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Patron
Mansoor Qadir Dar

Chief Editor
Raja Muhammad Sajjad Khan

Editor
Muhammad Sarfraz Khan

Assistant Editor
Matloob Hussain

Circulation
Naqeebullah Gardezi

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Website: www.jklc.org
E-mail: kashmirtodaymzd@gmail.com
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Kashmir remains in the brutal clampdown for consecutive four months as Hindu fascism ensnares regressive radicals who attempt to turn the so-called 'largest democracy' into a fanatical theocracy. Passage of the exceedingly discriminatory Citizenship (Amendment) Bill reflects a stark reality of today's India that has jettisoned the principles of diversity, inclusiveness and pluralism that it had 'boasted' for long. Recollecting the dots in the recent past from Gujarat Massacre, 2002, to Kashmir subjugation, 2019, one could clearly see the deep Indian denial of accepting Muslims as part of the Indian society. This 'history of hate' goes as far back as 1925, much before the partition, when the RSS was formed. Though Congress might appear to have acquiesced to the idea of Muslims being 'equal citizens' of India but RSS have always followed the doctrine of Hindu Rashtra, which has no place for non-Hindus, especially Muslims. Remaining in power of Gujarat from 2001 to 2014, Modi learnt the mechanics of suppressing Muslims through popularizing the narrative of Hindu radical fanaticism, which suggests that 'India only belongs to Hindus alone'. Muslim history has been systematically perverted through changes in the text books, the mainstream Indian media has been bribed to solidify the Hindutva vision of India and the Government colluded with Bollywood to produce films portraying the Muslim kings as killers and plunderers. Secularism is enshrined in the Indian Constitution, which has steadily been uprooted by the BJP, commencing in 2014. The Hindu extremist party re-formed the government in 2018 with an overwhelming mandate that gave it the power to alter the law as it pleases, and so it is on that path of unmistakable adulteration of India's image as the 'largest democracy'. The BJP government has earned titles like fascists, extremists, Hindu radicals, Hindutva-driven fanatics, monolithic theocratic party, to name a few. Nothing defines today's India more precise than the phrase that 'India has plunged into a new dark age' with

the coming into power of BJP, which arguably is the political face of RSS. In this new Indian dark age, the Muslims would be the only target of persecution, exclusion and facing trial of identity. People's Union for Civil Liberties, an Indian organization tasked an 11-member team to visit Kashmir, from 28 September to 4 October 2019, and published their report 'Imprisoned Resistance' in early November. The report unmasked several contradictions between the Indian official claims and the ground realities in Kashmir. Calling the blackout in Kashmir and curb on human liberties as 'structured state violence', the report observes that "besides the massive militarization, the surveillance and control by the [Indian] army is unprecedented." Amnesty International's report 'Losing Sight in Kashmir', published in 2019, suggests that a "weapon meant to be deployed for crowd control, has been responsible for blinding, killing and traumatizing people in Kashmir". The report finds that the Indian military has been using these weapons since 2010 to suppress the popular uprising against the Indian occupation of Kashmir. Use of inaccurate pump-action shotguns firing metal pellets has caused deaths of hundreds of people and many more losing their eyesight permanently. Amnesty's report is strongly instructive as it rebuffs the Indian government's claim of 'pellet shotgun being non-lethal' by showing that "the injuries and deaths caused by this cruel weapon bear testimony to how dangerous, inaccurate and indiscriminate it is". Death, torture and killing, as the report reflects, have now become refined markers of tyranny in the new Indian dark age.

Government of Pakistan issued its investigative report 'Indian Human Rights Violations and Atrocities in IoK', in August 2019. The report underscores the Indian attempt to change the narrative of 'Kashmir freedom movement' into 'cross-border terrorism'. Indian strategic and military thought has been aligned with this thesis, which predicates on a highly fabricated assertion: 'Pakistan-

Based terrorists infiltrating through LoC and attacking Indian military/ civilian infrastructure in Kashmir or mainland India, thereafter India responding with surgical strike; and if Pakistan responds to surgical strike then adopt more coercive/punitive posture'. Referring to revocation of Kashmir's autonomy and imposition of curfew and substantial restrictions on freedom and human rights, the report calls the situation in Kashmir as a 'major humanitarian crisis'. As late as of 10 December 2019, the Indian Home Minister Amit Shah has called situation in Kashmir 'totally normal', whereas the ground reality is in total contradiction. India's violence-centric approach to Kashmir has caused well over 100,000 deaths in the valley from January 1989 till August 2019. Indian Supreme Court decision, on 9 November 2019, to hand over Babri Masjid to Hindus to build a Ram Temple

assured Indian Muslims that their faith in the justice systems was grossly misplaced. Courts becoming the government's cohorts leave no hope or space for fairness and that has put the entire Indian judicial system into a significant ambiguity, which is also a marker of a dark age. Muslims, particularly the Kashmiri Muslims, face a legitimate danger of genocide in an India that thrives on bigotry, fascism and hate, especially after the infamous Citizenship Bill.

Nehru once remarked in his 14 August 1947 speech about 'India's tryst with destiny', and had he been alive he must have made another speech the leading line of which would, undoubtedly, have been 'India's tryst with darkness'

The writer is freelance columnist.

<https://pakobserver.net/kashmir-in-new-indian-dark-age/>

REFRAMING THE KASHMIR POLICY

The military siege of IOK continues unabated. India impudently refers to Kashmir as its internal matter. Notwithstanding the obvious ludicrousness of this assertion, it is a stratagem used to underscore and reinforce the fictional legitimacy of India's claim to Kashmir. It also symbolises an ungainly endeavour to masquerade the Indian military's kill-maim-arrest policy in IOK as a security paradigm rather than an occupation model. But the chicanery residing at the root of this policy is also New Delhi's Achilles heel. Consequently, Pakistan needs to reframe its Kashmir narrative to expose Indian atrocities in the valley and vigorously internationalize the dispute so the world can prevent IOK from becoming another Auschwitz.

There are three reasons why India is bent upon hiding its occupation of IOK behind subterfuge and deceit. One, it does not want the world to know that the vast majority of Kashmiris are opposed to its stranglehold on Kashmir and would go to any extent to wrench freedom out of India's jaws. Two, it does not want the world to be in possession of incontrovertible evidence regarding the ongoing genocide in IOK. And, three, it does not want the

world to know that New Delhi's decision to annex IOK has completely backfired and that once the curfew is lifted and the barricades removed, the Kashmiris' response to the annexation would be



Shariq Jamal Khan

steadfast collective resistance. Pakistan should reintroduce the Kashmir issue to the world through the UN and other relevant fora with renewed vigour and solemnity. Given India's enormous diplomatic clout and economic strength, Pakistan will have to mount an exceedingly efficient diplomatic offensive to garner the world's support. A suitably modified and efficacious Kashmir narrative would be a critical part of that offensive.

The Kashmir issue should not be framed as an India-Pakistan issue, Hindu-Muslim quarrel or a territorial row. Likewise, it should not be painted as a border dispute or an "atoot ungl/jugular vein" binary. Kashmir's sombre tale should be exclusively told with reference to the unspeakable woes of the millions of innocent souls facing persistent India-sponsored terrorism in IOK. It should be presented as an unambiguous narrative, a truth told

eloquently, a fact put across unequivocally and a catastrophe explained poignantly. It should relate information accompanied by reliable statistics regarding deaths, injuries, illegal arrests, rapes, gang rapes and physical torture and bring to light the fact that Kashmir is being slowly benumbed by violence to make its population unresponsive to pain and agony. This blood-soaked description of the situation in IOK should remain vividly etched on the world's conscience.

The UNSC's elite "informal consultations" forum should be used frequently to agitate the issue. Recently, the UNSC held an exclusive meeting about the situation in IOK, signaling that the UN did not accept the Indian claim that IOK was its internal matter. China's help should be sought to activate the UNSC. The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, the 47-member UN Human Rights Council, and the European Parliament's Sub-Committee on Human Rights are well-known

entities which should be approached by Pakistan for the formation of independent missions and commissions to investigate India's horrendous crimes in IOK. Prominent NGOs like Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, and Genocide Watch have all dealt with IOK and their reports regarding the carnage in Kashmir should be disseminated far and wide. OIC's Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission should similarly be pushed to conduct an independent study on IOK. The world must be apprised of the situation in the occupied valley. Repeatedly.

Evidently, a diligent reframing of the Kashmir issue would make it easier for the world to relate and respond to it. India's deception should be fought with the truth. That is the honourable course.

Published in The Express Tribune, December 7th, 2019.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2113016/6-reframing-kashmir-po>

INDIA A WAR LIKE STATE

A few days ago US Secretary of State Michael Pompeo and Secretary of Defense Mark Esper held bilateral talks with their Indian counter parts dubbed as two-plus-two ministerial dialogue and in the joint statement issued at the end of the parleys while reaffirming the growing strategic partnership and working in support of a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific region, unwarrantedly asserted that the Pakistani territory was being used by the terrorists. The statements also asked Pakistan to take immediate and irreversible action against these networks and prevent its territory from being used in this manner.

