

EDITOR'S NOTE: Can J&K Afford Assembly Elections Soon?

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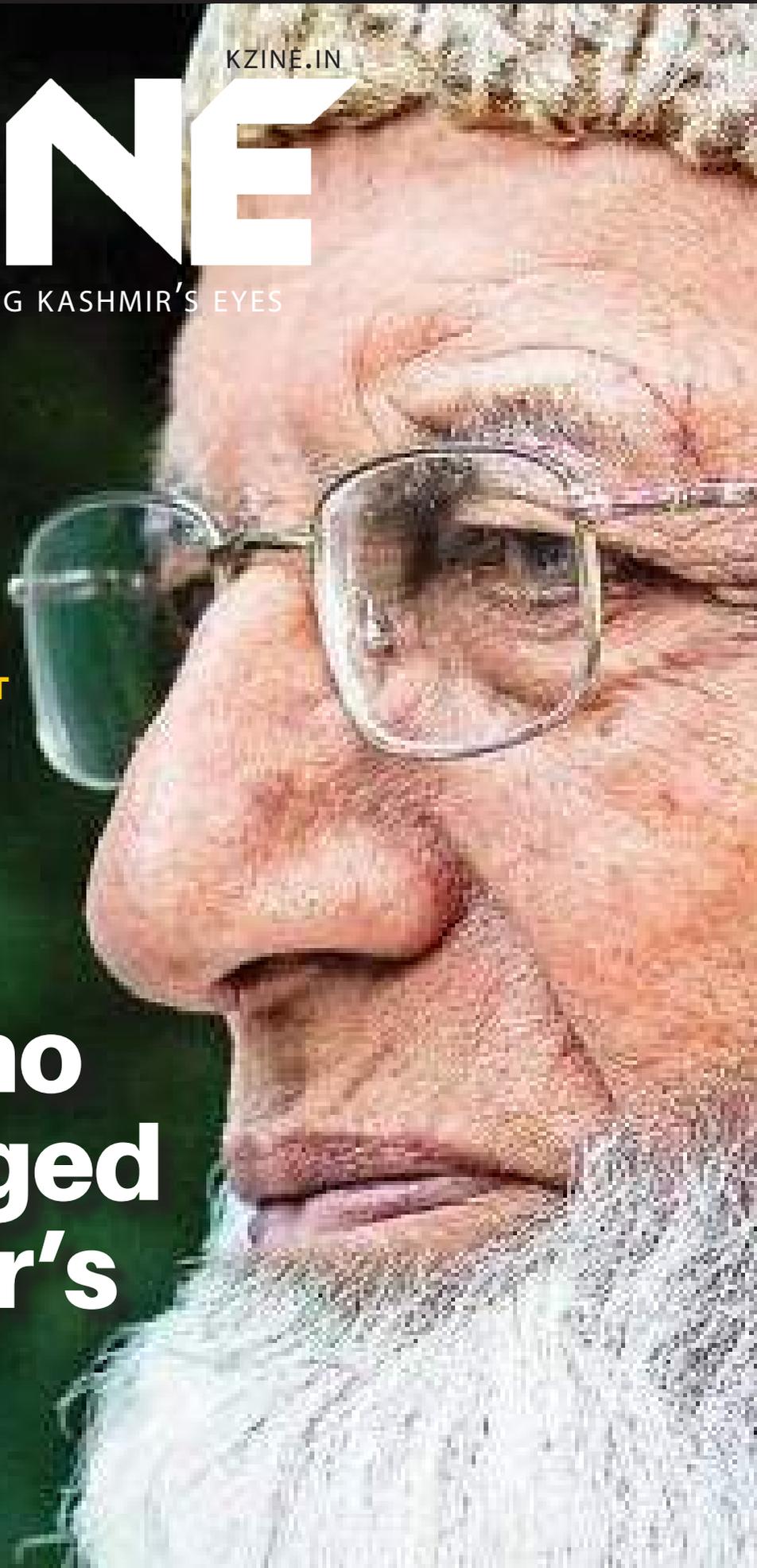
OPENING KASHMIR'S EYES

**THE LEADER WHO
LED KASHMIR INTO
A WASTED SPACE**

**THE KASHMIR THAT
GEELANI NEVER
TOLD YOU ABOUT,
AND MEHBOOBA WON'T**

**WILL TALIBAN 2.0
BE DIFFERENT?**

The Man Who Sabotaged Kashmir's Future



Given the toxic role played by political parties in fuelling unrest, can J&K afford Assembly elections anytime soon?



The aftermath of the death of Syed Ali Geelani revealed that Kashmiris in general have reconciled with the new reality. There was no serious attempt from any corner of Kashmir valley to disturb the law and order situation on the demise of Geelani. Restrictions were unwarranted and uncalled for. The UT Administration lifted them soon. Now an important observation. Imagine if one political party was in power in Kashmir and another in opposition. The party in opposition would have invested heavily in creating law and order problems for the party in power. The ruse would have been the death of Syed Ali Geelani. The political objective would have been to show down the party in power, and claim its inefficacy. We need not elaborate on this. Everybody in and outside Kashmir knows the role of political



parties in opposition in the uprisings of 2008, 2009, 2010, 2012 and 2016. The Opposition engineered the protests and stoked the fires daily. Youngsters kept engaging in violent agitations, leading to casualties. The toxic cycle kept spinning. The question remains this. Can Jammu and Kashmir afford an election to the Assembly in the near future taking into account the role of the existing political parties in keeping the pot boiling in Kashmir? Will the political parties desist from what they have done over decades? Will they assist in normalizing the situation? These are the vital questions before the policy planners. This is a crucial phase and New Delhi needs to tread with utmost caution.

