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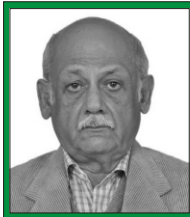
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INDIA-PAKISTAN AND THE ELUSIVE PEACE

Pakistan and India have had a love-hate relationship since 1947 and it has been a roller coaster of acrimony, hatred, blame game and two bloody wars along with many border skirmishes resulting in the loss of lives on both sides. There have been many attempts in the past to find a way-out of the tragic and painful reality of hostile relations between the two countries. Both sides now have come to the realization that the thorny problem of Kashmir does not have a military solution. Pakistan does not have the military might to forcibly wrest Kashmir from the Indian clutches and India cannot achieve a decisive victory in the difficult mountainous region of Kashmir. The latest development in this area has been the very recent initiative of the Government of the UAE to restart the long stalled peace talks between the two countries.

Immediately after this in a sudden and surprise statement the Pakistan Army chief said, "It's time to bury the past and move forward with India but India will have to create a conducive environment particularly in India-occupied Kashmir for talks to resume." Such developments and statements look like a breath of fresh air or the proverbial light at the end of the tunnel. The two countries also made the surprise announcements to recommit themselves to the already existing cease-fire agreements all along the Line of Control and people living along the line heaved a sigh of relief after years of tension and loss of many lives as a result of firing from both sides by the two nuclear armed hostile neighbours. The Director Generals of Military Operations of India and Pakistan also "reiterated that existing mechanism of hotline contact and border flag meetings will be utilized to resolve any unforeseen situation or misunderstanding."

The Foreign Minister of the UAE Sheikh Abdulla Bin Zayed met the Indian-foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar but for reasons unknown the official release issued after the meeting said, "They discussed all regional and international issues of common interest and exchanged views on them." No mention was made of



Tariq Aqil

India-Pakistan peace initiative or anything related to that. An Indian official in the know asked not to be identified said, "the ceasefire is just the beginning of a larger road-map to forge peace between the two countries." Hopefully the next step will be the reinstatement of Ambassadors who were recalled in 2019 when border tension was at an all-time high, to be followed by talks on trade and then leading to constructive and meaningful dialogue on the resolution of the Kashmir problem.

This new peace initiative was a thaw in the frozen relations between the two countries after many years especially after the rise in tension in 2019 when fighter aircraft of both countries clashed in aerial combat along the line of control. Tension also heated up when India did away with Kashmir's special constitution autonomy in 2019. The role of the UAE as a peace broker was never confirmed by India or Pakistan, but the UAE welcomed the India-Pakistan joint statement and it was also welcomed by the USA and the United Nations. The UAE also stressed that this is an important step towards achieving security, stability and prosperity in the region. Another welcome development was that India and Pakistan both agreed to hold a meeting of the Indus Water Commission that had not been held for the last three years.

The contentious issue of Kashmir has been a bleeding wound and a bone of contention between the two countries since independence in 1947. Strife and violence flared up greatly in 1989 when the manipulation of Kashmir politics by the Indian Government led to a popular uprising in the Valley and Pakistan saw this as a long-awaited opportunity that should be exploited.

After the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan again in 1989 and the influx of Kashmiri refugees in Pakistan and the availability of a large number of trained fighters, the Pakistani planners hit upon the idea of bleeding India through a Jihad policy using Muslim fundamentalists from the state patronized militant groups in Pakistan.

Officially Pakistan, of course, denied any such involvement but for the world at large it was an open secret. This strategy of guerrilla war was supposed to be a low cost and low intensity conflict across the Line of Control leading to ending the stalemate and eventual victory and the end of the Kashmir problem.

Over the years many close encounters and the loss of thousands of lives on both sides it became crystal clear

that the problem of Kashmir cannot be resolved militarily. Pakistan and India both have to decide whether they can afford this hostility and dangerous confrontation in the future. The enmity between the two neighbours is like a malignant tumour, a cancer expanding unchecked and with the capacity to destroy both countries if not checked now.

The writer is Professor of History, based in Islamabad.

CUSTODIAL KILLING OF ASHRAF SEHRAI

The seventy-eight year's old senior Kashmiri leader Mohammad Ashraf Sehrai, who dared to challenge Indian rule in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) died a few days back under the custody of Indian security forces. The veteran Kashmiri leader was under the custody of Indian security forces since July 2020. His only crime was the demand of legitimate right of Kashmiri's self-determination from Indian authorities. Like millions of Kashmiris, Mr Sehrai was a peaceful protestor, totally unarmed. As per the statement of his son, Mujahid Sehrai, his father was denied proper medical treatment in jail despite repeated requests to Indian authorities. Mr Mujahid talked to his father on telephone ten days before his custodial death. "He told us several times in the last few months during his two phone calls a week to home that he was not getting proper medical treatment. We moved a court on April 16 with a petition seeking proper medical assistance for him but the court was yet to review it." This is very unfortunate that, even courts in IIOJK are bound to follow the orders of Indian security forces over the genuine cases of essential medical care. There is no such precedence anywhere in the world. The worst part of the killings, rapes and torture in IIOJK is that, the killers (men of Indian security forces) are not charged for their brutal offence.

The brutal and discriminatory laws, imposed in IIOJK since 1990s allow the personnel of Indian Army and other security forces to imprison anyone in IIOJK for a period ranging from three months to two years even without any



Dr. Muhammad Khan

trial. Ashraf Sehrai was arrested in July 2020 under the Public Safety Act.

He remained in jails for over 16 years in various Indian prisons during his political career. He lost one of his sons at the hand of Indian security forces in 2020. IIOJK, deaths of innocent Kashmiris under the custody of Indian security forces are a routine matter. This is happening ever since 1990 and after 2016; there has been an upsurge in the custodial killing of Kashmiris as the revised strategy, devised by General Bipan Rawat, the incumbent Indian Chief of Defence Staff (CDS). The crux of the strategy was; planned killings (genocide) of the Kashmiri youth who protest against Indian rule in IIOJK or for that matter, any act of India in the occupied state.

