

**TOP DOWN LAND GRAB AT HARWAN**

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KZINE.IN

**KZINE**

OPENING KASHMIR'S EYES



**Has Business Tycoon**

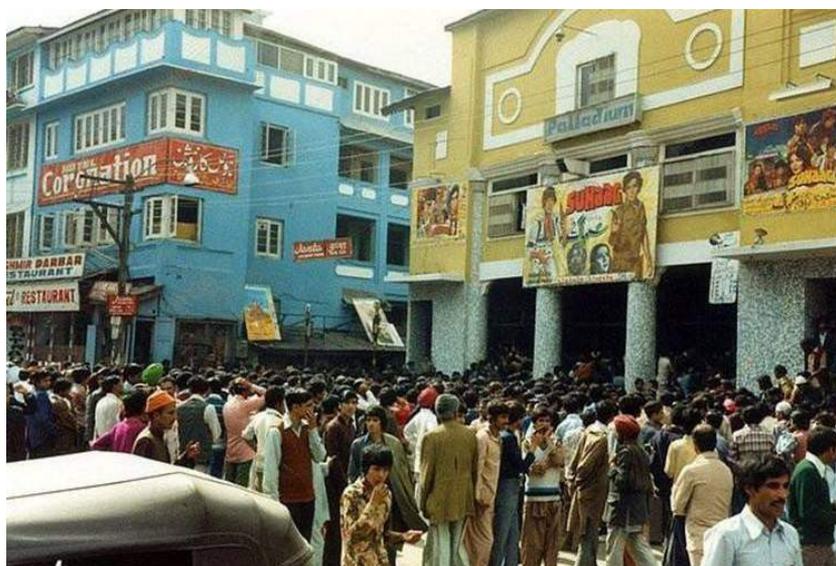
**FAHAD ZAROO**

**Unauthorisedly Occupied 674  
Kanals Of Forest/State Land  
At Kralsangri?**

## UT Administration To Revive Entertainment Industry in Kashmir

To revive Kashmir's glory of yesteryears, LG Shri Manoj Sinha launched J&K's Film Policy in August this year. According to reliable sources in the LG administration, the government is contemplating reopening the iconic Palladium Cinema in the heart of Srinagar's Lal Chowk.

The decision to revive the cinemas was taken on priority basis, as cinemas used to be one of the sublime sources of entertainment in the Valley, and helped to boost the local economy too. During Kashmir's harsh winter, people are usually idle and have long leisure hours to spend with their families. Cinemas are a favourite option to seek a break from the monotony.



**Palladium Cinema, Kashmir's joy of yesteryears**

Our first prime minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru had rightly said, "The influence of the films in India is greater than the influence of newspapers and books combined."

Sources reveal that the authorities are working on the upgradation and renovation of cinemas in Kashmir. The technologies and facilities are being ramped up. The opening of cinema halls will have a hugely positive impact on Kashmir. Since the 1990s, Kashmiris have borne the brunt of the conflict and have felt desolate in many ways, cut off from the rest of the country and the outside world. The cinemas will help the Kashmiris to align with the normal, happy world. Weary of conflict, we have forgotten how to laugh. The joy of going to a cinema will give us that happy space again.

**Bashir Assad**

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*razor sharp analysis*

**INCISIVE REPORTING**

**INVESTIGATE THE TERROR ECOSYSTEM**

**EXPOSE DECEPTION**

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**MAKE A SPLASH**

**INCULCATE DEMOCRATIC SPIRIT**

**KZINE**

**OPENING KASHMIR'S EYES**

# TOP-DOWN LAND GRAB AT HARWAN

*Baseer Khan, then Divisional Commissioner and Muneer Khan, then IGP Kashmir, were close to chief minister Mehbooba Mufti, and part of her inner coterie. Both played a key role in facilitating the land grab for Mufti. Baseer Khan legalized the unauthorized occupation of state land by changing the land title*

## HAVE CASH WILL GRAB

**How Harwan  
Became A Prime  
Destination  
For Those With  
Big Money**



Prime land at Harwan, which has been colonised by Kashmir's elites

by GM MIR

In the foothills of Harwan in Srinagar, massive colonization of state land began surreptitiously since 2016 when Mehbooba Mufti was the chief minister of Jammu and Kashmir.

The encroachment started top down. Baseer Khan, then Divisional Commissioner and Muneer Khan, then IGP Kashmir, were close to then chief minister Mehbooba Mufti, and were part of her inner coterie. Baseer Khan and Muneer Khan played a key role in facilitating the land grab for Mufti. Baseer Khan legalized the unauthorized occupation of state land by changing the land title.

In this way, floodgates were opened for further occupation of this land by the elites of Srinagar.