The continued firing along the LOC by the Indian forces and the threat hurled by the Indian army chief that the situation at the LOC could escalate any time are ominous portents that reinforce fears expressed by Pakistan that in an effort to divert the attention of the world community from the situation in IOK and compelled by deteriorating internal situation over the Citizenship Amendment Bill, India might try to re-enact a false flag operation which could easily lead to an armed conflict between the two

countries. Prime Minister Imran Khan reacting to the emerging situation rightly tried to invoke the attention of the international community to the lurking dangers in his twitter message saying "I



Malik Ashraf

have been warning the international community of this for some time and I am reiterating again, if India does such an operation to divert attention from its domestic chaos plus whip up war hysteria to mobilize Hindu nationalism, Pakistan will have no option but to give a befitting response. Over the last 5 years of Modi's government India has been moving towards Hindu Rashtra with its Hindutva Supremacist and fascist ideology. Now with the Citizens Amendment Act, all those Indians who want a pluralist India are beginning to protest and it is becoming a mass movement. At the same time the siege by Indian Occupation forces in IOJK continues. A bloodbath can be expected when it is lifted. As these protests are increasing, threat to Pakistan from India is also increasing. Indian Army Chief's statement adds to our

concerns of a False Flag operation”

Under the circumstances, Pakistan has done well to convey her apprehensions to the P5 and other countries regarding Indian designs and seeking their support and intervention to de-escalate the situation. Pakistan needs to intensify the diplomatic offensive to sensitize the world about the dangers to peace and security in the region due to Indian action in IOK and the anti-Muslim legislations enacted by her. Pakistan in spite of being capable of giving befitting reply to any aggression by India as it proved in February when the Indian planes crossed over to Pakistan and got hit, does not want an armed conflict with her. Pakistan and India are nuclear powers and any miscalculation on either side can have disastrous consequences for both of them. The countries of the world which believe in peace and tranquility need to play a role and use their influence on India to persuade her to reverse the situation in IOK and also refrain from the course it has adopted to make India a Hindu state, which can have a spillover effect in the region, particularly Pakistan. The US and her western allies also need to

revisit their strategy of extending unqualified support to India realizing that it could spell disaster in the region and also undermine their strategic interests.

Modi government also needs to realize that the course adopted by it is neither in the ultimate interest of India nor the entire region. Its war like disposition could endanger peace and security in the region and beyond and also jeopardizes for good its efforts to change the economic situation of teeming million in India. Peace and security in the region are pivotal to alleviation of poverty and shared economic prosperity. The only way this objective can be realized is through resolution of disputes between Pakistan and India including the core issue of Kashmir through dialogue in conformity with the UN resolutions. Sooner this reality sinks in the minds of the Indian leadership the better. Wars and confrontations bring death and destruction and not prosperity.

Malik Muhammad Ashraf

The writer is a freelance columnist.

<https://nation.com.pk/03-Jan-2020/india-a-war-like-state>

KASHMIR AND THE POWERS THAT BE *Imran Malik*

China's BRI-CPEC initiatives are well on their way to fruition. The CPEC that passes through Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), a region with Pakistan, is the flagship project of the BRI. Its success will signify a win-win model for all those who sign up to the BRI. CPEC's failure, on the other hand, will dent China's regional and global economic stature, credibility and stunt its ostensible challenge to the US' singular position as the dominant global economic power. Predictably, the BRI-CPEC have attracted the ire of the US, India etc, however, the Chinese economic juggernaut marches on relentlessly, regardless.

Three India-China issues merit attention here; Aksai Chin-Ladakh in the larger Kashmir region, Arunachal Pradesh in India's North East and India's frivolous objections to the CPEC passing through GB. India claims Aksai Chin as the eastern most part of Ladakh. China claims Aksai Chin as part of the Xinjiang Uyghur

Autonomous Region. Thus, two of these issues link China directly with the overall Kashmir imbroglio. This brings the national interests of three nuclear powers to clash ominously in the Kashmir region. India has recently “annexed” the Indian Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IOJ&K) region and Ladakh and appropriated them as Union Territories. China has summarily rubbished these theoretical absurdities, reiterated their disputed status and its own legitimate claim to Ladakh. Furthermore, the CPEC connects Xinjiang through GB to the Mekran Coast/Gwadar, a link that has enormous geopolitical, geostrategic and geo-economic connotations. The CPEC will dramatically alter the power matrix within Asia, giving a profound strategic advantage to China. With the CPEC in place, its massive roads, motorways and eventual rail networks will enable China to not only outflank India from the West but also the US and Allied

forces in the Pacific. Chinese presence on the Mekran Coast will force the US and its allies' (including India) in the Pacific and Indian Oceans to look over their shoulders, dividing and dissipating their military efforts. Most importantly China, thus becomes a two-ocean nation and nullifies drastically the strategic advantage of the Malacca Straits chokepoint to the US and its allies. Therefore, the US' and India's unrelenting efforts to demonize, dismantle, denigrate, disrupt and destroy the CPEC as it passes through GB and moves southwards!

A conventional-nuclear war in Kashmir will inevitably suck in China and enhance the ferocity, scope and theatre of war manifold. It might seriously derail and delay the BRI-CPEC but that will be a pitiable, untenable, pyrrhic victory for the US and its allies, especially India. China cannot possibly be contained and managed thus. It is therefore in China's and everyone else's interest too, to obviate war and ensure a peaceful resolution of the Kashmir problem(s) as per UN/UNSC resolutions.

Other players on the global chessboard must also play their parts. The European Union has massive investments and trade relations with India. It too can ill afford a conventional-nuclear war/winter over Kashmir as that will disrupt most regional and global economies including European ones. The Arab states, especially KSA and the UAE have made substantial investments in India. They would have done much better had they used their huge investments of billions upon billions of dollars in the Indian economy as a leverage to block the Hindutva crazed BJP government's crusade against the Indian Muslims, especially the genocide in Kashmir. A conventional-nuclear war over Kashmir will seriously jeopardize their investments in India and forestall the transformation of their respective economies and societies. The UN has been the weakest player in the international community. It has failed to maintain a fair, just and peaceful international order inescapably falling prey to the veto wielding P-5. Kashmir has lingered on its agenda since 1948 as a festering wound. The UN must enforce its Resolutions on Kashmir and move in now to forestall what will be a devastating conventional-nuclear war/winter that may affect more than half of humanity. The Sangh Parivaar-RSS-BJP Combine has been committing one faux pas after

the other. The debacle in IOJ&K, the irrational Citizenship Amendment Act and the National Register for Citizens have evoked a spontaneous backlash from the public across all political spectrums in India. India is on fire! The BJP Government has held the Kashmiris incommunicado and under a debilitating curfew for the last five months, or so. The international community remains largely insensitive to the atrocities being visited upon them. India needs a paradigm shift in its approach towards Pakistan. Its megalomaniac images of itself are patently delusional. It cannot possibly defeat Pakistan, a significant nuclear and military power in its own right, to "conquer and annex" Azad Jammu & Kashmir. Any foolhardy attempts will clearly go much beyond the "nuclear overhang" the Indians erroneously think they can limit a war to. Kargil '99, might not be the right example to emulate. If India were to resolve Kashmir and other outstanding issues with Pakistan it stands to gain enormously. It can benefit from the East-West trade routes from the Greater Middle East Region and CARs through Pakistan to India. Similarly, the North South trade corridors linking China and the CARs to the Arabian Sea could branch off to India as well. Furthermore, India could also be considered for inclusion in the CPEC initiative though terms and conditions would apply. If instead, it initiates a conventional-nuclear war astride the LOC, it must remain aware that it cannot possibly be a war limited in intent, scope and objectives. India might start it; Pakistan will decide how, when and where to end it! However, in its Hindutva laden frenzy, PM Modi and his megalomaniac BJP Government appear adamant to take the whole region and the better part of the world down in flames with themselves. They are losing control of the situation rapidly!