While the Kashmiri youth were continued to be killed through torture, custodial killings and fake encounters (genocide), the Kashmiri leadership leading the movement of self-determination was massively arrested under National Investigation Agency (NIA). NIA acts as the Central Counter-Terrorism Law and authorised to investigate any so-called terror-related matter anywhere without any special permission of the state authorities. Dozens of Kashmiri leaders were arrested under NIA just over the fake charges of having links with anyone in Pakistan or having costly household. NIA acted as an open licence to arrest the Kashmiris leaders and keep them under the custody of Indian security forces for years and years without any investigation. Yasin Malik, the leader of Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front is

languishing in Indian jail under NIA without any legal evidence for the last several years. The policy of genocide of Kashmiri youth and custodial killings were mainly implemented while General Rawat was the Indian Army Chief, therefore, the General was rewarded accordingly. For these brutal acts (genocide) and custodial killings of Kashmiris, general Rawat was elevated to the status of first Indian Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), upon his completion of his term as Indian Army Chief. As per various international pacts, covenants, Geneva Conventions, International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and other provisions of international law, these Indian acts come under war crimes. Indeed, IIOJK is an active war zone, ever since 1990 and there are over 900,000 men of Indian security forces are deployed there from August 5, 2019. "According to Article 2 of the 1948 Genocide Convention, "killing members of the group" constitutes genocide when "committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group". The Indian security forces are specially targeting and torturing the ethnic Kashmiri Muslims in IIOJK, making a classic case against Indian state, Indian Army and personnel of all Indian paramilitary forces who have been involved in the rapes and killings of Kashmiris. In their drive of custodial killings of Kashmiris, Indian security forces have arrested and killed thousands of innocent Kashmiris ever since 1990. In order to protect

their unlawful acts of human rights in IIOJK, the members of Indian security forces have been given total immunity under two laws; The Jammu and Kashmir Public Safety Act and the Armed Forces Special Power Act. Amnesty International and other human rights organizations at global level have condemned these laws and demanded India to lift these laws from IIOJK. Nevertheless, Indian has tightened its grip over the territory of IIOJK through its illegal acts of converting state into two union territories in August 2019. Indeed, India needs Kashmir, not Kashmiris, therefore undertaking the brutal acts of custodial killings of the innocent Kashmiris.

The United Nations and all international organizations must take a note of Indian massive human rights violation in IIOJK.

On their part, Kashmiris are not ready to surrender their legitimate right; the right of self-determination.

Kashmiris all over the world and the people of Pakistan salute the valiant struggle of great Kashmiri leader, Mohammad Ashraf Sehrai for the right of self-determination of Kashmiris. Indeed, just condemnation is not sufficient to attract the international attention towards Indian custodial killings in IIOJK. Pakistan must refer the custodial killing of Mr Sehrai and thousands of other Kashmiris to United Nations Human Rights Council.

This UN body is bound to "promote and protect human rights around the world" if pursued seriously.

KASHMIR, PALESTINE, MYANMAR: CASE EXAMPLE OF GENOCIDE

The world is turning blind eye to inherent right of self-determination of people, like the principle of nuclear non-proliferation, has been employed according to big power politics, not according to high moral standards or consistency. History records that big powers agreed in 1948 that the people of Kashmir have the right to self-determination but this pledge was never fulfilled due to political expediency. Are the power brokers oblivious of the fact that when United States and Great Britain



Ali Ashraf Khan

decided in November 1947 and August 1951 to take the Kashmir issue to ICJ. Over the years, these two countries have been dragging feet on the human rights situation in Kashmir and didn't want to disturb Indian market by challenging India or anticipating a role in US expansionism in south china sea to retain Taiwan as their camp follower ignoring International commitment under the Charter, under a questionable Instrument of Accession and under half a dozen UNSC Resolutions on Kashmir." Those working on

policy of clash of civilisation or war against religions, we have warned in these columns are trying to play with fire, their heinous designs are fully exposed, when Yugoslavia was dismembered four independent countries were recognized by UN but Kosovo was not? How UN came into action and held Plebiscite to carve a new Christian country East Timor out of Indonesia, how fast world community and United Nation came into to play in dividing another Muslim country Sudan to establish Christian dominated South Sudan with abundant oil reserves and Sudan where masses are still struggling for survival. It's my belief, self-determination is the only answer, not the problem in Kashmir provided if exercised with prudence and practicality. But the world politics and international relations, vis-à-vis emergence of China as an economic giant has disturbed the Chess game of the sole super power.

I have been writing and trying to expose conspiracy's against Humanity since long specially focused on Palestine and Kashmir, because the people of Kashmir and Palestine are suffering due to well planned scheme of things drawn by World Jewry's House of Rothschild's operating from United Kingdom, that started on 2nd November 1917 when Lord Arthur Balfour had communicated a decision approved by His Majesty the King addressed to Lord Rothschild signed by Arthur Balfour that we commit to support with our sweat and blood the Jews in establishing a Jewish State on Palestinian territory, similarly the British Parliament also approved the partition plan for British India dividing it into two dominions Pakistan and India, as per plan the Rulers of these princely states were free to choose among India & Pakistan, but in case of any dispute where rulers professed different faith and majority of population different then accession was to be decided by exercise of free will of the people of that state. The US and its NATO allies have already met their doom in Iraq, Syria, Libya, Yemen, Lebanon and Iran. Afghanistan is a situation that neither US can swallow nor spit it out inspite of total destruction of Humanity in Afghanistan, just wait and see, Israel is sooner than later going to implode from within due to massacre of unarmed Palestinians, why world conscience is sleeping over continued genocide of humanity by the champions of human rights, the spineless Muslim rulers are party to the crime.

Divide and rule game is over, realization and requirement of national interest demand greater reconciliation and unity among Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Iraq, Yemen and Iran, reports are emerging that ice has started melting and let's hope a balancing force emerges to strike a balance for socio-economic prosperity through alignment with BRI initiative offered by China and Russian cooperation. Pakistan is yet not clear to define its own national interest and priorities implementation of pragmatic foreign policy instead of continuing to look towards West only. Pakistan emergence on 27th Ramzan, coinciding with 14th August 1947, and declaring the republic as Islamic Republic of Pakistan was perhaps considered first threat to another newly born country "Israel" and our successive rulers failed to build public opinion rather kept playing super power game, when Suez Canal issue came up, when Hussain Shaheed Suhawardi had in reply to a newsmen question described then Arab block as Zero-plus-Zero is equal to Zero, and we antagonized Gamal Abdul Nasser a leader of Non-Aligned Movement, and then for personal gains we compromised with Oil rich Arabs and continue even now in spite of CPEC project hanging in balance since last two decades, that could have been a real game changer if rulers had developed consensus with all provinces instead of bulldozing their views. No Muslim can disagree with the principal of Shura or consultative decision-making. Islam also erects no stark hierarchy of religious authority like the Roman Catholic Church. Then why the voice of people is not given any importance by claimants of Rayaset-i-Medina, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) employed revelations from God to create a timeless constitution, yet also sought the consent of all who would be affected by its implementation. Thomas Jefferson thus borrowed from Islam consultative principle and incorporated in the Declaration of Independence in speaking of government by the consent of the governed. In the end, I can sum up with confidence that people of any religion will turn to violence when peaceful avenues of dissent or opposition are closed. We must listen carefully as well as speak forcefully for all international conflicts, be it Palestine, Myanmar or Kashmir. God bless Pakistan and humanity.

The writer is contributing columnist, based in Karachi.

