**People believe that on Kashmir,Modi will be able to do something: Mehbooba | The Indian Express**

Related. Mehbooba Mufti explains why while A B Vajpayee was one of the most respected PMs in the state,her party would never align with the BJP. In this Idea Exchange moderated by Editor (Legal Affairs) Maneesh Chhibber,the PDP president also expresses disappointment with Rahul Gandhi,says AAP should be given a chance to prove itself and claims that J&K has come to hate the Omar government. Maneesh Chhibber: There are rumours that you are joining hands with the BJP. I will talk about a recent statement. The Chief Minister went to Jammu and said that the PDP is a Pakistani party,look at their flag… But what Omar Abdullah says,his father doesnt. Coming to the point,we have always praised Atal Bihari Vajpayee,because whatever changes we see in Jammu and Kashmir today,were because of him whether his going to Lahore or inviting Pervez Musharraf after Kargil. After we took over in 2002 and Vajpayee came to Kashmir,he said a few touching words: I am going to resolve the Kashmir issue and I extend my hand of friendship to Pakistan. We have worked with the NDA without being their alliance partner,in contrast to the National Conference. They kicked out Saifuddin Soz when he voted against the BJP. Then Omar became a minister in the Vajpayee government; the NC was present when Godhra happened. Farooq Abdullah was the only one who defended Narendra Modi. Their breaking point came when Vajpayee announced that they were going to have a time-frame for polls,which the NC did not expect because their experience of having an alliance with the party at the Centre was something different. When they formed an alliance with the Congress,they were able to manipulate the Congress leadership in Delhi to rig the Srinagar elections. The PDP stands for more empowerment,self-rule and other things for the resolution of the Kashmir problem. The BJP has an aversion to Article 370. I dont think there is. a meeting point between us. and them. Rakesh Sinha: What is your view on Narendra Modi? I find Modi very authoritative. He seems to be growing much more than the party. Perhaps people are looking for someone assertive and authoritative. Perhaps thats why his stock is growing. I hope and pray that what people say about him,that he is divisive,is not true,especially after he is standing for the prime ministers post. I hope that he is able to prove people wrong by acting differently and allowing them to forget the unfortunate Gujarat incident. Coomi Kapoor: Do you think there is a possibility of an Aam Aadmi Party coming up in Jammu and Kashmir? For Kashmir the AAP experiment happened way back in 1987,because the Congress and the NC joined hands and people were tired of corruption. All these young guys Salahuddin,Yasin Malik,Ashfaq Majid got together and at that point a kind of jubilation was seen. I appreciate Vajpayee. In spite of being an alliance partner with the NC,he did not allow them to manipulate elections. But Farooq Abdullah was able to get the polls rigged. Elections even now are not seen as being free. What becomes an issue in the country doesnt become an issue when it happens in Kashmir. The Congress has set up a committee for snoopgate. But when a person is alleged to have died because of a party at the CMs place,where talk of money was going on,what about that? Recently we had an officer on the board of professional examination who was given half a dozen extensions,and the high court intervened when it was said that he was selling medical college seats for Rs 60-80 lakh each. If this had happened anywhere else in the country,it would have caught the attention of the media. We had a drug scam,but nobody did anything about it. Naveed Iqbal: Since the Omar Abdullah government came to power,there seems to be no opposition to what he does or says,whether inside the Assembly or outside. We have a young CM and you are recruiting 400 retired bureaucrats for high posts. We have been opposing his policy of re-employment and giving extensions. There is hardly any governance; electricity is very bad. Sometimes we talk and talk and people are on the streets protesting for electricity,water. Then we too get tired of criticising the government. Nayeem Showkat Khan: Can you define self-rule? Self-rule has three-four basic points and all those have been endorsed by the working group. First,lift the siege from this state,from all routes Muzaffarabad,Rawalakot,Kailash-Mansarovar yatra so that Kashmir becomes a gateway to central and south Asia. The other issue is water resources and power projects. Most of our projects have been taken by the