Bashir Assad

razor sharp analysis

INCISIVE REPORTING

INVESTIGATE THE TERROR ECOSYSTEM

EXPOSE DECEPTION

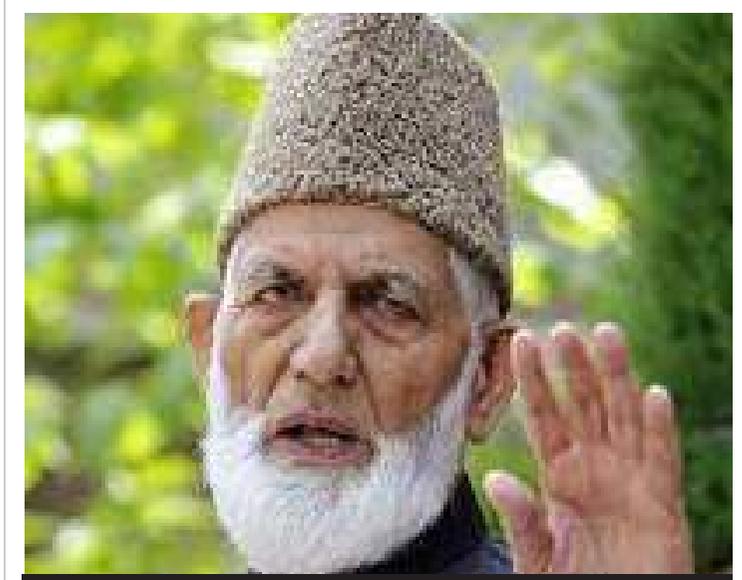
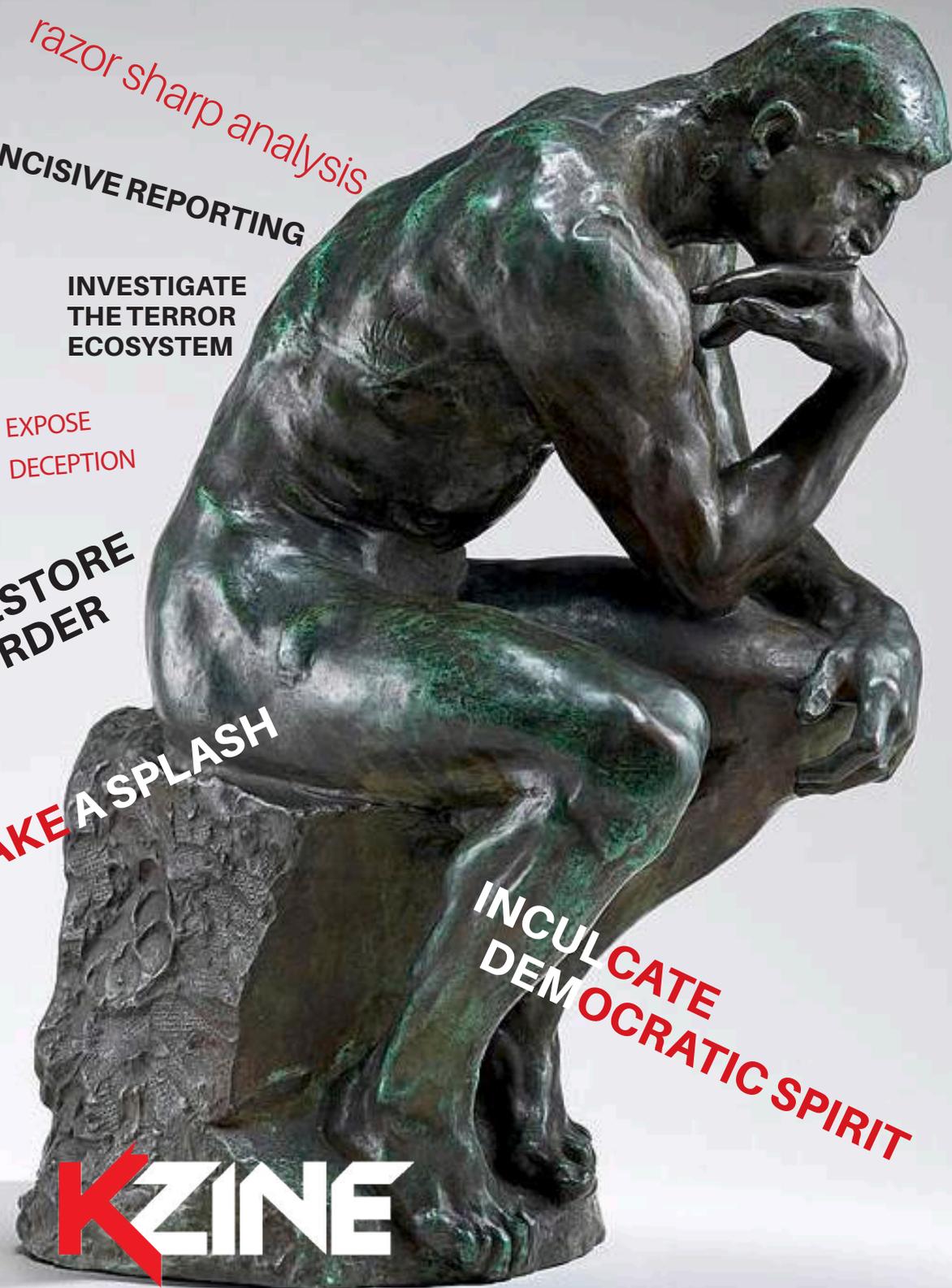
RESTORE ORDER

MAKE A SPLASH

INCULCATE DEMOCRATIC SPIRIT

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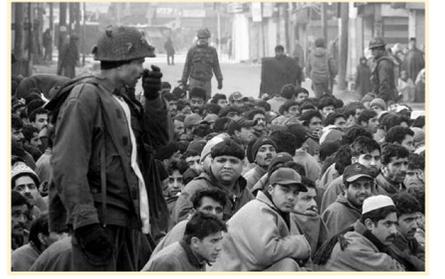


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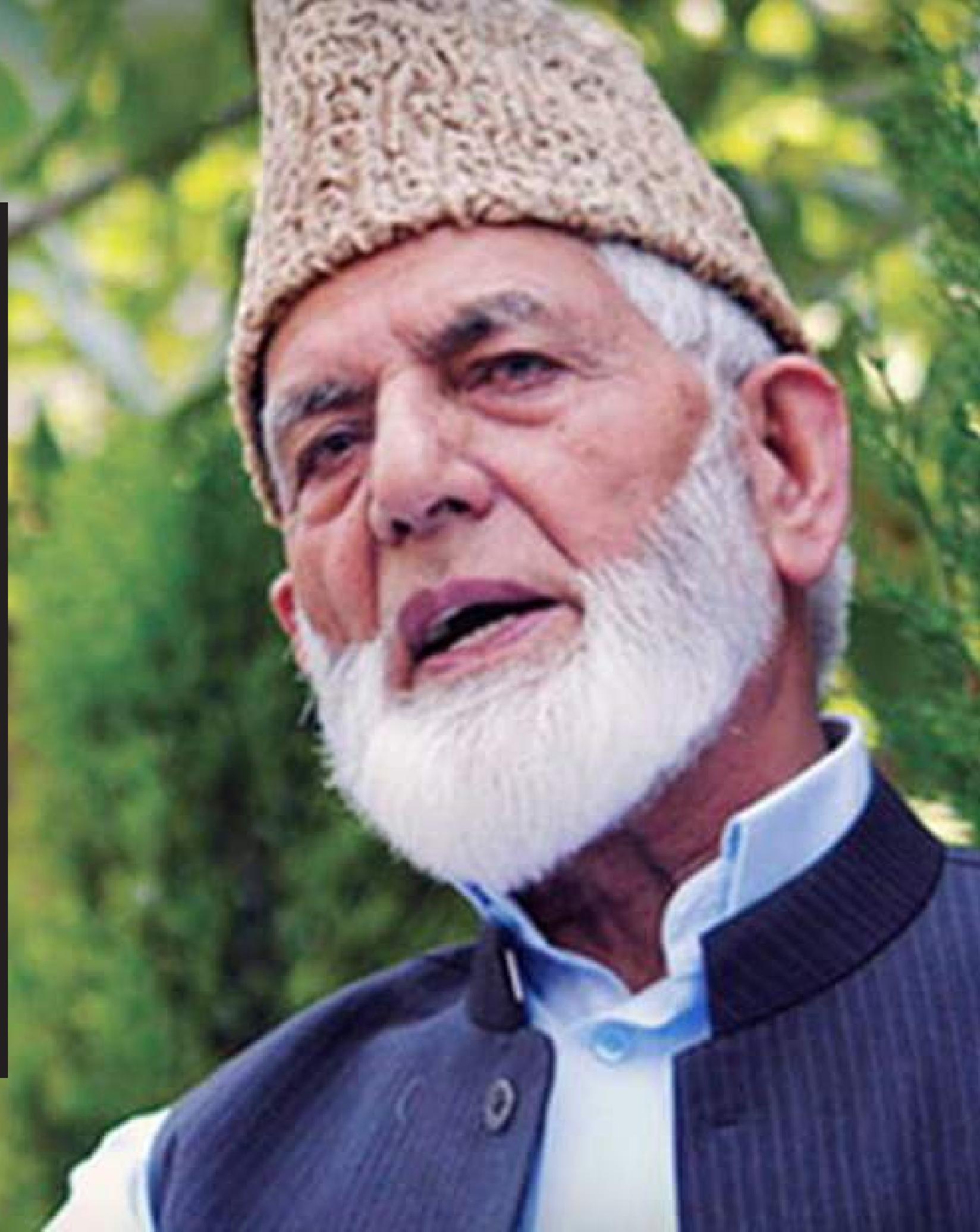


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THE MAN WHO SABOTAGED KASHMIR'S FUTURE