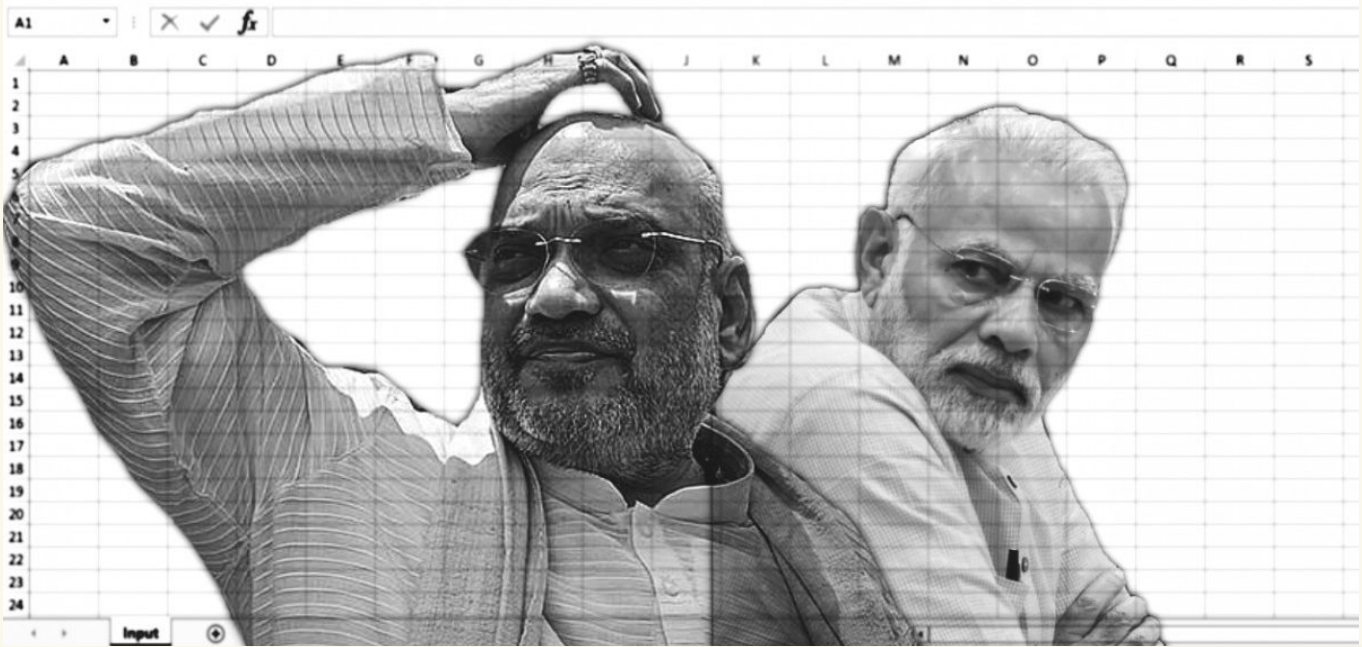
The world seems hesitant to address much less resolve Kashmir conclusively due to the conflicting geopolitical, geostrategic and geo-economic interests of the global powers that be. This reticence on the part of the international community portends dire consequences for the Indo-Pak subcontinent, South Asia, Asia and the world at large.

Kashmir holds the key to global peace and prosperity! The world ought to take note and act, pronto!!

The author is a retired Brigadier from the Pakistan Army.

Email: im.k846@gmail.com Twitter: @K846IM

A 'POST-CHANAKAYA' POLITY IS TAKING SHAPE



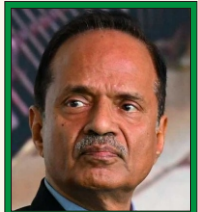
A stalemate is gnawing at the government's vitality. States have been lost and the economy is sinking. Not all judges are vulnerable to blackmail. Modi, the great salesman, is now reduced to asking citizens to tune in to a godman to understand official policy.

The close of 2019 saw yet another state government getting sworn in but without the familiar presence of BJP leaders in their colorful turbans crowding the stage. And the dawn of a new year clearly suggests that the polity is moving into a 'post-Chanakya' era.

The five years from 2014 to 2019 were the golden period of the new Chanakyas who came down from Gujarat to lord over Delhi and insisted on rearranging the essentials of how power was to be exercised. They developed a distinct style – rough, abrasive and tough. Their success was attributed to four traits.

First, the New Rulers were deemed to possess a magical touch when it came to this business of electioneering. They were the smartest guys in the room. They could disrupt the opposition's game plan; they could cobble alliances, deprive the opposition of partners and allies. It was believed they had key insights, never before possessed by any other political operative, into the matrix of castes and sub-castes, that they understood the religious divides, and that they had a monopoly over

imagination when it came to tactics, innovation and ruthlessness in forming governments. They were invincible, inexorable.



Harish Khare

Second, the New Rulers had no qualms when it came to going after individual leaders who chose to be outside the circle. Never before had the state's "agencies" been put to use so systematically against rival political parties and leaders; as a pliable press bought into the narrative of 'cleaning' India of its corruption, the judiciary at all levels self-recruited itself as a facilitator in the game. The new rulers were not averse to getting rough with those who did not fall in line. The CBI Headquarters could be sealed at midnight. A P. Chidambaram could be made to sit it out in Tihar Jail for over a hundred days. Remorseless, relentless.

Informed insiders would whisper excitedly as to who was going to be the 'next' target. These whispers informed us of how files were being maintained on even judges, the Election Commission, the chief ministers, or any other constitutional functionary who could possibly say *nyet*. J. Edgar Hoover would have thoroughly approved of how New Delhi had finally got a regime savvy enough to understand the power of technology and its potential to undertake intrusive surveillance and use that information

to disrupt the “enemy.” Third, the New Rulers rewrote and promptly copyrighted the book of nationalism. They and they alone would issue *deshbhakti* certificates. Those who disagreed with the regime would be declared lacking in patriotism. This appropriation of the nationalist mantle was maliciously, but successfully, worked against the Muslims. Fourth, and last, the prime minister was a communicator of the kind India had never seen before. He was accepted and respected as a *fakir* who works only for the nation. He was trusted fully to act always and only in the nation's interest. That meant he need not respect the reputation of any other person, past or present. He could go to any part of the country and bad mouth regional leaders, delegitimise local sensitivities, and, instead, impose 'national' issues, concerns and aspirations. Above all, he believed there was a 'Meerut SP' in every Hindu and had the uncanny gift of tickling that dormant prejudice. These traits converged into a toxic mix in the last Lok Sabha election. The opposition stood decimated. A tally of 300-plus Lok Sabha seats was a moment for the New Rulers to savour. But in that moment, the nature of the game changed. The Gujarat gang could no longer pretend to be the 'outsiders' in a capital of sin. Five years in office inevitably has produced its own quota of collusion and corruption. Even the Nagpur *sanghchalaks* are reported to be worried about the corroding temptations creeping in among the 'commissars,' or *sanghthan mantris*.

As the year closed, all the winning traits stood blunted. And that has produced a crisis of confidence in the regime. The follies and stupidities and flaws of the government's politics and policies can no longer be attributed to those “70 years.” And the government still has more than four years of its mandate too long a time to be squandered in short-term recklessness or ideological extremism. India cannot afford four years of government-instigated turmoil and instability, without jeopardising national interests and ambitions.

Three faultlines

As we speak, three distinct fault lines have already set in.

First, the government has needlessly poked the minorities. In the process, a massive weakness is being sought to be institutionalised in the Citizenship (Amendment) Act. “370” was framed in nationalist terms; the CAB/CAA debate was anchored, from the very beginning, in a religious divide. Pakistan's internal structural prejudices are cited to introduce prejudices and discrimination in our own glorious constitutional landscape. And because the Opposition had been so thoroughly crushed, the 'street' had to take over. Resistance has become a familiar slogan. A permanent civil war stares the nation in the eye.

Second, the Modi regime's hit and trial approach to the management of the national economy has cumulatively broken the citizens' backbone. Massive deprivation and destitution have set in. Yet the government remains enamoured of its own mediocrity and its slogans. Four more years of indifferent economic performance will inevitably produce serious social consequences.

Third, the armed forces have been given an oversized place in our political scheme of things, all in the name of the need to teach Pakistan a lesson. This role cannot be reversed easily. The militarisation of national objectives and outlook not only has put us on the road to permanent belligerence in our neighbourhood, it also impinges on our domestic political contestations. The generals and colonels are getting politicised, and this can come back to bite the *deshbhakts*.

A consequential stalemate is already gnawing at the government's vitality. The Chanakya magic is over; Maharashtra, Haryana, and Jharkhand tell the story. Ranjan Gogoi is no longer the Chief Justice of India. Not all judges are vulnerable to blackmail. Even the prime minister, the great salesman, is now reduced to asking citizens to tune in to a godman to understand official policy. The government needs to find the humility to move beyond its 'Chanakya'; intransigence and get for itself a new political hearing aid. Otherwise it would be consumed by its own follies and the nation will suffer grievously.

<https://thewire.in/politics/a-post-chanakaya-polity-is-taking-shape>

KASHMIR ON A ROLLER COASTER RIDE

Khurram Shahzad



In February 2019, after a dog fight between India and Pakistan fighter jets, in which Pakistan downed two Indian air planes and captured a pilot, along the line of control (LoC) came into world spotlight as “two nuclear powers risk a war”. Pakistan maintained its position as “right to response in equal or excess force” while India was trying to cover its failure by giving a higher military award to the captured and then released pilot. Surprisingly, this time the world didn't buy India's “cross-border terrorism” claim which was a huge setback for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government, and it was just the beginning of year 2019 with a collapse of India's “two faced secular state”.

