

Many In National  
Media, Other Areas  
Have Blinkers On  
For Kashmir



# THE KASHMIR CONNECT

VOLUME 2

EDITION 17

24 MARCH, 2023

## Gains of Good Governance



## GROWING POLITICAL SPACE FOR BJP

Party Needs Strong Local Leaders In  
Kashmir To Build Strength

رمضان كريم  
Ramadan Kreem



THE KASHMIR  
CONNECT

FROM THE DESK OF THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

# NATIONAL PRESS CLUB WASHINGTON HOSTS DISCUSSION ON KASHMIR FROM TURMOIL TO TRANSFORMATION

These are the times so many of us were waiting for. When globally, people in eminent sectors wake up to the truths about Kashmir. Now these times are here, God bless.

National Press Club, Washington is hosting a discussion on the theme, 'Kashmir: Turmoil To Transformation'. By the time our esteemed readers read this column, the discussion would have taken place.

It is gratifying to know that the realization is finally dawning globally about how Pakistan indoctrinated and radicalized Kashmir to achieve its objective to bleed India. In the mohallas, streets and bazaars of Kashmir, the Kashmiris are discussing how Pakistan deceived and duped them in the name of religion. They are discussing how Pakistan made them turn against their own nation to achieve its devious aims to destabilize India.

It is indeed a matter of pride that Mr Mir Junaid, President



of J&K Workers Party and Mr Touseef Raina, President of Municipal Council, Baramulla will speak at National Press Club Washington on the above subject.

The tagline for the conference is important: Hear Perspectives From The Ground. These are the sons of the soil who shall inform and educate US journalists about how Naya Kashmir is taking shape, how people have rejected terrorism and are now moving forward as proud, happy and responsible Indian citizens.

GAYATRI MOHAN

THE KASHMIR  
CONNECT

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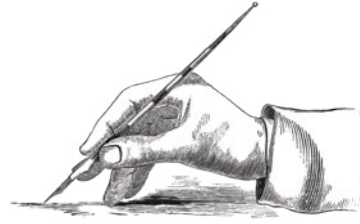
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## FROM THE DESK OF THE DEPUTY EDITOR

# LET'S EMPOWER OUR SISTERS, DAUGHTERS LET'S EMPOWER OUR YOUTH

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position with The  
Kashmir Connect)**

**O**ur sisters, our daughters are the ambassadors of peace and prosperity.

Women in Panchayats, in politics, in the administrative services carry the strong message that a society is educated and empowered.

It is vital to empower more and more women at the Panchayat level in different capacities. In fact,

our Panchayats across Kashmir must take on the task of forming committees that shall empower our sisters and daughters in different sectors. If this initiative starts at the Panchayat level, the empowerment shall happen at the grassroots.

When I travel across Kashmir, when I interact with girls studying in schools, colleges and universities, I see in them the desire to work for the happiness and development of their family, their community, their society, their nation. All this and more is possible if the Panchayats decide to handhold and empower our sisters and daughters more and more.

The Central government has provided for so many empowerment schemes for women and girls. These schemes are backed by the required financial outlay so that they can be effectively rolled out. Similarly, the government has provided schemes for the empowerment of youth in diverse sectors. These schemes have also been provided with the required budget so that they can be implemented effectively.

Our Panchayat members must avail of each and every scheme for women empowerment and for youth empowerment so that these benefits can reach the grassroots. Empowering women and girls means empowering our coming generations. And empowering the youth means channelizing the energy of the society in positive, constructive directions. We have government support for these initiatives. It is our collective task to implement the government vision effectively at ground level.



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# POLITICAL GROUND IN KASHMIR CHANGING

A Young Political Leader  
Of Kashmir Who Does Not  
Want to Be Identified

*(And Is Ready To Join BJP)*



# BJP CAN EMERGE AS STRONG OPPOSITION

## IF SOME GOOD LEADERS SHIFT TO BJP, ENTIRE POLITICAL SCENARIO WILL CHANGE

*by* **Young Political Leader  
From Kashmir**

**O**n October 5, 2022, Home Minister Mr Amit Shah addressed a public rally in Baramulla. The town used to rank among the most volatile places in Kashmir during the terror years.

