



## Media Analysis Center, Kashmir

- The free flow of negative content on Kashmir and its wide circulation on social media is damaging Indian interests locally, nationally and internationally. There is urgent need to counter this content in an organized and efficient manner.
- **Media Analysis Center, Srinagar** - a civil society initiative of Lehar Foundation - is an organized initiative to counter negative propaganda and content on Kashmir locally, nationally and internationally.
- Media Analysis Center (MAC) shall generate content which shall aggressively counter the lies being peddled regarding Kashmir in the domestic, national and international media.
- The content produced by MAC shall include news reports, features, videos and documentaries.
- The purpose is to break the toxic plot that keeps feeding malicious, negative news on Kashmir and circulating the same to deepen stereotypes of oppression and alienation. The attempt is to bring in a reality check on Kashmir and refresh the narrative in a positive, inclusive direction.
- MAC shall also provide a platform to bring together positive and happy voices of aspirational Kashmir youth, within Kashmir or outside. The Kashmiri voices of positivity and growth within India shall act as a force multiplier for the youth within Kashmir.

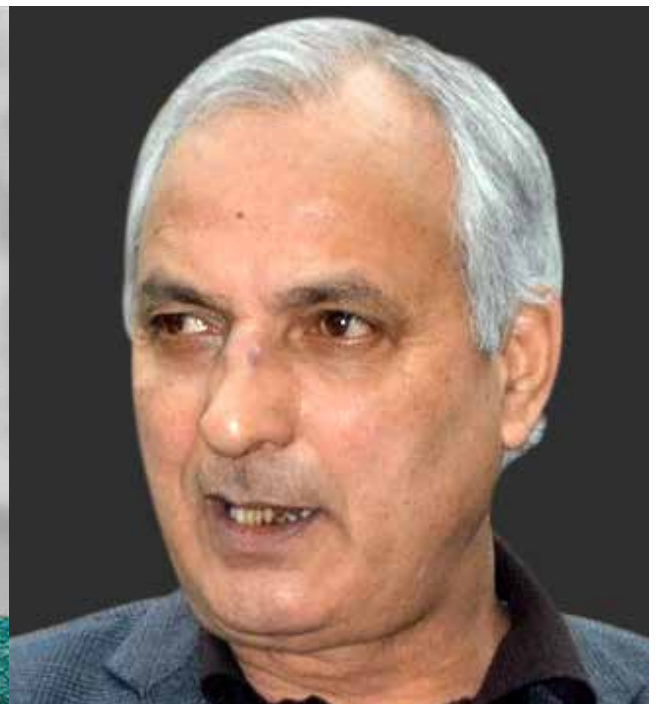
# Kashmir's Militant-Politician-Policemen nexus



Yusuf Tarigami



Mehbooba Mufti



Abdul Rehman Veeri

**T**he Militant-Politician-Policemen nexus in Jammu and Kashmir has thrived in Kashmir for decades. Many cases of this unholy triangular nexus have come to the fore in the past. The ruling class has never been willing to even acknowledge it. The reason: their direct involvement in the filthy network.

From 1990 – the dawn of the bloody insurgency – to 1999, the formation of Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) by Mufti Muhammad Sayed and his daughter Mehbooba Mufti, the nexus between politicians and militants was limited to some individual cases. After the formation of PDP, the unholy alliance became well-entrenched and legitimized under different pretexts and pretensions.

Political leaders cutting across the party lines learned about the trick which worked for them. In some cases, it is still operational.

**Mehbooba Mufti and her colleagues in PDP, Yusuf Tarigami (CPIM), Hakim Yasin (PDF) Sakina Yettoo, Majid Larmi, Shawkat Ganai Dr. Bashir Veeri of NC, Sayed Bashir Ahmad of PDP and many others were in the business of releasing militants for electoral gains**

### Luring Militants in Party Ranks

With PDP, the dirt became organized. PDP lured the relatives of militants in party ranks. Through them, the party established a relationship with the militants. PDP was not alone in this game. What was remarkably unique with PDP was the party's relationship with militant commanders – both locally and those in Pakistan. Politicians of other political parties could establish contact with the militants while providing logistics to them or under pressure.

### Through Cops Whose Relatives Were Militants

The second crucial link between politicians and militants was established by those police officials whose relatives were into terrorism. This has been and continues to be the most dangerous nexus in Kashmir. The modus

operandi was as follows.

Political leaders, particularly those from PDP, got these policemen in their personal security cover. Through them, contact with militants was established. This has been the most damaging nexus because it compromised national security in two ways. One: sharing of vital and highly confidential information. Two: making inroads into the system itself.