## LIST OF SOME PEOPLE WHO HAVE LAND IN HARWAN

1. **Ghulam Hassan Mir**, businessman from Lalbazar, 150 kanals apple orchard at Syedpora, Harwan
2. **Mohd Ayoub Dar** from Habbak, 50 kanals at Syedpora, Harwan
3. Brother of Inspector **Ayoub Rather**, 50 kanals at Dhara Marg, Harwan
4. **Shahid Choudhary**, former Deputy Commissioner, Srinagar, 15 kanals at Faquir Gugru and three kanals at Nishat
5. **Asgar Samoon**, four kanals at Dhara, Harwan
6. **Najeeb Ahamed**, former PRO of Tajmohiuddin, eight kanals at Dharbagh
7. **Nazir Mir**, businessman and retired ADGP Muneer Khan, joint property of approximately 350 kanals, Chatterhama near Syedpora
8. **Naseema Lanker**, former bureaucrat, 90 kanals at Syedpora, including some migrant property
9. **Shabir Qadri**, Businessman, 100 kanals at Syedpora
10. **Engineer Naseem Khan**, orchard over 100 kanals between Theed and Mulnar
11. **Farooq Rinzoo**, retired Deputy Commissioner, 15 kanals near Dachigam
12. **Farooq Shah**, retired Deputy Commissioner, 20 kanals at Dhara, three kanals with house at Chandpora and 10 kanals at Ishber near water canal
13. **Khazir Mohd Mir**, Businessman, 150 kanals at Saidpora
14. **Abass (katar)**, 80 kanals at Syedpora
15. **Kamaran** (News Editor), 50 kanals at Dhara

# Long History of Land Grabbing In Kashmir

Over the past 30 years, the land mafia in Kashmir has cultivated and nurtured assets in the terror ecosystem of the region. These assets in the terror ecosystem are used by the land mafia as and when required.

There are hundreds of such incidents where the land mafia with the help of their assets in militant organizations deliberately created lawlessness across Kashmir for a specific purpose. Using the law and order situations as a façade, the mafia undertook land grabbing or cutting of forest trees on a massive scale. Over the last three decades, timber smuggling has flourished in Kashmir and thousands of acres of state land have been grabbed by the land mafia all across Kashmir valley.

The hawala money which came from different channels was invested by the mafia in real estate. In the countryside, particularly in and around Kashmir's famous tourist resorts, the land mafia in connivance with the forest officials encroached upon forest and state land for commercial purposes.

In urban centers such as in Srinagar, hawala money was invested in real estate business by the separatists directly or indirectly. New colonies came up in the outskirts of Srinagar, Anantnag and also in the outskirts of Jammu in large numbers.

On the other hand, extremist religious groups like Jamaat e Islami grabbed community land all over Kashmir valley for establishing a large network of schools and madrasas. Going by the statistics, one

may come to the conclusion that two kinds of people flourished in the last 30 years of turmoil in Kashmir. One group comprises those who were linked directly or indirectly to secessionist activities. The other group comprises those who grabbed state land. Gradual land grabbing was steadily facilitated and aided by the lawlessness and stone-pelting incidents which were created in the areas.

During the 2016 agitation, Kashmir's land mafia created lawlessness at many pockets in Srinagar city like Anchar, Soura etc. Under the garb of protests, the mafia encroached upon some wetlands in Srinagar. The mafia would undertake the filling of the wetland during night time. During the day, the so-called stone pelters would patrol the roads, protecting their land grabbing. Heavy stone pelting was witnessed in and around Anchar wetland during the 2016 agitation at the behest of the notorious land mafia. The stone pelting was the façade to facilitate large scale land grabbing here.

**During the 2016 agitation, Kashmir's land mafia created lawlessness at many pockets in Srinagar city like Anchar, Soura etc. Under the garb of protests, the mafia encroached upon some wetlands in Srinagar. The mafia undertook filling of the wetland. The so-called stone pelters patrolled the roads, protecting the land grabbing**



# Mufti In Blunder Land

## How The Land Grabbing In Harwan Started

### Rules Changed For Madam Mufti: The Rest Followed



**D**uring the second stint of PDP rule in Jammu and Kashmir, Mehbooba Mufti and her powerful coterie decided to construct residences in Syedpora Chattarhama area of Harwan. About 30 per cent land was purchased and seventy per cent land was grabbed illegally for their residential accommodation.

Mehbooba's coterie that joined her for Project Harwan included Baldev Singh, MD and CEO of Peaks Auto Private Limited; Farooq Amin, owner of Kanwal Spices; SSP Aijaz Bhat and former ADGP Muneer Khan. All of them had been involved in fraudulent transfers from the CM Discretionary Fund. Now they joined Mehbooba for land grab in the prime areas of Harwan.

Mehbooba and Co purchased milqiyat land in Harwan as part of the project. In addition, the powerful and influential clique also purchased the grazing lands and state land in Harwan. As per state laws, these common lands cannot be sold or purchased.

