CHAPTER III

GROWTH OF TERRORISM

On 19 July 1982 Shri Amrik Singh, President, All India Sikh Students Federation (AISSF) was arrested in connection with a case of an attempted murder. The same day Sh. Bhindranwale shifted his headquarters from Chowk Mehta to Guru Nanak Niwas within the Golden Temple complex.

The AISSF started from June 1983 onwards to use Gurmat Camps to propagate extremism and communal ideology and to impart training in arms.

On 5 October 1983 a bus was hijacked near Dihilwan in Kapurthala district and 6 Hindu passengers were murdered after being segregated from other passengers. On 18 November 1983 another four Hindu passengers travelling in a bus in Amritsar district were similarly killed.

The situation had acquired dimensions which had wider implications for the security and the unity and integrity of the country. Recognising this the Chief Minister of Punjab resigned and the State was brought under President's rule with effect from 6 October 1983.

On 15 December 1983 Sh. Bhindranwale moved from the Guru Nanak Niwas to the Akal Takht with his armed entourage. From this sanctuary he and his associates intensified
incitements of violence and communal hatred. An important target of extremists were those Sikhs who opposed their anti-national activities. They were liquidated in a planned manner. A similar fate befell those within the Golden Temple complex who were judged to have defied the authority of the extremists. Several were tortured and subjected to painful death, their bodies then being thrown into open drains.

A Punjab bandh was called on 8 February 1984, which was followed by a bandh on 14 February 1984 called by the Hindu Suraksha Samiti. Serious clashes and violence resulted in the death of 11 persons. Some Hindu fanatics committed the sacrilege of damaging the model of the Golden Temple and a picture of Guru Ram Das at the Amritsar Railway Station.

There was violence in Haryana also. More innocent lives were lost including those of 8 Sikhs in Panipat on 19 February 1984. The pattern of violence now clearly bore the impress of a well-thought-out plan to plunge Punjab into anarchy. People were killed at random. Nine were shot dead on 21 February 1984, 12 on 22, 11 on 23 February and again 3 on 24 February. Shri H.S. Manchanda, President of the Delhi Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, was shot dead in Delhi on 28 March 1984 and Dr V.N. Tewari, MP, a professor at the Punjab University.
University, on 3 April 1984 in Chandigarh.

Over the period from 1 October 1983 to 31 May 1984, 24 banks were robbed. Large amounts of cash were looted and guards and other personnel killed.

A College Principal in Ferozepur was shot dead on 1 April 1984. Murders of prominent politicians, religious leaders and journalists followed. On 11 May 1984, a kar seva truck belonging to the Mehta Chowk gurdwara was apprehended and stenguns, arms and ammunition recovered. Shri Bhindranwale sent out instructions that in the event of any Government action, terrorists in the rural areas were to kill Hindus and Central Government employees and to move in large numbers to the Temple.

Several secessionist Sikh organisations are operating abroad. The Chief among them which have raised the slogan of 'Khalistan', or a 'separate Sikh State' are the National Council of Khalistan, Dal Khalsa, Babbar Khalsa and Akhand Kirtani Jatha. The National Council of Khalistan, headed by Dr Jagjit Singh Chauhan is active in the UK, West Germany, Canada and the USA. The Dal Khalsa activities are mainly in the UK and West Germany, while the Babbar Khalsa is operating largely from Vancouver in Canada. The Akhand Kirtani Jatha has units in the UK and Canada. These organisations have been functioning as conduits for assistance from external sources.
The militant organisations are the Khalistan Commando Force (KCF), Khalistan Liberation Front (KLF), Bhindranwale Tiger Force of Khalistan (BTFK) and Babbar Khalsa. There are a number of other splinter groups operating in different areas. The individual militant organisations were functioning without overall control. The only leadership worth the name is the Panthic Committee, which is also fragmented. They split into two groups led by Manochal and Zafarwal of which Manochal exercised greater influence, particularly on the KCF, KLF, and BTFK. A third and stronger faction under Dr Sohan Singh emerged with greater influence on the Babbar Khalsa, KCF (Panjawar Group), KLF (Budh Singhwala Group), BTFK (Sanga Groups) and AISSF (Bittoo Group). The Manochal Group's influence is over KCF (Rajasthani) BTFK and AISSF (Manjit). The Zafarwal Group and a few independent militant groups also functioned on their own.

