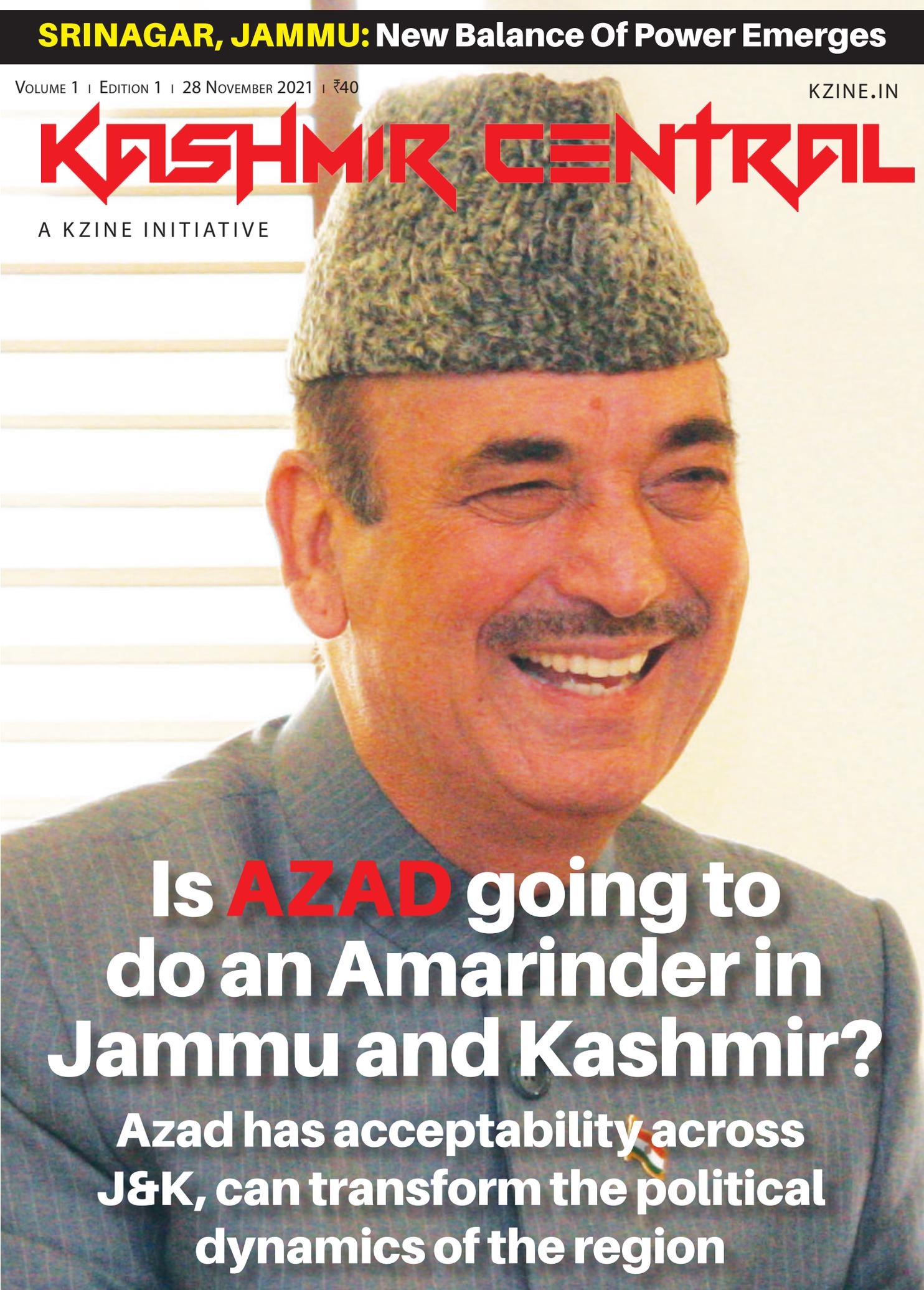


# KASHMIR CENTRAL

A KZINE INITIATIVE



## Is **AZAD** going to do an Amarinder in Jammu and Kashmir?

Azad has acceptability across J&K, can transform the political dynamics of the region