LONG LIVE KASHMIR

The third wave of Covid-19 has shaken Prime Minister Modi as the ongoing situation in India is beyond heartbreaking. The ever-menacing Farmers' Protest has blocked the roads and minds of India while it is in the process of swallowing the bitter pill of its humiliation at the hands of the Chinese army at Ladakh. India's imminent marginalisation in Afghanistan soon after foreign troops leave the war-ravaged country pose a different set of problems to its stated aims in the region. India's pride in policing South Asia, primarily to contain China, and its future role in QUAD has been met with a lukewarm response from the Biden administration on certain matters of bilateral trade thereby creating additional worries for Modi and his team. Visibly perturbed, Modi's face expressions correspondingly depict his worries at home and abroad. However, has anyone wondered why is it that when it comes to dealing with Pakistan, Modi's India looks as powerful, adamant and dismissive as it always has been since the birth of both the countries in 1947?

The annexation of the Crimean Peninsula by Russia in 2014 was condemned by the West and the United Nations as a violation of international law and a number of agreements safeguarding the territorial integrity of Ukraine. The UN General Assembly went on to pass a resolution affirming the territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders. On the other hand, the international community quietly witnessed India's subjugation of Jammu & Kashmir in violation of all norms of international law and the unanimously adopted resolutions by the UN Security Council and UNCIP on the final disposition of the State of Jammu and Kashmir. Why is it that besides defying norms of international law, India completely disregarded its neighbour's jealously guarded principled stand on Kashmir? India could not have taken the ever alert international community and a nuclear Pakistan that lightly if it was not absolutely sure of the consequences of its illegal actions taken on Aug 5, 2019.



Najm us Saqib

How could India take such a big risk if it was not sure of controlling the aftermath?

The producers had approved the jointly envisioned script a long time ago. Keeping the names of script writers anonymous, various directors with the help of a joint production team have discretely completed their job to the satisfaction of their masters. The audience is watching the carefully selected trailers with great enthusiasm and anxiety. As this movie is not likely to be released ever, the audience will have to collect bits and pieces of the storyline with the help of a few trailers so far released to make deductions through their already stretched to limits' imagination. This is exactly what we are presently doing. Paradoxically, the not-so-helpful guessing game on the scope of the plot, the nature of interactions between important characters, modus operandi, moral of the story and particularly the ending, continues unabated.

The contours of the understanding reached between India and Pakistan on the final disposition of Kashmir are being revealed through media in an extremely cautious but unyielding manner. A well planned strategy including some safeguards against any untoward reaction seems to be in place to cater for any contingencies. From throwing feelers and changing tactics to commencing a guessing game of sorts for taking appropriate timely actions to baffle political scientists about the real understanding, every bit of strategy seems to be working as planned. Besides being a territorial dispute, a heavy historical baggage, a foreign policy migraine, an economic spoiler alert, a military rigmarole, a nuclear flashpoint and a several decades old Achilles heel of South Asia, Kashmir also entails strong emotional and psychological dimensions for the people of Pakistan and India. Hence, the strategists had a Herculean task before them especially when the aspirations of the Kashmiris were also to be respected and factored in.

The recently released report by Global Trends had warned, "India and Pakistan may stumble into large-scale

war neither side wants” and that, “miscalculation by both governments could prompt a breakdown in the deterrence that has restricted conflict to levels each side judges it can manage.” Therefore, it was not surprising to know that war was not even an option. Subsequently, we saw the demand of reversal of Aug 5, 2019 decision changing into a request of only 'revisiting' it for demographic purposes. Apparently, one party has achieved its strategic objectives while the other is in favour of having a well defined strategic pause to effectively follow its freshly made checklist.

It seems, if not addressed, the Kashmir dispute has been taken care of. Apparently, the thorny agenda item has efficiently and skillfully been removed from any future bilateral talks. No need to worry about keeping the record or minutes of the meetings held particularly since 1989 in safe custody anymore. Signed in a spirit of goodwill and friendship, the Indus Water Treaty of 1960 stays as such but let us shelve the Security Council's resolutions, aspirations of the people of Kashmir, the jugular vein, the Simla Agreement and Article 257 of the Constitution of Pakistan. The events of May 1998 and the subsequently acquired 'balance of power' in the region may also be overlooked for the time being. However, all other bilateral

issues such as Siachen, Sir Creek and bilateral trade would remain alive. Importantly, with the core issue out of the equation, the curse of cross border terrorism has also been shown the door. There will be no cross allegations for at least a decade during which time the respective houses would be put in order. Hopefully, the multi-billion dollar CPEC initiative remains unaffected by the ongoing political developments.

All said and done, the fact remains that Jammu & Kashmir hurts us and its absolute subjugation by India hurts us. It is also a fact that Kashmir has suffered much more than Pakistan has. Not that the people of Kashmir had some unwavering confidence in Pakistan's resolve to protect their interests in real terms till the Day of Judgment. However, their hopes of the continued 'moral, diplomatic and political support' from the land of the pure remained alive throughout the past several decades. The reality stricken Kashmiris must be finding it hard to believe that the oatmeal cookies were actually marbles. If nothing else, their legitimate fears need to be allayed before the nightmare ends. Verily, they deserve to be taken into confidence while the chessboard is being rearranged to play the all important game of peace and security in South Asia.

AS THE CONTROVERSY OVER ARTICLES 370 AND 35A DEEPENS

Dr Moonis Ahmar

In an interview given to a private TV channel of Pakistan on May 8, Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi took a different position on the country's age-old position on Jammu & Kashmir by stating that the removal of article 370 which gives special status to the Indian occupied Jammu & Kashmir can be called New Delhi's 'internal matter' whereas the real source of concern for Islamabad is article 35-A which protects the demographic status of the occupied region by disallowing Indian residents to buy property, get a domicile and cast a vote in elections. Later, in a tweet on May 10 Qureshi tried to placate his stance on article 370 by terming occupied Jammu and Kashmir a disputed territory warranting resolution

according to the UN Security Council resolutions. Immediately, after his interview, the PML-N launched a fierce attack on the foreign minister accusing him of taking a U-turn on Article 370 as he and Prime Minister Imran Khan had, on several occasions, opposed revocation of Article 370 by the Indian state under the cover of Jammu & Kashmir Reorganization Act of August 5, 2019. PPP Senator Sherry Rehman also lambasted the foreign minister's stance on Article 370 and called it a departure from Pakistan's principled stand on occupied Jammu and Kashmir because the said article gave birth to Article 35-A.

What is Article 370 and how far it is different from Article 35-A and how India by revoking both these articles not

only absorbed the occupied Jammu and Kashmir into the Indian Union but also opened floodgates of non-Muslim settlement particularly in the Muslim-dominated Valley of Kashmir? Why did Foreign Minister Qureshi downplay the importance of Article 370 and called for the restoration of Article 35-A? Historically and factually, Article 370 came into effect in 1949 which exempted Jammu and Kashmir State from the Indian constitution. That article, according to Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah who is called the Lion of Kashmir and the first Prime Minister of J&K, became the basis of the relationship between the Indian state and the state of J&K. That article allowed the Indian-administered region jurisdiction to make its own laws in all matters except finance, defence, foreign affairs and communications.