Despite continued terrorist activity over months until the end of May 1984, the government evidently did not think that storming the Golden Temple and flushing out Bhindranwale and his supporters would put an end to the violence in the state. It was the Akali decision to step up their agitation by blocking the movement of food-grains and the possibility of increased terrorist activity that
compelled the government to come to the conclusion that enough was enough. It undoubtedly felt that a surgical operation of a major dimension was necessary to prevent the cancer of violence from spreading further.

A year after Jagat Narain's assassination, his son was shot as were others who also fell victims to the militant's bullets: H.S. Manchanda, President of the Delhi Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, A.S. Atwal, DIG of police and Gaini Pratap Singh, retired Jathedar (Head priest) of the Akal Takht.

The Babbars were opposed to the manner in which Bhindranwale was acting and it is possible that Bhindranwale sensed that this could lead to some in-fighting and clashes between his followers and the Babbars. Bhindranwale also suspected that the centre may any day order his arrest from within the hostel complex. On 15 December, he persuaded G.S. Tohra to let him move into the Akal Takht as, according to him, he did not think that the Government would let the police move against him there since it would not like to risk hurting Sikh feelings and sentiments by doing so.

In the words of K.S. Brar:

Tohra was, in many ways, a coward and he was prepared to do anything to prevent Bhindranwale's arrest, fully realising that he needed his support at this juncture since he was being somewhat isolated by Longowal and Badal, and his authority as President of the Shiromani
Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee was slowly eroding. The High Priest of the Akal Takht, Giani Kirpal Singh, voiced his objection as no one had ever before resided in the Akal Takht. He said Bhindranwale would be committing sacrilege by doing so, since he would be living above the holy Granth Sahib which was kept on the ground floor during the night while scriptures were recited from it. The Priests were helpless, having been overruled by Bhindranwale who even threatened to have them replaced if need be. Longowal pleaded with Bhindranwale not to take this step but to no avail. From that day onwards, Longowal and Tohra were at loggerheads as the former could not forgive the latter for allowing Bhindranwale to move into the Akal Takht.

Having moved into the Akal Takht, Bhindranwale continued to cast his spell all over the countryside. The Akali leaders and the High Priests had virtually lost whatever hold they had, and the shots were now being called by Bhindranwale. He moved around the Temple freely, with his bodyguards wielding rifles, guns and revolvers. Sikhs came from all parts of the country to seek his blessings and to listen to his inflammatory speeches, which he generally delivered during the afternoons from atop the roof of the Langar surrounded by his armed supporters.

On 26 January 1984, India’s Republic Day, a Khalistani flag was hoisted atop one of the buildings within the Temple complex. His preachings stirred up anti-Hindu feelings to such an extent that by April-May of that year,

1. K.S. Brar, Operation Blue Star (New Delhi: WBSPD, 1993),
there began a large exodus of Hindus, most of whom belonged to the business community, from Punjab.

The Centre knew about the clandestine piling up of weapons inside the Golden Temple, a large number of which were highly sophisticated. The natural corollary to this development was that the job could no longer be handled by the police and the para military forces. It was the army alone that was capable of undertaking such a dangerous and highly sensitive operation.

In the intervening period, after the decision had been made, but before its actual execution, a number of secret parleys are believed to have been held, stretching late into the night, between the Centre and the Akali Dal emissaries in a bid to arrive at an acceptable and honourable settlement. However, even the slender hopes that existed of striking a last minute compromise with the Akali leaders, ran into heavy weather as a result of their disinclination to budge an inch from their declared stand.

Mrs. Gandhi, finally decided to use the army to flush out the militants from inside the Golden Temple at Amritsar, and other shrines in the State.

Lieutenant General R.S. Dyal, MVC, was deputed by the Army Commander to oversee operations being launched to
flush out militants from nominated gurudwaras within the State. Lieutenant General K. Gowari Shankar, MVC, General Officer Commanding 11 Corps (located at Jullundur) was entrusted the task of sealing the Indo-Pak border throughout the State to prevent infiltration of militants and arms from across the border, as also to ensure that Pakistan did not militarily exploit the situation to our detriment.

Whereas the Operation to flush out the militants was code-named 'Operation Blue Star', the sealing of the border came under the code name of 'Operation Wood Rose'.

Mrs Gandhi broadcast to the nation at 8.30 p.m. on June 2 over the television network. Mrs Gandhi referred to the fast deteriorating law and order situation in Punjab and the fact that anti-social elements had taken up residence within places of worship from where they were spreading terror and committing grave acts of violence throughout the State.