The grazing lands and state lands were made available to Mehbooba and Co with the help of then Divisional Commissioner Srinagar Baseer Khan with the help of Tehsildar Harwan Dr Haroon Rashid. In the supervision of the Divisional Commissioner and the Tehsildar, the nomenclature of this land was changed. This grazing land was extended illegally to Khasra Number 1096 and 1097, which originally only consisted of milqiyat land.

In March 2020, Dr Haroon Rashid retrieved 45 kanals of government land from illegal occupation in three areas of Harwan. The drive was confined to the locals. It did not impact Mufti and Co. According to revenue officers, the documents have been falsified to such an extent that now they are not able to demarcate between the Milqiyat land in this area, and land under Dafa Paanch (Section 5) or Ghas Charaye (Section 4) land here.

Mufti's land is registered in the name of her sister Dr Mehmooda Syed, who lives in the US. Mufti's close relative, KAS officer Riyaz Wani helped her in purchasing the land.



Mehbooba Mufti's house in Harwan





Fahad Zaroo Caption to come here in this space



Has Business Tycoon  
**FAHAD ZAROO** Unauthorisedly  
Occupied **674 Kanals Of Forest/**  
State Land At **Kralsangri?**

by Bisma NAZIR

**H**as Kashmir's multi-billionaire business tycoon Fahad Nazir Zaroo unauthorisedly occupied approximately 674 kanals of forest/state land at Kralasangri in Gagribal forests?

Government officers told KZINE that the land has been illegally occupied by Fahad Zaroo. Some men working at the spot said they work for the Khazir Group of Companies. They said that Fahad Zaroo is the owner of the land.

Officials told KZINE that Zaroo has grabbed a huge chunk of forest/ state land with the connivance of some officials in the Forest and Revenue Departments at Kralasangri. The police took cognizance and foiled the attempts of land grab by the hotelier. In this connection, the SHO at Police Station Nishat registered FIR 113 /21 U/s 188, 447 IPC.

Preliminary investigations have revealed that Fahad Zaroo attempted to defraud the government of land worth hundreds of crores. According to police sources, Zaroo has claimed ownership of the land by producing bogus documents.

Zaroo is the Managing Direc-

tor of Khazir Group of Companies. He is Managing Director at Khazir Elegantly Timeless, at Khazir Hospitality Private Limited, Managing Director at Khazir Agro Private Ltd, and Director at Royal Khazir Hotels and Resorts Pvt Ltd. He is also the co-owner of RK Sarovar Portico constructed on the foothills of Shankaracharya hills. Zaroo lives in Muscat, Oman.

### **CONSTRUCTION AT ILLEGALLY OCCUPIED LAND**

Officials who did not want to be identified told KZINE that

Zaroo not only grabbed the land illegally but also started construction there. They said that pine trees, walnut trees and deodar trees on this land were chopped down. When Team KZINE visited the spot, they saw stumps of trees that had been cut.

When the news broke out that this priceless government land had been illegally occupied, the chopped trees were transported within no time. Hence evidence in this regard could not be collected.

Pine trees come under the category of the royal trees and walnut trees come under the



**GOVERNMENT OFFICERS TOLD KZINE THAT THE LAND HAS BEEN ILLEGALLY OCCUPIED BY FAHAD ZAROO. SOME MEN WORKING AT THE SPOT SAID THEY WORK FOR THE KHAZIR GROUP OF COMPANIES. THEY SAID THAT FAHAD ZAROO IS THE OWNER OF THE LAND**



**The stump of a tree cut down on the occupied land. Sources say many trees have been chopped here, which is against the law**

## Fahad Zaroo Has The Blessings of The High And Mighty

**T**his development relates to 2016. Fahad Zaroo was closely connected to then Minister for Tourism Tasaduq Mufti, the brother of the then chief minister Mehbooba Mufti. According to sources,



Zaroo proposed to the government to establish a tourist village in the Kralsangri forests just above the Tulip Garden. Tasaduq Mufti had purchased huge chunks of land at famous tourist destinations like Aru valley in Pahalgam.

Sources reveal that Tasaduq agreed to Zaroo's proposal for a tourist village because of the proximity between them and the common interest. Even after the unceremonious exit of Tasaduq Mufti as Minister of Tourism, Zaroo used all his resources to get the proposal cleared. The proposal later got stuck since it needed clearances from various departments.



category of specified trees. In accordance with the rules framed by the government, trees in the royal and specified categories cannot be pruned or chopped even when standing on private land. Section 8 of the Public Safety Act authorizes the Deputy Commissioner or the divisional administration to investigate against the forest smugglers.

### FOREST DEPARTMENT TRYING TO PREVARICATE

Officers of the J&K Forest Department seem to be in a fix regarding the illegal possession of land in Kralsangri. In conversation with KZINE, the officers tried to shrug off responsibility

for the land grab scam by saying that the area doesn't come under their jurisdiction.

District Forest officer Syed Abid told KZINE said the area where chopping or construction has been carried out is not forest land. "This area is revenue land (Milkiyat land)," he told KZINE.