Geelani created road blocks,
made unreasonable and
irrational demands to wreck
reconciliatory efforts



by Bashir ASSAD

W

e are talking about the man who knew he would lead Kashmiris nowhere. We are talking about the man who lorded over the funerals of hundreds and thousands of budding young Kashmiris so that his own funeral would be grand and glorious. By 2010, those close to him knew his final wish was that people in lakhs should attend his last rites, and entire Kashmir should mourn his death. Syed Ali Geelani was lowered into his grave in the



The Man Who Gave Kashmir No Space

Geelani was a privileged Pakistani living in Kashmir - a staunch representative of Pakistan's interests here. With his personal fortunes vastly built by hawala networks, for decades Geelani was a Pakistani by his ideas and beliefs. Some people wrongly regarded Geelani as the sole proprietor of the Kashmir cause. Not so. Geelani devoted his life not to Kashmir but to Pakistan. He was undoubtedly the most revered and respected strategic asset of Pakistan in Kashmir. By that account he was resolute and unwavering. That is precisely why he didn't allow his arch political competitors in the separatist camp to reach any settlement with New Delhi. At least on three occasions, the beleaguered political leadership in Delhi offered space to the separatists on the dialogue table. But Geelani played the saboteur. His preconditions attached to dialogue with New Delhi made it difficult for both New Delhi and Geelani's competitors in the separatist camp forge a consensus. Politically naive and rigid, Geelani refused to give space to the dynamics of conflict resolution. He had no endgame. Geelani created road blocks, made unreasonable and irrational demands to wreck reconciliatory efforts. Geelani never uttered a word beyond what Pakistan fed him. He represented Pakistani interests in Kashmir at the cost of interests of Kashmiris. This is precisely why Geelani sabotaged some historical opportunities which would have brought lasting peace to this region. He will go down in history as a saboteur.

GEELANI WASTED OPPORTUNITIES FOR AN HONORABLE EXIT FROM THE BLOODY CONFLICT. HE INCULCATED A CULTURE OF LAWLESSNESS, INTOLERANCE AND EXTREMISM IN KASHMIR. GEELANI ENGINEERED THE DEATH OF LOGIC AND REASON IN KASHMIR THROUGH HIS EXTREMIST INTERPRETATIONS OF BOTH RELIGION AND POLITICS

dead of night with only some family members standing by. Man proposes, God disposes.

After prolonged illness, the hardline separatist leader died on September 1 at 10.30 pm. Geelani had been terminally ill for many years. His end brings into focus many important layers in Kashmir which merit an

elaborative analysis.

For many, Geelani was a symbol of resistance. Yes, Geelani was resolute in whatever he believed. Equally, he was an irrational politician with little knowledge of geopolitics. Geelani was a maze warrior. He took a lurching, dazed and confused into the so-called fight for free-

dom with no endgame in sight. In his last years, Geelani had the realization that his political beliefs were just flights of fancy. It was too late by then.

Was it his personal ego that did not allow him to be realistic in his political views? Or was he always too firmly in the grip of Pakistan and the hawala chan-

nels that fed him and his large family? Whatever be the truth, History shall not be kind to Geelani. He presided over the killings of young Kashmiri men while his clan amassed fortunes. His children and grandchildren led a luxurious, sheltered life far from jihad.

Geelani lorded over the most turbulent and destructive periods in contemporary Kashmir. His despotic political beliefs and complete submission to Pakistan on Kashmir served to embolden New Delhi for a radical shift in its Kashmir policy.

THE WASTED OPPORTUNITIES

Geelani wasted opportunities for an honorable exit from the bloody conflict. He inculcated a culture of lawlessness, intolerance and extremism in

Kashmir. Geelani presided over transformation of Kashmir from an inclusive, pluralistic and tolerant society to the intolerant, exclusivist and politically irrational one. Geelani engineered the death of logic and reason in Kashmir through his extremist

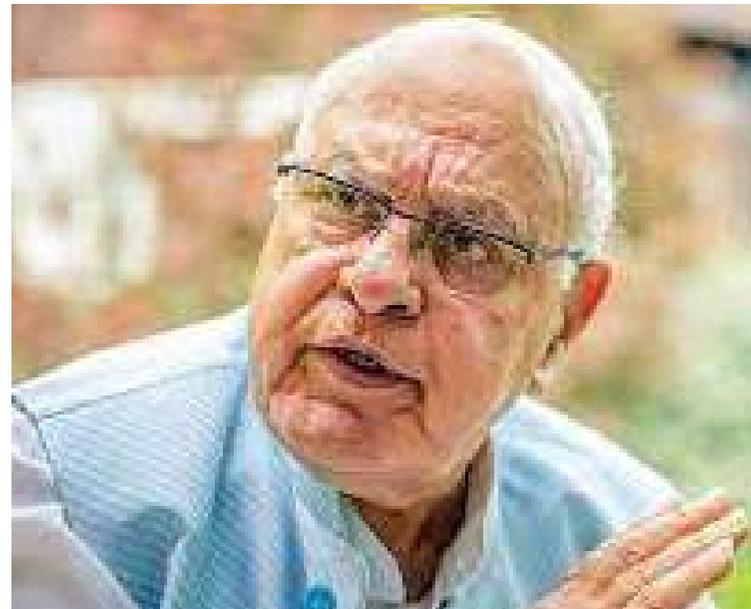
interpretations of both religion and politics.

Geelani believed in the doctrine of supremacy. He would never argue, nor would he listen to the opposite viewpoint. Geelani could not be held accountable. He could not be

questioned. Always victim of self illusions and delusions, Geelani tried to consistently impose his own ideology upon Kashmir. Kashmiris always were and continue to be too diverse for his totalitarian views.

Dumped by Pakistan in 2016 By the end of 2016, Geelani realized that he was no more required by Pakistan. His sell-by date had expired with the glamorization of new generation militant commanders. It was too late. Before Geelani could engineer a tactical shift which would serve him and his family, Pakistan abandoned him. The communications channels dried up. His representatives in Pakistan and Paki-

stan Occupied (POK) Kashmir showed their back to Geelani. This was perhaps the biggest shock of Geelani's political career spanning over 50 years. Geelani was dumped by Pakistan much before law enforcing agencies swung into action against the Kashmiri separatists over foreign funding. It is wrong to say that Geelani went into silent



Geelani had realized the futility of his political ideology, but he stuck to it only for an honorable and glorious death. Dr Farooq Abdullah and late Mufti Mohd Syed are on record having said this

mode after the enforcement agencies tightened the noose around the separatists. All indicators suggest that Geelani was abandoned by Pakistan by September 2016. The law enforcing agencies got active by 2017. Political and opinion leaders

GEELANI LORDED OVER THE MOST TURBULENT AND DESTRUCTIVE PERIODS IN CONTEMPORARY KASHMIR. HIS DESPOTIC POLITICAL BELIEFS AND COMPLETE SUBMISSION TO PAKISTAN ON KASHMIR SERVED TO EMBOLDEN NEW DELHI FOR A RADICAL SHIFT IN ITS KASHMIR POLICY



of all shades in Kashmir had consensual opinion about Geelani. All of them would argue that Geelani had realized the futility of his political ideology, but he stuck to it only for an honorable and glorious death. Dr Farooq Abdullah and late Mufti Mohd Syed are on record having said this.

Geelani had many health issues. Since 2010 particularly, his condition deteriorated. From 2010 to 2021, Geelani's doctors and family members were about to declare him dead on many occasions. A friend known for his strategic, tactical mind narrated to me that since 2010, senior police officers would invite him over for a meal when Geelani was reported unstable. He said senior officers would discuss with him how to maintain law and order and minimize casualties if Geelani died.