“On March 16, 2019, ex-chief minister of Jammu and Kashmir Omar Abdullah led a rally in Kulgam to protest Modi's remarks about changing Jammu and Kashmir's status of “autonomous state”

Following the incident, residents of Jammu and Kashmir, a region administered by India as a state and a part of the larger region of Kashmir which has been the subject of dispute between India and Pakistan, cheered for Pakistan which ignited hate against them. Every week there were news across India for lynching and some cases killing of Kashmiri descent citizen. In Lucknow, a large city in northern India, the police arrested four

people on suspicion of beating up Kashmiri street vendors after a video went viral that showed the attack. Wearing saffron shirts, the color favored by many Hindu nationalists, the attackers called the street vendors “terrorists” and said, “You sell here and throw stones there,” referring to protests in Kashmir. Things got even worse when PM Modi, in his speeches, started giving



indication of changing the laws for Jammu and Kashmir. On March 16, 2019, ex-chief minister of Jammu and Kashmir Omar Abdullah led a rally in Kulgam to protest Modi's remarks about changing Jammu and Kashmir's status of “autonomous state”.

On July 8, the United Nations published a report titled “Situation of Human Rights in Indian-Administered Kashmir” and outlined civilian killings and excessive use of force, continued use of pellet-firing shotgun, cordon and search operations, arbitrary detention, impunity for

human rights violations, restrictions on freedom of expression, censorship and attack on press freedom, brutal torture, and targeting of Kashmiri Muslims outside Jammu and Kashmir. The report concluded saying that world needs to address urgently the past and ongoing human rights violations and to deliver justice for all people in Kashmir. The United Nations also urged for the



formation of a commission of inquiry into the allegations. Later in July, Pakistani Premier Imran Khan met with US President Donald Trump in the White House where Trump shocked the world by saying Modi has requested him to help India in Kashmir. President Trump further elaborated saying that he has offered PM Modi “a mediation and facilitation” in Kashmir. PM Imran Khan had a big smile on his face, and he said, “Mr. Trump you will get prayers from over billion Muslims across the world if you do that”. Within less than an hour, the Indian home minister denied any such request from India. It was a huge dent on India's position on Kashmir as “internal matter” or “bilateral issue”. PM Modi's request to President Trump put India in an awkward position, moreover, even US Department of State was reluctant to give any statement about it.

“Kashmir dispute is an international issue”, “UN has a role [to play] in Kashmir”, “why international journalists and UN observers are not allowed in the valley?” and “communication ban should be removed immediately”, were coming from ranking congressional leaders.

After PM Imran Khan's visit to Washington, PM Modi started receiving a sharp criticism from all sides even within his own party. One of the election campaign promises of Modi was to change the status of Kashmir,



once for all however seeking help from America for Kashmir was not only embarrassing for Modi but it exposed the reality to the world. To cover this fumble, in desperation, on 5 August 2019, the Government of India revoked the special status, limited autonomy, granted under Article 370 of the Indian Constitution to Jammu and Kashmir. For the next 150 days, the Kashmir Valley and entire Jammu endured a full curfew, communications blackout, with landlines, cell phones and the Internet suspended. Nine to 10 million people were pushed



behind an iron wall. There was an absolute silence. Already one of the world's most militarized regions, the Valley was flooded with tens of thousands of Indian troops. Thousands of young boys were pulled out of their houses, women rape allegations were cited everywhere, and local economy became almost zero. Doctors were killed and dragged on the streets for treating patients and shops set ablaze a giving horrifying messages to the residents.

Western Media

The western world especially American media raised its voice on a historic note. In the month of August alone, there were 350 articles published in almost every newspaper across America. CNN, Fox, ABC, MSNBC

and other leading TV channels had special segments on Kashmir on a daily basis. The Kashmir issue got so much momentum that US congressional leaders and congressmen started talking about it publicly. Despite pressure from Indian lobbyist and diaspora, strong statements started coming from these leaders.

Activism at US Congress and Senate

It didn't just stop here; in October and November, the issue of Kashmir marked another historical foot print at the US capital. There were special hearings on the issue of Kashmir and grave human rights violations in the valley by the Indian Army. During these hours long hearing, strong statements, like "right to their [Kashmiris] own self-determination", "Kashmir dispute is an international issue", "UN has a role [to play] in Kashmir", "why international journalists and UN observers are not allowed in the valley?" and "communication ban should be removed immediately", were coming from ranking congressional leaders. Most recently, on December 06, Indian descent Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal has presented a bill in US Congress urging India to end the restrictions on communications and mass detentions in Jammu and Kashmir as swiftly as possible and preserve religious freedom for all residents.

Kashmir another Palestine in the making

While you are reading this article about Kashmir's rollercoaster ride, one cannot help but see its similarity to Israel's decades-long, brutal oppression of the Palestinians. On November 16, Sandeep Chakravorty,

Indian consul-general to New York said in a private gathering of Kashmiri Hindus and Indian nationals, in New York, that India will build settlements modelled after Israel for the return of the Hindu population to Kashmir. "I believe the security situation will improve, it will allow the refugees to go back, and in your lifetime, you will be able to go back and you will be able to find security, because we already have a model in the world. I don't know why we don't follow it. It has happened in the Middle East. If the Israeli people can do it, we can also do it," said the consul general. In my opinion, today we are living in a time where a country like India openly commits war crimes, cheers on its citizens bloodshed and literally gets away with it. The "world's biggest secular democracy" glitters like fool's gold on the tongues of world leaders. The US, UK and other so-called human rights champion regimes seem toothless in the face of the bold barbarisms of nation-states invested in repressing democracy. To ensure speedy justice to people of Kashmir and elsewhere, Western world needs to revisit their policies. Today, we see economic and trade benefits are taking priorities over humans which must change. But I do see a hope of light at the end of tunnel as the small but growing pockets of solidarity expressed for Kashmiris are heartening across America and Europe. As every issue has a specific shelf life, these small groups, like Pakistan American Political Action Committee (PAKPAC), are making a huge contribution to keep this issue and Kashmiri people's voice alive.

157 days since abrogation of Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir, families struggle as kin languish in faraway jails

(Quratulain Rehbar)

Over 400 Kashmiris, booked under the Public Safety Act after the scrapping of Article 370, were taken to different jails where they remain lodged to this day. Meanwhile, their families continue to struggle with legal battles amid mounting hardships financial and otherwise. At first, families were caught unawares about the w

hereabouts of those who were arrested

It took them weeks to locate their loved ones in different jails outside Kashmir

After scrapping Article 370 on 5 August last year, the Central government launched a massive crackdown in the region detaining people including mainstream and separatist leaders many of whom continue to be incarcerated in different jails far from their homes.

More than 400 of them were booked under the Public Safety Act (PSA) and were taken to different jails. They remain there under detention as their families struggle with legal battles amid mounting hardships. As the government imposed a strict communication clampdown in the region following the abrogation of the law, families were caught unawares about the whereabouts of those who were arrested. It took them weeks to locate their loved ones in different jails outside Kashmir.

One such case was that of Manzoor Ahmad, a shopkeeper from south Kashmir's Pulwama.

Forty-six-year-old Manzoor Ahmad Lone was arrested on 2 August after the police conducted a raid at his residence in Pulwama's Kakapora village. For three days, the family had no information where Lone was lodged by the police and on 5 August, when Article 370 was scrapped and the Valley was put under strict curfew, his family learnt that he was at the Kakapora Police Station.

From Kakapora, Lone was shifted to the central jail in Srinagar's Rainawari, and then taken to a jail in Agra on 10 August. Lone has a wife, Parveena Bano, and two children aged 22 and 19 years.

As per his family, the police has slapped prior charges that date back to he was associated with the Hurriyat in the past against Lone. However, he left the organisation after being charged under the PSA in 2016. "At the time, he was kept in jail in Kathua for almost eight months. And after his release, he left the Hurriyat. But now, he has been charged for no reason," said Imtiyaz Ahmad, his son.

As per Lone's dossier, he has been charged with "instigating youths" to pelt stones, but his family insists that the allegations are baseless. "My father is too old to be involved in such things, he was just keeping himself busy in his shop," said Imtiyaz, a Class 11 student, adding, "Who will run my father's shop, and who will feed my family?"

While Lone's family struggles to find answers for his arrest, Mohammad Maqbool Hurrah, a 51-year-old living

in Gulbagh Kakapora a village in Pulwama district has maintained a notebook in which he has written all the debts he took from neighbours and relatives ever since his 26-year-old son Irfan Ahmad Hurrah was detained under the PSA. Hurrah Sr is contemplating selling his land to pay his loans. "I don't have any other option," he added. Quratulain Rehbar



Mohammad Maqbool Hurrah, father of Irfan Ahmad Hurrah. Image procured by Quratulain Rehbar.

On 3 August, when the Valley was abuzz with rumours and a sense of foreboding, two police officers from Kakapora Police Station arrived at the Hurrah residence to enquire after the whereabouts of his son. "We had no idea why they were asking about him; Irfan would have been in a Darul Uloom with students, so I told them he would probably be there," said the father.