If this is milkiyat land, how has demolition been carried out here? Also, pine trees and walnut trees cannot be cut even on milkiyat land.

When questioned about the same, District Forest officer Syed Abid told KZINE, "The Police Department and LCMA (Lake Conservation and Management Authority) can answer this better. Forest land has its own demarcation boards, and the area you are referring to is outside those limits."

When Team KZINE visited the area, officers from the Police Department, the Deputy Commissioner's Office and the Wildlife Department were present there. The Range Officer of the Forest Department said the total area which has been illegally occupied comprises about 674 kanals of state land, including Section 4 (ghas charay) and Section 5 (shamilat) land.

Section 4 (Ghas charay, Kahcharai or grazing land): People can use this land only for grazing purposes but not for construction and agricultural purposes. There is no legal ownership of any individual over this land.

Section 5 (Dafa 5 or Shamilat): This is the land adjoining the milkiyat land limiting up to the shadow of the trees. Section 5 land is included in milkiyat land to the point where some trees may be standing.



**OFFICIALS TOLD KZINE THAT ZAROO HAS GRABBED A HUGE CHUNK OF FOREST/ STATE LAND WITH THE CONNIVANCE OF SOME OFFICIALS IN THE FOREST AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS AT KRALSANGRI. PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATIONS HAVE REVEALED THAT ZAROO ATTEMPTED TO DEFRAUD THE GOVERNMENT OF LAND WORTH HUNDREDS OF CRORES. ACCORDING TO POLICE SOURCES, ZAROO HAS CLAIMED OWNERSHIP OF THE LAND BY PRODUCING BOGUS DOCUMENTS**

# UT Govt's Media Centre at Sarovar Portico

In August 2019, the divisional administration set up a media centre at RK Sarovar Portico in wake of the internet ban following abrogation of Article 370. During this time, Zaroo renewed his efforts to construct tourism huts in the fragile Kralsangri forests.

The then divisional commissioner Kashmir Baseer Khan, Deputy Commissioner Srinagar Shahid Choudhary, Director Information Dr Sehrish Asgar, IG Muneer Khan established the media centre at Sarovar Portico. The Deputy Commissioner also made it the camp office, thereby providing huge benefits to Sarovar Portico. According to sources, Fahad Zaroo secured many contracts in the tourism and tour and travel industry because of his deep connections with these officers.

Sources also reveal that the black money running into many crores in the possession of then DC Srinagar Shahid Choudhary was converted into white money through Fahad Zaroo.

The intelligence agencies are investigating the matter. KZINE will reveal the details of this scam in a subsequent edition.

**SHAHID CHOUDHARY AND BASEER KHAN DID NOT RECEIVE OUR CALL DESPITE REPEATED ATTEMPTS. THEY DID NOT RESPOND TO OUR TEXT MESSAGES EITHER.**

The KZINE correspondent asked Dr Sehrish Asgar how much was paid to Sarovar Portico for opening the UT Govt's Media Centre there, and the process for shortlisting it.

Dr Asgar said, "I don't know anything about it. Please ask someone from the Finance Department."

When questioned in this regard, Muneer Khan said, "I was Additional DG Law and Security. How would I know? That was not my job. It was shortlisted by the IT department. We had no role to play."

When questioned by Team KZINE that even if he was Additional DG Law and Security, he would have still noticed, because the Internet was snapped across the valley for security reasons, and the service was provided to media only. Muneer Khan replied that the police department had no involvement in this matter.

**CONSTRUCTION HAPPENING FOR OVER TWO MONTHS**

Residents of Kralsangri told KZINE that construction has been going on over this land for the last two months. Residents said it was not possible that the Forest Department did not know about this encroachment and also about the gate barricading entry to this area. The gate is clearly visible from the main road.

A government official who did not want to be identified told KZINE that revenue documents from Fahad Zaroo claiming ownership of the land have been taken into possession.

The official informed that Zaroo is claiming ownership of 674 kanals of land in Kralsangri. Out of this, 100 kanals is forest land which has been grabbed illegally. The official also said that 574 kanals were given on lease to Zaroo by the government.

The official did not know whether Zaroo has legal documents for the lease, or who gave the land to him on lease.

**EYEWASH BY LAKE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY (LCMA) TO DEMOLISH STRUCTURE**

When the construction activity was carried out around the protected forest zone, LCMA demolished just a few iron poles and fencing. It is to be noted that LCMA did not lodge a complaint against Fahad Zaroo or against any unknown offender.

KZINE contacted LCMA Enforcement Officer DySP Abdul Aziz Qadri in this regard. When questioned by KZINE, Qadri said, "I am on medical leave. Please ask some other officer."

This again seemed to be a case of deflection of responsibility. When contacted by KZINE, Enforcement Officer DySP Zahid said, "I shall not be able to answer your queries. The area comes under Qadri Sir. He had sent his team yesterday. Officers of the Police and Forest Department were also there. They raised the objection that some poles and fencing were illegal.



