

Baatcheet - Indian Army Bulletin

Serial Number 153, June 1984

Introduction

1. It is amply evident now that the decision to employ the army in Punjab to deal with the tragic situation was taken by the authorities reluctantly as a last resort. Akali Dal could not be brought to the negotiating table. No final settlement could be accomplished. Unfortunately, the Akali movement ultimately went out of the control of the moderate leaders and the extremist took over. The places of worship became their secure bases from where they carried out their unlawful activities.

The Army Action

2. Being pledged to democracy and secularism, it has been a practice of the Government to honor the religious sentiments of every community. Accordingly, police entry into the places of worship was not permitted, although there is no written law, which expressly prohibits it. Government showed utmost patience in dealing with the terrorists, who had taken shelter in the Gurudwaras and were issuing death warrants, killing innocent people all over the country belonging to every community. Lawlessness prevailed over a long time. These terrorists, criminals, murderers, smugglers and other undesirable elements wanted the police, taking shelter in the Gurudwaras, started organizing themselves for anti national activities. A large quantity of arms, ammunition, sophisticated transmitting equipment recovered by us during the action and Pakistani nationals dressed as Nihangs prove their evil designs. Countries inimical to us and some disgruntled ex-servicemen also helped extremists by training them. The temples were converted into fortresses and unlawful activities continued unabated. Some of our innocent countrymen were administered oath in the name of religion to support extremists and actively participated in the act of terrorism. These people wear a miniature kirpan round their neck and are called "Amritdharis".

3. Under such circumstances, the Government had to act promptly and sternly, for the benefit of all of us, to protect the sanctity of our religious places and preserve unity and integrity of the country as a whole. Besides the police and para-military forces, the military also had to be brought on the scene to deal with the situation.

4. The army action has been appreciated by all. Our officers and men have shown unprecedented courage in facing the terrorists who indulged in the most brutal acts of even blowing up our men with lethal devices. The army has exhibited great restraint and discipline by not even pointing their weapons towards Harmandar Sahib from where the terrorists kept showering bullets on them. Those who took part in the action belonged to all communities. Having taken oath to maintain sanctity of the holy place, they displayed indomitable will and unprecedented loyalty. Everyone is proud of our men that even under great provocation they maintained their balance.

An Appeal

5. Although majority of the terrorists have been dealt with and bulk of arms and ammunitions recovered, yet a large number of them are still at large. They have to be subdued to achieve the final aim of restoring peace in the country. Any knowledge of the "Amritdharis" who are dangerous people and pledged to commit murder, arson and acts of terrorism should be immediately brought to the notice of the authorities. These people may appear harmless from outside but they are basically committed to terrorism. In the interest of us all, their identity and whereabouts must always be disclosed.

6. We keep our ears and eyes open; never listen to rumours and malicious propaganda being planned and carried out by the enemy agents.

7. Our integrity and loyalty to the country could never be questioned. We have a long tradition of sacrifices for our Sacred Mother Land. Our forefathers taught us to always live for the well being of the country as a whole. It is our bounden duty now to protect the National interest at all costs.

Conclusion

8. Army is absolutely an apolitical organization. Narrow considerations of caste, creed and communal feelings have never betrayed us. We belong to the country and re-dedicate ourselves to sacrifice everything for its honor, unity and security. Whatever happened was unavoidable. We must learn from it that we do not fall prey to the designs of external forces.