Likewise, Article 370 established a separate constitution and a separate flag and denied property rights in the region to outsiders which meant that the residents of the state lived under different laws from the rest of the country in matters such as property ownership and citizenship. That was the special status which was given to the Indian Occupied J&K in 1949 which diminished with the passage of time. Prime Minister was replaced with Chief Minister, and President with Governor. With each passing day, the erosion of the writ of Article 370 led to a direct control of occupied J&K by the Indian state as most of the times since 1970s Governor's rule was imposed by New Delhi. Consequently, Article 370 which provided special status to occupied J&K as compared to other Indian states became a piece of paper which was ultimately revoked by the Modi regime on August 5, 2019. As far as Article 35-A is concerned, it was introduced through a presidential order in 1954 to continue the old provisions of the territory regulations under Article 370 of the Indian constitution and permitted the local legislature in the disputed territory to define permanent residents of the region. It forbade outsiders from permanently settling in the occupied territory, buying land there, getting local government jobs and security education scholarships.

The article, referred to as the Permanent Residents Law, also bars female residents of the occupied region from property rights in the event that they marry a person from outside the state. The provision also extends to such women's children.

While analysing articles 370 and 35-A, it becomes clear that the former was the essential source of legitimacy which India derived while maintaining its association with occupied J&K and its importance cannot be relegated. That article thus cannot be termed India's internal matter because as rightly stated by Mehbooba Mufti, a former chief Minister of occupied J&K, by revoking Article 370, India lost its legal and legitimate status over the disputed territory. She asserted that after the revocation of Article 370, Kashmiris are not bound to maintain their association with India and without reversing the August 5, 2019 acts by the Modi regime, things cannot be normalised. Foreign Minister Qureshi downplayed the importance of Article 370 by calling it India's 'internal matter' while terming the revocation of Article 35-A a major source of conflict because of the demographic changes the Indian state is undertaking in occupied J&K by issuing thousands of domicile certificates, patronising settlement of non-locals in J&K, trying to transform the Muslim majority of occupied Valley of Kashmir into a minority.

The controversy over Articles 370 and 35-A needs to be examined from two major angles, as follows.

First, while Article 370, which gave special status to J&K in the Indian Union, was severely violated, Article 35-A remained intact. During the election campaign, the alliance led by BJP and Shiv Sena had pledged to scrap both these articles. Foreign Minister Qureshi was right when he called revocation of article 35-A a major development because of subsequent policies of New Delhi which patronised the settlement of non-Muslims in the Valley of Kashmir; the issuance of thousands of domiciles since August 2019 to non-locals; and occupation of land illegally so as to transform the

demographic complexion, particularly in the Muslim-majority Valley of Kashmir. If Article 370 has been challenged in the Indian Supreme Court, revocation of Article 35-A is being implemented by the BJP-led Modi regime.

Second, is it not a reality that almost two years have passed since India revoked Article 370 and 35-A and absorbed occupied J&K into the Indian Union and no cogent voice at the international level has been raised against such illegal acts? The Modi regime despite being under attack over its mishandling of the pandemic crisis has maintained the Kashmir lockdown and gone ahead with the siege and search operations and extra-judicial killings in Kashmir, and appears under no pressure to reverse its August 5, 2019 acts. Prime Minister Imran and Foreign Minister Qureshi may continue to remind India that any normalisation process can only take place if New Delhi reverses the unilateral acts of August 5, 2019, but the situation on the ground has not changed and there is no indication of any positive transformation of India's

stance on J&K. When Pakistan demands the restoration of Article 370 then why had the foreign minister, during the mentioned TV interview, called it India's internal affair? How can he eat his own words when there is a documentary evidence of what he had uttered about Article 370?

It seems Pakistan's Kashmir policy is still shrouded in confusion, and one can hear various voices from the side of the government. Furthermore, when the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister say that Pakistan wants the resolution of the Kashmir conflict only in line with the Security Council resolutions, but they are unable to mention how it is possible. And when the Prime Minister says that normalisation of relations with India can only take place if New Delhi reverses its August 5, 2019 acts, in that case he is unable to state how it will be achieved. Hence, the controversy over Articles 370 and 35-A needs to be understood in the context of India's unilateral measures of August 5, 2019 and Pakistan's failure to prevent the absorption of J&K into the Indian Union.

STANDING BY KASHMIR

Ashraf Jehangir Qazi

The writer is a former ambassador to the US, India and China and head of UN missions in Iraq and Sudan.

Bekhudi besabab nahin Ghalib

Kuch to hai jiski purdah dari hai

(Distraction is not without reason, Ghalib)

Something's afoot that is being veiled)

FOR Pakistan, the prospect of reduced tension with a larger adversary should be welcome. Extended backchannel contacts, a revival of the LoC ceasefire, an exchange of messages between the prime ministers, Pakistan's offer of Covid-19 relief assistance to India, and possible negotiations on "all outstanding issues, including Jammu and Kashmir", should be cause for cautious optimism. However, important questions remain which will be answered one way or another soon enough. Reportedly, Modi took the initiative. Why? Is it because he is politically weakened by the gross and tragic

mishandling of the pandemic which has now been reflected in significant defeats in three out of five state elections? Have military setbacks in confrontations with China led to fears of a China-Pakistan alliance against India's regional aspirations? Has Biden's reliance on Pakistan to coax the Taliban to limit US humiliation in Afghanistan increased its leverage in Washington at India's expense? Have India's failure to eradicate the Kashmiri resistance despite massive repression, and international criticisms of India's human rights violations been factors?

Conversely, is India driven by its perception of the political, economic, military and diplomatic mess in which Pakistan finds itself today? Has Modi calculated that Pakistan has no Kashmir options left other than to accept Aug 5, 2019 as a fait accompli and cover its own humiliation with empty bluster and information management? After losing its majority 50 years ago is

Pakistan now poised to forego its 'jugular vein'?

On July 24, 2004, Dawn carried a report 'Musharraf for giving up maximalist positions'. Musharraf told India's external affairs minister, Natwar Singh, that he was ready to set aside Pakistan's "maximalist" position on Kashmir as "enshrined in the UNSC Resolution 91". This and other UNSC resolutions embodied the UN's legal and principled decision not Pakistan's "maximalist" position. According to Musharraf "India's initial maximalist position" was that all of the pre-Partition State of Jammu and Kashmir belonged to it. Later, India's "maximalist position" was reduced to "the conversion of the LoC into an international border".

Pakistan abandoned its UN-based position before even entering into negotiations while India only reduced its illegal territorial claims to what it had already forcibly absorbed. Musharraf presented his four-point proposal: demilitarization or phased withdrawal of troops; no change in the borders of Kashmir while "softening" the LoC to allow Kashmiris to travel and trade across it; self-governance for Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and India-held Kashmir (IHK) without independence; and a joint supervision mechanism involving India, Pakistan and Kashmiris.

Syed Ali Shah Geelani, the veteran Kashmiri political leader, opposed the four points as a sell-out. However, other Hurriyat leaders seemed ready to settle for them. Ultimately, developments in India and Pakistan aborted the process.