She made an appeal to the Akali leaders to call off their morcha which, they had announced, would commence the next morning (3 June), to prevent the movement of grain in the State. She said that the Government could no longer remain a silent and passive spectator to the happenings in Punjab, as also the secessionist movement designed to break up the country. Mrs Gandhi ended her broadcast by pleading:
"Let us join hands and shed hatred, rather than shed blood."

At 9 p.m. on the 3rd, curfew was clamped down around the Golden Temple at Amritsar, and all over Punjab for a period of 36 hours. This was a clear indication that army action was imminent.

By 7 June, with Bhindranwale's death, the fight had virtually ended. With top leadership comprising Bhindranwale, Amrik Singh and Shabeg Singh having been eliminated, there was no one left in their command post at the Akal Takht to take over. All the subsequent actions were directionless and the handiwork of a few die-hards.

The President of India, Giani Zail Singh visited the Golden Temple on the 8th morning. By 10 June, Operation Blue Star was finally over.

The Government was insistent that repairs must be undertaken expeditiously, and the Temple restored to its original condition. The octogenarian and highly respected Baba Kharak Singh was the ideal choice to begin the kar seva, not only as one who had been directing kar seva on previous occasions over a period of many years, but also because he was greatly respected and had a very large following amongst the Sikhs.

The Akali Dal, wanted to extract maximum mileage from the damage caused to the Akal Takht as a result of the
Government having ordered army operations inside the Golden Temple complex. They wanted the Akal Takht to remain in its damaged condition, and to become a monument to "army aggression". They also wanted to use it as a catalyst to stir up the emotions and religious sentiments of the Sikh masses. The Akalis advised Baba Kharak Singh that it would be inopportune and not in the interests of the Sikh community if he were to undertake kar seva at this juncture, and he certainly shouldn't do so unless the army withdrew from the Temple. In all future parleys, thereafter, on the instructions of the Akali leaders, the Head Priests and functionaries of the SGPC rigidly made the total withdrawal of the army from the Temple premises a pre-condition to even discussing the question of kar seva.

It was in mid July, that the Nihang leader of the Buddha Dal, Baba Santa Singh arrived at Amritsar and began the kar seva to rebuild the Akal Takht. This move of the Government further angered the Sikhs and a large number of them gathered near the Temple shouting anti-Government slogans when Baba Santa Singh ceremoniously commenced his kar seva. There is no doubt that the back door entry of Santa Singh was resented by most Sikhs and viewed as Governmental interference.

Later, the rebuilt Akal Takht was demolished as, according to the Sikh leaders, it was the outcome of "sarkar
seva" (governmental construction) and not kar seva. For this act, Baba Santa Singh was later excommunicated and declared a tankhaiya (one who commits a Sikh religious offence), through a hukamnama issued by the Head Priests. The Government of India, issued a White Paper on the Punjab Agitation on 10 July, 1984.

According to the White Paper four distinct factors were noticeable at work in Punjab:

- The agitations sponsored by the Shiromani Akali Dal:

- A stridently communal and extremist movement which degenerated into open advocacy of violence and sanction for the most heinous crimes against innocent and helpless citizens and against the State:

- Secessionist and anti-national activities; and

- Involvement of criminals, smugglers, other anti-social elements and Naxalities who took advantage of the situation for their own ends.

The secessionist agitations and terrorist groups took advantage of the cover of agitations provided by the Akali Dal leadership to pursue a systematic plan of stockpiling of arms and ammunition in places of worship and of misusing the sacred precincts of the Golden Temple and other Gurdwaras to direct and commit acts of murder, sabotage, arson and loot. A determined effort was made to drive a wedge between Hindus and Sikhs.
A secessionist and anti-national movement with the active support of a small number of groups operating from abroad, dominated the scene. The Akali Dal leadership surrendered the initiative and control over the agitation to the terrorists.

After the Operation Blue Star, Sikhs all over the world held protest-demonstrations. The BBC and the British and American newspapers gave wide publicity to the Sikh anger. Dr J.S. Chauhan, head of the "Khalistan Council", was allowed to broadcast over the British Radio (Channel 4) that "Mrs Gandhi's end was now near, and that whosoever killed her would be rewarded by the British Sikhs with a lakh and a half pounds sterling". A militant Sikh organisation of the West was formed on 31 July, 1984, at New York, with Mr Didar Singh Bains of Yuba City, a multi-millionaire farmer, as President, and Maj. Gen. G.S. Bhullar, its General Secretary. Mr Ganga Singh Dhillon became its Executive member. They all talked of violence against the Indian state. Efforts were made to bring the Sikh question before the United Nations.