## Vital To Restore The Faith Of The People

**KASHMIR CENTRAL**  
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CENTRAL

Following the unfortunate incident at Hyderpora, both the factions of the Hurriyat Conference gave a shutdown call for November 19 against the civilian killings. Shops and businesses remained shut, and transport on roads was thin. This was a first since the abrogation of Article 370 and the state's downgrading to two Union Territories in August 2019. After the abrogation of Article 370, Hurriyat had become irrelevant in Kashmir and had turned into a dead horse.

Security agencies in the UT have been working in close coordination to ensure that no civilian killings took place during the operations. This strategy worked well. Separatist voices had no issue in hand to disrupt daily life in Kashmir. It was felt that we had reached a stage where the separatist forces would be isolated now.

Unfortunately, the Hyderpora incident has provided a breather for separatist voices in Kashmir. Some segments of the society came out on the streets to protest, though peacefully. Those who protested were the same people who had raised the bar for violent protests in the past. This time, the protests were of a different nature. They were isolated and non-violent. There were no road blockades. Nevertheless, protests are protests. There is a proverb in Kashmiri. *Raechhes doha, chooruss cthuha*. The protectors have to be vigilant at all times, because the thieves are forever on the hunt for any slip.

The Lt Governor of Jammu and Kashmir has done a commendable job on many fronts, particularly in making the apparatus of the UT Administration accountable. The incumbent LG is clear-headed and forthright. Admittedly, the Hyderpora incident has done damage. At the same time, it must be acknowledged that the LG administration has taken major strides and has achieved much, both physically and the positivity in mind space.

The turn of events has posed a challenge before the LG administration. On the occasion of Gurupurab, the LG, who has ordered a magisterial inquiry into the Hyderpora incident, reiterated the commitment of protecting the lives of innocent people. He emphasized that the culprits will be dealt with firmly, ensuring there is no injustice. The LG said that suitable action will be taken as soon as the report is submitted in a time-bound manner.

The LG's words need to be translated into action. This is important not to appease people like Mehbooba Mufti, but give the general peace-loving people reason to have faith in him and his administration, and feel that they are in safe hands. At the end of the day, what matters for the people of Kashmir is safety of their loved ones. The Government needs to double down on the clean-up operations, both kinetic and non-kinetic. This is vital to ensure the safety of civilians and at the same time ensure that the adversaries have no handles to foment trouble.

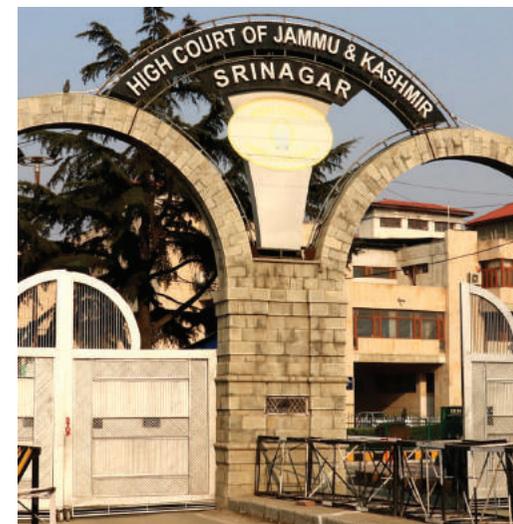
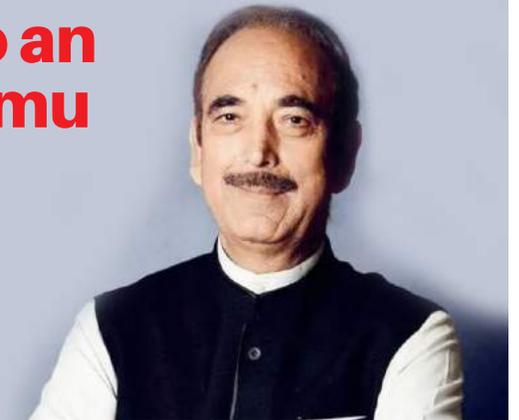


**Bashir Assad**

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# Is Azad going to do an Amarinder in Jammu and Kashmir?