In 2010, Mufti Sayeed told

The then Ameer e Jamaat, Hakeem Ghulam Nabi and Qari Saifuddin would warn and argue publicly with Geelani against introducing the gun culture in Kashmir. Geelani never gave a damn to them

me that in the last phase of his life, Geelani will not change his mind. He is just waiting for a hero's death. Geelani had not imagined that Pakistan would abandon him after he served their interest for five decades, at the cost of thousands of blossoming Kashmiri youth.

GRAND DELUSIONS THAT DEVASTATED KASHMIR

A veteran journalist wrote on Geelani's death: He was among those Jamaat leaders in 1990 who opposed the inception of gun in Kashmir society. The journalist did not take long to exonerate Geelani of all the blunders he committed, and all his wrongs

against the people of Kashmir. The then Ameer e Jamaat , Hakeem Ghulam Nabi and Qari Saifuddin would warn and argue publicly with Geelani against introducing the gun culture in Kashmir. Geelani never gave a damn to them. He remained firm on armed insurgency. He would ask people to be ready to fight a long battle. He would demand sacrifices from the people. After the end of each uprising since 2008, Geelani would blame Kashmiris for not giving enough to sustain the agitation in order to build pressure on India for resolution of the K issue. He wanted that the violent phase should end only with the kneeling down of New Delhi, or the local administration bow-

Geelani Paralyzed Kashmir For Eight Years!

In August 2019, Article 370 was abrogated, and a lockdown was imposed. Soon thereafter, Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industries projected the losses incurred by the lockdown to be ten thousand crores. Imagine the material losses incurred by the Kashmiris over 30 years of hartals, shutdowns and enforced civil curfews!

In 30 years of violent conflict, Geelani issued shutdown calls for 2,928 days. This means that over 30 years, Geelani paralyzed normal life for eight years! The height of Kashmir's moral numbness is that nobody questioned the supremacist Geelani for his irrational, illogical and self-destructive approach. Under his self-delusory leadership, Kashmiris lost self respect, generations of our youth, our cultural ethos - everything. Geelani grew taller by standing over dead bodies of innocent youngsters.

Syed Ali Geelani enjoyed power without responsibilities. He would rule the streets to ruin them. No one could ever ask him why, when and how. Generations of Kashmiris had faith in him. Amazing are the ways of life! Geelani was finally demolished by Pakistan - for whom he worked his whole life. He died long before his physical death. He was no more Pakistan's darling. All separatists lost ground after the abrogation of special status of Jammu and Kashmir.

ing before him. To achieve this chimera, Geelani would demand more and more blood to be spilled on the streets in Kashmir.

August 5, 2019 and Thereafter

The cascading effect of the events of August 5, 2019, events was multidirectional. The separatists lost the support of Pakistan. They got discredited before the people of Kashmir as much as the National Conference and PDP leadership. Abrogation of Article 370 and 35A exposed the mirage that the separatists and also the mainstream were selling



PDP president Mehbooba Mufti's anti India rant could not help her get votes in the December 2020 elections to the District Development Councils (DDCs). The separatists and the mainstream camp stand exposed. Nobody believes them now

to the people of Kashmir.

People were, and continue to be aghast with the political elites of Kashmir. The events of August 5, 2019 made Kashmiris realize that the entire political spectrum sold empty dreams to them. PDP president Mehbooba Mufti's anti India rant could not help her get votes in the December 2020 elections to the District Development Councils (DDCs). The separatists and the mainstream camp stand exposed. Nobody believes them now.

Geelani was buried quietly at night. His last rites were attended by only a few family members. This must be an eye-opener for those who still want to resort to emotive and exploitative politics.

For Years, Many Kashmiris Had Known That There Would Be No Agitations If Geelani Died



On March 1, 2021 I was invited by National Defence College (NDC) for an exclusive interaction. Among others, a US defense expert was also present. During the question and answer session, the gentleman wanted to know the feel of the ground post abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution of India, guaranteeing a unique status to Jammu and Kashmir within Union of India. I responded candidly. "Sir, I cannot quantify the pros and cons of the action of the Parliament. What I can say with authority is that if the hawkish separatist leader Sayed Ali Geelani dies today, Kashmir will not shut. There will be no protests whatsoever to create a law and order situation."

I had stated the same many times earlier. I was not the only one to have articulated this. It was the feel of the ground. Many Kashmiris knew it. I was so confident of this that I spoke to many senior officers in JK Administration soon after news of Geelani's death broke. I urged them not to impose curfew. I told them that restrictions in specific pockets like downtown and Hyderpora in uptown would suffice. Why would people come out chest beating,

mourning the passing away of a leader who only presided over the death and destruction of Kashmiris? The UT Administration realized this soon enough. The curfew and restrictions did not stay for long.

The only visible change on ground post the events of August 5, 2019 is that Kashmiris are completely disillusioned with the political leadership across the spectrum. Kashmiris have realized that they are all liars. Some lie in the name of secularism and composition culture. Others lie by invoking religion and Pakistan. Our so-called leaders have never been sincere to the people. They are the conflict entrepreneurs. Some sold conflict to New Delhi, some to Rawalpindi. The most crafty ones sold it to both New Delhi and Rawalpindi. The separatists had their own loyalists and customers in mainstream camps.

Of late, Kashmiris are least bothered about what is in store for the political elites. They celebrated the incarceration of Mehbooba Mufti and Omar Abdullah last year. Omar admitted as much. There is no love lost for Kashmir's political leaders. And some years ago, Geelani lost the status of the popular leader of Kashmir.

Geelani's Janazy Strategy

**THE LEADER
WHO LED
KASHMIR INTO A
WASTED SPACE**

**Geelani's Story
Is Of A Life And
Leadership Ruining
30 Years Of A Region**

by Mir QAYOOM

Hardcore separatist leader Syed Ali Geelani died at his home in Srinagar at the age of 92. He passed away after a lengthy illness. His politics of separatism, advocacy of a pro-Pakistan position, open callouts for hartals which shut the valley for months, hostility to the suffering of Kashmiri Pandits, and either active complicity or passive approval of violence extracted a heavy cost upon Kashmir.

Geelani died on September 1. September 3 witnessed huge crowds in various parts of Kashmir, engaged in peaceful observation on the 24th day of Muharram. It brought home a stark truth. Geelani and his ideology were long irrelevant in Kashmir. Pak agencies leaved no stone unturned to instigate people to come out and protest but no reactions were observed.

Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan declared a day of official mourning on the demise of the separatist leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani, who had popularised the slogan Hum Pakistani Hai, Pakistan Humara Hai. The official mourning in Pakistan was meaningless back home in Kashmir.

Geelani had refused Nishan-E-Pakistan in 2020 when he saw his grip weakening over the Hurriyat conference chapter in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. In



his last years before he slipped into dementia, he was disillusioned with Pakistan.

**Towards The End,
Geelani Realized
Pakistan Had
Used Him**

At the fag end of his life, Geelani realized how empty and corrupt the so-called movement for the liberation of Kashmir was, and how Pakistan had used him to further its agenda. Geelani had accused Pakistan of using drug as a weapon in Kashmir and had quit the Hurriyat in June 2020.

Some called Geelani the man who fought for Kashmir's freedom. This was wrong. Geelani fought only for Pakistan. For

decades this simple fact has remained covered in the smoke-screen of emotionally attractive "freedom".

Pakistan's strategic assets were quick to respond by paying their condolences on social media to the Hurriyat leader. They failed to highlight the loss of lives and destruction caused by Geelani's narrow worldview. Soon after Geelani's death, his close circle was abuzz with talks of his successor. A section of resistance leadership wanted Masrat Alam to don the mantle, but Geelani's family didn't want a non-Syed to take over. Also, a death due to long term illness was termed as murder. Known separatist propaganda handles in Turkey, Pakistan, Europe and US peddled the expected notes.

