politicians as paid operatives of the Army and other security establishments,” Omar informed the Legislative Assembly while winding up the discussion on Singh’s allegations.

Quoting from the letter written to the Prime Minister, Omar said he has appealed him (Dr Singh) to ask the Ministry of Defence to disclose the names of politicians in J&K to whom the money was transferred.

He said the outcome of the probe would help restore, to a significant extent, credibility of mainstream political parties and members amongst the people.

On September 21, a New Delhi-based newspaper reported that JK’s Agriculture Minister Ghulam Hassan Mir was paid Rs 1.19 crore by the Army’s secret counter-intelligence unit Technical Services Division (TSD) to destabilize the Omar Abdullah Government.

Later, Singh told a New Delhi based news channel that almost all ministers in Jammu and Kashmir “are on the payrolls of the Army”.

“I have the right to know what was going on, who gave the money and to whom,” Omar said.

He said the accusations have left mainstream politicians belittled in the eyes of people and fingers were being pointed at them.

He said if New Delhi wanted to do justice with the mainstream institutions in J&K then it should not dismiss the allegations. “Right or wrong we will wait to hear the outcome,” Omar said. “But if you (New Delhi) want us to go into the upcoming Parliament and Assembly elections with Singh’s stigma then let it be.”

ON GEN SINGH

He said an impression was being created that the legislators were speaking against army when they were discussing Singh’s allegations.

“It is totally wrong. He is a private person who sits beside Narendra Modi (BJP Prime Ministerial nominee). If we speak against VK Singh we are not speaking against army but holding a person responsible who has insulted politicians through his irresponsible statements,” Omar said.

He said Gen Singh’s damaging allegations that 2011 Panchayat Elections in J&K were one of the achievements of the Army’s intervention has raised suspicion on the very authenticity of polls. He said more importantly it has put the lives of elected Panchayat representatives in danger.

“If they are targeted tomorrow who is responsible? It is he (Singh) who was the army chief till yesterday,” Omar said.

ON ‘PAYOFFS’ TO MIR

Omar said he would not ask Agriculture Minister Mir (Ghulam Hassan) to resign. “One will be a fool to accept that you can topple government with this amount of money; you can’t even change a municipality with it.”

The Chief Minister said whether Mir had taken the money only he knows it better. “I have not asked him about it nor will I ask him in future. If I would have thought he took money from the Army then I would have asked him to resign,” Omar said.

ON PHONE TAPPING:

Omar said he was apprised by a senior army officer that his phone was being tapped by army during VK Singh’s tenure as Army Chief.

He said the two machines installed in Jammu and Srinagar, for phone tapping were later destroyed.

“This should be probed too. I have right to know whether my army was tapping my phone,” Omar demanded.

Later Omar moved a one-line resolution urging New Delhi order an inquiry into the allegations which was unanimously adopted by the House

The House unanimously resolves that the allegation made by Retired General VK Singh should be enquired in a time bound and transparent manner by the Government of India,” was the resolution.

Search operation...

Reports reaching here said that more soldiers have been deployed in the area to assist the already deployed forces. “All the exit and entrance points have been sealed,” the official said, adding that an effective cordon is in place with complete control and domination in the area.

Army has said that this is a BAT (Border Action Team) action-cum-infiltration bid. BAT is part of the Pakistani Army unit that includes members of its Special Services Group.

The area of operation is in high altitude which has heights ranging from 10000-12000 ft with thickly forested steep slopes, deep ravines and crevasses.

The Army today displayed the weapons that have been recovered from militants who were killed while foiling infiltration bids in last four days. “A large haul of seven AK-47 rifles and war ammunition has been recovered. The recovery made by the Army makes the designs of militants amply clear,” Col Sanjay Mitra, officiating Brigadier General Staff (BGS) 15 Corps, told reporters Monday evening.

He said that on October 4 there were two infiltration attempts in 24 hours in Keran sector and weapons were recovered from militants.