Two of the Sikh bodyguards of Mrs Gandhi assassinated her on the morning of Oct. 31, 1984, at her official residence in New Delhi.
By the afternoon of October 31, 1984 crowds began to gather around the All India Institute of Medical Sciences Hospital, New Delhi. The crowds chanted Indira Gandhi, Zindabad - Long live Indira Gandhi. The crowds' chant changed to: Khoon ka Badla Khoon say leyngey - we will avenge blood with blood. From the A.I.I.M.S., Hindu mobs fanned out to neighbouring highways, roads and markets. Sikh-owned shops were looted and then set on fire. Cars and buses were stopped, Sikh passengers pulled out and beaten up. If the car was driven by a Sikh, petrol was taken out of its tank, sprinkled on the seats and it was set on fire.²

At break of dawn of 1st November, truck-loads of hoodlums went round the city of Delhi setting fire to gurdwaras. Hundreds of young Sikhs were doused with petrol and set alight. Trains and buses coming in or going out of Delhi were halted, Sikh passengers dragged out and burnt alive. Hindus who tried to help their Sikh neighbours were threatened with violence. Nevertheless, many Sikh lives were saved by them.

Most of the looters and killers were sweepers, cobblers, day-labourers or beggars. The majority were between the ages of 12-30. Their main object was to loot.

For two days there was no law or order in India's capital city nor in major cities like Kanpur, Lucknow and Bokaro. On the second day, newspapers and the radio announced that Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code banning any gathering of five or more persons and night curfew had been imposed and that the police had been ordered to shoot law-breakers at sight. Nevertheless, the marauding went on. Ultimately, the army had to be called in.

A report entitled 'Who are the Guilty?' jointly published by the Peoples' Union for Democratic Rights and the Peoples' Union for Civil Liberties pointed that the guilty included H.K.L. Bhagat, senior member of Rajiv Gandhi's cabinet, four members of Parliament belonging to his party and innumerable members of the ruling Congress Party. Another commission of inquiry headed by a retired Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, S.M. Sikri and consisting of a panel of eminent retired civil servants including Badruddin Tyabji, Rajeshwar Dayal and Govind Narain likewise gave an indictment against Congress politicians, the police and Delhi Administration. A third report prepared by the Citizens for Democracy was released on the 29th January, 1985 by its Chairman, retired Supreme Court Justice V.M.Tarkunde. According to the report: "Kerosene was collected, killers were gathered from both outside and inside the localities, jhuggis (huts) and houses
of Sikhs identified". The Sunday, a widely circulated weekly from Calcutta, described Rajiv Gandhi's silence on the subject as "the first black mark he has got on his otherwise clean image."

Rajiv Gandhi's succession as Prime Minister was taken for granted and announced within a few hours of her death. Rajiv Gandhi called the elections. The Hindu backlash formed the central theme of the campaign. All papers carried full page advertisements showing barbed-wire entanglements and text asking: "Will the country's border finally be moved to your doorstep?" And "Why should you feel uncomfortable riding in a taxi driven by a taxidriver who belongs to a different state?" Huge hoardings showed two Sikhs in uniform shooting at blood-stained Mrs Gandhi against the back-drop of a map of India, or Mrs Gandhi's body lying in state with the Congress party candidate's picture doing homage to her. The 1984 Parliamentary election was a land-slide for Rajiv Gandhi.

Several factors helped Rajiv Gandhi to deal with the Punjab crisis with determination. In the words of Khushwant Singh, "The days of the proud Sardar were over and he had lost much of his swagger. At long last, Akali leaders realised the enormous damage they had done to their own community and became more amenable to reason. At the
same time, Rajiv Gandhi and his advisers also sensed the peril of having a community of 14 million located on the most sensitive border of the country being in a mood of sullen rebellion. "3 Akali leaders were released, the ban on the All India Sikh Students Federation was removed, special courts were abolished, and an enquiry into the anti-Sikh violence was instituted.

Rajiv Gandhi, and Governor Arjun Singh, played their cards with great skill. Rajiv Gandhi took leaders of the Opposition parties in confidence. Every negotiation with the Akalis was discussed with them and it was only after he had sensed their approval for the way he was handling the problem that he called Sant Longowal to negotiate a detailed settlement.

The Rajiv-Longowal Accord

On Wednesday, the 24th July, 1985, an accord was signed between Rajiv Gandhi and Sant Harchand Singh Longowal.