Due to suspended network,

The visible fact on ground is the indifference of Kashmiri youth on the death of Geelani. They have chosen to remain silent and continue their daily life than argue with the creed or generation who still feel emotion for the hardline Pakistani separatist



Indifference of Kashmiri youth to Geelani's Death

The visible fact on ground is the indifference of Kashmiri youth on the death of Geelani. They have chosen to remain silent and continue their daily life than argue with the creed or generation who still feel emotion for the hardline Pakistani separatist. More than the Kashmiris, the social media figures of Pakistan are discussing Geelani's death. They want to ignore the fact that he had declined the national honour granted by Imran Khan's government in refusing the Nishan e Pakistan in 2020.

Kashmiri youth don't care either way. Life will be back to normal in Srinagar including Hyderpora in a day or so - maximum. We need this fact to travel and sink in with the Kashmir watchers.

not much was posted or observed from the local population of Kashmir. Pro-Pakistan social media activists tried to make a show of protests in streets following Geelani's death. But many Kashmiris outside Kashmir, who had suffered because of Geelani, spoke their minds on how a brutal chapter of bloodshed has ended. They brought out the fact that Geelani made life comfortable for his family but put rifles and stones in the hands of Kashmiri people.

Pakistan's social media warriors tried to unleash disinfo ops using Geelani's death. Firing carried out to prevent infiltrating terrorists was shown as shelling being carried out by India in celebration of Geelani's death.

The Leader Who Led Kashmir Into A Wasted Space

Geelani was a symbol of how a society gets lucky or unlucky based on the leadership it gets. Kashmir society wasted more than three decades following a leadership with delusion. Geelani's loyalty to Pakistan was more than to the good of his people and society. Sadly, he realized his folly only when the end was near. His lack of vision led to thousands of deaths and sustained a cycle of violence.

Geelani's most macabre strategy was the Janazy Strategy. It was horrific to see him presiding over the cycle of more and more deaths and justify these to achieve some delusional goal.

Geelani invented issues like demographic change, religion under threat, Jagmohan conspiracy etc – anything that could sustain more violence and shedding of more Kashmiri blood. Over the last 50 years, he probably has more Kashmiri blood on his hands than any other person.

The Kashmiri nexus played to his Pied Piper dreams. He sold dreams of azadi while he ensured only Pakistani stooges survived. Very few leaders have such magical impact on his followers despite their lies. Anyone with a different ideology or a personality who could be a threat to his leadership would either be thrown out or killed.

Geelani was like the banyan tree that did not allow any other tree to grow. But there's more. This banyan was growing on the piles of bodies of Kashmiri youth.

Geelani - The Symbol Of Failure

Geelani's story is of a life and leadership wasting 30 years of a society. He led Kashmir on a garden path of self delusion and pain. His last few years showed he had realised the errors of his ways.

Some Kashmir watchers say Geelani was not a banyan tree, but a near dead man who was deliberately resurrected and revived. This was when Hurriyat was in tatters and Kashmiris were thinking the violence is over for good.

Kashmiris take side with winners. When they saw how subservient to Geelani the Indian government was, they assumed he was a big shot. August 5 and onwards have shown that Geelani type of thugs can't keep the state hostage if the incumbent government doesn't allow them to.

Why do we need a new leader for a "peaceful happy Kashmir"? Is that a subtle warning that "Unless there is a new leader, peaceful happy Kashmir is not possible?"

Take the argument further. Is this another succession plan for Geelani that Mehbooba Mufti will fulfil? This way of cliched thinking must be shunned. Geelani was a gone case. He was deliberately propped up, dignified and legitimized. Geelani was never a "mass leader", unless we consider the large cadre of Jamaati Islamists as "masses". Support for Geelani was 1 out of 10 at best. Let's not record him as mass leader in history.



Taliban 2.0

**Will Big Money,
New Churn Make
Them Different?**

**World Not Ready
To Accept Taliban
Barbarism**



by Waseem GUL

After conquering Kabul, the Taliban want to be considered the ruler, not just a religious militia. Meetings and talks are being held behind closed doors to establish themselves both globally and domestically as legitimate rulers, with the aim of forming a government that includes forces other than the Taliban.

Will these efforts be successful? What will happen to young Afghans who are accustomed to urban culture and the Internet and want to live in the 21st century, not the seventh? This facility was taken away from them some time ago.

The Taliban capture of power is a significant development for this war-torn country, the neighbouring states and the Western powers led by the US. PHOTO COURTESY: REUTERS

LIFE WITH TALIBAN 1.0

Under the leadership of Mullah Omar, in the previous era of the Taliban (1996-2001), the focus was on the implementation of the commandment of good and prohibition of evil. In the Pakistani madrassas where the Taliban were educated, they learned that this divine instruction meant becoming a religious policeman and straightening people's morals. In contrast, according to liberal religious scholars, enjoining the good and forbidding the evil means believers should walk on the path of guidance while controlling their ego.

Under Mullah Omar, the Taliban rejected this



The Islamist group has issued video statements as part of its bid to employ more sophisticated propaganda techniques. PHOTO COURTESY: REUTERS

Pakistan should open its border to Afghan refugees. Failure to do so will be immoral

What will happen to young Afghans who are accustomed to urban culture and the Internet and want to live in the 21st century, not the seventh?



justification outright. They stoned adulterers, cut off hands for stealing, flogged sinners, closed girls' schools, restricted women to homes, and demolished a 2,000-year-old Buddha statue in Bamiyan. The Afghans who came before them would have never heard of such incidents.

WILL ECONOMICS CHANGE THE TALIBAN?

The changed Taliban are giving the impression that this time the justification for enjoining the good and forbidding the evil will not be so strict. Will ordinary Taliban agree with that? Nothing can be said yet. Of course, the militant Taliban leaders, who have been living on foreign aid and extortion for decades, are well aware that economic needs are calling for change.

It makes sense. For those accustomed to luxury hotels in Doha or bungalows in Quetta and Peshawar, it is difficult to return to mountain villages from where they fought the invaders. The truth is that they now wish for the good life that their enemy invented. The day will come when these same Taliban or perhaps their next generation will send their children to normal schools instead of madrassas spread in Pakistan or Afghanistan.

For this, it is necessary that aid keep coming. More importantly, billions of dollars worth of minerals are buried under Afghan soil. Both the technique and

the organization will come from outside to extract these minerals. Many countries, especially Russia and China, are interested in these mineral deposits. It also means that regional politics will come to the fore and a variety of bargains will emerge.

Pakistan wants to play an important role in this whole game. The Chinese are said to eat everything that moves, but the old-fashioned Taliban will not be able to digest them. Xinjiang may suffer from indigestion. The Taliban's old allies, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, are concerned that Taliban extremism should not reach them. Saudi Arabia and UAE are inclined towards social reform these days. Much remains to be done.

Pakistan can be accepted as a mediator because the leader who created the new Pakistan and the "new Taliban" (a term coined by Dawn columnist Niaz Murtaza) are ideologically the same. Both are against Western dress, education and language. Both

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shalwars emphasize symbolic items such as shirts or turbans. According to both, the measure of morality is fasting and prayer. Imran Khan could not help but express his happiness over the Taliban's takeover of Kabul. "Afghanistan has broken the chains of slavery," he said.

In order to form a new structure, the new Taliban will obviously turn to the forces that made it successful. Yes, but a little caution will be exercised. Al-



though it is prudent for the Taliban to associate with people who know they are hypocrites, the Taliban themselves are not hypocrites. The Taliban knows that his comrades were taken to Guantanamo Bay. Some have not yet returned.

The back cover of a book written by General Musharraf during his tenure reads: "We arrested 672 and handed over 369 to the United States. By arresting them, we have been rewarded with millions of dollars." Memories don't fade so easily. It is a different matter that the winners are not discussing the deceptions of the past at this time.