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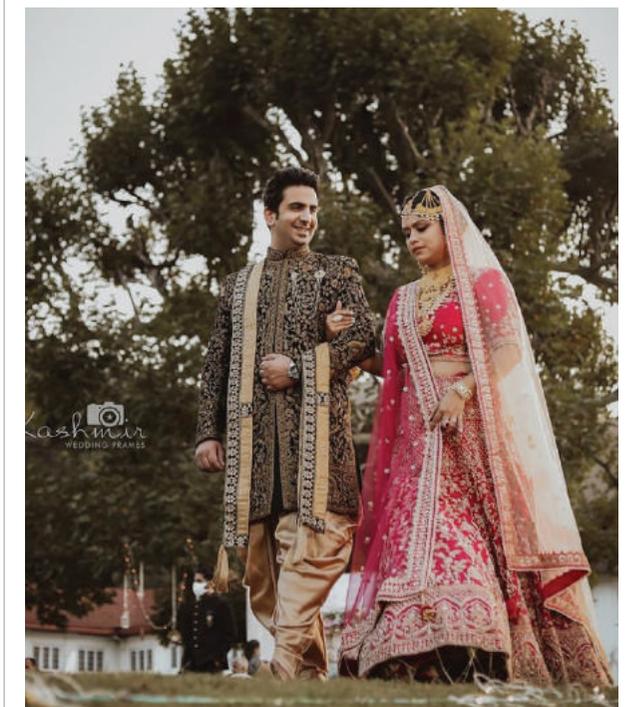


## Srinagar, Jammu: New Balance Of Power Emerges 4

## Pakistan, the benefactor from all that makes Kashmir cry 22



## Opulent And Beautiful Always Kashmir! 32



## Social Chaos In Kashmir - Pakistan's Time Tested Strategy 26



razor sharp analysis

INCISIVE REPORTING

INVESTIGATE THE TERROR ECOSYSTEM

expose deception

RESTORE ORDER

MAKE A SPLASH

INCULCATE DEMOCRATIC SPIRIT

# DYNAMICS OF KASHMIR POLITICS CHANGING FAST

**Social, Political  
Distancing  
Between Jammu  
and Kashmir  
Getting Bridged**

## Srinagar, Jammu: New Balance Of Power Emerges



by Bisma NAZIR

**T**he dynamics of politics in Jammu and Kashmir are changing fast. Recent developments on political and social fronts demonstrate that power equations are changing. Post abrogation of Article 370, a new balance of political power is emerging between Gupkar Road in Srinagar and Gandhi Nagar in Jammu.

In the South Asian concept of electoral democracy, the sublime strategy has been to raise passions, bully adversaries and incite religious sentiments to grab power. Jammu and Kashmir was no exception. Political heavy weights in both Jammu and Kashmir would rely on emotive issues to consolidate votes. They would create wedges between the two regions and sow seeds of hatred for electoral gains. The 2008 elections for the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly were fought solely on regional and religious planks. After the Shri Amarnath land row, the political parties in both the regions played the religious and regional card for electoral gain. This continued in the Parliamentary and Assembly elections held thereafter.

# MEHBOOBA MUFTI REACHES OUT TO JAMMU LAWYERS

## Seems to have finally realized the cost of isolating Jammu from Kashmir



### WITNESS THE NEW SHIFT

Recently members of Kashmir Bar Association had a meeting with their counterparts in Jammu. It was rare for the Kashmir Bar Association to reach out to the Lawyers Committee in Jammu. The meeting had a context.

The Bar Associations of Jammu and Kashmir had been fundamentally opposed to each other, and found no meeting ground. A major factor for this professional and social distancing was the political stand taken by the Srinagar chapter of the Bar Association of Jammu and Kashmir.