NHPC. What we get in return is minimal. We have done our homework and it comes to Rs 30-50 thousand crores every year. If we negotiate the losses,it gives us an amount which can be used for infrastructure. The third is that we need a joint mechanism between the two Kashmirs. We can have a joint advisory council,where representatives from both sides can meet at least twice a year. This has been endorsed by the working group where the BJP,NC and the Congress were present. There is hardly any place in Kashmir where you dont have graveyards for young people whether militants or security forces and you cant sweep it away. If we have a joint advisory council,it will give people a symbol of hope. The fourth point is that we would like to have an elected governor,once each from Jammu,Kashmir and Ladakh. We would like to have 90 per cent officers from the state. I would like to see J&K become a model of SAARC corporation. If it becomes a free zone,let us have a currency. We are talking about self-rule within the parameters of the Constitution. I cant imagine what sort of day it will be when we take a bus from Srinagar and in 18 hours we are in China. We can go from Kargil to Iran to Haj. Y P RAJESH: You think the India-Pakistan dialogue on Kashmir has made progress under the UPA government or was it better under the NDA? The hardest part was started by Vajpayee. Even after Kargil and Parliament attack,the dialogue process started,there was ceasefire and confidence building. Unfortunately,things changed thereafter. But definitely in UPA-II we havent seen much progress. The Pakistan foreign ministry and secretaries met and spoke about issues,travelled across Rawalakot,and spoke about banking facilities,but nothing moved on ground. Prawesh Lama: In the next few months,if Modi comes to power and AAP in Delhi,how will things change in the Valley in terms of policies,expectations of the people? Even the Kashmir valley is celebrating this change. In the Valley,mainstream politics is seen as untouchable,it is considered a bad thing. Because of AAPs victory,it may not be considered a bad thing now. Modi has a mixed response,because it is a Muslim-majority state and some people do remember the unfortunate incident in Gujarat. Not that communal riots have not happened before or after that,but its representation in terms of what we have seen has made an impact. There is a section of people who think that Modi will be able to take certain tough decisions,because when Vajpayee took certain decisions,nobody could question him. Maneesh Chhibber: At a rally in Jammu,Modi spoke about Article 370,and many viewed it as a change in the BJPs stance. The PDPs opposition to Modi and the BJP has been because of their anti-370 stance. If the BJP dilutes that stance,do you think there can be a re-look to your opposition? When we came to power,we did not have an alliance with the BJP,but we were able to get maximum things done under Vajpayees rule. We got a package to promote tourism; we got Rs 660 crore for electricity. But as far as an alliance is concerned,the BJP is a no-no. Coomi Kapoor: Assembly polls are due in Kashmir next year. Is there a possibility that you would ally with the Congress after the results are out? When we made an alliance with the Congress,there was a proper common minimum programme. It was not an alliance out of the blue. When we formed the government,nobody believed that the PDP could do what it had promised people finish task force,stop bloodshed. You could not use a mobile phone in J&K during the NC regime. Our tunnel would shut at 5 pm. When we reopened the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad road,security people told Mufti sahab,… wahan se toh millitants ayenge. Everything we did,there was another angle to it. We formed the government with the Congress; our common minimum programme was successful. At this point of time the two Jamats are hand in hand and both are looting everything. There is no limit or account of corruption. If one Jamats minister is stuck in a drug scam,the others is in a jungle scam. Right now in Jammu and Kashmir theres an anti-alliance,anti-government anger. Unni Rajen Shanker: From what you said there is a lot of nostalgia for Vajpayee and some optimism for Modi. So to have an alliance,is something possible? Have they reached out to you? As far as Vajpayee is concerned,its not just mine,its a general perception in the Valley. Whenever an Indian PM came to Kashmir,people shut shops,put up black flags. But when he came,nothing like that happened. And he reciprocated it. Also,because every time a PM came to Kashmir,they would talk about Pakistan,saying we will teach you (Pakistan) a lesson. He said,Main insaniyat ke daayre mein baat karunga. Main Pakistan se dosti karunga.