“The bids were in Keran sector. In the first attempt three militants were killed in Gujardar area while in the second infiltration attempt in the area of Fateh Gali on Saturday, four militants were killed. In both cases, a large amount of arms, ammunition and war-like stores were recovered,” Col Mitra said.

According to some media reports, for the first time since Pakistani regulars and militants occupied several abandoned posts in Kargil in 1999, Pakistani soldiers on September 23 occupied Shalbatto village in Keran sector during a routine rotation of troops on the Indian side.

Further action after...

“We have repeatedly emphasized that the maintenance of sanctity of Line of Control is of primary importance. Even at the last meeting between Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, this issue was re-emphasized. As regard to the current situation, our armed forces who are responsible of sanctity are currently undertaking appropriate necessary measures. Based on the outcome of those efforts, we will take the further necessary action, as appropriate,” Spokesperson in the External Affairs Ministry said here.

He also said if at the outcome of the efforts by the Army, there was a requirement for India “to take this further ahead, we will do so” after making an assessment.

Asked when will the Directors General of Military Operations of India and Pakistan will meet to lessen border tensions in the Kashmir region, as was agreed in the meeting between Singh and Sharif, he said the DGOs talk every Tuesday and the meeting will depend on their telephonic conversation.

The Army launched a massive search operation in Shalbatto village in Keran Sector on September 24 after reportedly noticing a group of 30 to 40 militants trying to sneak into the Valley. ■

JK’s political setup...

allegations, Mehbooba said the accusations leveled against JK politicians are a blot on the state’s political system. “Though this hasn’t come as a surprise as different agencies and security establishments are deviously operating in JK in the name of national interest,” she said. “The revelations made by Gen Singh have negatively impacted the psyche of the people. If the people here had already certain doubts over the dubious role of some mainstream politicians, Gen Singh’s revelations have only strengthened those views that JK politicians are on Army’s payroll.”

Mehbooba said the media reports suggested that the payoffs by the Army were meant for toppling Chief Minister Omar Abdullah led coalition government in JK. “Another allegation was that one of JK ministers had received Rs 1.19 crore to engineer a change of guard in the state. One more revelation was made by Gen Singh that Rs 2.3 crore were given to one Haqeeqat Singh for an NGO to file a PIL against present Army Chief,” she said. “Whatever Gen Singh has stated is nothing new. He even said that JK Chief Minister was aware of Army funding to the politicians. I am not saying that means the present Chief Minister only, but the moot question is that is our democratic setup so weak that Delhi can fiddle with it whenever it wants?”

She, however, said there is lot of confusion as to why no follow-up action is being taken over these explosive leaks. “And when we sought a debate in the House, unfortunately, none of us stated that revelations were wrong,” she said.

“Maneuvering of democratic institutions has been taking place in JK since 1947 in the name of national interest. The rigging and boycott started after the formation of Constituent Assembly in 1952. The former Prime Minister of India Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru once stated that Kashmiris will be tied with golden chains. Today, I see only chains without gold but with currency notes.”

Referring to the statements made by former US Ambassador that Kashmir politics was as filthy as Dal Lake, she said: “The question is how we can pull out of this mess. Those who entered into accession with India later took to the U-turn. They asked people to give support against Plebiscite. I want to know what happened after Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah had to change his stance. Why did he do that? Why we witnessed 1975 and 1987?” she said. “Why didn’t the leader of that time tell New Delhi that majority is the authority and majority was with Plebiscite?” Even Muhammad Yousuf Shah, now United Jihad Council chief, Syed Salahuddin recently stated how 1987 elections were rigged by the then Chief Minister (Farooq Abdullah) with active support of the some police officers.

She said the payoff revelations made by Gen Singh has provided JK politicians an opportunity to introspect. She said Delhi knows the pulse of people in JK. “We need to convey to Delhi that we aren’t stooges and robots that would act on their instructions. We have to decide that are we part of a democratic set up by conviction or compulsion,” she said. “It was after 1975 accord Delhi became sure of the mood of JK leaders. Had our leaders not done what Delhi wanted them to do, probably at present, we would have been most trusted people in India.”