The constitution of the Bar Association of Kashmir, which has been questioned by the government, says that Jammu and Kashmir is a disputed region between India and Pakistan. The Jammu Bar Association consistently believed in inseparability of Jammu and Kashmir with the Union of India, and had been demanding complete integration constitutionally.

### THE SCENARIO TILL AUGUST 5, 2019

Till the morning of August 5, 2019, the Bar Association of Kashmir dominated the narrative. They would never take on board the Jammu Bar Association on crucial matters. Both were poles apart, and there seemed to be no question of reconciliation whatsoever.

The abrogation of Article 370 changed this. The UT administration took a strong note of the activities of Kashmir Bar Association. The Administration specified that elections to the Kashmir Bar Associa-

tion would not be held till it amended its constitution.

Now, it is the ad-hoc body of Kashmir Bar Association that reached out to Jammu lawyers. It was in this context that Advocate Nazir Ronga, who is also a member of the Mirwaiz group of Hurriyat Conference and some more lawyers had a meeting with the Bar Association of Jammu.

According to sources, during the meeting Ronga suggested putting up a united front for the welfare of the lawyers of Jammu and Kashmir. This is a complete departure from the past, though tactical, to avoid any further action by the UT Administration.

Earlier, it was the Jammu Bar Association, the business community and the political class of Jammu region who would initiate a dialogue with their counterparts in Kashmir. This was essentially because the social and political discourse was somehow controlled by the Kashmir elites. The dynamics have changed.

### NAZIR RONGA, HIS COLLEAGUES DESPERATE TO EVADE STATE ACTION

Ronga and his colleagues in the Srinagar Bar association are desperate to evade state action against them. They are clandestinely trying to hide behind their colleagues in Jammu Bar Association and are projecting the facade that all is well. The District magistrate Srinagar has served notices to Srinagar Bar Association, asking them to clear their stand on certain important issues, particularly the controversial sections of its constitution. District Magistrate Srinagar Aijaz Asad was not available for comment.

A few days after Nazir Ronga and some other lawyers from Kashmir met members of the Bar Association at Jammu, PDP president Mehbooba Mufti with the help of her party colleague from Kishtwar Firdous Tak organized a well-attended meeting of members of Jammu Bar Association. Sources reveal that during the meeting, Mehbooba said that Kashmir is drifting away from us. She asked the people of Jammu to be the bridge and maintain a strong bond with Kashmir.

KASHMIR CENTRAL tried to contact Mehbooba Mufti in this regard. She disconnected the call and did not take any subsequent call.

Amandeep Singh, Treasurer J&K High Court Bar Association, Jammu said, "We did not have any official meeting with her. It was an interaction between some advocates and Mehbooba Mufti. I was not part of that meeting. Some of our members were there to speak to her and share some concerns, but it was not an official meeting. You can talk to PDP member, Advocate Anil Sethi.

Advocate Anil Sethi told KZINE, "The PDP president wanted to have an interaction with Jammu Bar. So the Jammu Bar was invited by the party for a meeting. There was no agenda. She is a law graduate and she wanted to have an interaction with young lawyers. That's it. No political agenda."

The events suggest that the dynamics of power politics in Jammu and Kashmir are changing. Kashmir lawyers who built their career on the "Kashmir dispute" and also Mehbooba Mufti have finally realized the cost of isolating Jammu from Kashmir. By all parameters these are the tactical moves.



Mehbooba Mufti

Amardeep Singh



Anil Sethi



The ground reality suggests that people in Jammu region by and large feel insecure on many fronts post the abrogation of Article 370. The political elites of Kashmir want to ride on those grievances to have some kind of legitimacy in the overall discourse.