On 4 August, police arrested Irfan from a hostel in Kakapora, where he was teaching the Quran to local boys. The police didn't tell the family the reason for his arrest. "They just told us that he will be safe in the police station," said Hurrah Sr. A day after the abrogation of Article 370, the communication blackout in the Valley left Irfan's family with no means to get information about where he had been taken. "We went to meet officers in Pulwama and requested a curfew pass. I just wanted to locate my son," said Irfan's father, who would go to find out 16 days later from central jail authorities that he had been taken to an Uttar Pradesh jail. "I took fruits and clothes for him, but was told that he had been shifted," he

added.

Irfan, who was the lone breadwinner of his family, was teaching Arabic and Quran to students in Shah-i-Hamdan Pampore, a local school for religious education. Irfan had studied till Class 9, but then sought admission at a Darul Uloom in Srinagar, where he studied for three years.

Lawyers in Kashmir said in various reports that most of the people charged under the PSA have been detained on grounds of "likely to disturb public order", in accordance with Section 3 of the Act. Irfan's dossier reads, "He has done his post graduation in Arabic from Kashmir University." This shocked that family who pointed out that he hasn't even attended higher secondary school.

The family feels that Irfan was arrested because of his religious leanings. "Is it a sin to follow one's own religion?" asked his father, who has undergone surgery on both his eyes recently and is unable to earn a living for his family. Before this, there had never been any charges filed against Irfan. It was only in October, a month-and-a-half since Irfan was picked up, that Hurrah Sr was able to meet his son in the Uttar Pradesh jail. It was then that he started taking loans from people in his village due to his own financial strain.

Ever since their last meeting, the Hurrah family was hopeful that their son was in good health despite being in jail. This was until the most recent meeting on 17 December.

It took four days for the family to travel by train to Uttar Pradesh and meet their son, but what greeted them was most unexpected. When Hurrah Sr entered a meeting room at the police station, and hugged his son, Irfan told him that he had been tortured. These were the only words he could utter. "We were not allowed to talk in Kashmiri, so we couldn't discuss the whole matter," said the father. "I don't know much Hindi. I was just staring at my son and tears were rolling down my face," he added, "We just exchanged glances helplessly without talking much."

Irfan showed his father his injured foot saying that he

might require surgery, but wasn't sure who would be able to operate on him there. Since then, the family has been quite worried. "We cannot bear to see him like that. He should at least have been shifted to Kashmir," said Hurrah Sr.

Arranging a meet with their kin in outside jails is a long struggle for families mostly due to the difficult financial conditions.

As per the recent report by the Jammu and Kashmir Coalition of Civil Society and Association of Parents of Disappeared Persons (APDP), nearly 37.4 percent of the detainees in PSA-related cases have been moved to jails in various states across the country. The report mentions that 662 people were charged under the PSA in 2019, of which 412 cases were recorded after 5 August.

Another resident of Pulwama, 45-year-old Abdul Rashid Dar from Mohenveji Kakapora, was arrested in a night raid on 5 August and security personnel didn't cite the reason for his arrest to his family. Zeba Bano, Dar's 43-year-old wife, said that her husband has never been taken to a police station before, but had now been charged under the PSA. On the night of 5 August, police and CRPF personnel knocked on Dar's door and told him to accompany them. "They just told us he has to go with them while they search a house nearby," said Zeba.



Zeba Bano, wife of Abdul Rashid Dar, showing medicines she is taking for heart related diseases.

Image procured by Quratulain Rehbar.

It was only nine days after he was picked up that Dar's

family learnt he was at the Kakapora Police Station. Two-and-a-half months later, he was moved to a jail in Agra without his family being informed. In Agra, around 84 people from the Valley remain imprisoned and at district jail in Uttar Pradesh's Ambedkar Nagar, around 60 people from Kashmir are under detention. Dar, a driver and the lone bread-winner of his family, has two children and a wife who are waiting for his release. "If they are not going to release my husband, they should arrest us as well," said Zeba.

While the families continue to suffer after the detention of their bread-winners, the police dossiers read somewhat similarly for all of them, charging them with "stone-pelting" and "disturbing law and order". In Kashmir, following the abrogation of Article 370, there have been very few protests as the region has been under a strict blockade. The families question the detention of their kin and say that "most of them were falsely charged on weak grounds".

A few kilometres away from the main town in Pulwama, Pahoo is a quiet village surrounded by apple orchards. Fayaz Ahmad, a 26-year-old from the village, was among hundreds slapped with the PSA and shifted to Bareilly after he was charged for "stone-pelting", as per his dossier.

Fayaz was in the middle of his PhD in Arabic, having completed his Masters from the University of Kashmir. According to his father, Abdul Rashid, Fayaz was falsely framed under prior charges and was "just keeping himself busy with a tractor which was his part-time job".



Abdul Rashid Mir and Sara Bano, near their tractor which their son Fayaz Ahmad was running to earn livelihood. Image procured by Quratulain Rehbar.

It has been six months and Rashid has only been able to visit his son once. "Since the past six months, our son hasn't able to work or study. And as a result of him being jailed, our financial condition has worsened," said his mother, Sara Bano. Fayaz' family fears that by being charged under the PSA, "the authorities have jeopardised his career".

In Parliament last October, Union Home Minister Amit Shah justified the arrests in Kashmir and maintained that less than 1,000 people from Kashmir were under detention and that 800 of them were "stone-pelters". Earlier this month, the government released some politicians who had been detained following the 5 August crackdown. However, while most police officials approached for comment refused to speak about the PSA cases, one on condition of anonymity said that the government might release some political prisoners depending on the situation in Kashmir in the coming months.

BEATEN, STRIPPED, LIPS SEWN UP: A BLEAK YEAR FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN KASHMIR

Watchdog releases report detailing allegations of shocking rights abuses in Indian administered Kashmir of 368 people killed, 80 were civilians.

(Fahad Shah)



Activists of the Youth Forum for Kashmir burn an Indian flag with pictures of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Human Rights Day

As the world celebrates a new year, Indian-administered Kashmir is still struggling to make sense of the traumas of the last one. Some 368 people were killed in Kashmir in 2019, according to an annual review by the human rights watchdog Jammu Kashmir Coalition of Civil Society. Of these, 80 were civilians, 159 were militants and 129 were government forces' personnel.

The watchdog's report raises shocking allegations of torture by government troops that include detainees being beaten, stripped naked and in one case a teenager having his lips sewn up. The report makes grim reading for the region, which has been racked by separatist-driven conflict for decades but has seen an uptick in violence since August, when the government revoked the partial autonomy of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir and divided it into two federal territories Ladakh and Jammu and Kashmir. The year 2019 started with a suicide attack on Indian forces by a Kashmiri youth, who blew up an explosive laden car, killing at least 48 government personnel. The incident led to a brief escalation in tensions between the nuclear-armed neighbours India and Pakistan, both of whom have territorial claims over the region. Following the bombing, 43 attacks on Kashmiris were reported across India. And there was further trauma to come.



Indian forces in Kashmir have been accused of rights abuses.

Tensions rose when the government of Narendra Modi revoked the region's partial autonomy on August 5, since when the Indian armed forces have been accused of killing at least six civilians. The report says that between August and December, Indian government forces detained 5,161 people and that during this period, several reports of torture emerged. The report notes one such incident in September, in which a factory worker, Fayaz Ahmad Ganai, 19, from Chandgam village of district Pulwama, claims to have had his lips sewn up with a needle after being detained at a military checkpoint.

The report also refers to an incident on August 11, in which Bashir Ahmad Dar and two other men from his village in Shopian district were called to a detention centre in Chilipora. The report claims the men were tortured and that the detention centre installed loudspeakers so the population living near the camp could hear what was happening, labelling this an instance of "psychological warfare". Human rights bodies have long accused the Indian police of torture and various cases have been raised with the United Nations, but India has always denied that any civilians have been tortured during operations in the region. According to the report, "out of the 80 civilians killed, 19 were killed by armed forces, 17 were killed in cross line-of-control shelling between Indian and Pakistani armed forces ... 28 civilians were killed by unidentified gunmen, six were killed by militants, seven were killed in explosions, one person died after being allegedly hit by a stone and one person [a non-local] died in crossfire between armed forces and militants." Another person killed themselves, allegedly after being tortured by the armed forces.

Pakistan ready for plebiscite in line with UN resolution: Imran



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan has said that Pakistan stands ready to play its role in ensuring a free and impartial plebiscite in accordance with the UN Security Council resolutions.

In a message on the Right to Self-determination of Kashmiri Day which was observed on Sunday, the prime minister said that recent wave of unprecedented Indian state-sponsored terrorism in held Kashmir and discriminatory steps against minorities, especially Muslims, were a clear manifestation of the Hindutva ideology espoused by the RSS-inspired Indian government. "The world must ensure that human rights abuses do not go unpunished and that perpetrators of these heinous crimes against humanity are held accountable," the prime minister said. He said that every year, the 5th of January reinforced commitments to uphold the fundamental human rights of the people of Jammu and Kashmir as on this day, in 1949, the UN made a commitment to the realization of the right to self-determination of the Kashmiri people through a free and impartial plebiscite under the auspices of the UN.