Mehbooba said that her father and PDP patron Mufti Muhammad Sayeed never sought votes in favour of Plebiscite. “We have to take steps that none of us takes U-turn later,” she said. “It is strange that ever after 65 years, we are being labeled as agents of Delhi,” she said.

Mehbooba said that the meaning of Azadi have changed in present times. “If we see Lebanon and many other countries in the middle-east, they are living a better life despite the fact they were once demanding freedom. This is because of the politico-developmental arrangements made there that have satisfied both the groups,” she said. “It is high time for the Government of India to implement the recommendations of all the five Working Groups constituted by the Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on JK affairs.”

While concluding her speech, Mehbooba said that there has to be a thorough probe into revelations made by Gen Singh. “We want to send a strong message to Delhi that JK politicians are not a saleable commodity,” she said.

Mir’s presence in...

Taking part in the discussion in the Legislative Assembly on former Army Chief General VK Singh’s allegations that JK ministers were on Army payrolls, Kamaal said it was unfortunate that a Minister tried to topple the government he is part of.

“This (allegation) is a blot on him. He should take moral responsibility and resign from the Cabinet,” Kamaal said. “His continuation in the Cabinet is not only an insult to the government but the Constitution as well as the party which has nurtured him.” As Kamaal continued with his speech, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah suddenly stood up and left the House in a huff.

However, before leaving, Omar summoned National Conference senior leader Abdul Gani Malik at his place and was seen discussing something with him for a brief time.

Kamaal, however, continued unfazed. He said the allegations by Singh were “treason with the country” and demanded that he should apologize.

Kamaal did not spare even the Peoples Democratic Party over the allegations leveled by party president Mehbooba Mufti earlier during her speech that National Conference founder Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah was responsible for rendering JK’s democratic institutions weak.

“If he (Sheikh) wouldn’t have shaken hand with government of India then your father would have been on road and not have been the former Union Home Minister,” Kamaal hit out at Mehbooba.

He said the NPP chief Bhim Singh revealed earlier in a press conference that huge money was spent on creation of PDP.

“They are the creation of same Army officer (VK Singh) who played a critical role in their emergence in south Kashmir during his tenure as chief of the victor force (counter insurgency wing of army). They would hide in the army camps in south Kashmir,” Kamaal said.

“They acted like Jaffar and Sadiq to push Kashmir in the situation in which we find it today,” he said.

Now, he continued, they (PDP) were claiming that government should open “this route and that route” connecting Kashmir with central Asia and beyond.

“It is because of Sheikh Sahib that a person from scheduled caste category holds the position of Deputy Chief Minister and another person from the same caste was the Chief Secretary of the State,” Kamaal said.

He accused Mehbooba of wasting time of the House with her “meaningless speech.”

Eng Rashid:

Independent legislator Eng Rashid emphasized the need for an investigation into Singh’s allegations.

However he opposed the demand for making Singh to stand in the House, saying: “We don’t have any moral authority to take action against Singh Sahib unless an action is taken against the Minister (Mir),” Rashid said. “This government has no guts to take action against him.”

He asked the legislators to stop calling each other agents of the security agencies. “Were not Javid Shah, Kuka Parray and another person from Bandipora part of this State Legislature in the past? Singh has not said anything wrong,” Rashid said.

Rashid said he congratulates Singh for taking the mask off many faces. “There are many more people who are hiding behind the masks,” Rashid said.

He said Kashmir issue has been turned into a business and it should be given the status of an industry.

MY Tarigami:

State Secretary CPI-M M Y Targami said the revelations by Singh were “blot on India and institution of Army.”

“It is not acceptable. We demand a probe by a Supreme Court judge to bring facts to fore,” Tarigami demanded.

GM Saroori:

Congress legislator GM Saroori, while condemning Singh’s remarks, questioned their timing.