Islamabad, on the other hand, has the Taliban's most trusted allies. A few days ago, Maulana Abdul Aziz and his associates waved the Taliban flag on the roof of Hafsa University for a while and sent a message to the Afghan conquerors: We were with you even when you were being bombed in Tora Bora. Now that you are victorious, we are still with you.

WILL TALIBAN THINKING SPREAD OVER PAKISTAN?

Like it or not, AfPak has become a reality. The term was introduced in the United States and was not popular in Pakistan, but it seems to be correct. Not only are the two countries geographically close, but ideologically the rulers of the two countries are also close now. Now Taliban thinking will spread all over Pakistan.

With Taliban 2.0, India may find the going tough. Pakistan's strategic dream has been fulfilled.

Fearing that the new Taliban will be the same as the old one, millions of Afghans are fleeing the country. The arrival of these Afghan refugees in Pakistan is also being opposed by those who have this poem of Iqbal on their lips:

Break the story of colour and blood and get lost in the nation

Neither the queen nor the Iranians nor the Afghans remained

Pan-Islamism of the Indo-Pak subcontinent, which resulted in the formation of Pakistan, dies on the Torkham border for most Pakistanis. But the new Taliban may be thinking differently. Afghan nationalism has been successful. Cultural and linguistic continuity cannot be stopped by building a wall on the border. After defeating the most powerful empire in history, how will the Taliban sanctify the lines drawn by the old British?

Pakistan should open its border to Afghan refugees. Failure to do so will be immoral. Using its influence, Pakistan should convince the Taliban: the world is not ready to accept their barbarism as before. This is not the time to imprison women in their homes and hide them in burqas or to oppress and kill religious and linguistic minorities. And before Pakistan explains this to the Taliban, it has to fix its own affairs.

This Week in 1965

56 Years Ago, Pakistan's Evil Plans For Kashmir Were In Motion

**Constant
Kashmir Sabotage
And the Hope For
Lasting Peace**



by Dr Amjad Ayub MIRZA

It was the early hours of September 1, 1965. A group of Pakistan Army men dressed in plain clothes crossed over into Indian territory from Pakistan-occupied Jammu Kashmir (PoJK). They had been given the task to capture the Akhnoor Bridge and sever land connectivity of the state of Jammu and Kashmir with the Indian mainland.

Things did not go as planned. The farmers ploughing their

fields became alarmed at the sight of alien faces. One young man rushed to the nearest military post and reported the uncanny movement of non-residents in the area. That was when Pakistan's Operation Grand Slam was exposed. The locals alongside the military fought the very same army that was claiming to "liberate" Kashmir.

Operation Grand Slam was designed as Plan-B alongside Operation Gibraltar. The lat-

ter was supposed to ignite a rebellion in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir by sending in Pakistani troops pretending to be locals. The purpose was to create a fake separatist war scenario for the consumption of the international community at the United Nations.

These were two back-to-back attempts of infiltration. The objective was to cause unrest in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. These resulted in then Indian Prime Minister Lal Bahadur

**PAKISTAN PLANNED OPERATION GRAND SLAM
AIMED TO IGNITE A REBELLION IN THE INDIAN STATE
OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR BY SENDING IN PAKISTANI
TROOPS PRETENDING TO BE LOCALS**

PHOTO COURTESY: FINANCIALEXPRESS.COM



Shastri opening a second front at Lahore and Sialkot in Pakistan-occupied Punjab. This proved to be a master stroke. Within 17 days Pakistan was forced to surrender – on September 23, 1965. However, this was not going to be the end of Pakistan military establishment's nefarious intrigues against the people of Kashmir in particular and India in general.

REPEATED ATTEMPTS FOR FORCIBLE ANNEXATION OF KASHMIR

During the 1970s, Pakistan declared PoJK as the base camp for the forcible annexation of Kashmir. An Indian plane named Ganga was hijacked allegedly by Pakistan sponsored terrorists and brought to Lahore. This incident established the authority of Maqbool Bhat as the sole leader of the separatists. Subsequently Pakistan's secret services launched Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) in 1976 in Birmingham, United Kingdom. JKLF was presented to the people of Jammu Kashmir and the wider world as the legitimate separatist movement. But it miserably failed to garner support in Jammu, Laddakh and Pakistan occupied Gilgit-Baltistan. Hence, JKLF's acts of individual terrorism also failed to stir unrest in the Valley.

In December 1979, USSR came to the rescue of the newly-formed communist regime in Afghanistan (formed in April 1978). This was because Afghanistan was faced with a hostile neighbour – Pakistan. This gave rise to the influence of jihad in the political discourse



PHOTO COURTESY: HISTORYNET.COM

DDC elections have witnessed keen interest among the population. Development projects and business infrastructure is bringing in the most needed financial investment into Jammu and Kashmir. Only recently, Indian Home Minister Amit Shah has announced that under the Central Sector Scheme, Rs 50,000 crore will be invested in the region.

The question remains whether peace and tranquility has won its battle against terrorism in Jammu Kashmir. Well, there are significant improvements. But unless Pakistan is forced by the international community represented at the UN to follow through its resolutions and withdraw all Pakistani troops and aliens from PoJK and PoGB (Pakistan occupied Gilgit Baltistan) and finally we reunite with motherland India, lasting peace

of the region. The Pakistan military establishment was keen on applying the same tactics in Kashmir. JKLF was used by the ISI to facilitate the infiltration of jihadi terrorists in Kashmir.

After consolidating their position, the Pakistan military establishment conveniently shifted

its focus away from JKLF and began to nurture jihadi terrorists in Kashmir. By 1989, the jihadis had consolidated their terrorist network. With the assistance of JKLF and the local clergy they launched a hate campaign against the Kashmiri Pundits. This eventually led to the geno-



JKLF WAS PRESENTED TO THE PEOPLE OF JAMMU KASHMIR AND THE WIDER WORLD AS THE LEGITIMATE SEPARATIST MOVEMENT. BUT IT MISERABLY FAILED TO GARNER SUPPORT IN JAMMU, LADDAKH AND PAKISTAN OCCUPIED GILGIT-BALTISTAN. HENCE, JKLF'S ACTS OF INDIVIDUAL TERRORISM ALSO FAILED TO STIR UNREST IN THE VALLEY

cidal attacks culminating in the mass exodus of Kashmiri Pundits starting from January 19, 1990.

CONFLICT TRAUMA, FATIGUE

Today, the social fabric of the Vale of Kashmir seems fractured. Unemployment, lack of industrial development, lack of business infrastructure and decades of Pakistan-sponsored communal

violence has left the populace traumatized.

Since the abrogation of Articles 370 and 35-A of the Indian Constitution on August 5, 2019, things in Kashmir have begun to change for the better. Stone pelting and violent protests seem a thing of the past. Panchayat and