"This day reminds the international community, especially the United Nations, of the imperative of honouring its commitment towards the people of Jammu and Kashmir," he said. Residents of valley have been deprived of their right to life, food, health, freedom of expression and assembly over last 150 days

The prime minister said the importance of the inalienable

right to self-determination had been acknowledged in all important human rights covenants and decisions of the UN General Assembly and the Security Council. Due to Indian intransigence, the Security Council had failed to fulfil its pledge to the Kashmiri people, he added. "Over 72 years of illegal occupation of occupied Jammu and Kashmir are a saga of brutalization of the Kashmiri people. Around 900,000 occupation forces have converted the region into the largest prison in the world," the prime minister said, adding that since Aug 5, 2019, India had unleashed a new reign of terror in held Kashmir, locking the region and abusing human rights of the innocent people, especially of women, children and the elderly, with impunity.

Kashmiri people, he said, had been deprived of their rights to life, food, health, freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, freedom of religion and, above all, the right to self-determination for over 150 days.

"Being a party to the Jammu and Kashmir dispute, Pakistan stands ready to play its role to ensure a free and impartial plebiscite in accordance with the UN Security Council resolutions. Our strong and steadfast moral, political and diplomatic support for the Kashmiri people will continue till the realization of their inalienable right to self-determination," he said.

Meanwhile, Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Information and Broadcasting Dr Firdous Ashiq Awan said on Sunday that oppressed people of Kashmir had been facing lockdown for the last 154 days and they were still looking towards the UN to ensure early implementation of its resolutions regarding their right to self-determination. She said the Pakistani nation stood united with the Kashmiri people in their freedom struggle. Ms Awan said that India had crushed human rights of the Kashmiri people. "The oppressed people of Kashmir are not alone in this very hard time as 220 million people of Pakistan were with them," she claimed. Dr Awan said that Pakistan would take the Kashmir issue to all international

courts, besides highlighting the issue effectively at all international forums.

Muslims across world support just struggle of Kashmiris

Quetta: President Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Sardar



Masood Khan has thanked the people of Balochistan on behalf of the people of Jammu and Kashmir and Azad Kashmir for their unwavering support for the Kashmiris. He added that numerous rallies in over 20 cities of Balochistan were held in solidarity with the people of Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK) and the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) flag a symbol of freedom and self-determination was flown high in all the rallies. The President made these remarks while interacting with the participants of the Fifth National Security Workshop Balochistan at Quetta on the topic, 'Kashmir its Genesis, Global Perspective and way forward'. The workshop is being jointly organized by the Pakistan Army's Southern Military Command and National Defence University, said a press release. In his opening remarks, the President said that the people of Balochistan are progressing fast and it is a matter of pride that the valiant people of Balochistan are now being fully represented in all national institutions including the bureaucracy, armed forces, judiciary and also in the political arena. The President while informing the

participants of the grave human rights situation in Kashmir said that unfortunately, the situation in IOJK has always been dire since 1947 but after the BJP-led Modi government has taken power in India the situation has taken a turn for the worst. He said that cordon and search operations have become a norm during which young Kashmiris are picked up, the elderly beaten and the womenfolk harassed and molested. 'According to the National Federation of Indian Women, over 13,000 innocent Kashmiri boys have been illegally picked up. These boys are sent to prison houses all over India where they are tortured and left traumatised for life', said Masood Khan. India, he said, is forcefully settling Hindus in Kashmir and has published fake maps which have shown Azad Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan as the territory of India. Under the pretext of establishing health facilities, they plan to settle Hindus in IOJK and settlements are being made for ex-army officials, so-called West Pakistan refugees and Pundits. 'There is an imminent danger of a massive refugee outflow towards Pakistan which will lead to a further demographic imbalance in IOJK turning Muslims into a minority', he informed.

<https://pakobserver.net/muslims-across-world-support-just-struggle-of-kashmiris/>

Rallies held across AJK to remind UNSC of its pledge

Muzaffaraba(Tariq Naqash) Rallies, public meetings and seminars were held across Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) on Sunday to remind the United Nations of its pledge to let Kashmiris exercise their inalienable right to self-determination to decide the fate of their motherland. On Jan 5, 1949, the UN Security Council (UNSC) had passed a resolution envi-saging the right to Kashmiris to decide between Pakistan and India through a fair, free and impartial UN-sponsored plebiscite. The main function was held in Muzaffarabad with AJK Prime Minister Raja Farooq Haider as the key participant. In his speech on the occasion, Mr Haider called upon the UN to appoint a special representative on Kashmir to mount



pressure on India with regard to implementation of Security Council resolutions on the disputed Himalayan region. Of Pakistan's Kashmir policy, he said that it had failed [to deliver] over the past 72 years and there was dire need to revisit it without further ado. On Jan 5, 1949, a resolution was passed envisaging right to Kashmiris to decide through plebiscite "Since India has lost the status of a party to Kashmir dispute after its Aug 5 move and instead has become a proven occupier of the territory, Pakistan should advance its national Kashmir policy through its parliament," he said. "Whenever and whatever we talk, it's in the interest of Pakistan. Our words may sound bitter to you but being activists of the freedom movement as well as students of history we realize the importance of Pakistan far more than others and, therefore, we call a spade a spade," he added.

The AJK premier reiterated his suggestion for constitution of a forum comprising the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) and AJK-based political parties to convince the international community on Kashmiris' birth right to freedom. Stating that Kashmiris' future was linked with Pakistan, he stressed upon all national and political parties to set aside their petty political differences, forge national unity and take solid steps for freedom of occupied Kashmir. He disclosed that a conspiracy was being hatched to establish a Kashmiri government in exile and made it clear that the government in Muzaffarabad was the sole legal and representative government of the state.

Earlier, Mr Haider and some other participants also cast their "vote" in favour of Pakistan in a symbolic referendum. Later, the AJK premier led a rally from district

headquarters complex to Azadi Chowk during which he kept on chanting pro-plebiscite and pro-freedom slogans along with other participants.

Speaking at a function on Saturday, Mr Haider said that not only rulers but also political parties of Pakistan had disappointed him with their role in tackling the Kashmir issue. "I have objections against everyone; against the PML-N leadership, the PPP and other people who are always busy in a tug of war," he said at the Manak Payyan camp of post-1989 Kashmiri migrants to express solidarity with young victims of India's savagery in held Kashmir as well as along the LoC in AJK.

"Do they not see [how] the people in occupied Kashmir drape coffins of their loved-ones with green Pakistani flags? It has been 154 days to the lockdown [in held Kashmir]; how many [leaders from Pakistan] have visited us," he asked.

AJK government has finalized all arrangements to observe Kashmir Solidarity day

Muzaffarabad (PID-AJK): AJK government has finalized all arrangements to observe Kashmir Solidarity day in a befitting manner on February 5th to express complete solidarity with people of Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK), facing illegal Indian occupation for the last 72 years and heightened oppression and curfew since August 5. Kashmir Solidarity Day will be observed throughout the state with the renewed pledge to raise voice for the oppressed people of IOJK at every available forum. In this connection, a high-level meeting presided over by Prime Minister Raja Farooq Haider Khan reviewed and finalized the arrangements here on

Wednesday. "February 5 will be a closed holiday. Special prayers will be offered after morning prayers for the martyrs of Kashmir and success of freedom struggle. Sirens will be sounded at 10:00am after which traffic will be stop and one minute silence will be observed to pay tribute to the martyrs of Kashmir liberation movement", decided in the meeting. The special messages of AJK President and Prime Minister in connection with the day will be broadcast at AJK Television, all three stations of Azad Kashmir Radio and other private FM channels. Moreover, special programs to highlight the gross human rights violations by Indian military and paramilitary forces in the held valley would also be telecast and broadcast



through AJK TV and Radio. A big rally participated by the all sections of the society led by Prime Minister Raja Farooq Haider Khan will be taken out from Chatter Chowk at 03:00pm.

The representatives of government, opposition and All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) will also march towards to UN Observer Mission office to handover a memorandum to their concerned officials.

Special supplements, carrying exclusive interviews of political leadership of the divided parts will be published in the national dailies of Pakistan. Functions would be held at all entry/connecting points of Pakistan and Azad Kashmir including Kohalla Bridge, Azad Pattan, Hullar, Mangla Bridge and Bararkot. Human chains would be formed at all these points. Public gatherings, rallies, walks and protest demonstrations would be arranged at district and Tehsil level across the state to remind the international community to fulfill its commitment with the Kashmiri people for granting them their internationally recognized right to self-determination. Speech, essays and other competition would be arranged in all schools, colleges and universities to highlight the significance of the day. The special session of AJK Legislative Assembly would also be observed if President or Prime Minister of Islamic Republic of Pakistan visited the state capital to

express solidarity with the Kashmiri people.