Fifteen years later, Pakistan is resurrecting Musharraf's 'backchannel'. A backchannel is essentially a 'trouble-shooting'- or an initiative-launching modality to overcome deadlocked or restore suspended negotiations. It is not a proper modality for extended negotiations to resolve complex core issues, especially if professional and experienced diplomats are excluded and replaced by largely 'miltel' personnel.

Pakistan seems ready to dump its UN-based stance on Kashmir again in the alleged expectation India will reciprocate by changing its implacable stance. Modi is

not considering political suicide, and nobody is fooled.

The difference 15 years later is India has eliminated the State of Jammu and Kashmir and replaced it with two Union Territories. This essentially abrogates the Shimla Agreement which states "neither side shall unilaterally alter the situation". India has thereby also rendered the LoC moot as it derives from the Shimla Agreement.

Shimla needs to be restored for the ceasefire to endure and Aug 5, 2019, needs to be reversed. Otherwise, backchannel negotiations will be cover for surrender, especially if Kashmir is relegated to the back-burner as reports suggest. Democracy dies in darkness. So does national security and foreign policy, including Kashmir policy. Only betrayals thrive in the dark.

India will not 'reciprocate' Pakistan's bending of the knee. The Kashmiri resistance will not surrender whatever Pakistan does or does not do. Has Pakistan consulted the Hurriyat leadership in IHK or the government in AJK? On what basis does Pakistan distinguish between Articles 370 and 35A of the Indian constitution? India's respected legal scholar A.G. Noorani states 35A directly flows from 370. Why should Pakistan refer to the Indian constitution when its position is defined by its own constitution? Article 257 integrates the Kashmir independence option with the Pakistan option.

Are we asking for the Indian constitution, instead of the UN resolutions, to provide the basis for a Kashmir settlement? The Indian constitution claims the whole of Jammu and Kashmir for India. Moreover, why did the prime minister on Feb 5 suggest two plebiscites for the Kashmiri people: one to choose Pakistan and the other to leave Pakistan? Much like Ahmad Faraz's "aa phir se mujhe chorh ke jaane ke liye aa." This once again needlessly undermines Pakistan's UN-based stance.

Is Pakistan really left with no options to support the Kashmiri people in the face of genocidal repression including killings and maiming, communal targeting, systematic disruption of families through disappearances, communications blackouts, cultural suppression, demographic change, etc except

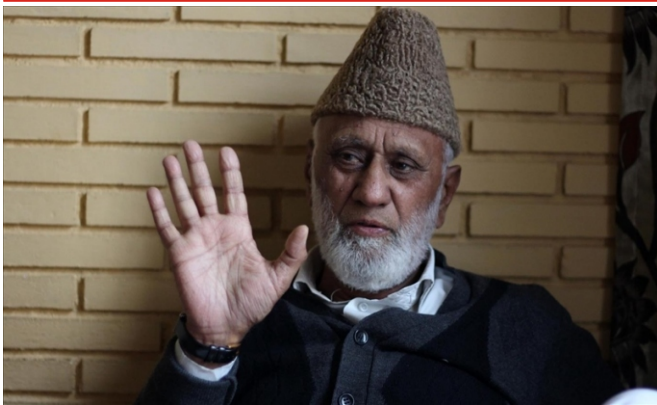
unavailing diplomacy and lawfare? If so, why not publicly tell the Kashmiri and Pakistani people the honest if bitter truth? There is no justification for war, especially between neighboring nuclear weapons states. Nor is there any need for a Kashmir settlement which insults the heroic sacrifices of the Kashmiri people, not to mention the massive costs extracted from the people of Pakistan for the 'Kashmir jihad'.

By all means Pakistan should develop a working

relationship with India and seek a principled compromise Kashmir settlement acceptable to the majority of Kashmiris. It must also effectively dissuade India from perpetrating mass slaughter, possibly genocide, against the Kashmiri freedom struggle. If even this is now considered beyond Pakistan, what is left of the credibility of the country, and how come?

The writer is a former ambassador to the US, India and China and head of UN missions in Iraq and Sudan.

PLIGHT OF KASHMIRI PRISONERS WORRIES RIGHTS DEFENDERS



Ailing pro-freedom leader complains of worsening eyesight in jail, says son

(Hilal Mir)

SRINAGAR, Jammu and Kashmir

Kashmiri pro-freedom leader Muhammad Ashraf Sehrai's "preventive" detention since July 2020 highlights the bleak plight of Kashmiri political prisoners, according to rights activists and experts.

Sehrai, 77, can hear only with the help of hearing aids. He was diagnosed with 70% hearing loss in his right ear and 50% loss in his left in 2019.

The irreversible loss of hearing was caused years after alleged custodial torture in 2000 in a jail in India's Jharkhand state, according to his son, Mujahid Sehrai.

A few months before his arrest, he had a cataract operation. But after his arrest, there was no follow-up by an eye specialist, the younger Sehrai told Anadolu Agency.

Police allow him a 10-minute call with his family once a week. But during the brief conversations, much of which

goes into exchanging pleasantries, the septuagenarian cannot even fully explain his health condition.

A few days ago, Mujahid said his father complained of not being able to read the Qur'an or clearly identify someone in front of him.

"He said he is losing eyesight and he finds it difficult even to stand up and walk up to the landline phone which is probably some distance away from his prison cell for the weekly call," said Mujahid.

Even when he was free, the son said, his knee trouble and degeneration of muscles in the legs made walking difficult. The family does not know if he can take occasional walks as advised by doctors.

The family sends Sehrai's monthly stock of medicines for hypertension, high uric acid, hyperthyroidism, post-surgery eye issues and an enlarged prostate. Jail officials then dispense the quota a strip at a time, said Mujahid.

At the mercy of the authorities

Sehrai's health concerns have drowned out questions around his detention. Tapped to become the leader of the largest pro-freedom grouping, the Hurriyat Conference -- after Syed Ali Geelani -- Sehrai had been under detention at his home in the capital, Srinagar, since Aug. 5, 2019, when the Indian government scrapped the longstanding special status of Jammu and Kashmir and put thousands of political leaders and activists in jail, mostly outside Kashmir.

Geelani has been under house arrest for the better part of

12 years but nearly continuously since 2016. He stepped down from leadership of the Hurriyat Conference last year because of differences with Hurriyat constituents parties.

Like hundreds, Sehrai's detention has been justified under the Public Safety Act, a preventive detention law that allows the Indian state to jail any person for up to three months without a trial. Detention can be extended to six months and then a year.

Only the High Court can quash the detention, but a favorable verdict is no guarantee to freedom because the law can be used repeatedly to keep one in prison.

Pro-freedom leader Masrat Alam has spent 22 years in preventive detention under the law which has been termed a "lawless law" by Amnesty International in 2010.

Sehrai's family filed in November 2020 an application in the High Court to void his detention. Last week, when the application came up for a hearing, the judge was absent.