“It is a move to defame Central and State governments. He should be brought here and asked to prove his allegations, and if he can’t he should be taken to court,” Saroori demanded.

UGC releases list of 21 fake universities operating in 9 states

Srinagar, Oct 7: The University Grants Commission (UGC) has come up with the list of 21 ‘fake’ universities operating out of different parts of the country. The maximum numbers of such universities are from Uttar Pradesh followed by Delhi.

As per the UGC notice, “UGC Act prohibits the word ‘University’ by any institution other than a university established by or under a Central or a State Act.”

“Students and public at large are hereby informed that the UGC has identified 21 self styled, unrecognized institutions in nine states, which are functioning in contravention of the provisions of the UGC Act. All these institutions have been declared as fake and do not have any right to confer degree,” UGC said.

UGC has also warned these universities of severe actions, it said, “...running of undergraduate or post-graduate degree courses and giving misleading advertisements shall attract severe actions under UGC Act, IPC etc.”

UTTAR PRADESH

There are nine universities from Uttar Pradesh that have been declared fake, the universities are Varanaseya Sanskrit Vishwavidyalaya, Varanasi; Mahila Gram Vidyapith (Women’s University) Allahabad; Gandhi Hindi Vidyapith, Allahabad; National University Of Electro Complex Homeopathy, Kanpur; Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Open University, Aligarh; Uttar Pradesh Vishwavidyalaya, Mathura; Maharana Pratap Shiksha Niketan Vishwavidyalaya, Pratapgarh; Indraprastha Shiksha Parishad, Noida and Gurukul Vishwavidyalaya, Mathura.

The UGC has put Bharatiya Shiksha Parishad in the list but with a note that the matter is subjudice.

DELHI

There are five universities from Delhi in the list of fake universities; the universities are Commercial Universities Ltd, United Nations University, Vocational University, ADR Centric Judicial University and Indian Institute of Science and Engineering.

BIHAR

Mithila University from Darbhanga is the only university from Bihar in the list of fake universities published by the commission.

KARNATAKA

Badaganvi Sarkar World Open University run by the Badaganvi Sarkar World Open University Education Society operating out of Gokak in Belgaum is the university from Karnataka in the list.

KERALA

St. John’s University from Kishanattam in Kerala is the one university from the state in the list.

MADHYA PRADESH

Madhya Pradesh also has one university, Keserwani Vidyapith among the list of 21 fake university published by the UGC.

MAHARASHTRA

Raja Arabic University from Nagpur is the one university from Maharashtra among 21 fake varsities.

TAMIL NADU

DDB Sanskrit University from Pudur area in the Trichi district of Tamil Nadu is the only one university from Tamil Nadu.

WEST BENGAL

Indian Institute of Alternative Medicine from Kolkata is the one institution from the state of West Bengal in the list of ‘fake university’. GNN

Indo-Pak Army...

Indian and Pakistani officials to tackle issue of intrusion across the Line of Control.

“Our Prime Minister during the talks said that the Army of both the countries could only tell and exchange inputs on real situation on the LOC to which Sharif agreed,” he said.

Khurshid said that Sharif himself appeared uncomfortable over the terrorist activities and wanted good relations with India but some elements from Pakistan were proving hurdle in this. ■

Haven’t done...

the Assembly on former Army Chief’s accusations.

“No country can survive without its army as territories need to be protected,” he said, adding that when militancy was at its peak, Army played a vital role in bringing normalcy after which politicians again joined the fray. Nobody is agent here. All of us are here with the active support of people,” Mir said.

He said when allegations are leveled against each other, suspicions arise.

“If we have credibility only then we will survive in politics,” Mir said. He said that he hasn’t done anything wrong. “I have done nothing that would force my colleagues here to put their heads down in shame,” Mir said.

Militants attack...

Sources in police said that unidentified militants lobbed a grenade and opened fire on a bunker of CRPF 179 battalion near State Bank of India in Main Chowk Sopore at around 9:15 p.m.