Provisions of the Accord:

1. Compensation to Innocent Persons Killed

Along with Exgratia payment to those innocent killed in agitation or any action after 1.8.1982, compensation for property damaged will also be paid.
2. Army Recruitment

All citizens of the country have the right to enrol in the army and merit will remain the criterion for selection.

3. Enquiry into November Incidents

The jurisdiction of Mr Justice Ranganath Mishra Commission enquiring into the November riots of Delhi would be extended to cover the disturbances at Bokaro and Kanpur also.

4. Rehabilitation of those Discharged from the Army

For all those discharged, efforts will be made to rehabilitate and provide gainful employment.

5. All-India Gurdwara Act

The Government of India agrees to consider the formulation of an All-India Gurdwara Bill. Legislation will be brought forward for this purpose in consultation with Shiromani Akali Dal, others concerned and after fulfilling all relevant constitutional requirements.

6. Disposal of pending cases

1) The notifications applying the Armed Forces Special Powers Act, Punjab will be withdrawn.

Existing special courts will try only cases relating to the following type of offences:

A) Waging war

B) Hijacking

119
2) All other cases will be transferred to ordinary courts and enabling legislation if needed will be brought forward in the session of Parliament.

7. Territorial Claims

1) The capital project area of Chandigarh will go to Punjab. Some adjoining areas which were previously part of Hindi or the Punjabi regions were included in the Union Territory. With the capital region going to Punjab the areas which were added to the Union Territory from the Punjabi region of the erstwhile State of Punjab will be transferred to Punjab and those from Hindi region to Haryana. The entire Sukhna Lake will be kept as part of Chandigarh and will thus go to Punjab.

2) A commission will be constituted to determine the specific Hindi-speaking areas of Punjab which should go to Haryana, in lieu of Chandigarh.

   The principle of contiguity and linguistic affinity with a village as a unit will be the basis of such determination.

   The commission will be required to give its findings by December 31, 1985 and these will be binding on both sides.

3) The actual transfer of Chandigarh to Punjab and areas in lieu thereof to Haryana will take place simultaneously on January 26, 1986.
8. Centre-State Relations

1) Shiromani Akali Dal states that the Anandpur Sahib Resolution is entirely within the framework of the Indian constitution, that it attempts to define the concept of Centre-State relations in a manner which may bring out the true federal characteristics of the resolution to provide greater autonomy to the state with a view to strengthening the unity and integrity of the country, since unity in diversity forms the corner-stone of our national entity.

2) In view of the above, the Anandpur Sahib Resolution in so far as it deals with Centre-State relations, stands referred to the Sarkaria Commission.

9. Sharing of Rivers Waters

1) The farmers of Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan will continue to get water not less than what they are using from the Ravi-Beas system as on 1.7.1985.

2) The claims of Punjab and Haryana regarding the shares in their remaining waters will be referred for adjudication to a tribunal to be presided over by a Supreme Court Judge. The decision of this tribunal will be rendered within six months and would be binding on both parties.

3) The construction of the SYL canal shall continue. The canal shall be completed by August 15, 1986.
10. Representation of Minorities

Existing instructions regarding protection of interests of minorities will be recirculated to the State Chief Ministers (PM will write to all Chief Ministers).

11. Promotion of Punjabi Language

The central Government may take some steps for the promotion of the Punjabi language.

Shri G.S. Tohra, SGPC President, and Shri Parkash Singh Badal, former Chief Minister of Punjab, however, disapproved the accord and opposed every clause of the agreement signed by Shri Rajiv Gandhi and Sant Longowal.

On July 24, 1985, elections to the Punjab Assembly were announced. On August 20, Sant Longowal was shot dead.

The September 1985 elections in Punjab were held in an abnormal background. Both the Akali Dal and the Congress(I) had made the Rajiv Gandhi-Longowal accord the centre-piece of their election platform. The political parties which participated in elections were Congress (I), Akali Dal (L), Bharatiya Janata Party, Janata Party, Communist Party of India (Marxist Party). The main contenders for power were the Congress(I) and Akali Dal (L). Many people believed that the "deal" had been struck between
the Prime Minister and Sant Longowal. The nomination of comparatively unknown candidates by Congress (I) against the Akali stalwarts - men like Surjit Singh Barnala, Balwant Singh, Sukhjinder Singh, Ravi Inder Singh, Sukhdev Singh Dhindsa and some others confirmed this belief. Rajiv Gandhi in his campaign, refrained from attacking the Akali Dal (L).