### The Role of Abdul Rehman Veeri

Many political leaders from PDP even purchased benami properties in the name of such police persons. For instance, Abdul Rehman Veeri – senior PDP leader and former minister both in Mufti led PDP-Congress coalition and Mehbooba-led PDP-BJP coalition. Immediately after he was sworn as minister in 2002, Veeri got one Sajad Bhat attached with his security as Radio Operator. Sajad Bhat hails from Hugam village in Veeri’s home constituency, Bijbehara. He is the brother-in-law of top Hizbul Mujahideen Commander Ghulam Nabi Khan aka Amir Khan of Livar village in Pahalgam Constituency.

This is a typical case where the nation’s security was deeply compromised. Veeri established contact with a number of militants through Sajad. In return, Veeri facilitated the issuance of Indian passports to a large number of relatives, kith and kin of terrorists, including those now settled in Pakistan. Sajad got passports for his wife Parveena; Amir Khan’s daughter Anjali Akhtar and wife Fatima Begum (she expired in Pakistan). Veeri also got the Indian passport issued for Zahid Bhat, son of Husain Bhat, the cousin of dreaded terrorist Zaffar Husain based in PoK. Sajad’s brother Manzoor Ahmad Bhat accompanied Parveena to Pakistan. Sajad got passports for many other relatives of terrorists based in PoK through Abdul Rehman Veeri.

### By Releasing Militants, Over-Ground Workers

Then there is the third category of the militant-politician nexus. In this case, politicians would facilitate the release of held militants, their Over Ground Workers (OGWs), and ideologues of poisonous Jihadi ideology, particularly from Jamaat-e-Islami. Politicians would literally compete with each other in facilitating the release of arrested anti-nationals. This fetched them votes and also provided them contacts with terrorist groups and individuals.

Mehbooba Mufti and her colleagues in PDP, Yusuf Tarigami (CPIM), Hakim Yasin (PDF) Sakina Yattoo, Majid Larmi, Shawkat Ganai Dr. Bashir Veeri of NC, Sayed Bashir Ahmad of PDP and many others were in the business of releasing the militants. This benefitted them electorally for about two decades.

### Yusuf Tarigami harboured militants

Yusuf Tarigami first got connected with former Hizbul commander Zafar Akbar



Dr Bashir Veeri

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This gave him an edge over his rivals in his home constituency Kulgam.

Some years back Tarigami’s son Fayaz visited Pakistan, where he reportedly met top Hizbul Commanders through Sajad Akbar Bhat – the personal bodyguard of Hizbul Mujahideen chief Syed Salahuddin. Two years ago, Kulgam Police and the local Army commander got credible inputs about Umar Ganai hiding at Tarigami’s Kulgam office or residence. They even raided one of these places, but Ganai gave them a miss.

### Madam Mufti’s involvement

One high profile case was unmasked in 2006. Mebooba Mufti, then MP from South Kashmir, harbored a notorious LeT conduit at her Delhi residence. Emboldened by the successful hobnobbing with militants which resulted in the 2002 electoral win of PDP, Mehbooba even facilitated the exfiltration of dreaded Hizbul commanders Amir Khan, Abid Baba, Rashid Gadhanjipora, Javed Seepni and many others to find shelter in Pakistan.