Ahsan Untoo, a human rights defender who was one of thousands jailed before or after Aug. 5, 2019, told Anadolu Agency that a detainee "is completely at the mercy of the authorities these days."

"Under the present regime, the laws under which people are detained have become harsher and legal redress difficult. Other forms of relief have also dried up," he said.

No outside help

Other forms of relief were usually jail visits by International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC) officials and an occasional assessment of prisoners' condition in various jails by a visiting team of Kashmir's largest lawyers' group, the Jammu and Kashmir Bar Association, said Untoo.

While the ICRC has stopped humanitarian ventures in Jammu and Kashmir, the lawyers' visits also stopped after the Indian government took complete reins of the region in 2018.

Earlier, a provision of the draconian Public Safety Act prohibited the government from transferring a detainee to a jail outside the region, said Sheikh Showkat Hussain, a former law professor at the Central University of Kashmir

and noted political commentator.

That provision was scrapped in 2018 when the Indian government started ruling Kashmir directly. A prisoner can now be sent to far away jails in India so that his family has little contact.

"This is an attempt to make Kashmiri prisoners and their plight invisible to the world at large," said Hussain.

Ghulam Mohammad Bhat, 65, a longtime member of proscribed religio-political organization Jama'at-e-Islami Jammu and Kashmir, died in jail in Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh in December 2019, about 1,652 kilometers (1,026 miles) from his home in the Kupwara district of northern Kashmir. No family member had spoken to him after his detention on July 17, 2017, or visited.

Pro-freedom leader Muhammad Yaseen Dar of Budgam district learned about the death of his wife only on the day of his release on Aug. 9, 2020, from a yearlong preventive detention.

Late Thursday, the wife of senior pro-freedom leader Ayaz Akbar died of cancer in Srinagar, his family said.

Akbar is imprisoned in Tihar Jail in New Delhi. He was serving as spokesperson for Geelani.

Sehrai's son-in-law has been the only person to visit him after coronavirus restrictions on visits were lifted, while his son had a video interaction once from the Central Jail Kashmir.

"My brother-in-law was not allowed to hand a packet of dry fruits to my father. He was told 'this could become a precedent for others.' My father is ailing. He needs a good diet," said Mujahid.

Jail manual

According to the Jail Manual, which dictates rules and conduct for prison authorities and inmates, the prison diet should have meat once a week. But Udampur jail, where Sehrai is housed, does not serve non-vegetarian food.

Harish Kotwal, superintendent of the jail, told Anadolu Agency the prison has a "common mess" and therefore serves only vegetarian meals.

Kotwal said prisoners receive regular health check-ups as per protocol.

But families of detainees have regularly complained in the media that inmates do not get adequate treatment in prisons.

According to Untoo, the rights defender, more than 30 pro-freedom leaders, including eight women, suffer from multiple ailments. Most have been housed in jails either outside Jammu and Kashmir or in the Jammu province of the region, which is more than 300 kilometers away (186 miles).

During his detention at the Srinagar Central Jail last year, Untoo said he witnessed the deaths of three prisoners -- Ghulam Mohammad Lone alias Papa Kisthwari and Ali Muhammad Kumar, both in their seventies, and Mujeeb Siddiqui, in his late forties -- from health complications he said were not addressed adequately.

While Kisthwari was a dreaded former militiaman alleged to have worked for the Indian army, Kumar and Siddiqui were imprisoned for ordinary crimes.

"We requested jail authorities to revamp the health infrastructure so that a prisoner who develops emergency complications could be stabilized here and then taken to the hospital. I remember Mujeeb bled from his nose several times before jail doctors attended to him and then his condition deteriorated very quickly," said Untoo. "Against a capacity of 18, there were 25 prisoners in our cell. I told an official that we are literally breathing into each other during sleep amid the COVID-19 pandemic," he said.

In August 2020, one in five inmates at the Srinagar Central Jail tested positive for the virus.

"I'M NOT IN DESPAIR": ASHRAF SEHRAI AWAITS SON'S BODY

Rayan Naqash

"If the youth pick up guns, let it be known that they were forced to do so," said Hurriyat chairperson Mohammad Ashraf Khan, better known as Sehrai, as he awaited the body of his militant son, 29-year-old Junaid Ashraf Khan, who was killed in a gunfight today.

Mr. Khan is the second prominent commander of the Hizbul Mujahideen militant outfit to be killed in May so far. He was a divisional commander of the Hizb and was killed

The Jail Manual, Untoo said, is "often practiced in breach."

The High Court in December 2020 reprimanded authorities for delaying updating the Jail Manual, which was adopted in 2000. Before that, the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir followed the manual of Punjab state.

Superintendent of Srinagar Central Jail Daljit Singh told Anadolu Agency that the jail's doctors do refer patients to outside health facilities if the need arises. He said until the updated manual is ready, the prison follows the existing jail manual.

Family members are allowed to meet prisoners once a month after following COVID-19 guidelines.

Disputed territory

Kashmir, a Muslim-majority Himalayan region, is held by India and Pakistan in parts and claimed by both in full. A small sliver of Kashmir is also held by China.

Since they were partitioned in 1947, New Delhi and Islamabad have fought three wars in 1948, 1965, and 1971 two of them regarding Kashmir.

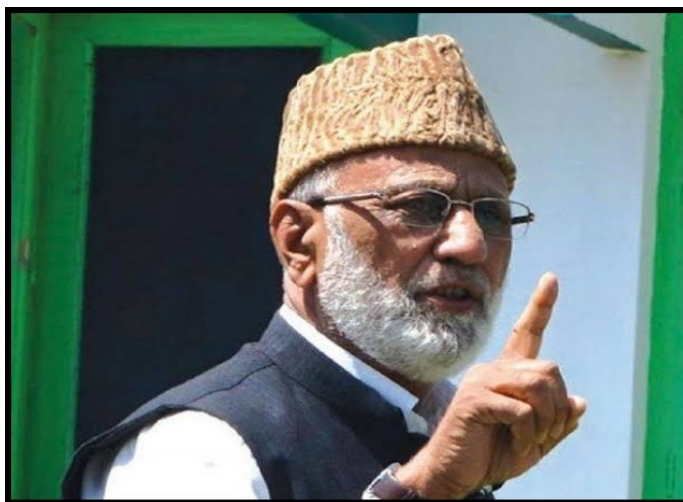
Also, in the Siachen glacier in northern Kashmir, Indian and Pakistani troops have fought intermittently since 1984. A cease-fire took effect in 2003.

Some Kashmiri groups in Jammu and Kashmir have been fighting against Indian rule for independence, or unification with neighboring Pakistan.

According to several human rights organizations, thousands have reportedly been killed in the conflict since 1989.

in a ten hour long gunfight with government forces along with an associate Tariq Ahmed Sheikh from Pulwama district of South Kashmir, in downtown Srinagar's Nawakadal area.

Mobile phone services, barring the state owned BSNL, have been barred since the gunfight. The news of his killing reached the family through television, Mr. Sehrai said at his residence as he attended to mourners. "We were in a state of ambiguity since morning," he said.



