

# ‘War can’t fetch Kashmir peace’

Rising Kashmir News

Srinagar, Oct 29:

Peace in Kashmir could be achieved through serious political steps rather than sustaining a war, prominent civil libertarian, P V Rajagopal said here Friday. Rajagopal was in Valley at head of a civil society delegation that interacted with opinion makers, politicians and separatists including Syed Ali Geelani.

“Mediating between people of Kashmir and Indian government is a serious job. Considering the level of protests the people here displayed, this effort should have been rather more serious,” he said in response to a query about the composition of the panel that has just concluded its first tour to Kashmir. “It shows,” Rajagopal added, “either the government of India is unconcerned with whatever is happening or is completely ignorant about the real issues confronting Kashmir.”

Asserting that the Kashmir problem spanned many layers, the noted activist said perpetual sufferings of people, political aspirations and the question of governance are equally crucial to any effort that aims at ending the popular unrest in Kashmir.

Without putting down Professor Radha Kumar, Dilip Padgaonkar or M M Ansari – the trio that will be shuttling between Delhi and Srinagar over next one year – Rajagopal said, “I would suggest Kuldip Nayar and Swami Agnivesh.”

Admitting that the India’s policy establishment has been undergoing chronic misunderstanding about the problems facing people living in hilly terrains, he said, “the dialogue between civil society of Kashmir that of India would help build pressure on the government vis-à-vis restoration of civil liberties and restoration of democracy, which in India has turned into an expression of money power.”

Regretting the escalation of race for arms in Indian subcontinent, Rajagopal noted that India was racing to become the region’s number-one country in terms of defense spending, “but our country has more poverty than Pakistan and China. We are mistaken if we think wars will fetch peace. We should at once focus on social and economic development.”

Social worker from Hyderabad Mazhar Hussain and columnist from Maharashtra Jaitin Desai were also part of the delegation. “This is a private initiative to express solidarity with Kashmiris. Governments or political parties don’t build public opinion. We shall be coming here every month and inviting Kashmiri opinion makers to various state capitals across India. The initiative would be supported by mutual cooperation,” said Mazhar.