Total votes polled were 66.5 per cent, and the Akali Dal won 73 seats. The Congress (I) secured 37.8 per cent votes with 32 seats. The CPI 4.5 per cent of votes with 1 seat, the CPI(M) 1.8 per cent with no seat. The BJP got 3.84 per cent votes with 4 seats. Janata Party got one seat, while four seats were secured by independents. The Akali Dal won a clear majority in the Assembly winning 73 seats.

Surjit Singh Barnala was elected leader of the Akali Dal legislature party and became the Chief Minister. After the installation of a popular ministry in Punjab, the army was removed from Punjab, anti-terrorists operations called off and a number of detenus, including several known terrorists were released from the jails.

In the 1985-elections the Shiromani Akali Dal (Longowal) emerged as a dominating party by capturing seven Parliamentary and seventy-three Assembly seats. It formed Government under the leadership of Surjit Singh Barnala who was also holding the post of party chief. In case of the
Congress Party it captured six Parliamentary and thirty-two Assembly seats. While, the Bharatiya Janata Party secured four seats, the Communist Party of India had to satisfy itself with a single seat.

The notable and significant development that took place in the elections was that the masses actively participated in the elections ignoring the call of boycott given by the 'United' Akali Dal, the Shiromani Akali Dal (Talwandi), AISSF and other extremist, separatist and terrorist organizations. The people also disowned the candidates who were representing extremism and separatism. Obviously, it was a popular verdict in favour of the Accord and the moderate Akalis.

On April 30, 1986, 28 Akali legislators walked out of the Party over the issue of Barnala having sent the police again to the Golden Temple to rescue it from the terrorists.

The moderate Sikhs demanded (i) the implementation of the Rajiv-Longowal Accord; (ii) release or trial of all Sikh prisoners and full rehabilitation of Sikh deserters from the army and (iii) trial of those guilty of violence against Sikhs in 1984, in Delhi and elsewhere.

Mercy was shown to about 2400 out of 2700 deserters from the army and they were duly rehabilitated.
commission under Justice Ranganath Misra was appointed to go into the November 1984 anti-Sikh riots in Delhi and elsewhere.

On August 10, 1986, a little over one year after his retirement, Gen. A.S. Vaidya, who was the C-IN-C at the time of "Operation Blue Star" was gunned down at Pune. On January 26, 1987 a Sarbat Khalsa was called by the militant leader, Gurdev Singh, who had by now appointed himself head of the Akal Takht. A Panthic Committee of five which had been constituted earlier on January 26, 1986 was reconstituted. The Convention dismissed the earlier SGPC-appointed Jathedars and nominated people of their own militant persuasion. Akali Ministers were asked to resign. A resolution favouring "Khalistan" was passed. In a gathering of about 25000 to 30000 Sikhs, the national flag was burnt and a Khalistani flag hoisted.

Mr Barnala blamed the non-implementation of the Accord as one of the main factors for his failure to contain violence. The accord was in danger of being forgotten. It provided for the transfer of Chandigarh to the Punjab and compensation in terms of land and money to Haryana. Haryana was hoping on getting the rich cotton-growing and predominantly Hindu and Hindi-speaking tehsils of Fazilka and Abohar as well as cash to build a new capital. The Mathew Commission appointed to settle the details denied it these tehsils because of one village, Kandukhera.
Justice Mathew refused to identify Hindi-speaking areas and suggested another Commission. The transfer of Chandigarh to Punjab scheduled for the Republic Day was postponed. The Second Commission under Justice Venkataramiah was able to identify 45,000 acres of Hindi speaking villages and recommended yet another Commission to locate another 25,000 acres making a total of 70,000 acres as fair compensation to Haryana. The transfer of Chandigarh was postponed to 15th July. A third Commission under Justice Desai was a non-starter as the Barnala government refused to accept its terms of reference. A fourth Commission was promised. The Times of India in an editorial said:

... the Centre is at last moving away from the amateurish practice of setting artificial deadlines - "Chandigarh to be transferred by January 26", "Chandigarh to be transferred by June 21", "Chandigarh to be transferred by July 15" - only to become a prisoner of these dates.

The more important part of the accord and one which affected the future of farmers in the region was the laying of the link canal to bring waters of Punjab rivers to Haryana and Rajasthan. The Punjab government was in no hurry to dig its part of the 35 miles. Haryana had already laid its portion of the link canal.

From the day the accord was signed, sections of Akalis had been eager to upset the apple-cart.