Mr. Sehrai said that he had approached local authorities seeking the return of his son's body but was "stonewalled" by officials who directed him to approach the District Commissioner or the district's police chief. "But both of them were not in their office when we visited," he said.

The authorities, Mr. Sehrai said, told him to wait and that information regarding his son's body would be conveyed telephonically. "We understood that this meant they would not return his body," Mr. Sehrai said, adding that the family only wanted to "perform his last rites as commanded by our religion." Though, funeral prayers in absentia were held in their neighbourhood led by Mr. Sehrai himself.

Mr. Sehrai lamented the government's newly "established policy" of denying last rites to families of militants. "Others have seen their sons for the last time but we are not being allowed to. [Mourning] families want to see their sons for the last time," he lamented. "India claims to be the world's largest democracy but their attitude is similar to the Nazis."

Even as his bloodshot eyes were moist, he asserted that "we are still not in despair". In the recent gunfights, the government has denied bodies of militants to their families, most of whom are buried in two graveyard in and Central Kashmir.

"He died for a cause"

A photograph of Mr. Khan, the youngest son of Mr. Sehrai, holding an assault rifle went viral in Kashmir just days after his father had replaced Kashmir's octogenarian pro-freedom leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani as the chairperson

of the Tehreek-e-Hurriyat an anti-India political outfit, in March 2018.

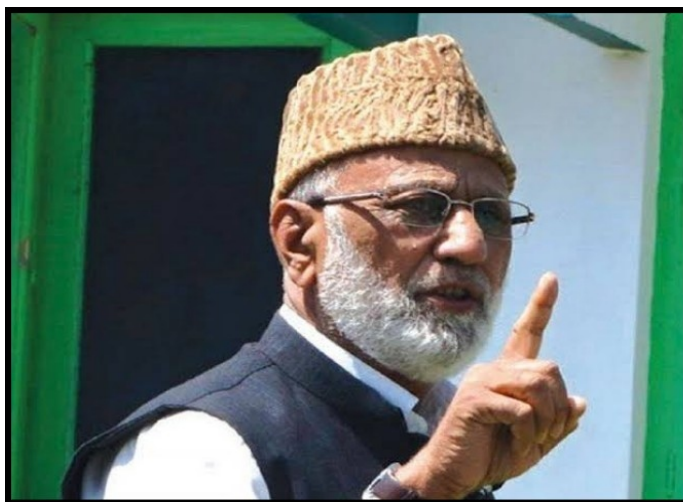
Addressing the media shortly after, Mr. Sehrai had said that he would not make appeals to Mr. Khan to shun militancy. At Mr. Khan's condolence meeting at their Srinagar residence, Mr. Sehrai told *The Kashmir Walla* that his son "did not become a militant for personal revenge. He died for his cause and mission of [fighting Indian rule]."

Mr. Sehrai said that his son had taken a stand for "righteousness" and to fight injustices in Kashmir. "He did it for his passion for freedom," said Mr. Sehrai. "He knew the truth that we need to struggle for our rights and if that meant spilling blood, even his own. It is now for the Kashmiri nation to protect and respect the sacrifice of all martyrs, not just him."

However, the Director General of Jammu and Kashmir police Dilbagh Singh said that "[Junaid Ashraf] Sehrai was assigned the task of heading Central Kashmir areas," he said. "He would hold meetings with the youth and lure them towards militancy." The police also said, in a statement, that Sehrai was involved in multiple cases.

Since the inception of the Hurriyat (and its subsequent factionalism), Mr. Khan is the first son of a prominent office bearer of the Hurriyat to join the militant ranks. In recent years, the Kashmir based pro-freedom leadership has been drawing flak from various quarters within Kashmir and outside for its alleged complacency.

Many observers then believed that Mr. Khan joining the ranks of the militants would silence the criticism. Mr. Khan has, however, maintained a low profile during the two



Years that he was a militant. Hours after the gunfight in Nawakadal, on Tuesday afternoon, smoke rose from the rubble of more than a dozen houses damaged or destroyed by government forces during the gunfight.

“Political dispute not recognised”

The ongoing lockdown due to the coronavirus pandemic was strengthened following his killing and minor protests had broken out in the vicinity of the Sehrai residence, now adored with two flags of Pakistan and a green flag symbolising the Muslim faith.

The lane littered with rocks leading to Mr. Sehrai's residence was and sealed with a spool of concertina wire and a large contingent of government forces stood guard to prevent any further protests. Police personnel warded off another group of protesters not far from Mr. Sehrai's residence, near the Old Barzulla bridge.

As the young men shouted slogans against India and in

favour of Pakistan, it was evident that the gathered mourners relatives, friends, and neighbours of the Sehrais were angry over the denial of Mr. Khan's last rites. “They [the government] think that Kashmiris would take a step back because of this,” a masked young man said, refusing to divulge his identity. “We want to make it clear that we won't. This only means that Kashmiris are fighting injustices.”

The Modi government in Delhi, Mr. Sehrai said, was a “Hindu majoritarian government” that was “mistreating its minorities, especially the Muslims” and was particularly irked by the Muslim majority region of Kashmir. “India has declared a war against Kashmiris. They may not say it openly but they have declared it practically through their actions,” he said. “It is for Kashmiris to now protect their faith and withstand [attacks on faith].”

Mr. Sehrai said that the struggle for freedom in Kashmir had claimed the lives of many Kashmiris including his son and expressed fear that it may continue to claim many more if the “political dispute was not recognised” by India. The Kashmir issue, he said, was not about the special status but of the Kashmiri people's right to self-determination.

The Government of India, however, Mr. Sehrai said had instead “given a final shape to their plans to overturn Kashmir's Muslim majority” in the wake of the “forced integration” post August 2019. “We have been treated worse than animals,” Mr. Sehrai said.



AJK President Calls For Muslim Ummah Unity To End Plights Of Palestinian And Kashmiris:

MIRPUR (APP)President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir



(AJK), Sardar Masood Khan, has said that unity among the Muslims is vital for ending the plights of the oppressed people of Palestine and Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir. Expressing a deep sense of shock over the indiscriminate bombardment in Gaza and other areas of Palestine, the martyrdom of innocent Palestinian, and the massive destruction of their property, President Khan said on Monday that Muslims in Palestine and Jammu and Kashmir are being targeted because of their religion and belief.