<U+0094> Thats why people respect him. When militancy was at its peak,he went to Lahore. The same day, seven Hindu boys were killed. When we talk to people,including the extremely staunch ones,they say that in matters of Kashmir,Modi will be able to do something because nobody is going to question his authority. Rakesh Sinha: Whats your impression of Rahul Gandhi? I feel that Rahul Gandhi could have been the face of the anti-corruption movement something weve been seeing for the last four-five years since he got a platform. Rahul Gandhi is a young leader,his party is big; leaving the UPA-I aside,by the UPA-II,he should have woken up. Take Anna Hazares fast against corruption,something that an old man is doing,he should have been doing that. No offence meant,but he cant have a Sheila ki jawani number in a flop film. If pressure begins to build up,you talk about passing an ordinance; if pressure builds up,you talk about the Lokpal Bill. You have to be consistent and constant. Muhammad Zulqarnain Zulfi: Youve been talking about Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) removal from the very beginning. But in 1990,AFSPA was implemented in J&K by Mufti Mohammad Sayeed. From 2002,you claimed that militancy is low. Why werent measures taken for the removal of AFSPA then? When Mufti Mohammad became the Home Minister and militancy started in thousands,AFSPA was enforced and confined to the Valley. In 1996 polls,the NC got a majority and extended it to Jammu province,Rajouri,Poonch,Chenab valley. They also got POTA (Prevention of Terrorism Act). Once we came to power,POTA was revoked. Now with the number of militants going down,black laws will also have to go … since the militant numbers have gone down,the security forces are doing fake encounters. Thats why a defence committee was set up by the Defence Minister. They said,give us six months and we will revoke AFSPA. Unfortunately,another government came and now its going on just like that. Aniruddha Ghoshal: Rahul Gandhi is trying to appear to be the face of the anti-corruption movement. Do you think its too late? It looks like a guest appearance. The young guys have nothing to lose. The older politicians think we are in our last leg,we wont live much. But he is a young guy,he could have done that. He comes in the middle of things,says things,of which,I think,there is no credibility. Sudhakar Jagdish: Say Rahul Gandhi, Narendra Modi and Arvind Kejriwal contest from the same seat,who would you vote for? I cant say because we are still watching Arvind Kejriwal. I will see how he performs in Delhi. Im sure he is going to perform because he has calculated everything. We need to give him some time. Sudhakar Jagdish: How do you see the High Court judgment that gave Modi a clean chit on Godhra riots? When riots like these happen,its not about your criminality,it is about morality. Modi wasnt there himself with a gun. He was the CM. There is a responsibility. Ravish Tiwari: Do you feel that NOTA (none of the above) will expose both the NC and the PDP,showing that they dont have support in the Valley. And if the separatists decide to use it,will it become a plebiscite? I have said this before that whatever is reformative in our country,we are scared of implementing it in Kashmir. NOTA is very good,though it doesnt result in anything. But there are apprehensions about Kashmir. That means 65 years down the line,we are still where we were in 1947. Maneesh Chhibber: When you were here the last time,you spoke about Omar Abdullah. Next year,you are going to face elections. Omars government seems to have an opinion on everything except what he should be doing in the state. What are the things you think he should have done? The worst failure of this government has been the disconnect with the youth. When he became the CM,everyone thought that hes young,he has something positive about it,though people had bad views on the NC in general. The unfortunate part is that people have died during these five years. Casualties have been mostly civilians,majority of them youth and students,with no connection with militancy. People who were booked were innocent. This must be the first government that used palette guns,used for animals,against the youth. The boys who got hit in the eye,if they go to the doctor,there will be a police case, their names will be registered. Kashmir is the only state and this is the only government using chilli grenades. We have a small population,very few government jobs,and you give Rs 1.5-2 lakh to 400 retired people. Kashmirs people have begun to hate him.