## We Discussed Common Issues Of Legal Fraternity With Members Of Jammu Bar Association

**You have been served notice by District Magistrate Srinagar asking you to clear the position of the Srinagar Bar Association on certain controversial sections in its constitution. What is your response to the notice?**

Yes, we have properly responded to it. First of all we wanted to know under which provision of law the District Magistrate Srinagar has issued the notice. What has made him issue the notice? Under which law he has taken recourse to this? Second, what kind of material does he have with him for which he wants clarification? That has been communicated to him. Give us that material so that we are in a position to reply. Till date they have neither forwarded that material, nor have we been appraised as to what kind of law they have taken recourse to, for issuing such notices to us. How can we respond to the mere notice when nothing was written in that notice? What do we have to clear? First he has to indicate on what basis he has said it.

**You had a meeting with the Jammu bar association. What was discussed in the meeting?**



Nazir Ronga

It was an informal meeting. I congratulated them for recent elections. Beside this we discussed certain common issues. We discussed hurdles that we are facing at this stage where we are not able to give justice to the people, and in the process people are losing faith in the judicial system. First and foremost point of consideration before us is this – the executive authority is overpowering the judiciary. The judiciary is losing its standards of being independent. The orders passed by the court are not being implemented by the authorities.

There are other issues too. We have no Central Administration Tribunal (CAT) bench in Srinagar. This is a problem for us. In the High

Court, the number of benches is less. That should be increased.

We and the Jammu Bar Association discussed this. In the future we shall formulate a joint paper regarding the judiciary.

Also, we don't have the Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission and the Consumer Disputes Redressal Forum for the last two years. Thousands of petitions are pending there but nobody is paying any attention to them. We had a series of meetings with the Chief Justice of Jammu and Kashmir. He assured us that he will use his good offices and he will request the governor that they should immediately provide the Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission and the Consumer Disputes Redressal Forum in Kashmir and also in Jammu. I don't think there is any improvement on this front.

I had also contacted Justice Tashi Rabstan. He is heading the committee that will formulate a report regarding the establishment of the Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission and the District Forum. He has submitted the report and done all the formalities what he was supposed to. The Administration does not seem to be serious about this issue. We don't know why it is so. Why are these posts vacant? Public as well as lawyers are facing problems.

Thirdly, we are facing the problem that the Debt Recovery Tribunal (DRT) is in Chandigarh. One has to travel to Chandigarh if we have a problem with banks or financial institutions. Those matters are addressed by DRT but we don't have it here. We want the Tribunal here also. A bench of the Tribunal should be here and also in Jammu.

There are other issues like registration of documents. Earlier we had the Registration Act, Stamp Act etc. We used to prepare the documents and produce them before the Sub Registrar who used to be a judicial officer. He knew everything about the laws. So we could easily get it done.

Now we have to go to the concerned Patwari and he says he will draft it himself. It has become a den of corruption there and in the process lawyers have lost their jobs in J&K. They have only this work of drafting and this has been taken away from them.

**Are you associated with the Hurriyat Conference?**

I am the person who has served the Bar Association for more than 10 years. My opponents used to call me a moderate and say he is Indian. I am not associated with Hurriyat Conference. I have nothing to do with them. I am the Bar Chairman. Actually I had affiliation with one of the sections that Mirwaiz Umar Farooq is chairman of. I was a close associate of his father. When his father got affiliated with Awami Action Committee, I used to help him. Delhi people, CIK, NIA had come to him. He was taken to Delhi, I was also with him. Everything is open. There is nothing hidden. I

have nothing to do with militancy. I have always disapproved of this throughout my life.

**Your son Uzair Nazir Ronga's premises were raided by Counter-Intelligence Kashmir (CIK) on October 2. Why?**

There was some FIR by an unidentified person. He had told CIK that Uzair is contemplating setting up a terrorist organization for which he will be funded by some Rayees Mir who is a Kashmiri terrorist in Pakistan. I came to know that Rayees Mir is an employee in a media service in Pakistan. So these were the allegations. I allowed the authorities to check our house but I told them that you should have served us the notice. We want certain clarifications on phone. We could have given you everything. All this was done by someone to defame me and my family. My son can never think about this. My son was in England for six long years so he has nothing to do with all this nonsense. Why



**When contacted by KASHMIR CENTRAL, Surjeet Singh Andotra, General Secretary J&K High Court Bar Association Jammu said, "We discussed common issues of lawyers like registration, Debt Recovery Tribunal, consumer court etc."**

should he do any such thing?