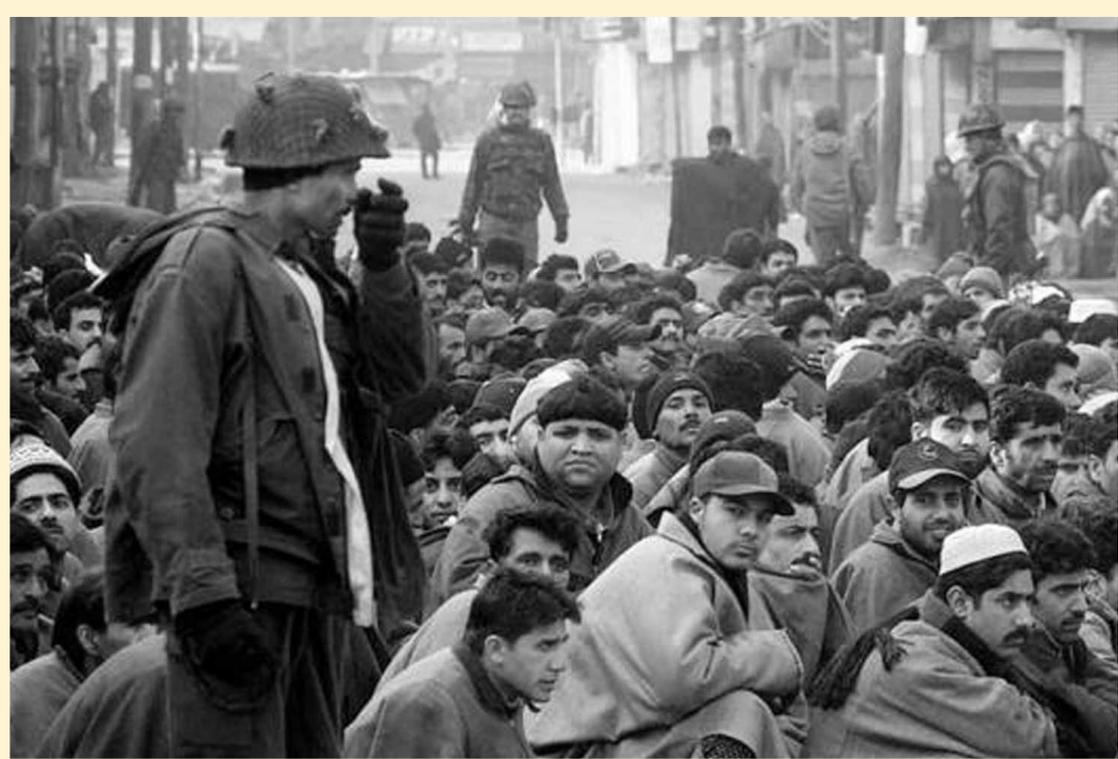
cannot endure.

Incidents like Operation Gibraltar and Grand Slam might be a thing of the past. But recent acts of individual terrorism and attempts to infiltrate jihadis in the tranquil vale of Kashmir suggest that we have yet to see the light of lasting peace.

(Dr Amjad Ayub Mirza is an author and a human rights activist from Mirpur in Pakistan occupied Jammu Kashmir. He currently lives in exile in the UK)

The Plight And Agony Of KASHMIRI PANDITS

Physical and Psychological Trauma



by J.N. AHMAD

The tragic plight of Kashmiri Pandits who continue to live in exodus away from their homeland remains a blot on modern Kashmiri history. The majority community in Kashmir owes an apology to them. But far from the recognition of their pain and suffering, their tragic plight is often mocked at. Youngsters continue to be fed wrong narratives and outright lies regarding Kashmiri Pandits. They are being constantly fed narratives of hate and poison against the KPs. But the fact remains that the KPs became victims when the majority community decided to embark on path of religious extremism where Kafirs had no role and rights.

What Kashmiri youth must understand is that the massive onslaught of Pakistani-sponsored insurgency in 1989 affected almost every walk of life in Kashmir. In its very beginning, the armed insurgency jolted the venerable bond of peace and harmony between Kashmiri Muslims and Kashmiri Pandits. The growing fear and insecurity forced Kashmiri Pandits to leave their homes for safety and sur-

vival. Their long cherished dream to return to their homeland could not materialize all these years.

Over the years, this displaced community has produced burgeoning expressions of pain and suffering. These expressions have successfully and still continue to immortalize the agonizing memories of past, of rootlessness, of identity crisis of their community, scattered around the country and outside the country. Nothing can match the agonized memories of a displaced community. The plight and agony of Kashmiri Pandit migrants erupted on two levels; physical and psychological.

COMMON CULTURAL HERITAGE AND IDENTITY

No matter what Islamic extremists declare, nobody can dispute the fact that the Pandit and Muslim residents of Kashmir are not only the descendants of a common cultural heritage and identity, but have historically lived together beyond the barriers of religion and ideology. This was true even when communalism, a holocaust of violence terribly incited and escalated by the partition of the subcontinent



in 1947 had murderously blinded the Hindu and Muslim residents of India.

When truckloads of dead bodies were traded in other parts of the country, not even a single death was reported from Kashmir despite the Muslim population being high. However, this historic harmony became victim of the militant insurgency which erupted in late 1980s in Kashmir. It brought about a tragic end to this harmonious, unruffled and peaceful history of the Pandits and Muslims of Kashmir.

EARLY CASUALTIES OF PAKISTAN'S PROXY WAR

The proxy war initiated by Pakistan, the rebelling Kash-

miri militants with backing from Pakistan and Kashmir, the regular protests for so-called freedom by the local belligerent mobs and the increasing number of the deaths and disappearances led to a growing sense of insecurity among Kashmiri Pandits. The militants and their patrons declared them as the enemies of Kashmiri freedom movement and the "spies" and "agents" of India. The militants intimidated them to vacate the valley by using mosque loudspeakers and by pasting death warnings on electric poles and walls everywhere.

Some of the prominent Pandits who initially resisted the provocations were brutally targeted and killed. Islamists wanted to enact an ethnic cleansing to rob Kashmir of its plural identity in favour

of a puritanical Islamic identity. Unfortunately, the Indian state apparatus at that time just capitulated. The growing fear and insecurity led to a mass exodus of Kashmiri Pandits to Jammu and various other parts of the country in the beginning years of the troubled 1990s.

The story of irreparable loss, suffering and distress, both physical and psychological, of Kashmiri Pandits begins with the migration. Their broken memories of the past, their unflinching yearnings to return to their homeland, their helplessness while living a sub-human life in squalid migrant camps, their tormenting sense of uprootedness and their endless strivings to settle in alien socio-cultural and linguistic settings, are some of the poignant



Kashmiri youngsters continue to be fed wrong narratives and outright lies regarding the Pandits. They are being constantly fed narratives of hate and poison. Pandits became victims when the majority community decided to embark on path of religious extremism where Kafirs had no role and rights



The psychological plight is very complex. It involves almost every Pandit inhabitant of the tented camps. They left their homes in a muddled and indecisive state of mind. Their actual psychological battle to belong to a new terrain and to re-connect the present with the snatched past began after migration

aspects which often get ignored amidst the din of politics.

THE TRAGEDY OF MASS MIGRATION

The physical plight begins with the very assassination of some of the prominent Kashmiri Pandits even before the mass-migration. The way they were forced to leave their homes in overcrowded trucks evokes the pathetic images of the coops of poultry. The major chunk of the displaced Pandits had to live in an omnium-gatherum of dilapidated migrant camps in Jammu. In these camps Pandits silently bore the humiliating hardships. What they were provided in the migrant camps

was a shameful accommodation. In some aspects, it was worse than the established slums. The inhabitants divided their single room accommodations by piling up trunks and hanging old sarees and bedspreads as walls.

The psychological plight, on the other hand, is very complex and involves almost every Pandit inhabitant of the tented camps. Their anxiety and despair, causing a "sickness unto death" develops from the very moment when the outbreak of militancy in 1989 unleashes the reign of terror and insecurity in Kashmir. They left their homes in a muddled and indecisive state of mind. Their actual psychological battle to belong to a new terrain and to re-connect

the present with the snatched past, began after migration.

The more the consciousness of loss of their past grows, the more their psychological despair intensifies. Some say the Pandits loved their land even more than their fellow Kashmiri Muslims, because they lived there even when Islam had not arrived. Their love and attachment with their land led to a grave psychological disturbance among Pandits after migration. They were simply unable to withstand the mental horrors. The horrors brought upon them by the Islamic extremists were backed by the neighboring country. And such horrors which destroyed Kashmir must never be forgotten!