# Don't write anything which will hurt my sentiments. Otherwise you know what I will do

## Man at occupied site in Kralsangri told Team KZINE

**O**n November 10, Team KZINE visited the Kralsangri area at about 1 pm where according to government officials, Fahad Zaroo has unauthorisedly occupied state land. We saw two gates constructed on the encroached land. One gate was locked and another gate was open. We went inside and spoke to the security guard and the worker of the Khazir Group present at the spot.

After talking to them, we asked them if they can unlock the other gate for us. They refused, saying that they don't have the keys to the gate. The locked gate leads to the land occupied by Zaroo.

Meanwhile, officers of the Police Department, Wildlife Department and Forest Department reached the spot. We tried to talk to the officers of the Forest Department. They seemed to avoid talking to us and also seemed to hide from us.

We spoke to the SHO about the unauthorized occupation of land. He said that we are conducting investigation. We will let you know about the matter after the investigation is over.

We asked the police if this is revenue land. I told him that an officer of the Revenue Department had told us that this is revenue land. The police officer said that we are investigating the matter.

We asked the police officer if we can go inside. He said to us, "You need not ask for permission. Journalists can go anywhere. Go ahead." But the officials of the Forest Department seemed to get alerted. They shouted at us, "Don't go there. Stay near the gate. It is risky inside. There are snakes and wild animals there."

The workers of the Khazir Group still didn't open the gate.

We crossed a wire from the side and went inside. We found a shed, some hidden construction material, fresh tracks of vehicles, fencing wire, chopped trees, rice in polythene hanging on a tree and some other material. This provided that activity had been going on here.

When we returned, the police and officers of some other departments were still there. The Range Officer of the Forest Department told us that this land measures 674 kanals (mentioned in the report).

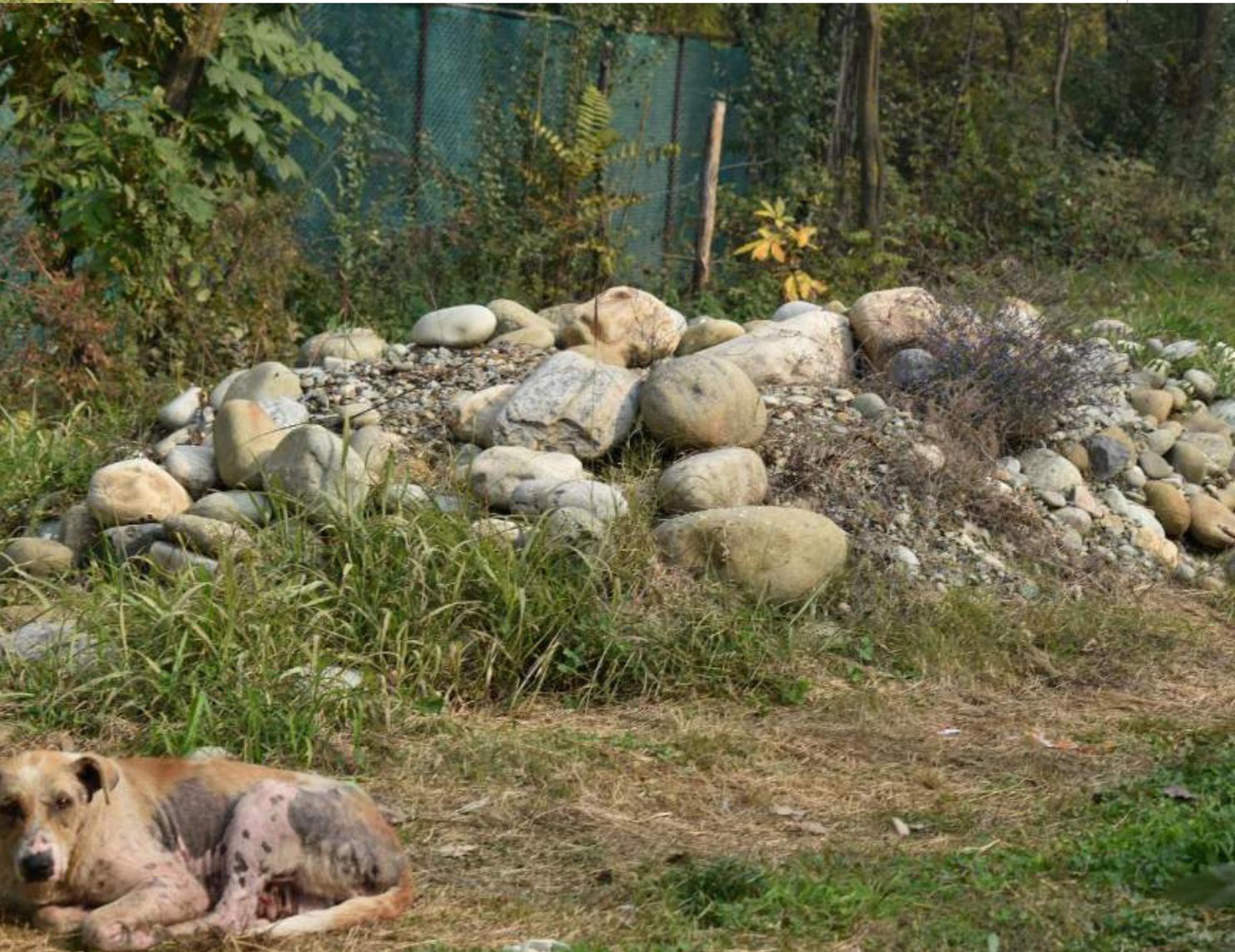
Five other men were around the group of officers. Two among them seemed to be men of affluence. They stopped and asked us, "Did you find anything?" We told them that trees have been chopped here. One of them asked us, "What kind of trees?" We said walnut trees. "Show us the photographs. We don't have walnut trees here. Now don't tell the SHO that you saw walnut trees, otherwise he will believe you," said one of the men, who looked prosperous. We replied that why will the SHO rely on a journalist to find out what kind of trees have been chopped? He will investigate and find out.