**Uzair is seen wining and dining with officials of intelligence and security agencies at CH2, the popular hotel at Sonwar. Why so?**

Uzair is a very social person. Like me, he also dislikes violence. He wants to contribute in the field of politics. There are some people who are asking him to join their party. But he can't join them. After some-time he will join me.



Uzair Ronga

**RONGA AND HIS COLLEAGUES IN THE SRINAGAR BAR ASSOCIATION ARE DESPERATE TO EVADE STATE ACTION AGAINST THEM. THEY ARE CLANDESTINELY TRYING TO HIDE BEHIND THEIR COLLEAGUES IN JAMMU BAR ASSOCIATION AND ARE PROJECTING THE FACADE THAT ALL IS WELL**

# Is Azad going to do an Amarinder in Jammu and Kashmir?

by Bashir ASSAD

Is Ghulam Nabi Azad going to do an Amarinder in Jammu and Kashmir?

Fact of the matter is – this jumla comparing Amarinder and Azad fits only to a certain point.

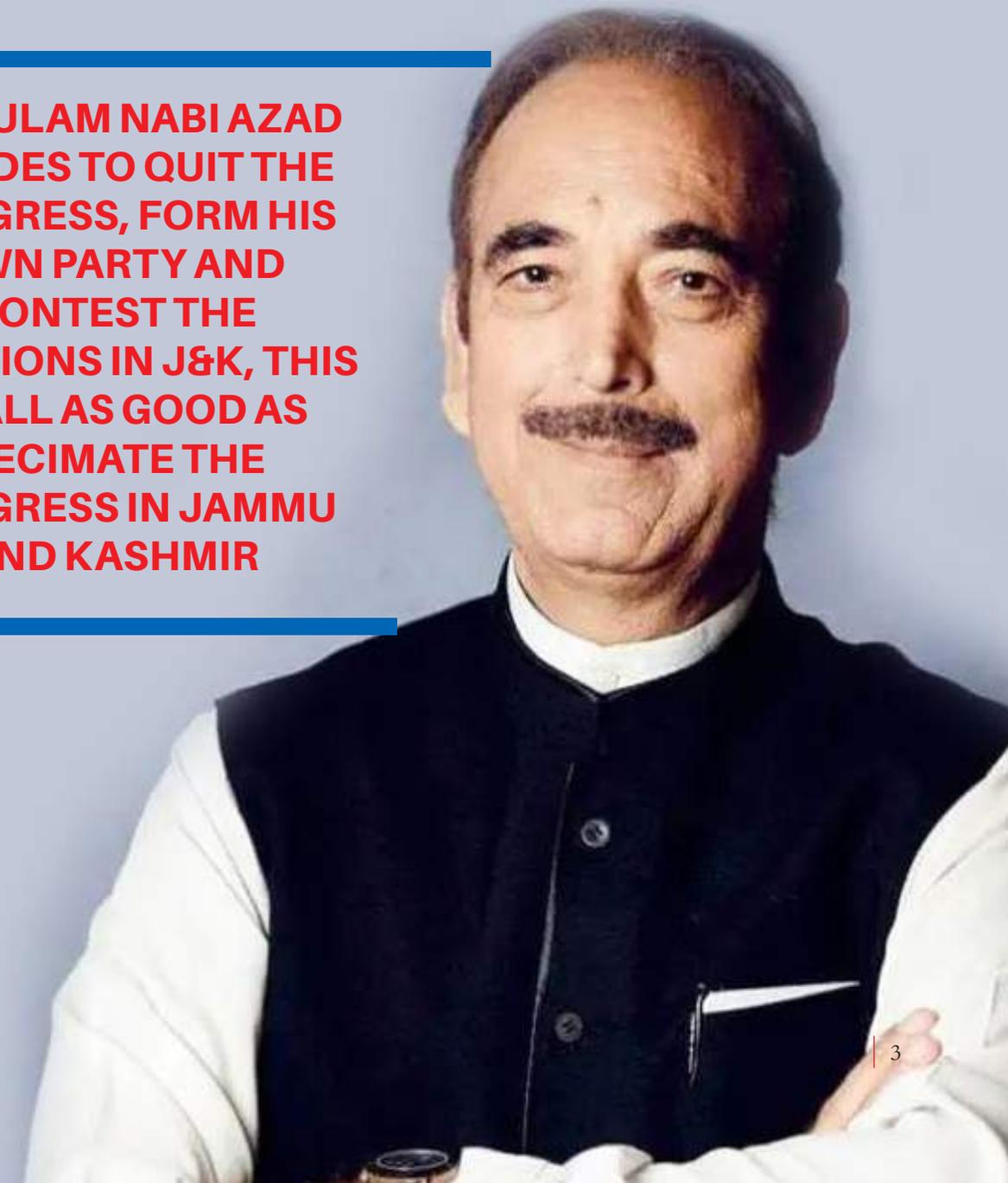
Amarinder, a die-hard Congress loyalist, quit the party recently after his relations with the party high command and other loyalists soured. Ghulam Nabi Azad is currently feeling the same pinch. His relations with the party high command are not what they used to be. To the credit of both Amarinder and Azad, it must be said that both of them did not indulge in any objectionable conduct or go against party ethics.