“No one was injured in the attack,” sources said, adding that the area was cordoned off by soldiers of 22 RR and SOG but no one was arrested. GNN

Army Commander...

Lt Gen Chachra particularly briefed the Governor about the several incidents of large-scale infiltration from across the LOC in the Keran Sector, he said.

Lt Gen Gurmit Singh, Corps Commander, 15 Corps, was present during the meeting.

Malik not allowed...

The senior separatist leader said that there are thousands of such families. “I have seen a woman of Batamaloos suffering from cancer and her husband was not allowed to meet her in her last days,” he said, adding that body of a Kashmir youth was lying at Wagah border for eight days as his relatives were not provided with travel documents. “Later he was buried at Wagah border,” he said.

Malik said, in contrast, the British government set free Jawahar Lal Nehru after his wife was critical and was taken for special treatment outside the country.

Malik said after the elevation of Narendra Modi of BJP, the Congress-led government at Center has become crueler and hell has been broken loose on the people of Kashmir.

He said that by doing all this, Congress is trying to gain and it has become like an offshoot of RSS. “Hanging of Muhammad Afzal Guru is one of the examples,” he said adding that 20 year old cases against Kashmiri youth are being reopened and they being convicted. “They are being given life imprisonments,” he said. “Congress now wants to show that they are true nationalists,” he said.

JKLF chairman said that such tactics would “not deter the people of Kashmir and the separatist leadership from demanding freedom.”

KARRA SLAMS GOVT:

Senior PDP leader and former Finance Minister Tariq Hameed Karra has strongly condemned the government’s “arbitrary” move of disallowing Malik from meeting his family.

In a statement issued, Karra said resorting to the inhuman tactics of forcibly keeping Malik away from his family is not only despicable bullying tactics of the government, but speaks volumes about the extent to which the government can stoop to persecute Kashmiri separatist leaders. “This is the most unfortunate thing to happen in a civilized society,” he said.

Karra said using such detestable tactics to cow down the separatist leaders reflects the prejudiced mindset of the government. “Such savage and tyrannical methods are not even used during the wars against enemies,” he said and added that the government should not only allow Malik to visit Nepal to meet his wife and daughter there but also provide his family the requisite travel documents so that they can be together.

He said instead of resorting to medieval methods of repression, the government must strengthen the process of reconciliation in Jammu and Kashmir by involving all the stakeholders including the separatists to find an amicable and long-lasting solution to the Kashmir problem.

SHRC seeks report on plight on Central Jail inmates

Srinagar, Oct 7: Taking suo-moto cognizance of the news reports highlighting living conditions of inmates in Central jail Srinagar, the State Human Rights Commission (SHRC) has issued notice to state home department asking for a detailed report on the issue. In an order Rafiq Fida, member SHRC, has asked the registry of the Commission to treat the news item as a complaint and issue notices along with a copy of the news report to Principal Secretary to Government (Home) Department, DGP, ADGP Prisons and Superintendent Central Jail Srinagar for submitting their respective factual reports in the matter. “The Commission deems it proper to visit the Central Jail Srinagar on 10.10.2013 and have an on spot inspection of the living condition of the inmates and the basic facilities being provided to them. Secretary of the Commission is directed to inform the Government and Superintendent Central Jail Srinagar regarding the proposed inspection by the Commission.” The Commission’s order reads. (GNN)

₹ 1.19 cr can’t...

He quickly went on to add that it was not possible to pull down a democratically elected government with the help of an amount that can’t even satisfy a Sarpanch.

Participating in the discussion on Gen Singh’s explosive payoff revelations in the Legislative Assembly here, Baig said is the government led by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah so weak that it could be toppled with just Rs 1.19 crore. “When the State was sold along with its people by the Britishers to the then Maharaja, the deal was to the tune of Rs 75 lakh. One can better realize how the retired Army General stated that the secret intelligence unit – TSD – paid Rs 1.19 crore to Mir to topple the elected government in the state,” Baig said. “This amount can’t even satisfy a Sarpanch, if he/she is asked to change the party or stance.”