The turnout at the rally surprised Kashmir. In thousands, people thronged to the venue.

It's been nearly six months since then. If the Home Minister addresses a rally in Kashmir

today, the turnout may be higher than what was witnessed at Baramulla. On account of good governance delivery, the faith of people in BJP is higher than ever.

The propaganda unleashed by our Kashmir-based political parties against BJP has spread some fear and anxiety. But many in the grassroots feel that the party has earned goodwill among the people with its multiple public welfare initiatives.

BJP may be looking for Kashmir-based political leaders. We are watching a very interesting shift in the political dynamics here. If some established



and trusted leaders join BJP, the entire political scenario will change here.

This is a positive shift for Kashmir. It shall be good for the Valley. The question is – who will take the first step?

After the Home Minister's rally in Baramulla, many observers were shocked. Thousands of people came for Mr Amit Shah's rally, and that too in Baramulla district – which used to be called a terror hub.

One will have to admit that there is change. Thousands of Kashmiris had reached the Home Minister's rally voluntarily. They were not just from Baramulla. There was good participation from other districts too.

The general political messaging till now has been that the BJP is untouchable in Kashmir. It seems that this messaging is a constant attempt at political engineering. Parties like NC, PDP and others do not want their hold on Kashmir to loosen. Hence they keep drumming in negative messaging against BJP.

I think that the voters are

weighing their options. We do not know as yet how many will vote for the BJP when the Parliamentary or Assembly elections take place. But it shall be foolish to deny the shift.

One problem is that those who represent the BJP at the grassroots in Kashmir do not have a good image. The party is searching for credible faces.

The political leaders of Kashmir constantly keep saying that people will not accept the BJP. But at ground level, the situation is changing.

The Abdullahs and the Muftis are fearful that people may accept the BJP, and in some years it may become a strong force in Kashmir, challenging their hegemony. Now from Gupkar Road or from closed rooms, no political diktat can be given to the people. When these leaders were restrained after the abrogation, they had thought that there would be stone pelting, protests demanding their release.

But people said – keep these politicians restrained in this way. They had caused so much distress among the people

that even their workers did not agitate for their release.

For years, this old guard kept scaring Delhi regarding abrogation of Article 370. The BJP did it, and now the Kashmir economy is booming with tourist inflow and greater prosperity in other sectors.

This acceptance of the BJP is surprising for many. But it shows that people were sick of the governments earlier. People are searching for what people seek nationally and across the globe – stability and prosperity.

The LG Administration has definitely brought about a visible difference. Pehle ground level kaam nahin hote the. Panchayati Raj was not so strong. Nobody used to care for the Sarpanch.

Now the Sarpanch is a very powerful figure. Funds have been provided to the most distant blocks and villages. Earlier money used to circulate among those at highest levels in political circles and in bureaucracy. Now corruption has been reined in, work is happening. We know that change does not happen overnight. But Kashmiris are aware of the damage done by the dynastic parties.

It will be good if the Central government makes some major announcements for the horticulture sector. About 30-35 lakh people are associated with the horticulture industry in Kashmir. A package for them will generate immense goodwill for BJP. If they address the challenges of the fruit industry, they will stay connected with the common man.



**GROWING  
POLITICAL  
SPACE FOR  
BJP, THE  
PARTY  
NEEDS TO  
GRAB IT**



**Mr Iqball Ahmad**

Mr Iqball Ahmad is the Executive Editor of Heaven Mail, an English daily published from Srinagar

**The LG Administration has clear thrust on good governance. There are clear directives from the top for delivery of services to the people. People know that it is the Modi government at the Centre which is focusing on delivery of services and good governance in Kashmir. When so much is being done, BJP must come forward with the right moves to benefit from these initiatives and convert them into votes**



**BJP NEEDS  
STRONG  
POLITICAL  
ECOSYSTEM  
IN KASHMIR TO  
COUNTER FEARS**

**Rival Parties  
Labeling Every Govt  
Initiative As Wrong**



Officials during 'Back to Village' programme at north Kashmir's Bandipora district

In my interactions with the people, I have often found them to be full of appreciation for the Centre's welfare schemes like the Golden Card Scheme offered by Ayushman Bharat. They are full of praise for the development of roads and infrastructure.

