

NEWS WRAP

AGD

2010. KASHMIR VALLEY witnessed the third angry summer in a row, leading to deadly clashes between stone throwing protesters and heavily armed security forces. In spite of young Muslims across North Africa and the Arabian peninsula rising up against dictatorial governments since Feb 2011, Kashmir Valley, a mostly Muslim region is unexpectedly tranquil. While Indian soldiers are seen as an occupying force and draconian laws shield security forces from prosecution, tourism and business are booming in Kashmir Valley. Without any grand bargain being struck in Kashmir Valley, there has been a visible improvement in terms of the relationship between the Indian government and Kashmiri separatists, the relationship between India and Pakistan, and the quality of governance. Talks between India and Pakistan, which remained suspended since Nov 2008 after the attack on Mumbai by militants from Pakistan, have resumed since July 2011. The two countries have announced a series of measures aimed at easing restrictions at the Line of Actual Control, the de facto border between the parts of Kashmir, each country controls. Indian security forces have received new training and equipment that allows them to control restive crowds armed with nothing but rocks, without resorting to lethal force. Across the streets of Central Srinagar, dozens of bunkers have been removed, lifting the sense of siege. Young Kashmiris are back on university campuses and cricket fields, and the jobs in offices, family orchards and guesthouses. The night time checkpoints have been sharply curtailed. The deployment of heavily armed paramilitary forces on the streets of city neighbourhoods has been reduced. Criminal investigations have been opened on allegations of rape by security forces. However, separatist leaders are continuing the struggle for self-determination which they interpret as integration with Pakistan.

SEX SELECTION TESTS

When it comes to sex determination in India, doctors and patients act closely using ultra sound, which is used for many other medical conditions. Sex selection tests are more common among India's educated urban populace, than the rural masses. A recent Union Ministry of Health Survey indicates that Sex Ratio at Birth (SRB), under 0 to 4 years and in all ages in rural areas is better than in urban areas. There are under 900 women for every 1000 men, in 44% of the 284 districts. Uttarakhand has the lowest female births, and Chattisgarh the highest. Educated people who are better off, are opting for sex tests.

VENGEANCE

Legal proceedings and enquiry commissions on killings and atrocities allegedly by the CPI(M) over the last four decades have been set up in West Bengal. "Political revenge" covers dead bodies in Sainbari, Garbeta, refugee camps in Marichjhanpi and attacks on Anandmargis. Trinamul Congress is attacking Left Front panchayat members and poor farmers, who are patta and barga holders. Around forty Left Front workers and supporters have been killed since the West Bengal Assembly elections of April/May 2011. About 42000 Left minded people have been rendered homeless in violence by Trinamul Congress and Congress supporters. 750

CPI(M) party offices are forcibly taken over. Twenty three women supporters have been raped and over 500 assaulted.

RIOTS IN ENGLAND

August 6, 2011 saw a night of rioting and looting in the north London district of Tottenham, which resulted in twenty six police officers injured. In the middle of a peaceful demonstration over the shooting of local resident Mark Duggan, who was killed after an exchange of gunfire with specialist firearms police on 04 Aug, 2011, the rioting commened. Police officers undertaking a preplanned operation, shot Mr Duggan, while in a minicab. The protests deteriorated into criminal and violent disorder, and arson and looting. The man shot in a cab was a twenty-nine-year-old black man, a suspected drug dealer. Around eight persons died in the unrest. British authorities tripled police presence and asserted the primacy of law. But the rioting mobs were full of destructive mischief, as police remained in the front. The violence erupted overnight in several other cities, including Liverpool, Nottingham, Bristol, Kent and Birmingham. British society is already under severe economic strain, and faced new questions about the political sustainability of the Cameron government's spending cuts, particularly the deep cut backs in social progress. Spending cuts have affected Britain's poor severely, including large numbers of the minority youths, who have led the forefront of the unrest. The week's violence and arson brought into prominence the resentment and dislocation among the have-nots of British society. □□□