He said JK politicians have been caught in a quagmire since 1947. “Things turned ugly after 1996 as contesting elections was like putting life in the line of fire. Even I had made a will in 1996 before contesting elections,” he said. “Present situation is such that I have no guts to go to the people and tell them be ready for elections. I am afraid if five young boys would stand up and ask me how much money you have received from the Army for the rally, I have no answers.”

The former law minister said moral integrity is more important than territorial integrity. “I must say here that this House is not divided. All of us are sailing in the same boat,” he said. Baig said that the former General is not Indian army as he is just a retired General. “General Singh has a history. He had made a declaration that if he would be made Chief of the Army staff, he won’t take up the age row issue. “But he still approached the Supreme Court,” Baig said. He said that Rs 1.19 crore can buy some stone-pelters but can’t topple the elected government.

“Whatever money was transacted to JK, if at all, was not under operation Sadbhavana. “Operation Sadbhavana is a different issue. A Military Intelligence unit was created here which according to Gen Singh would help bring stability,” he said. Baig said it was strange to see Gen Singh’s allegations that Army released money for the conduct of Panchayat elections. “About these elections, Prime Minister stated not only once, but thrice, that people of JK have expressed faith in democracy by registering 75-80 per cent voting,” Baig said. “By saying that Panchayat elections were conducted after Army funding, Gen Singh has put lives of all 33000 Sarpanchs and Panchs at risk.”

Gen Singh, Baig said, has stated that JK ministers were receiving funds since 1947. “That means he is leveling allegations against Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah, Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad and G M Shah as well. They can’t defend themselves as they are not alive at present. But it is our duty to deal with this issue,” Baig said. “Gen Singh’s allegations have cast a shadow on the electoral politics of the State.”

Baig said Gen Singh’s revelations have put the good work done by army at the back burner—helping people in earthquake, opening of schools and hospitals. “It was strange to see that he first revealed that Agriculture Minister Ghulam Hassan Mir has been given Rs 1.19 crore and then he stated he (Mir) was not less than a God and that he was a true Indian nationalist,” Baig said. “What kind of friendship is this? On one hand, he terms Mir as not less than God, and on the other hand accuses him of receiving money.”

“I challenge Gen Singh to reveal the names of ministers who have received Army funds. If he is really an Army General he should reveal the names,” Baig said.

He said there is a need of thorough probe into the allegations leveled by Gen Singh. “The mistake of a General is a General of all mistakes,” Baig said.

Govt faces heat...

contested the figure saying hundreds of such violations have taken place in Srinagar city.

“This is totally wrong and I don’t know why are they distorting figures. An official report has revealed that 2500 structures have come up in violation and even SMC Commissioner admitted that 1377 such structures have been detected in the city,” he said.

Mincing no words in castigating Srinagar Municipal Corporation for “failing to act against illegal constructions,” Ashraf said the body has failed in discharging its responsibilities.

“It is the High Court which is performing the duties of SMC,” he said, accusing the Corporation of making BOCA “dead” and “flourishing corruption” by clearing cases in single window system.

Ghulam Qadir Pardesi of NC also came down heavily on the government for failing to curb vandalism of Srinagar by turning “every house into commercial complex”.

“In places like Jawahar Nagar, every house has been turned into shopping complex. This is a matter of serious concern and needs urgent attention,” he said.

Intervening in the debate, Chairman Legislative Council Amrit Malhotra said the lopsided development has marred the beauty of Srinagar.

“The ill-planning has distorted the picture of Srinagar,” he said.

Malhotra said the House Committee constituted by him over illegal constructions would be re-constituted.

Replying to supplementaries, Jora hinted at the possibility of collusion between government officials and builders.

“Some officials may be hand-in-glove with them but most of the cases are sub-judice,” he said.

Jora said around 1400 cases are sub-judice in Srinagar alone. On this, several legislators asked him to get the stay vacated promptly to take action against the violators.