The opposition political parties have been successful in labeling every government initiative as wrong. They are using it to create fear. This is why even though the LG Administration is consistently engaged in public welfare projects, BJP has not been able to strengthen its position in the region electorally. We are observing that at the grassroots, what the BJP should do as a party is not happening.

When BJP focused on its operations here, those who joined the party at the grassroots level did not have a good image.

## There is goodwill in Kashmir towards the BJP. There are no two opinions about it. But till now, we cannot see any major efforts of the BJP to convert this goodwill into votes in Kashmir

These people continued to indulge in corrupt and unethical ways, spoiling their own name and that of the party.

BJP must align strong Muslim leaders in Kashmir who can challenge and clear the doubts of the people regarding any accusation made by the local parties. Let us take the example of the anti-encroachment drive started by the UT Administration.

### 70 Percent People Were Happy With Anti-Encroachment Drive

The truth is that 70 percent of

people were happy with the anti-encroachment and land retrieval drive. For so many years, people were tired of land grabbers who were using their power and influence to grab state land. The LG assured the people that no harm would come to the smallholders.

But people remained anxious because of the heavy propaganda unleashed by the rival politicians against the land retrieval drive. A large number of powerful politicians and bureaucrats have grabbed state land. Why will they want the land retrieval drive to succeed?

BJP should have a strong

grassroots presence so that its local leaders are able to address the fears of the people.

There is goodwill in Kashmir towards the BJP. There are no two opinions about it. People are appreciating the crackdown on corruption. There is no pathar baazi. Protests are not being engineered, youths are not dying. With digitization of services, chances of corruption have been minimized. But till now, we cannot see any major efforts of the BJP to convert this goodwill into votes in Kashmir.

## Education Department Initiative Being Applauded

The initiatives taken by the Education Department have become the talk of Kashmir. Before the beginning of the academic session, the Education Department engaged mobile units with loudspeakers. These mobile units went into every gali, every mohalla. They are urging people to send their children to government schools.

The Education Department is creating awareness that in government schools teachers are better, facilities are better. Children are given mid-day meals, books. Due to this massive awareness drive, the enrolment in government schools is already 30 per cent higher.

For decades, we saw that many government school teachers stayed busy in their orchards or with their other engagements. They were not bothered about the students.



**It is for the party to take the development agenda of the government to the level of every booth, every household. BJP must amplify all the welfare programs and initiatives at grassroots level**

Not anymore. The Administration has made the teachers accountable for good results in government schools.

## Rumours Being Spread Against Govt

Despite the good work being done by the LG Administration, politicians are spreading anxiety among the people. Deliberate and consistent efforts are being made so that people stay steeped in fear and do not vote for the BJP. Fears are being spread about 'Land to The Tiller Act', which was passed more than 70 years ago.

Once the election fever hots up, the local political parties will demand restoration of Article 370. They want that their time of loot maar and corruption, nepotism should come back. There is constant messaging by the political parties that BJP should not be allowed to come to power.

It is for the party to take the development agenda of the government to the level of every booth, every household. BJP must amplify all the welfare programs and initiatives at grassroots level.

**BJP Needs Strong  
Muslim  
Figures  
To Be Part Of  
Political  
Debates  
In Kashmir**

*by* Iqbal Ahmad



*Mr Ravinder Raina, State President, BJP J&K*



*Mr Ashok Koul, BJP State General Secretary (Org), Jammu Kashmir and Ladakh*

**K**ashmiris have great trust in BJP's state level leaders like Ravinder Raina ji, Ashok Kaul ji. People feel that they are trustworthy and honest. BJP has highly presentable and credible faces in Jammu.