We asked this prosperous man that why was construction material lying here? What was it being used for? The other prosperous man said this material belongs to someone else. Then he said to Team KZINE in a threatening manner, "Don't write anything which will hurt my sentiments. Otherwise you know what I will do."





**A GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL WHO DID NOT WANT TO BE IDENTIFIED TOLD KZINE THAT REVENUE DOCUMENTS FROM FAHAD ZAROO CLAIMING OWNERSHIP OF THE LAND HAVE BEEN TAKEN INTO POSSESSION. HE INFORMED THAT ZAROO IS CLAIMING OWNERSHIP OF 674 KANALS OF LAND IN KRALSANGRI. OUT OF THIS, 100 KANALS IS FOREST LAND WHICH HAS BEEN GRABBED ILLEGALLY. THE OFFICIAL ALSO SAID THAT 574 KANALS WERE GIVEN ON LEASE TO ZAROO BY THE GOVERNMENT. THE OFFICIAL DID NOT KNOW WHETHER ZAROO HAS LEGAL DOCUMENTS FOR THE LEASE, OR WHO GAVE THE LAND TO HIM ON LEASE**



So our team demolished them. As of now, we only carried out some demolition. The rest shall be confirmed by the Forest Department and the Revenue Department – whether the land is legally or illegally in someone’s possession.

Why didn’t LCMA register an FIR for the illegal construction and encroachment? DySP Zahid responded that FIR is registered regarding big constructions only. According to DySP Zahid, poles and fencing were demolished over land measuring about two to three kanals.

The demolition of the poles and fencing by LCMA establishes that these were unauthorized installations on the land. It is strange that the department has not initiated any official action

regarding illegal occupation of prime state land.

A police officer who visited the area said that Zaroo and his team have constructed some huts on the land. LCMA has demolished just one window of one hut. The other structures are standing as they were before.

**WORKERS OF KHAZIR GROUP PRESENT ON THE SPOT**

Fayaz Ahmad, who works with the Khazir Group, was present on the spot when the DC and officials of the Revenue Department, the Forest Department, the Wildlife Department and LCMA visited the area in Kralasangri to check for the

violations on the land in their jurisdiction.

Fayaz told KZINE, “They did not find any construction materials or labourers here. The officials told us not to have any wire fencing at the boundary. We only have fruit trees. We don’t have any pine trees here. Hundreds of kanals belong to Fahad Zaroo in different patches.”

Fayaz added that the huts constructed here are for tourists, but they are not operational yet.

When questioned by KZINE, the security guard manning the area said that no demolition activity was carried out here. “Some wires were removed from here. Those removing the boundary wires said that this is forest land, so it cannot be fenced in any way.”



**Pakistan's Dual  
Strategy On  
Kashmir To Claim  
Deniability**

**PLANS**

**BORDER  
ATTACKS BY  
TRAINED  
TERRORISTS**

**Fidayeen Attacks  
By Local Youth**

by Waseem GUL

**T**error operators sitting across the border are conditioning the naïve Kashmiri militants for fidayeen (suicidal attacks) activities. The indoctrination to radicalize the naïve Kashmiri militants is happening online in cyber space. Information about the youth who may be considered suitable for the fidayeen role is being shared by the local terror handlers.

Last week, Inspector General of Police (IGP) Kashmir Vijay Kumar had said that one of the three militants who were killed in an encounter in Srinagar was planning a 'fidayeen' attack. He was identified as Aamir Riyaz from Khrew in Pulwama district. Police said Aamir was affili-

ated with the Mujahideen Gazwatul Hind. He had been assigned to carry out a fidayeen attack. Police had also stated that Aamir was a relative of one of the accused of the Lethpora militant attack.