The report was criticized by all the rightist and leftist parties. The extremists and separatists again started reorganizing themselves. They, once again were able to establish their dominance in the Golden Temple complex as during the pre-Operation Blue Star period. They even started organizing 'Sarbat Khalsas'\(^6\) in the complex and criticized the moderate Akali leadership, openly. In a 'Sarbat Khalsa' which was held on January 27, 1986, the SGPC was dissolved and high priests were sacked. Jasbir Singh Rode, a nephew of Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, was appointed as the head priest of 'Akal Takht'. Moreover, a five-member committee\(^7\) known as 'Panthic Committee' was appointed in order to run the affairs of the community.

The Central government had been pursuing a policy of drift and had not implemented the Accord as promised. Such tactics helped the extremists and separatist forces.

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\(^6\) 'Sarbat Khalsa'—literal meaning is 'all the Khalsa'. It is representative meeting of all Sikh parties and groups convened by the 'Jathedar' of the 'Akal Takht' to consider important matters relating to the 'Panth'. The tradition goes back to the misl period of the eighteenth century. Its underlying theology is that of the Guru Panth.


\(^7\) The committee consisted of Wassan Singh, Roor Singh, Dhanna Singh, Gurbachan Singh and Gurdev Singh.
The failure of Akali government in tackling the extremists, separatists and terrorists resulted in deterioration of law and order day by day.\textsuperscript{8} The situation became critical, when the declaration to the effect of beginning the Sikhs' battle for the creation of 'Khalistan' was made by 'Panthic Committee' from inside the Golden Temple complex on April 29, 1986. The very next day, the commandos and paramilitary forces entered the temple to apprehend the involved elements. The entry of forces caused split in the Shiromani Akali Dal (Longowal), the dissidents organized themselves under the leadership of Parkash Singh Badal, a known rival of Surjit Singh Barnala for the Chief Ministership and who had been opposing the Punjab Accord right from the beginning.\textsuperscript{9} The split, however, did not cause the downfall of Barnala Government because other political parties such as the Congress Party, Bharatiya Janata Party, The Communist Party of India, the Communist Party of India (Marxist), lent their support to the government inside and outside the assembly.

The policy of appointing one commission after another rather than implementing the Accord in its true spirit by the Rajiv Gandhi Government, resulted in weakening the moderate Akali leadership. Since the split in their

\textsuperscript{8} The Tribune, January 27, 1986; Indian Express April 14, 1986.
\textsuperscript{9} The Tribune, May 1 & 4, 1986; July 6, 1986.
ranks, the Akalis had already been facing problems, and had become weak against the extremist, separatist and terrorist forces.

In the first week of May 1986 the ruling Akali Dal was plunged into a crisis by the resignations of Agriculture Minister Arminder Singh and Education Minister Sukhjinder Singh from the state Cabinet, and former Chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal and the ex-SGPC Chief Gurcharan Singh Tohra, from the Working Committee in protest against the police entry into the Golden Temple. The position of Chief Minister Barnala was not immediately threatened but the Akali Dal was faced with the threat of a party split.

Badal had become the rallying point of all dissidence in the ruling party. Gurcharan Singh Tohra, who had parted company with Badal, in September last at the time of Barnala's election as Akali party leader, had since gravitated back to the Badal fold. Siding with them were Arminder Singh (who had also resigned in June 1984 in the wake of Operation Blue Star, gave up his seat in Parliament, and left Congress-I) and Akali Dal hardliner-Sukhjinder Singh. The four leaders pointed out that they were opposed to the manner of the liberation of the complex with the help of the police, para-military forces and commandoes.

About 50 out of 73 Akali members were supposed to be supporters of Barnala, who in addition had the backing of
32 Congress (I) members giving him a comfortable majority in the House. On 4 May, 29 Akali dissident members of the State Legislature in a joint statement condemned the desecration of the holy shrine by the Barnala Government. Barnala took recourse to purchase support of MLAs by inducting 21 new ministers and raising the strength of his Cabinet to 29—seven ministers of Cabinet rank, and 20 ministers of State, and 2 Deputy Ministers. On 2 June 1986, a whip was issued by the ruling party, directing them to vote in favour of Mr Minhas in the election of the Vidhan Sabha Speaker. The whip was flouted. Barnala then urged the Speaker that action should be taken under the anti-defection law against the rebel Akali legislators who had flouted the party whip. Subsequently the Speaker sent show-cause notices to the legislators to explain why action should not be taken against them under the anti-defection law for having flouted the party whip. The Akali legislators belonging to the break-away group however filed a writ petition in the High Court challenging the validity of the Act. The Speaker disqualified and unseated 11 rebel Akali legislators including the former Chief Minister, Parkash Singh Badal. The validity of the anti-defection law was challenged in the Punjab and Haryana High Court by Badal. In a majority judgement, the High Court held that the provisions of the anti-defection Act were valid. The development came as a
major set back for the "Unified" Akali Dal. The party appeared to be in a disarray with its top leaders having been disqualified.