In Kashmir, BJP does not have a strong Muslim figure to be part of the political debates. They do not have any political leader who has been MLC or MLA. They need leaders who have enjoyed a long tenure in politics and enjoy people's trust and support.

Dr Darakhshan Andrabi has done very good work as Chairperson of the J&K Wakf Board. She has initiated major reforms which involve people's welfare. BJP needs a strong political ecosystem in Kashmir to make the grassroots aware of these reforms.

At the grassroots level, the party needs strong figures among the Muslims. The BJP cadre at the grassroots feels insecure of losing their position. Hence they don't let others join the party. The party should

assure them that you will be given space.

At the same time, BJP needs a makeover where their rank and file in Kashmir is concerned. The party must give maximum responsibility to those people at the grassroots who have credibility.

## **BJP Candidates Ranked Third In DDC Bypolls**

In the DDC bypolls for the Hajin and Drugmulla constituencies in Kupwara, the candidates supported by the BJP ranked third at both places. This proved that in the Muslim Community, BJP is no more an untouchable in Kashmir. Both seats were reserved for women, and the candidates supported by BJP were credible faces.

Within Kashmir, there is growing political space for BJP. But the BJP functionaries at grassroots level are not interacting enough with the general public. Perhaps they think that people will question them about abrogation, about

**Kashmiris have great trust in BJP's state level leaders like Ravinder Raina ji, Ashok Kaul ji. People feel that they are trustworthy and honest. BJP has highly presentable and credible faces in Jammu.**

**In Kashmir, BJP does not have a strong Muslim figure to be part of the political debates.**

land retrieval drive. Perhaps they feel that they are not strong enough to address these questions.

After abrogation of Article 370, BJP has delivered good governance in Kashmir. Their cadre here needs training and dedicated workshops to communicate this strongly to the people.

People are influenced by what they see in the media. But as of now, BJP's leaders in Kashmir do not have a grip on social media. They should have higher influence on the mainstream media and also on social media.

# YOUTH WANT TO JOIN BJP

## GRASSROOTS BJP FUNCTIONARIES NOT GIVING THEM SPACE

BJP is the strongest party in the country. It should increase local recruitment. BJP should draw credible faces of Kashmir towards them. When the BJP initially invited people in Kashmir to the party fold, there were not many takers here. The people who joined them at that time were not strong figures.

Now a sizable section of the local youths want to join the BJP. But the old guard of the BJP in Kashmir does not allow them to join. The old guard enjoys security, other perks. They feel that if they let new faces join, they will lose space within the party.

In Kashmir, the party must make space for new people. It must give responsibility to new faces. Ab Kashmir mein BJP ka space ban gaya hai. The party must grab this space.

Congress workers in Kashmir are connecting with the people. They are going from house to house saying Bharat Jodo. NC is doing rallies in every district, they are reaching out to the people. PDP, PC, Apni Party – all are engaged in political activities in Kashmir.

If the BJP has a strong political cadre here, the party can play a decisive strong role in connecting with the people, the youths. The people want to connect with the BJP. The party must reach out to them with firm and clear communication which establishes trust.



# BJP MUST FORM OWN BASE IN KASHMIR, NOT DEPEND ON ALLIES

Perhaps the BJP is thinking that it will form an alliance with People's Conference or Apni Party to come to power in Kashmir. In my opinion, BJP should concentrate on establishing its own base in Kashmir rather than depending on allies. If terrorism makes a comeback here again, we have such kind of political leaders here who won't even take 24 hours to switch sides.

We call these people the Recharge Nationalists. They can switch to any side. At the same time, there are Kashmiri politicians and many others in eminent positions in Kashmir who strongly believe in the idea of India. They are nationalists by conviction.