For the Congress high command, the initial provocation was that Azad and 22 other Congress called for reforms in the party, which had been struggling for the last many

## AZAD HAS ACCEPTABILITY ACROSS J&K

### He can transform the political dynamics of the region

IF GHULAM NABI AZAD DECIDES TO QUIT THE CONGRESS, FORM HIS OWN PARTY AND CONTEST THE ELECTIONS IN J&K, THIS SHALL AS GOOD AS DECIMATE THE CONGRESS IN JAMMU AND KASHMIR



years with high-profile exits and crises in the state units.

Azad's stature as a Congressman is much bigger than that of Capt Amarinder Singh. This is despite the fact that Amarinder has twice been the chief minister of Punjab. He is a Congress heavyweight and an MLA for many terms. But Amarinder does not carry the same clout in the Congress or even nationwide as Ghulam Nabi Azad.

Amarinder's exit from the Congress caused a ripple across Punjab. On the other hand, if Ghulam Nabi Azad decides to quit the Congress, form his own party and contest the elections in J&K, this shall as good as decimate the Congress in Jammu and Kashmir.

Another important point of comparison. Many political analysts are not sure how Capt Amarinder Singh shall

fare electorally with his independent party in the Punjab elections, which are likely to be held in February or March 2022. If Azad fights the elections in Jammu and Kashmir under his independent banner, it shall mean a tectonic shift in the politics of Jammu and Kashmir. Azad's move shall transform the electoral dynamics of the region.

### **POLITICS IN J&K HAS BEEN LEADER CENTRIC, NOT PARTY CENTRIC**

Congress has never been a magnetic force in the elections in Jammu and Kashmir. Politics in the erstwhile state has been leader-centric. It was the personal clout of the Congress leaders nationally which made Kashmiris vote for them. The Congress was able to make gains in Jammu and Kashmir

on account of the personal charisma of the party leaders.

The other factor is the complex preference of the Kashmir voter while casting his vote. The Kashmir voter may not be in love with New Delhi, but he definitely votes for the candidate who is loved by New Delhi, or the one who is in power in New Delhi. For many decades, the party in power in New Delhi was the Congress. This made the choice of the Kashmir voter easy during the Parliamentary elections. Hence the Congress was able to steer through in Jammu and Kashmir.

Jammu and Kashmir Congress President Ghulam Ahmad Mir is not a leader of stature who can take people along. The majority of the Congress rank and file in Jammu and Kashmir has no choice but to put their weight behind Ghulam Nabi Azad.