On 8 March 1987, national level leaders of nine political parties - the Congress (I), BJP, CPI, CPI(M), Lok Dal, AIDMK, AGP, National Conference (Farooq) and Akali Dal (L) in an unprecedented show of unity, at a mammoth all-party rally in Ludhiana rejected the demand for "Khalistan" and use of the Akal Takht for political and separatist activities.

On 11 May 1987, the Barnala Government was dismissed and President's rule in Punjab was imposed. The Central issue on which the dismissal was justified was on the ground of complete break-down of law and order in the State. The Punjab Governor, Sidhartha Shankar Ray, in his report recommending imposition of President's rule in the State, observed that the ruling party had lost the political will to combat terrorism. The Governor also stated that the writ of State Government had ceased to run in large areas of the State, particularly in almost all rural areas.

On 12 May, the Parliament approved the proclamation imposing President's rule in Punjab after the opposition in both the Houses had charged that the step had been taken to boost the Congress election prospects in
At least 85 lives had been lost during April in 350 incidents. In the first ten days of May, 100 incidents took place and 20 lives lost in the State on account of terrorist violence. On 12 May, the Punjab Government extended the State Director-General of Police, J.F. Ribeiro's term by one year. During one month under President's rule terrorist killings rose to 146 and the terrorists killed or captured were 404 during the same period.

In July 1987, the terrorists indulged in a heinous massacre. The slaughter of 70 bus passengers in Punjab and Haryana in Lalru and Fethahabad took place. During May-June 1988 the militants once again took over the Golden Temple and converted the rooms along the Parikarma into torture chambers. The Government had to take recourse to another surgical operation in the form of Operation Black Thunder.

The Rajiv Government was also making efforts to persuade extremists, separatists and terrorists for some sort of compromise by taking into confidence Darshan Singh Ragi, the then acting head priest of 'Akal Takht' and involving a Jain Muni named Sushil Kumar as the mediator. Muni himself claimed that he made contact with various extremist groups and succeeded in making a settlement with them under which, the extremist had pledged to work within the Indian Constitution in exchange for the release of all
prisoners except those who had been charged with heinous crimes. The efforts, however failed to bear any agreement. Muni blamed the Congress government which did not keep its words and he was given vague excuse of forthcoming assembly elections in Haryana.

The dismissal of Barnala government and imposition of President’s rule snowballed. The Shiromani Akali Dal (Longowal) condemned the dismissal very strongly. The Party Chief Surjit Singh Barnala blamed that the government had been dismissed to serve the interests of Congress Party in the Haryana assembly elections. While, the step was welcomed by the 'Unified' Akali Dal, its leadership described the action "a step in the right direction". The Bharatiya Janata Party expressed its satisfaction over the imposition of President’s rule, following the dismissal of the Barnala Government which had been its major demand. The party alleged that the Barnala Government was incapable of dealing effectively with anti-national and extremist elements in the state.

The dismissal of Barnala government and imposition of President's rule buried the Punjab Accord for which Sant Longowal had sacrificed his life; which was endorsed by the people at the polls; for which Surjit Singh Barnala had suffered excommunication. Moreover, it also buried any hope for a political solution in the near future.

In the beginning, it was generally acknowledged that there was some improvement in the situation under the President's rule. A large number of hardcore separatists and terrorists had either been arrested or got killed. The efforts of Julio Francis Ribeiro, the then Punjab Police Chief, resulted in improving performance of police and paramilitary forces in the State. In spite all these facts, the extremism, separatism and terrorism continued.

To flush out the extremists, separatists and terrorists from the Golden Temple complex, the government conducted 'Operation Black Thunder'. The operation was very successful in the sense that it made progress in its objective without hurting the feelings of the Sikhs as was the case earlier during the 'Operation Blue Star'.

The operation brought about a metamorphic change in the situation. The extremists, separatists and terrorists not only lost their control over the Golden Temple and other shrines, but also the sympathy of a big
section of the Sikhs. Recovery of more than twenty human
dead bodies including those of women, from the debris of the
'Akal Takht' inside the Golden Temple complex, exposed the
atrocities of the terrorist forces.