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## BJP CAN EMERGE STRONG IN ANANTNAG-POONCH PARLIAMENT CONSTITUENCY

It is being speculated in some quarters that Panchayat elections may be held in Jammu and Kashmir this year. If the BJP focuses on these elections, it can strengthen its position in the electoral politics of Kashmir.

Similarly, BJP is likely to be in a strong position in the Anantnag-Poonch Parliament Constituency. The party wins a good share of the Pahadi and Bakarwal votes. With steady focus on Kashmir, the party can also win a higher percentage of the votes polled in Kashmir.

# ROUSING WELCOME FOR BJP J&K CHIEF IN BATMALOO

When BJP J&K President Mr Ravinder Raina visited Batmaloo this week, crowds of local residents thronged him and welcomed him with open arms. The response was so boisterous that the anchor on one of J&K's news channels commented: BJP President Ravinder Raina was welcomed in Batmaloo the way even Kashmiri political leaders are not welcomed in Kashmir. This is the love that Ravinder Raina is getting from the janata of Batmaloo.



It is notable that the BJP J&K president was given such a rousing and loud welcome at a place which was counted among the hubs of militancy in the 1990s. At times, people who were kidnapped by terrorists at other places were kept at Batmaloo. Since the area was heavily radicalized, it used to be considered as a safe zone for terrorists as a hideout. In the later years of the terror phase, while other areas in Kashmir became a little peaceful, Batmaloo continued to have the concentration of a large number of stone pelters.

The winds of change are sweeping over Kashmir. Like other areas in Kashmir, Batmaloo wants to firmly be part of the mainstream.

## FOR LONG, BATMALOO WAS A SAFE ZONE FOR TERRORISTS

# MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS THAT BJP MUST AMPLIFY IN KASHMIR



Influential politicians and bureaucrats grabbed land illegally in rural and urban Kashmir. The UT Administration tried to retrieve that land. BJP should have a strong local brigade in Kashmir to emphatically convince people: The Government did the right thing to retrieve the land.

Our regional political parties and also the Congress had made corruption and nepotism endemic to Kashmir. We used to think this situation would never change. But the LG Administration has put a severe check on corruption. BJP should have a strong grassroots presence in Kashmir to amplify this message for the common masses.

The Education Department has launched a most praiseworthy drive to get children to government schools. The BJP should maximize its contribution to the education sector in order to benefit from it politically.

The LG Administration has ensured 99.9 per cent attendance in government offices. This is a huge achievement for Kashmir.

There were many government employees who used to go to their office sometimes after months. Some of them would leave their spectacles and their handkerchief on the seat in Kashmir. They would be roaming in Jammu. Their job was only to collect a fat salary. The LG Administration has put an end to these practices and has introduced a responsible work culture. People have greatly appreciated this. BJP should benefit from this move politically.

There are reforms in each and every department of the government. Every department is being made accountable. BJP must draw political benefits from this.

Recently the LG Administration ordered that the ration cards of all the people in the BPL category shall be reviewed. About 18 years ago, Mr Muzaffar Baig was the Deputy Chief Minister. It was revealed that he had a BPL ration card. This made headlines at that time. He had to give clarification that he got a BPL card due to an administrative error.

Now the verification of BPL cards is being done. Only those who are truly below the poverty line will be given the cards.


BJP should benefit politically from this move. But political workers of other parties have got BPL cards made to benefit from government schemes. They may call the move victimization. Some labels will be stuck on this drive too, which is to benefit the poor.

Every good initiative is being labeled wrongly by the local politicians. The LG cannot get into every debate. BJP is not there at grass roots level in Kashmir to counter it. The government is being run by BJP. It must go ahead and grab the growing political space in Kashmir.

# KASHMIR'S POLITICAL DYNAMICS WILL CHANGE IF SOME LEADING FIGURES FROM OTHER PARTIES JOIN BJP

Every party in Kashmir has some credible, established leaders who can leave the party and join BJP. The political dynamics of Kashmir will change if some leading names from other parties come to the BJP fold. Till now, BJP has not been able to fully consolidate the benefits of the abrogation of Article 370.