The youth who are being targeted by terror groups to carry out fidayeen attacks are not trained militants. They do not have any arms training and they may not have any previous history of violence. Whether they choose to execute a suicidal attack depends on the level of individual indoctrination. Terror analysts say that a high level of indoctrination coupled with a personal sense of purposelessness may make a youth vulnerable to opt for a fidayeen attack.

Intelligence agencies have learnt that Paki-

stan is working on two major offence strategies in Kashmir. One, to keep up the heat on LOC with trained Pakistani terrorists or those who have returned after the war in Afghanistan.

The purpose is to keep up the façade of deniability. Engaging in border adventures with India comes with greater cost for Pakistan Army. It is taken note of by the international community and condemned. There is also the question of casualties of men in uniform. Hence Pakistan's strategy is to push in highly trained terrorists to engage with the Indian forces.

Second, Pakistan wants to train Kashmiri youth as fidayeen. Again, the façade of deniability. If the youth carrying out a suicide attack on the security forces are Kashmiri, Pakistan uses this to make the claim of "local resistance".

### US STATE DEPARTMENT URGES CITIZENS NOT TO TRAVEL TO J&K

In its advisory for India, the US State Department has urged the citizens not to travel to Jammu and Kashmir due to terrorism and civil unrest, and also within 10 kilometres of the India-Pakistan border due to the potential for armed conflict.

This reveals that US intelligence inputs continue to be on high alert regarding anticipated border tensions between India and Pakistan. Going by the current intelligence inputs, Pakistan may not abide by its ceasefire announcement with India made in February 2021. The borders may heat up in the coming weeks. Also, isolated fidayeen attacks by local youth may be expected in Kashmir.

**THE YOUTH WHO ARE BEING TARGETED BY TERROR GROUPS TO CARRY OUT FIDAYEEN ATTACKS ARE NOT TRAINED MILITANTS. THEY DO NOT HAVE ANY ARMS TRAINING AND THEY MAY NOT HAVE ANY PREVIOUS HISTORY OF VIOLENCE. WHETHER THEY CHOOSE TO EXECUTE A SUICIDAL ATTACK DEPENDS ON THE LEVEL OF INDIVIDUAL INDOCTRINATION**



**ENGAGING IN BORDER ADVENTURES WITH INDIA COMES WITH GREATER COST FOR PAKISTAN ARMY. IT IS TAKEN NOTE OF BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY AND CONDEMNED. THERE IS ALSO THE QUESTION OF CASUALTIES OF MEN IN UNIFORM**

# Robust Civil Society Pushback Essential To Defeat Terror In Kashmir

by Iqbal AHMAD

**T**he operation in Poonch has been a negative for the Army. It shall take time to regain that space. Concurrently the Poonch episode confirms Pakistani centrality to sustaining terror in Kashmir in terms of both resources and foot soldiers. In February, India and Pakistan

reaffirmed their commitment to the 2003 ceasefire agreement along the LoC. Both countries agreed to resolve the “key problems” that threaten peace and stability. It is now evident that Pakistan was only buying time with the ceasefire agreement to avoid military engagement on its western and also eastern flanks. In February Pakistan’s focal engagement was with Afghanistan.

the steady supply of weapons from Pakistan. Second, the network of overground workers and Pakistan proxies, carefully nurtured by the terror ecosystem.

The local terror networks sustain the militants and also the movement of weapons received from Pakistan. A section of indoctrinated youth of Kashmir continues to walk into the terror camps, driven by diverse socio-

**PAKISTAN IS BACK TO NORMAL IN TERMS OF SUPPORTING TERROR IN KASHMIR. ATTEMPTS ARE BEING MADE FOR INFILTRATION AND PUSHING IN WEAPONS. GOING BY EXPERIENCE, IT IS KNOWN THAT PAKISTAN SHALL ESCALATE THE INFILTRATION ATTEMPTS BEFORE HEAVY SNOWFALL CHOKES THE INFILTRATION ROUTES**

With Taliban in power in Afghanistan sooner than anticipated, Pakistan is back to normal in terms of supporting terror in Kashmir. Attempts are being made for infiltration and pushing in weapons. Going by experience, it is known that Pakistan shall escalate the infiltration attempts before heavy snowfall chokes the infiltration routes.

Terror in Kashmir is sustaining on two grounds. One, the Pakistan-trained terrorists and

economic factors. These youth are completely untrained in terms of handling weapons or in jungle survival. They embrace militancy with a drummed up jihadi mindset fed on Pakistan’s propaganda. For handling arms and jungle survival, they depend on trained terrorists sent from Pakistan or on Google search.