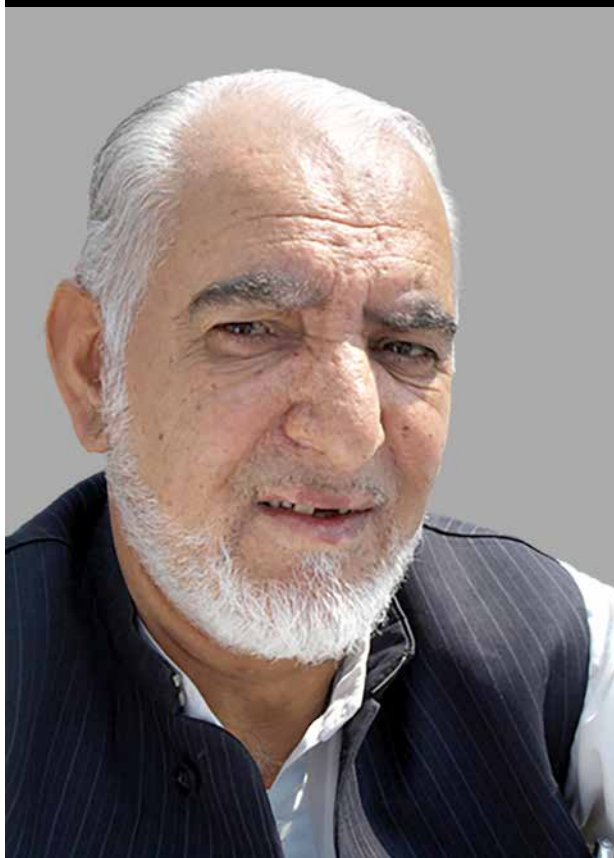
Showkat Ganie

### Control Over Stone Pelters

Verified reports state that Kashmir’s political class was in control of the stone pelters. They would decide the target for stone pelting and also the intensity as suited their interest. This report may unnerve the political class, but the truth remains that Kashmir’s politicians wreaked havoc on innocent lives in the Valley for petty political interests.

The long-term impact of the Police-Politician-Militant nexus has been highly unfortunate. This nexus has criminalized Kashmir society. The security cover provided by the state to these politicians was misused and abused. There are dozens of confirmed reports that politicians harboured militants in their government and private houses in complete breach of national security.

Everything has a shelf life. This phase too shall pass. The security and law enforcing agencies must tighten the noose around these politicians and policemen, and make them pay for their notoriety.



Syed Bashir Ahmad (PDP)

Bhat during the latter’s detention. Zaffar connected Tarigami and his son Fayaz his brother Sajad Akbar Bhat in Pakistan. Realizing the benefits of the nexus, Tarigami soon established contact with local militants.



# Kashmir Needs New Political Leadership

**One in Four Votes in Kashmir Went to Independent Candidate In Recently-Concluded DDC Elections**

**Ground Realities Suggest Kashmir’s Mandate Not For Political Narrative Constructed Around Abrogation of Article 370**

**K**ashmir needs a new political leadership. It needs a leadership marked by positivity and the thirst for development.

It is Kashmir itself that has given the clear signal that it is awaiting new political leadership. In Srinagar, Independent candidates won seven out of 14 seats in the recently-concluded elections to the District Development Councils (DDC).

This is despite the fact that the capital city remains the epicenter separatist or sub-national politics. The tally of Independent candidates in Srinagar is the highest of any district in J&K.

## **PAGD’s Political Narrative Belied**

The victory of Independent candidates from Srinagar and also other districts of Kashmir belies the claim of some PAGD leaders that the electoral result can be seen as some kind of referendum on restoration of Article 370.

In the total 140 DDC seats in Kashmir, 36 Independent candidates were elected.

Hence 25 per cent of the total DDC seats in Kashmir went to Independent candidates.

With one in four seats in Kashmir won by Independent candidates, it is clear that the vote is not in favour of any particular party. The vote cannot be considered as a referendum for identity or dignity.

Kashmir suffers from conflict fatigue. The high degree of voting in Kashmir is a clear

signal that people have rejected conflict. The vote is specifically for the candidate who promises good administration. People want an end to violence, and want to open the door to peace and development.

Four Independent candidates won in Pulwama, Shopian and Poonch and three in Bandipora and Baramulla districts. Three independent candidates each won from Bandipora and Baramulla, two each from Ganderbal, Kupwara and Anantnag and one from Budgam.

In the 20 districts of Jammu and Kashmir, each district has 14 seats for the District Development Council. In Jammu region, Independent candidates won 10 percent seats, winning 14 of 140 seats.

The Independents won in large numbers in Kashmir despite the fact that Mehbooba Mufti engaged in a shrill, high-pitched campaign by championing the restoration of Article 370.

Mehbooba offered a daily diatribe of victimization and accusations directed at New Delhi. Other PAGD leaders offered the same tired political





rhetoric. Despite this, Independent candidates have won majorly in the DDC elections in Kashmir.

The new political leadership must arise from the grassroots in Kashmir. It must be the leadership that can lead the Valley towards development, building on the bedrock of prosperity, stability and peace. These are the pillars which need the investment and focus of the people of the Valley.