This fresh narrative must reach every person in Kashmir. To take this message to the people, the BJP needs local credible leaders. BJP needs leaders who can contest separatism and militancy on religious grounds, and also on political grounds. There are many people who can do it. BJP must bring them into its fold. Acceptability and reach are the key factors.

A portrait of Narendra Modi, the Prime Minister of India, with a white beard and glasses, wearing a blue checkered kurta. He is looking slightly to the right. The background is a blurred Indian national flag.

# SENIOR JOURNO ADVISES PM MODI IN LEADING DAILY

**‘IN KASHMIR, MODI COULD TRY  
WHAT RAHUL GANDHI DID’**

**IS SHE  
SERIOUS?**

*by* Gayatri Mohan

**L**et's get real on Kashmir. Kashmiris are acknowledging that they respect Prime Minister Mr Narendra Modi because he has restored that which was snatched from two generations of Kashmiris.

Peace, stability, harmony, prosperity – all these are returning to Kashmir because Prime Minister Modi refused to accept the status quo like the regimes before him and gave shape to the 'Naya Kashmir'. Those who cannot see the 'Naya Kashmir' taking shape are plainly agenda-driven and prejudiced.

It is hilarious to watch the advice being doled out to Prime Minister Modi and his team in the columns of a leading national English daily. "In Kashmir, Modi could try what Rahul Gandhi did".

Seriously?

Mr Rahul Gandhi and his sister Ms Priyanka Gandhi enjoyed their time in Kashmir. It was possible not because of the many missteps of the Congress in Kashmir, but because of the many correct and urgently needed steps taken by Prime Minister Modi and his team.

Unfortunately, the writer is blind to the Pakistan-sponsored Islamist jihadist forces trying to destabilize Kashmir. The writer completely ignores the elephant in the room and conveniently holds the Indian state responsible for everything that is labeled as wrong in Kashmir.

## **PM Modi's Muscular Approach Appreciated In Kashmir**

The writer of the article in the leading national daily has a



## **Informed Kashmiris are now acknowledging on diverse platforms that “political problem” was a label stuck on Kashmir by Pakistan and the separatists. After abrogation of Article 370, the “political problem” is a thing of the past**



problem with the “muscular approach” of the Prime Minister.

It is mandatory for the state to provide good governance to the people. The state has to be the custodian of the law and order situation. This is important because the state is accountable to the citizens to safeguard their life and property.

When this is not done, anti-state forces take law into their own hands. They wield power and authority without accountability. Then human rights are assaulted and the social indices go into a tailspin.

### **‘Political Problem’ And Other Labels Are So Dated**

The writer of the article makes a number of statements which make one wonder about whether the person concerned has done a sincere study of Kashmir before choosing to comment on it. The writer says solemnly, “Kashmir is essentially a political problem...”

This articulation displays a very poor understanding of the region. Informed Kashmiris are now acknowledging on diverse platforms that “political

problem” was a label stuck on Kashmir by Pakistan and the separatists. After abrogation of Article 370, the “political problem” is a thing of the past.

Kashmiris are hugely relieved that they don’t wake up to hartal calls, to curfews and manufactured agitations, to engineered violence and stone pelting, chaos and counter-terror action in which young lives were lost.

The number of local militants is down to 28 – among the lowest ever. Terror pockets have squeezed. The youngsters choosing violence or becoming hybrid militants are in the age-group of mid-teens to early 20s. These radicalized, gullible youth are easily brainwashed into notions of jihad. But the society at large has completely rejected violence as an option.

### **Wake Up To Naya Kashmir**

Kashmiri trade and industry bodies are inviting experts to the Valley for educating the youth about successful start-ups. Tourism is at an all time high. Leading tourism players in the private sector are organizing road-shows across the country and abroad, inviting more and more people to come to the Valley.

Kashmir is experiencing new-found freedom not known for decades. But “woke” journalists outside Kashmir are still stuck on the old labels of “political problem” stuck on Kashmir.