With the rebooted government offensive against terror operators, there is lower command and control among the militant



Security personnel move villagers to a safer place following an encounter with terrorists in Chawalgam, Kashmir’s Kulgam district on November 11  
PICTURE CREDIT: THE HINDU



**A SECTION OF INDOCTRINATED YOUTH OF KASHMIR CONTINUES TO WALK INTO THE TERROR CAMPS, COMPLETELY UNTRAINED IN HANDLING WEAPONS. THEY DEPEND ON TRAINED TERRORISTS SENT FROM PAKISTAN OR ON GOOGLE SEARCH**

ranks in Kashmir. This makes trained Pakistani terrorists central to any terrorism in the Valley. According to recent reports, security forces have identified 38 Pakistani terrorists active in the Kashmir valley. These include 27 men of Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and 11 men in Jaish-e Mohammad (JeM). These ultras are on the radar of the security forces and efforts are on to neutralize them soon.

**PAKISTAN DESPERATELY PUSHING IN WEAPONS**

All the infiltration happening on the border is now loaded with as much ammunition as possible. Pakistan is pushing in as many weapons as it can manage to, in order to sustain terror through the winter months. Pakistan has utilized the last few months to build and strengthen their bases

on their side of the line of control. With Pakistan back to its duplicity, the Line of Control may get activated. When one nation is trying to push terrorism into another nation, anything can go wrong any time.

The Army and the security agencies shall have to focus on a strong line of control grid, and target the support system of the Pakistan proxies. In order to demolish the terror networks, it is

important to target the OGWs. Since many of them play on both sides of the law, they are tougher to catch. Robust targeting by the intelligence agencies is essential.

**LOCAL PUSHBACK TO TERRORISM IS DIFFICULT, BUT NEEDED**

The state has to work on deepening the realization of Pakistan's duplicity on Kashmir. Some progress has been made on this front. The Pakistan propaganda on Kashmir manages to mislead some people internationally. It also continues to be the opiate for the Pakistani population, to wean away their attention from the nation's domestic failures. Within Kashmir, the Pakistan propaganda of supposed oppression and repression is losing value. There is now only a very small constituency which buys these lies.

To fully expose Pakistan's lies on Kashmir, much more needs to be done. The initiatives of the government to build this narrative carry value. From the civil society side, the pushback needs to be stronger.

It is understandable that any vocal resistance is difficult for those living in the midst of terror. The commoners in a conflict area have zero protection. Speaking up against terror is not an option for them. The cost for this may be too high. But the cost of silence is high too.

Kashmiri life will get to normal only if violence stops. As things stand, we can expect the continuation of what has been going on. Militants may try to hit more soft targets, like the minorities and the migrant labour. We need more Kashmiris who are vocal in rejecting violence and who speak for peace.

The large majority of the civil society does not support the killings by the militants. But at the same time, the civil society pushback is not enough to deter the

**WAY OUT OF THE MORASS**

- Better LOC management
- Better intelligence inputs to find, arrest and neutralize militants
- Better intelligence inputs to arrest OGWs, break their networks
- Better preventive law enforcement actions
- Stronger civil society actions to prevent violence in Kashmir





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**IF WE ASSUME THAT TERRORISM IS NOT THREATENING OUR LIFE, WE ARE LIVING IN A BUBBLE. LIFE SHALL ALWAYS BE AT RISK IN A SOCIETY WHERE KILLINGS HAVE BEEN NORMALIZED. COLLATERAL DAMAGE IS NOT SELECTIVE. WHEN THE VIOLENCE INCREASES, THE LEVEL OF THREAT FACED BY ALL SHALL GO UP**

terrorist. We have not crossed the Rubicon yet. The moment the terrorist feels that the people have gone against him, he will be sufficiently deflated. That scale has not happened yet.

There are enough Kashmiris who still accept the soft killings in one way or another. Some indulge in whataboutery. What about this or that killing? Others are pained but feel that they have no choice except to be silent spectators. This is the social feedback that finally reaches the terrorist – that the society accepts the killing of soft targets one way

or the other.

Some areas in life cannot be seen in greys. They must be seen in stark black and white. If tight security checks to prevent killings are seen as oppressive, that may perhaps give greater leeway to militants to operate there with ease.

Unless the civil society push-back is stronger, we may be doomed to see more and more blood on our streets, and more and more Kashmiri blood. If we assume that terrorism is not threatening our life, we are living in a bubble. Life shall always

be at risk in a society where killings have been normalized. One may think that only the other is threatened, but one never knows when the cycle may come back. Collateral damage is not selective. When the violence increases, the level of threat faced by all shall go up.

Currently, the militants and their handlers are feeling the pressure. That is why the general population is facing a low level of threat. The moment the militants and their handlers don't feel the pressure, the threat will become larger for the common people.



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# Opulent And Beautiful Always Kashmir!

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Our Valley So Beautiful  
Happy And Green  
Dance To My Tunes  
My Beauty Queen!





I Swear On Chenab  
On Kashmir's Blue Skies Above  
I Shall Love You Always  
Always, My Love

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