Addressing the meeting, Prime Minister Raja Farooq Haider Khan said that government has chalked out a comprehensive programme to observe the day. He said brutalities and massive human rights violations, being committed by the Indian troops to suppress the indigenous freedom struggle of Kashmiris would be effectively highlighted through different events on the day. The Prime Minister directed that day should be observed in befitting manner to convey a strong message to the people of IOJK that they are not alone in their just struggle and whole Pakistani nation and people of AJK are standing shoulder to shoulder with them. Speaker

Legislative Assembly Shah Ghulam Qadir, Ministers Mrs. Noreen Arif, Sardar Farooq Ahmed Tahir, Dr. Mustafa Bashir Abbasi, MLA Naseema Wani, Chief Secretary Mathar Niaz Rana, Secretaries, Commissioners and heads of departments attended the meeting.

In letter to UN, Pakistan says India placing missiles in Kashmir

Pakistan's foreign minister says he fears India plans to attack Pakistan to divert global attention from Kashmir.

Pakistan's Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi has written to the United Nations, warning the world body of what he says are actions by New Delhi to position missile launchers in Indian- administered Kashmir, according to a statement released by Pakistan's foreign ministry on Thursday. In the statement, Qureshi is said to have told the UN that he fears India is planning to launch an attack on Pakistan to divert international attention from human rights violations in Kashmir. These are "Indian actions that continue to escalate tensions in an already tense environment in South Asia", Qureshi said in his letter, demanding the UN respond to the purported moves by India. The Pakistani minister did not offer evidence to support his claim of missiles being placed in the disputed Himalayan region. There was no immediate comment from India.

Tension over Kashmir

Tensions between Pakistan and India have been heightened since August 5, when India's Hindu nationalist government abrogated Article 370 of the Indian constitution, pushing Kashmir into its worst political crisis in 70 years. The article granted the disputed region, which was India's only Muslim-majority state, a degree of autonomy. In October, New Delhi divided the state into two federally-ruled territories.

India's move in August was followed by an unprecedented lockdown which remains imposed. "Curfew and communications blackouts have now entered the fifth month. Kashmiri political leadership remains in custody, in jails, and in detention centres across India," said the letter by Qureshi. India and Pakistan claim the Kashmir territory in its entirety but rule over parts of it. Many Kashmiris demand either a merger with Pakistan or an independent state. Pakistan's top diplomat also claimed in the letter to the UN that India has partially removed the fence in five areas along the Line of Control (LoC) that divides Kashmir between the two countries. "The reason could only be planning for some 'misadventure' across the LoC," Qureshi's letter said. Pakistan and India have fought two of their three wars over control of Kashmir since they gained independence from British colonial rule in 1947. They nearly went to war again in February, when a suicide bombing in Indian-run part of Kashmir killed more than 40 paramilitary soldiers. India responded by bombing an alleged rebel training camp in Pakistan. Islamabad later said its forces downed two Indian air force planes and captured a pilot, who was later released.

Govt. should counter propaganda alleging compromise on Kashmir

Staff Reporter: Certain elements with vested interests are spreading baseless rumours regarding the handling of the Kashmir crisis by the Pakistan government and it should play a proactive role in countering the propaganda. The army chief recently said there will never be a compromise on Kashmir whatever the cost, which

has sent across a very positive message, said the participants of a meeting held at Institute of Policy Studies (IPS), Islamabad.. The fifth meeting of the working group on Kashmir, formed by IPS to discuss the latest developments in Indian Occupied Kashmir (IoK) post 5 August 2019, was chaired by Executive President IPS, Khalid Rahman and included Maj Gen (r) Sardar Muhammad Anwar Khan, former president, Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJ&K), Raja Sajjad Khan, director, Jammu & Kashmir Liberation Cell, Farzana Yaqoob, former AJ&K minister, Ambassador (r) Syed Abrar Hussain, Shakil Turabi, senior journalist and head of South Asian Broadcasting Agency (Sabah), Amanullah Khan, former president, Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Muhammad Ali, research scholar, and Advocate Nasir Qadri, international law expert, among others. The participants of the meeting were of the view that Pakistan has a major asset in the form of national consensus on Kashmir and all sections of society, including ulema, should be engaged to further mobilize public opinion on the issue. A well thought-out narrative should be formulated after discussions and this should be promoted globally through all available channels such as embassies, media, etc. The speakers opined that experts of Islamic jurisprudence should be engaged to discuss the Islamic viewpoint regarding Kashmir's disputed status and its occupation by India. The panelists said the conditions after August 5 present an opening for stakeholders to mobilize people through rallies, art exhibitions, conferences, etc.

No compromise over Kashmir: COAS

RAWALPINDI Army Chief Gen Qamar Javed Bajwa on Monday visited the Line of Control in Azad Jammu and Kashmir, and said that the armed forces are "fully prepared to thwart any misadventure" or aggression for the country's defence, the military's media wing announced. The visit comes as Indian and Pakistani troops have been exchanging fire across the restive border, with casualties caused on both sides. "Our quest for peace must never be misconstrued as weakness," the



army chief was quoted as saying in a tweet by the Director General Inter-Services Public Relations. "There will never be a compromise on Kashmir, whatever the cost. We are capable and fully prepared to thwart any misadventure/ aggression for [the] defence of our motherland," added Gen Bajwa, who also paid a visit to Combined Military Hospital Muzaffarabad. ISPR footage showed the army chief met and addressed troops stationed along the LoC and also visited patients receiving treatment at CMH. On Dec 19, two civilians were martyred and two others were injured as India resorted to unprovoked shelling across the LoC.

<https://pakobserver.net/no-compromise-over-kashmir-coas/>

Memories of 1993 Sopore massacre still fresh in apple town

Srinagar (KMS): In occupied Kashmir, the memories of Sopore massacre in which over 60 civilians were killed by the Indian Border Security Force on January 6, 1993 are still fresh in this apple town. On the fateful day the BSF personnel had gone on a rampage after an unknown person allegedly snatched a rifle from a soldier. More than 350 structures including residential houses and shops were also gutted after Indian soldiers set the town ablaze. Ghulam Rasool Ganai, a shopkeeper who is an eyewitness to the carnage said: "Forces went berserk and fired indiscriminately upon the unarmed civilians and set ablaze the markets especially the area from main Chowk to Tehsil Office." "Among the dead civilians, scores had been burnt alive," he said adding that the "troops dragged driver out of a bus and showered bullets on the passengers on board, resulting in the on-spot

death of 20 passengers." "The troops later sprayed gun powder and petrol on many surrounding buildings, shops and houses and set them ablaze. More than 400 such establishments and 75 residential houses in and around five localities including Shalpora, Shahabad, Muslimpeer, Kraltang and Arampora were turned into ashes. The buildings include some landmarks like Women's Degree College and Samad Talkies," he said. "Our family at Shalpora lost four of our members including 15-year-old Mohammad Ashraf Shalla, Ghulam Rasool Shalla, Sajad Ahmad Shalla and Bashir Ahmad Shalla," a member of Shalla family said. He said, "A day before the massacre, one of our fruit laden trucks had got stuck in a drain near the main Chowk. Four members of our family who were rescuing the truck on the fateful day had taken shelter in a shop when the BSF troops started firing at the people. The BSF men entered the shop and killed them all." Tariq Ahmad Kanjwal, 45, an eyewitness, who was just 20 then said: "The image of a person burning in a shop will haunt me always. His head was in flames. I remember a BSF officer telling his colleagues not to shoot him as he will be dead soon," said Tariq Kanjwal. Tariq also remembers how Shaheen, owner of Shaheen studio, and his assistant, were burnt alive in the shop. A report on the Sopore massacre was appeared in the Time magazine under the heading "Blood Tide Rising." According to a petition filed by human rights activist, Muhammad Ahsan Untoo, in the Human Rights Commission of the territory, "77 civilians were killed by the BSF men on January 6, 1993 in Sopore while as 100 houses and 300 shops were torched." The petitioner added that the names of the convicted BSF personnel had not been communicated.

Internet trek: Kashmiris travel miles to get online due to India's 5-month-long clampdown

Every day the train to occupied Kashmir's remote cyber oasis Banihal is packed as people travel for hours to get online in the region where internet has been cut for five months. The mountain town of fewer than 4,000 people

People has six internet cafes, which are booming due to a security clampdown by the Indian government. "The speed is very slow," admitted Irfan, manager of one of the cafes where customers pay up to 3,000 rupees (\$40) an hour to link their laptop to the snail's-pace broadband. "Scores of Kashmiris, mostly students and income tax professionals, come visiting every day," said Irfan, who only gave one name. In early August, New Delhi made a sudden move to axe occupied Kashmir's semi-autonomous status, shutting down communications and sending tens of thousands of extra troops into what was already one of the world's most militarised zones. While phone calls and very limited text messages are now possible, the internet is still down. Forcing people offline has crippled the economy and made it impossible to pay utility bills, make applications or just send a message to family outside the stricken zone. Some Kashmiris make special trips to New Delhi or Jammu city an eight-hour drive from the regional capital Srinagar to connect.

Banihal, a two-hour train ride from Srinagar, is the nearest town with any access.

Internet trek

To get to Banihal, students Bhat Musaddiq Reyaz and Aqeel Mukhtar fought their way onto a train at Awantipora a town more than 100 kilometers away, south of Srinagar in the Kashmir valley.

