

India west
2/1/96



Dr. Krishna Reddy (l), chairman of the Gandhi Peace Center in Los Angeles, Jeevan Zutshi (c), national director of the Indo-American Kashmiri Forum, with P. N. Raina, secretary of Panun Kashmir, during their visit to Jammu recently.

Govt. Blamed for Plight of Hindu Refugees in J&K

By a Staff Reporter

FREMONT, Calif. — A two-member delegation from California that returned here after a visit to various Jammu camps housing displaced Hindus, victims of militancy in the Kashmir Valley, has alleged that the conditions in the camps have deteriorated over the last two years.

Jeevan Zutshi, national director of the Indo-American Kashmir Forum, and Dr. Krishna Reddy, former chairman of the FIA of Southern California and currently chief of the Los Angeles-based Gandhi Peace Center, visited the camps last month. Panun Kashmir, an organization espousing the cause of Kashmiri Pandits, took

the two around the camps, a press release here said.

Zutshi, who visited the camps two years ago as a member of the FIA of Northern California, in the release charged the Muslim militants with indulging in "ethnic cleansing" of the Hindu minorities in the valley in its fight to have the state merged with Islamic Pakistan.

The government of India has "completely written off" Kashmiri Pandits by allowing the situation to worsen, Zutshi said, adding: "The genocide of Hindus in Jammu & Kashmir was swept under the carpet to hide the ugly face of Muslim communalism, fundamentalism and separatism."

According to Zutshi, the Indian authorities failed to take note of the militant propaganda in the earlier years of separatism when the violence was directed against Kashmiri Hindus. "The poor understanding of Kashmir affairs and the delay by the V.P. Singh government in reacting to the initial spurt of militancy are the main reasons for the current sorry state of affairs," he pointed out.

He also blamed Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao for not responding to a number of issues that were raised in a memorandum submitted to Rao during his visit to New York in October last year. Zutshi personally submitted the memorandum to Rao.

Zutshi said the Indo-American Kashmir Forum supports the goals and objectives of Panun Kashmir, which, among other things, has been demanding the formation of a separate homeland for Kashmiri Pandits with the status of a union territory.

He also said that moved by the sorry state of affairs in the camps, the Gandhi Peace Center has donated Rs. 100,000 to the Shirya Bhatt Medical Mission in Jammu that is striving to provide minimum medical facilities to displaced Hindus in the state.

Decline in Infant Mortality Rate

NEW DELHI (PTI) — The in-