Work Hard, Believe In Yourself And Never Give Up



If you don't
come
from a rich
family,
let the rich
family
come
from you

A young Kashmiri who started his online business when he was only 17 years old today has a handsome turnover annually



marketbuz
making lives easier healthier & happier

by Bisma MANZOOR

Umer RB is the founder of Marketbuz.com, an e-commerce website that sells diverse Kashmiri products like dry fruit, saffron, honey, Kashmiri spices, special and unique Kashmiri Wazwan, papier-mâché and much more.

Umer says that he wanted to create an online market space like Amazon or Flipkart. Later, he decided that he must not copy anyone. That made Umer decide to market only Kashmiri products on his website.

“My main motive is to popularize Brand Kashmir all over India. After the abrogation of Article 370, we moved to Delhi to continue our online business because in Kashmir there was no internet connectivity at that time. E-Commerce is becoming the hook of successful businesses internationally. It is important to have a digital marketing strategy that aligns with online selling. Fortunately I was able to formulate a good marketing strategy, and am happy with the growth of my venture,” says Umer.





MESSAGE FOR BEGINNERS

- Start now. Don't hesitate. Just jump into it. Work on it in between homework, work, and examinations. Your social life might take a hit, because you will need to put in as much time as you can.
- Talk to people. You will make progress faster if you get help or advice from other entrepreneurs. From them, you can learn how to avoid mistakes and how to skip a few steps.
- Be patient, it's going to take time. Regardless of what your business will be, it's going to take some time to get it started. You have to consider so many things that it can overwhelm you. Just stay organized, keep working, and be patient.
- My message for youth is, if you don't come from a rich family, let the rich family come from you. Work hard, believe in yourself and never give up.

The young entrepreneur says the first step must be to outline one's goal. Thereafter, one must identify the target market. "Study your competitors. What are they offering? How can you do better? How can you offer your consumers greater value for money? Why should they choose to shop with you? You must answer all these questions in order to create a successful business," Umer advises.

PURSUING THE DREAM

Umer lost his father, Mr Abdul Rashid Bhat, was a government

official. He died in an accident in 2018. His mother Fehmeeda is a homemaker. Umer has two elder siblings who work in the private sector.

Umer studied at Sheikh-ul-Alam Model High School, and then at Candid Higher Secondary School, Nowgam. He did Bachelors in Commerce from Bemina Degree College, Srinagar in 2018.

By the time Umer finished his graduation, he had been an entrepreneur for a year. Interestingly, Umer wanted to become an engineer. "Unfortunately, that didn't work out due to some reasons. Then I took commerce



as my stream and decided to be an entrepreneur."

UMER'S SUCCESS STORY IN HIS WORDS

Many business leaders inspire me, but I would have to say that my greatest inspiration comes from Indian startup founders like Ritesh Agarwal of OYO and Binny Bansal of Flipkart. Ritesh Agarwal is a self-made billionaire, and my biggest inspiration. From them, I have learnt to stay focused and goal oriented, no matter what obstacles come my way. This focused thinking has greatly contributed to my success.

We shall always have self doubt – we are humans. The key is to take the doubt, acknowledge it and then lock it away.

Spend your energy and focus on your mission which should be building a successful business.

My target is to make it big nationally and internationally. This is not possible in offline mode. Also, it is difficult to run a business in Kashmir due to the situation here. In the coming years the scope of e-commerce is going to increase majorly. This is the big area of growth.

HARDSHIPS

I have faced many hardships because I was inexperienced and new to the online market. I followed many business tycoons. This helped me to stay strong and positive to achieve my dream – becoming Kashmir's top businessman.

I faced many financial problems but I am very thankful to my friends who helped me financially. I used my pocket

WHY I LOVE BEING AN ENTREPRENEUR

- I work where I like.
- I work with the people that I like
- I create my own opportunity and destiny
- I solve problems and make a difference in the process
- I stand up for what I believe in



money for developing my website. Now I am able to continue my business by my own. My first order was for Rs 25,000. From then onwards, I have earned good profit Alhamdulillah.

FAMILY SUPPORT

My family didn't support me at first because they don't understand my plan. They didn't know about online business. They were always after me to do something in the banking sector, but I was focused on online business.

I shared my plan with my brother. He is well-educated. He understood my plan and started supporting me. Now everyone is in my support.

FUTURE PLANS

I want to expand my business worldwide. In the next five years, I want to make my startup unicorn (The term was introduced by venture capital investor Aileen Lee to describe rare tech startups that were valued at more than \$1 billion.)

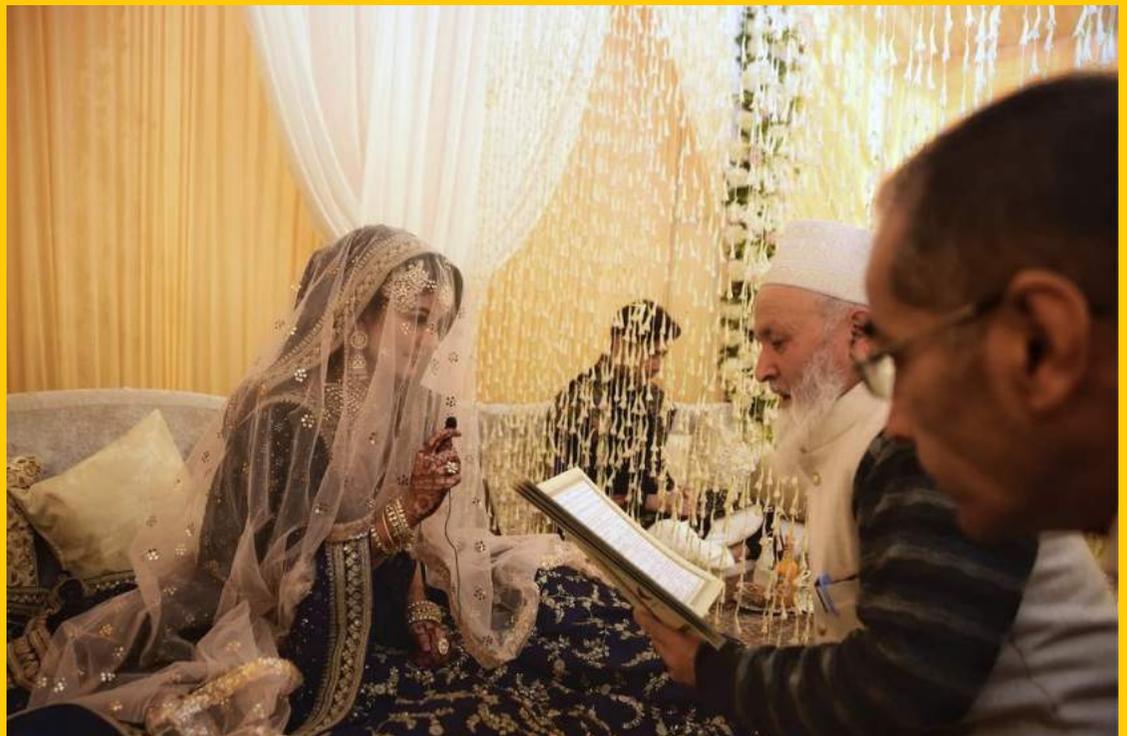
The Kashmir That Geelani Never Told You About And Mehbooba Won't



These happy, joyous couples. The Luxurious, Plush Weddings.
The royal décor by wedding organizers.
The merry moment shared on social media.

EVERYONE FINDS THE KASHMIR THEY SEEK







LOG INTO KASHMIR @

kzine.in



Barafsar Lake is the highest alpine lake of Kashmir Valley, perched at over 4600 meters. It is one of the most beautiful vantage points offering views of the Valley's highest peak Mt Kolahoi (seen in the pic), Mt Harmukh, various other peaks and serene valleys. One can trek to this lake from Sarbal village in Sonmarg.

Your window to news, views, exposes, scoops
and exclusive features that bring to you

THE REAL KASHMIR

KZINE

OPENING **KASHMIR'S EYES**