**Take action against corrupt politicians**

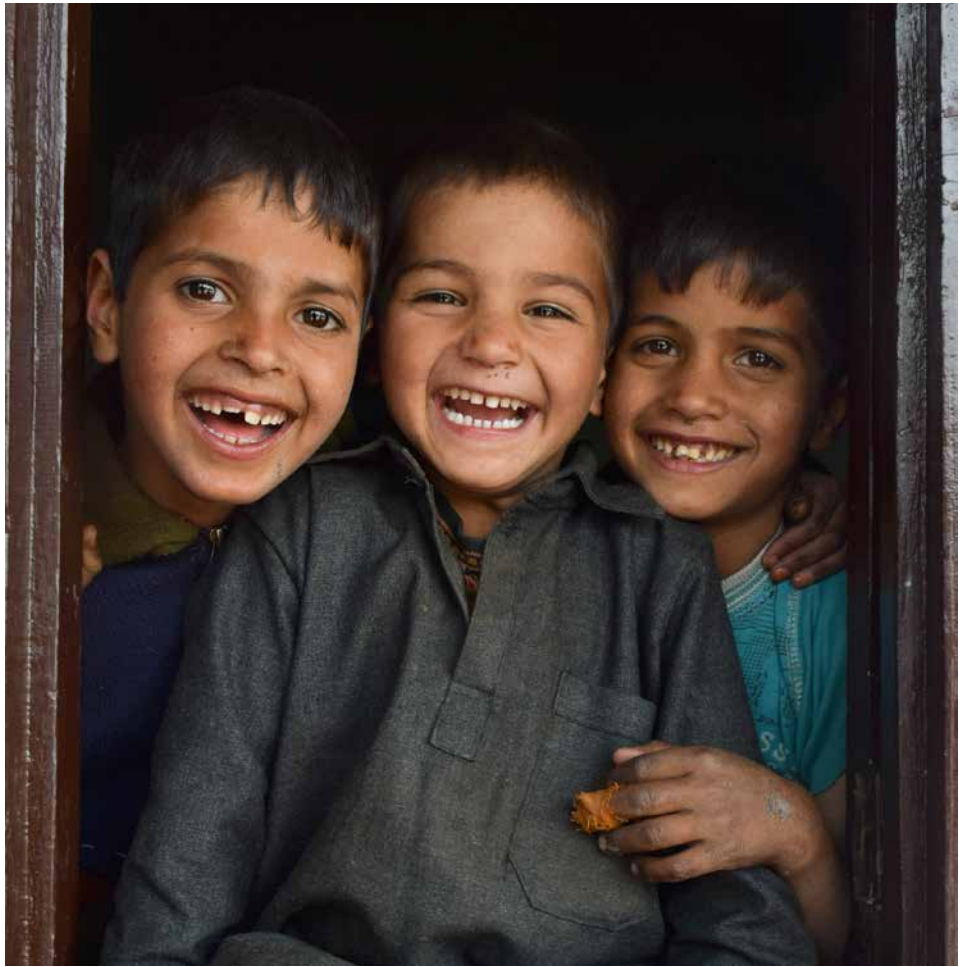
In order to enable clean new political leadership to emerge, law enforcement agencies and anti-graft bodies should swiftly act against the corrupt politicians of Kashmir. This will send a clear message that good governance and accountability must become the hallmarks of democratic institutions in Kashmir.

To read the outcome of the DDC elections as referendum of the people of Kashmir on Article 370 or J&K's special status is a faulty analysis. The voting has been highly localized in the Valley. It is the specific candidate who has played a key role, and not the party. All over Kashmir, the vote for the specific candidate that has been the determining factor.

For example, BJP candidate Aijaz Hussain won a DDC seat in Srinagar. Many political analysts have termed this as a victory for Aijaz Hussain the individual, and not for his party. There are scores of such Aijaz all over Kashmir, who have been able to secure a victory not in the name of the party, but for their personal eminence in the area.

Steep polarization continues to mark electoral politics in the union territory of Jammu and Kashmir. This has been proved yet again in the DDC elections. With the NC-PDP and other smaller

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**PDP registers poor show**

The choice of the two traditional rivals – NC and PDP – to join hands increased the total number of seats won by the alliance. But if analyzed individually, it is clear that PDP has hugely suffered electorally.

Going by the party-wise analysis, BJP won 75 seats in the DDC elections. NC won 67 seats and PDP could win only 27 seats.

South Kashmir was regarded as the traditional stronghold of PDP. In this region, the party could not register a significant win. The performance of PDP is poor in all the four districts in south Kashmir. Hence the argument of referendum falls flat. Madam Mufti has been the most vocal critique of the abrogation of Article 370. Despite all her political machinations, her party had to face drubbing in the DDC elections.



parties coming together against the BJP, the overall outcome in these elections was not surprising.

People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD) captured the mandate in Kashmir Valley. Gupkar alliance also maintained its hold in many Muslim-dominated areas of Jammu division. The alliance won the highest number of seats in Ramban, Kishtwar and Rajouri districts, but not enough to win a majority in the District Development Councils (DDC) here.

Both BJP and PAGD failed in winning over the confidence of opposite faiths. Ground realities also suggest the mandate won by PAGD was not for the political narrative constructed around the abrogation of Article 370.