"I tried getting internet at a government kiosk set up in my district but I waited for two hours on two different days and never got a turn," said Reyaz as he waited for the train.

The 19-year-old wanted to register for exams to gain

access to a graduate medicine course. Mukhtar, 25, recently completed a degree in education and wanted to apply online for scholarships. "It is a complete hassle to have to travel so much just to send applications online," said Mukhtar.

The two students took two hours on one train and then had to change to another which was another 90-minute standing trip to Banihal.

They waited in the snow for a bus to take them from the station to the town and its prized internet cafes in a crowded lane.

Reyaz was able to complete his task. But when the pair returned to the railway station for the long trip home, they were told the last train had been cancelled due to snow on the tracks. No taxis would take them but after a few hours, a truck driver heading to the Kashmir valley finally offered a lift. The truck also became stuck in the snow and the students had to sleep there for the night.

Traffic was still halted the next day and the students had to walk 10 kilometers past stranded cars and trucks to get back to Banihal railway station. There, they waited seven hours for the only train that left that day.

Reyaz called his trek to make his application "unbelievable". "Something that would take me half an hour at home, took me two gruelling days," he said.

ss"I will never do this ever again in my life," added Mukhtar.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1526435/internet-trek-kashmiris-travel-miles-to-get-online-due-to-indias-5-month-long-clampdown>



Muzaffarabad: Prime Minster Raja Muhammad Farooq Haider Khan leading a rally to show solidarity with children of Kashmir(04-01-2020)

Estimated 13,000 boys arrested in Kashmir since India's crackdown

India imposed tough new restrictions in disputed Kashmir fearing protests ahead of UN speeches by rival Indian and Pakistani leaders at the UNGA, even as the US

humanitarian costs of the lockdown since August 5, Syeda Hameed from Muslim Women's Forum said after the release of the report.

"We wanted to see with our own eyes how this 43-day lockdown [until September 17] had affected the people,



urged New Delhi to ease control.

Security personnel stand guard during a lockdown in Srinagar on September 27, 2019. (AFP)

Indian authorities arrested an estimated "13,000 boys" in Jammu and Kashmir since August 5, according to a fact-finding report by a team of five women who visited the region recently. The report's release came ahead of UNGA speeches on Friday by India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Pakistani PM Imran Khan.

Security forces imposed tough new restrictions in India-administered Kashmir on Friday, fearing protests ahead of the rival leaders speeches.

"Shops closed, hotels closed, schools, colleges, institutes and universities closed, streets deserted was the first visual impact as we drove out from the airport," the "Women's Voice: Fact-Finding Report on Kashmir" report said.

"To us, it seemed a punitive mahaul [environment] that blocked free breathing" the report noted on Tuesday.

Kashmiris are waiting for the world to understand the

particularly women and children," the report said.

Hameed said that people of Indian-administered Jammu and Kashmir are waiting for Friday when the 74th UNGA session listens to prime ministers of India and Pakistan.

"People are waiting for world opinion [to build] pressure [on India]," she added.

The report claimed that boys as young as 14 or 15 are taken away by the authorities and allegedly tortured.

"One estimate given to us was 13,000 boys were lifted during this crackdown," the report said about the alleged detentions by Indian forces to disallow any protests.

"Army pounces on young boys; it seems they hate their very sight. When fathers go to rescue their children, they are made to deposit money, anywhere between 20,000 Indian rupees [\$281] to 60,000 Indian rupees [\$845]," read the report.

The women's activists said women in Kashmir, especially those from the Sikh community, denied they face any sexual harassment at the hands of Kashmiri men.

The group demanded that for normalcy to restore in the

region, the Indian government should immediately withdraw army and paramilitary forces.

They added allegations of torture by Indian army should be investigated.

It demanded an immediate lifting of the communications blackout and restoration of special provisions back to their status before August 5.

More restrictions ahead of UN

Security forces imposed tough new restrictions in Indian Kashmir fearing protests ahead of UN speeches by rival Indian and Pakistani leaders at the United Nations.

Concrete and razor wire barricades went up across Srinagar and other towns in the disputed Muslim-majority territory.

"There were worries about big protests after Friday prayers. Similar restrictions are in place in other towns and areas," a police officer said on condition of anonymity, as he was not authorised to speak to media.

Barricades went up across roads and bridges in Srinagar as security forces in bulletproof gear guarded deserted streets following orders to stop any public rallies.

"The hospital is just a mile away from my home, but I have already walked three times the distance and am still not sure how long I need to walk to reach there," said Mudasir Ahmad, after pleading with soldiers to let him pass at one barrier in Srinagar's old town.

Ahmad said he wanted to visit a sick relative at the

hospital. He was one of many residents on the streets who were stopped and redirected by soldiers.

US presses India on Kashmir rights

The US wants New Delhi to quickly ease restrictions imposed in Kashmir, a senior official said, declaring President Donald Trump's willingness to mediate to ease tensions between India and Pakistan over the territory.

Trump met separately this week with both Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan.

While Trump has forged a close bond with Modi, joining the Hindu nationalist at a massive rally on Sunday in Houston where the Indian leader boasted of his actions in Kashmir, a senior official said that the US had concerns over the clampdown in the region.

"We hope to see rapid action the lifting of the restrictions and the release of those who have been detained," Alice Wells, the top State Department official for South Asia, told reporters.

India, however, has long rejected any outside role on Kashmir and quickly shot down the idea after Trump mentioned mediation in a July meeting with Khan

Several rights groups including Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International have repeatedly called on India to lift restrictions and release political detainees.

India said that 93 percent of the restrictions have been eased in the conflict-ridden region.



President AJ&K Sardar Masood Khan, Prime Minister GoAJ&K Raja Muhammad Farooq Haider Khan and other speakers addressing on the occasion of Death Anniversary of Quaid-e-Millat Ch. Ghulam Abbas.



Muzaffarabad: Prime Minister Raja Muhammad Farooq Haider Khan and other speakers are addressing to public Rally in Manak Pyan Camp (04-01-2020)

Habeas Corpus Petitions filed in J&K High Court

Total number of Habeas Corpus petitions filed before J&K High Court in 2019	662
Total number of Habeas Corpus petitions filed before August 5, 2019	250
Total number of Habeas Corpus petitions filed post August 5, 2019 (post abrogation of Article 370)	412
Total number of PSAs quashed in 2019	8, including of 3 minors

District wide compilation of PSA cases from 2019

District	Total PSAs	Post 5 August Cases	Pre 5 August-Cases	Disposed Off	Disposed Off Post 5August	Disposed Off Pre 5 August	Date/ Case Not Mentioned	Petition not known
Anantnag	42	23	19	8	0	8	-	3
Badgam	62	32	30	10	0	10	-	3
Bandipora	26	14	12	8	0	8	-	1
Baramulla	95	51	44	16	1	15	-	4
Ganderbal	11	9	2	2	1	1	-	0
Kulgam	66	44	22	6	0	6	-	4
Kupwara	64	37	27	6	1	5	-	9
Pulwama	105	62	41	26	0	26	2	10
Ramban	1	0	1	0	0	0	-	0
Shopian	59	34	24	12	3	9	1	3
Srinagar	87	70	18	13	4	9	1	15
Others	17	11	7	9	4	5	-	0
Total	635	387	247	116	14	102	4	52

Compilation of PSA cases as per the location of the detainees from 2019

Original Detention Jail	Name of the Jail shifted/ Currently Located	No. of Detainees
Central Jail Srinagar	District Jail Agra	85
Central Jail Srinagar	District Jail Bareilly	20
Central Jail Srinagar	District Jail Lucknow	24
Central Jail Srinagar	Central Jail Naini (Prayagraj)	16
District Jail Anantnag	Central Jail Naini (Prayagraj)	4
Central Jail Srinagar	District Jail Varanasi	30
Central Jail Srinagar	District Jail Ambedkar Nagar UP	60
Central Jail Srinagar	Not Shifted	110
Unknown (Other jails in J&K)	Unknown	287

Age wise compilation of the PSA cases from 2019

Age Group	Number of Cases	Booked Twice	Disposed Off	Released/PSA Quashed
Juvenile (Below 18)	6	0	4	0
Youth (18-35)	374	7	70	5
Middle Age (36-59)	170	0	38	0
Old Age (60 and above)	26	0	3	0
Age Not Known	60	0	-	1

(For detail report please visit www.jkccs.net)



Briefing to delegation of Foreign Journalist by Director JKLC Raja Muhammad Sajjad Khan

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN IOK

(From Jan 1989 till Dec 31,2019)

Total Killings *	95,475
Custodial Killings	7,136
Civilian arrested	158,399
Structures Arsoned/Destroyed	109,451
Women Widowed	22,911
Children Orphaned	107,784
Women gang-raped / Molested	11,175



Secretary JKC Mansoor Qadir Dar and other speakers are addressing to Speech computation in Lamnian Hattian Girls high School

Month Of Massacres...