The end of this tyranny and injustice is possible only when the Muslims across the world get united by overcoming their petty differences and for the greater interest of Muslim Ummah, he emphasized. "Our brother and sisters in Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK) have been facing agonies which have no precedence in the history," the AJK president added. Highlighting the decades-long atrocities of India and Israel, he said: "The People of Kashmir and Palestine have been imprisoned in their own homes and deprived of their land, homes, businesses as well as essential commodities to survive. Saying that the entire disputed state of Occupied Jammu and Kashmir has been turned into an open prison by the Indian occupying forces, Masood Khan regretted that the youths in IOJK are being killed, maimed, injured, and blinded every day for demanding freedom and right to self-determination. He said that thousands of political

leaders and political activists who were arrested in Occupied Jammu and Kashmir after August 2019 are still lodged in jails in India and IOJK where they were subjected to the worst forms of torture. "No medical facilities are being provided to Kashmiri detainees in Jails, which puts the lives of hundreds of these prisoners in grave danger," he warned. The AJK President said that despite the worst anti-Kashmir measures of the Indian government and the oppression of its occupying army, the people of IOJK are in high spirits and they are determined to continue the struggle for freedom of their motherland and to take the movement to its logical conclusion. Meanwhile, the President of Azad Kashmir has strongly condemned the arrest of more than 50 youths protesting against the attack on Palestinians in occupied Jammu and Kashmir and termed it the worst fascism of the Indian government. He said that India, a claimant of democracy, wants to suppress every voice raised for freedom, right to self-determination, and human rights in occupied Jammu and Kashmir with the use of force, which has badly exposed its so-called democracy to the world. He demanded immediate release of the detained youth and withdrawal of false cases framed against them by occupation authorities.

The religious and political services rendered by Mir Waiz-e-Kashmir Moulana Muhammd Yousaf Shah is not only a golden chapter of Kashmir history but would also serve as a guiding factor for the Kashmiri people struggling for their right to self-determination, Raja Muhammad Farooq Haider Khan

Muzaffarabad (PID) The Azad Jammu and Kashmir Prime Minister Raja Muhammad Farooq Haider Khan has paid glowing tributes to the former President of Azad Kashmir Mir Waiz-e-Kashmir Moulana Muhammad Yousaf Shah on his 54th death anniversary being observed throughout Azad Jammu and Kashmir and occupied Kashmir on Thursday. The Prime Minister in his

message said that the religious and political services rendered by Mir Waiz-e-Kashmir Moulana Muhammad Yousaf Shah is not only a golden chapter of Kashmir history but would also serve as a guiding factor for the Kashmiri people struggling for their right to self-determination. He said Mir Waiz-e-Kashmir was an epoch making personality who had played a significant role in political and religious fields. The Prime Minister reaffirmed his government resolve to continue to support the Kashmiri brethren for the achievement of their fundamental right to self-determination and added that we will not take rest till the dawn of freedom in occupied Kashmir. He said Indian forces have intensified the reign of terror in occupied Kashmir to crush the freedom movement but the morale of the Kashmiri fighting against Indian brute forces are high and they will continue their struggle till the achievement of the goal of liberation. The Prime Minister also paid tributes to the Hurriyat leaders for their unprecedented struggle and facing Indian forces brutalities for the liberation of their mother land from Indian cruel clutches

JKHBCA describes Sehrai's death as "Custodial Death"

Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir High Court Bar Association (JKHBCA) has termed the death of incarcerated Tehreek-i-Hurriyat (TeH) Chief Mohammad Ashraf Sahrai as 'custodial murder' and expressed concerns about the life of other Kashmiri prisoners languishing in different jails. In a statement, JKHBCA spokesman GN Shaheen said in a statement published on facebook, said that the veteran freedom leader and chairman TeH Mohammad Ashraf Khan Sehraie "passed away in judicial custody in GMC Jammu a few minutes back". "He was ailing in jail past so many weeks without any health care and was reluctantly shifted to GMC Jammu yesterday in serious condition," they bar said adding, "may Allah be pleased with him and accept his shahadat". "JKHBCA held condolence meeting and paid rich tributes to the legendary freedom fighter."

Bar Association described the death of "Sehraie as

"custodial murder" and feels genuine concerns about the life of other Kashmiri prisoners". "World bodies must step in to ensure safeguarding the lives of Kashmiri prisoners in Indian jails," spokesman said. The spokesman said that Sehraie was detained under Public Safety Act (PSA) last year and his habeas corpus petition was still pending for disposal before the JK High Court at Srinagar. "The council for Sehraie Sahab had filed three applications before court for shifting from Kathua to Jammu jail, hospitalization owing to ill serious heart ailment and meeting with the family members. Surprisingly no orders were passed on all the three applications. Bar Association is deeply concerned about the casual approach of the courts in dealing the liberty matters and judicial apathy," spokesman added.

A meeting of the Azad Kashmir chapter of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC-AJK) was held in Islamabad

Islamabad: A meeting of the Azad Kashmir chapter of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC-AJK) was held in Islamabad, today, to pay homage to chairman Tehreek e Hurriyat Shaheed Muhammad Ashraf Sehrai, senior Hurriyat leader Syed Muzaffar Hussain Shah, brother in law of senior APHC leader Mohammad Farooq Rehmani and mother of Hurriyat leader, Zahid Safi. The AJK Prime Minister, Raja Farooq Haider, attended condolence meeting held at the APHC-AJK headquarters in Islamabad. Speaking on the occasion, the AJK Prime Minister paying homage to Muhammad Ashraf Sehrai called him the hero of freedom struggle who along with his family rendered enormous sacrifices for the Kashmir freedom struggle. Senior APHC leader Muhammad Farooq Rehmani paid glowing tribute to Shaheed Sehrai and deplored no proper medical facilities were given to him during his illegal detention. His custodial death substantiates popular observations that Modi cult of tyranny is on rise in Kashmir and other Kashmiri leaders aren't safe and secure in prisons, he said. Therefore, Pakistan should raise the question of Ashraf Sehrai's custodial death on the international level and the UN

should send an investigation team to IIOJK to unravel the truth behind his death which threatens the life of other leaders in Indian jails, he added. Speaking at the condolence reference Zahid Safi said, "We are giving these sacrifices for great and noble cause and we will continue the mission of Ashraf Sehrai." Former APHC convener and Tehreek-e-Hurriyat representative Ghulam Muhammad Safi also paid rich tribute to the party Chairman and said that Ashraf Sehrai never bowed in front of Indian occupational authorities. "He spent 16 years in different jails and was martyred in jail also. Sehrai Sahab is our icon and we should learn from his zeal and

passion for freedom struggle," he added. Other leaders present in reference condemned the atrocities being perpetrated by Indian troops on the innocent people of Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir. They urged the United Nations and other human rights organizations to intervene to bring to an end the miseries of the IIOJK people they have been suffering for the last over seven decades. International community should pressurize India to stop gross human rights violations in the occupied territory, they added. The condolence meeting was also attended by religious, social and political leaders.



Meeting of APHC delegation with President PML Mian Shehbaz Sharif and Prime Minister AJK Raja Farooq Haider Khan at JK house Tribute paid to Muhammad Ashraf Sehrai Shaheed.



HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN IOK

(From Jan 1989 till 30 Apr 2021)

Total Killings*	95,776
Custodial killings*	7,169
Civilian arrested	161,672
Structures Arsoned/Destroyed	110,409
Women Widowed	22,925
Children Orphaned	107,814
Women gang-raped / Molested	11,240



Kashmiri
Political
Prisoners