# THE SHIFT AT GROUND ZERO

The secessionist ideology had been nurtured in Kashmir for over 30 years by the separatists, by religious clerics, by the media and even by some mainstream politicians. It shall take consistent action to weaken and finish this ideology. It is difficult but it is not impossible

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# ANTI-STATE ELEMENTS FINDING NO SUPPORT AMONG PEOPLE

by Gayatri Mohan

**W**e are witnessing a major shift in Kashmir. Some

changes are indicative of the remarkable changes that we are observing at ground level.

It has been three and a half years since the abrogation of Article 370. People are watching that now we have zero stone pelting, zero agitations, zero clashes of the youth with the police, zero hartals.

## No Protests In Favour Of Anti-State Elements

More is coming to light.

People are refusing to launch any protest for those who are found to be involved in unlawful or anti-state activities.

This is a major shift from the pre-abrogation years. At that time, actions taken by the government or the armed forces

to counter the terror ecosystem were projected wrongly by separatists. And then agitations were sparked and engineered.

Over the last few days, Jammu and Kashmir Police Special Investigation Unit attached four houses in Srinagar district for "willfully providing shelter" to militants in Srinagar district. Police said it had been found that militants had been sheltered in these houses. A few days later, another house was attached by the police in Handwara for the same reason.

Nobody came out to protest why these houses had been attached. Nobody protested the police action.

## Kashmiri Society Has Rejected Violence As An Option

A mark of the changed times is the reaction of the people towards hardcore secessionist

religious cleric Maulana Sarjan Barkati. When he had been arrested for his anti-state activities, his family had sent out appeals that they were facing a financial crisis.

At that time, Rs 1.50 crore was collected for his family through crowd funding. Now when the State Investigation Agency carried out a raid against Barkati for his political activities, no one protested. People have realized that the government is initiating action against those who were involved in illegal actions. Hence supporting them is wrong.

The secessionist ideology had been nurtured in Kashmir for over 30 years by the separatists, by religious clerics, by the media and even by some mainstream politicians. This ideology cannot be decimated within a few years. It shall take consistent action to weaken and finish this ideology. It is difficult but it is not impossible.



# NOTES FROM THE VALLEY

FROM THE CONSULTING EDITOR'S DESK

SHEIKH MUDASIR HUSSAIN

## THE LESSONS WE MUST DRAW FROM THE AMRITPAL EPISODE

The Indian Express has reported that investigation agencies have detected dubious transactions of over Rs 40 crore in multiple bank accounts of at least five members of Waris Punjab De, whose leader Amritpal Singh is on the run. These deposits are spread over seven years.

The report added that in some cases, money was received in the name of giving financial assistance to families of persons who lost their lives during the farmer agitation at Delhi's borders. In another case, it was found that money was received in the name of promoting religious activities.

Over the last few months, Amritpal had been highly vocal over the mainstream media and also over the social media about his separatist ambitions for Punjab. At that time, I used to wonder why is the national media giving him so much space? We also voiced these fears in our magazine.

The government must definitely exercise the required control over the national media and also over the social media. Mainstream or

social media platforms must not be allowed to print or broadcast anything in the name of democratic rights. The space given by mainstream and social media to Amritpal by printing and airing huge interviews maximized his appeal among the youth and among radicalized individuals.

When I call for media control, many may consider my statement undemocratic. Those who pass judgments of this kind must first remember that we in Kashmir lost thousands and thousands of our budding, blooming youth to the terror factories. Our brothers the Kashmiri Pandits were pushed out of their homeland by these terror factories. All of us suffered grievous tragedies.

Terror is not just a factory. In the modern world, terror is a highly organized industry which runs with specific strategies. Nations have to protect their people from global terror conglomerates. We cannot allow the global terror industry to misguide and radicalize our youth by abusing the democratic space. Otherwise we must prepare ourselves for the most disastrous consequences. We in Kashmir are witness to it.



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