**JAMMU AND KASHMIR CURRENTLY HAS A POLITICAL VACUUM. NO PARTY OR LEADER HAS BEEN ABLE TO CREATE ANY POLITICAL HULCHUL AFTER THE ABROGATION OF ARTICLE 370. ALTAF BUKHARI SHOULD HE GIVEN CREDIT FOR GOING AGAINST THE WIND AFTER THE ABROGATION. SAJAD LONE MUST BE GIVEN CREDIT FOR HIS BOLD MOVES. BUT THE POLITICAL STORM WHICH CAN CREATE A HULCHUL HAS NOT HAPPENED**

## **Popular Congress Leaders in J&K Side With Azad**

**A**zad is a shrewd politician who makes careful and calculated moves. Over the last one year, since the time he retired from the Rajya Sabha, there has been much talk over what can be his next move. But by and large, Azad has remained silent, and carefully assessed the ground and the political environment.

Azad has denied it, but it is widely believe that the Congress leaders of J&K close to him have resigned at his behest.

This proves that he enjoys higher clout over cadres than any other Congress leader of Jammu and Kashmir. The Congress leaders in Kashmir who have some chances to win in the elections owe allegiance to Azad.

Leaving out these Congress leaders, only two are left in the Congress fold in Kashmir. One is J&K Congress president Ghulam Ahmad Mir, and the second is former minister Taj Mohiuddin.

Till recently, Taj Mohiuddin was close to Congress leader Saifuddin Soz. Mohiuddin too does not enjoy a good equation



**Peerzada Mohd Sayeed**



**Mohd Ameen Bhat**



**Abdul Rashid Dar**

with GM Mir. The rest of the Congress leaders in Kashmir valley are paper tigers. They issue statements against Ghulam Nabi Azad sometimes, but their winnability is zero.

**IF AZAD FIGHTS THE ELECTIONS IN JAMMU AND KASHMIR UNDER HIS INDEPENDENT BANNER, IT SHALL MEAN A TECTONIC SHIFT IN THE POLITICS OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR**

**In Kashmir division, there are five Assembly segments where Congress men enjoy clout among the electorate. From among these five Assembly segments, the political leaders of three Assembly segments shall move into the Azad fold if push comes to shove.**

**These are the Congress leaders who shall choose Azad over Ghulam Ahmad Mir.**

**\* Peerzada Mohd Sayeed. Former PCC president. Represented the Kokernag Assembly segment many times till 2014**

**\* Mohd Ameen Bhat. Represented Devsar Assembly segment in Kulgam district**  
**\* Abdul Rashid Dar. Won the 2008 elections from Sopore constituency**  
**The three are Azad loyalists. They shall opt to go with him if they are forced to make a choice.**



Taj Mohiuddin

Jammu and Kashmir except some wannabe leaders who have no hold at ground level.

### Congress Leader Saifuddin Soz Not A Constituency Man



Saifuddin Soz

Saifuddin Soz is a former Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) president and former union minister, but he was never a Constituency man. Soz reached the Lok Sabha on an NC seat. In 1999, the 13-month old Vajpayee government was voted out in the Lok Sabha by a margin of one vote. Then National Conference member Saifuddin Soz went against the whip of his party and voted against the motion. His cross-voting sealed the fate of the BJP government and it lost the confidence motion by one vote.

Since his single vote led to the fall of the BJP government in 1999, Soz's clout in went up in the Congress circles. The Congress rewarded Soz by giving him a Rajya Sabha seat and making him a Union Minister for Water Resources.

Soz has been a long-time Member of Parliament, but he does not enjoy any local clout or hold over the Congress cadre.

### The Political Vacuum In Jammu And Kashmir

Jammu and Kashmir currently has a political vacuum. No party or leader has been able to create any political hulchul after the abrogation of Article 370.

Undeniably, Altaf Bukhari should he given credit for going against the wind after the abrogation of Article 370. Equally, Sajad Lone must be given credit for his bold moves. But the political storm which can create a hulchul has not happened.

National Conference does not seem capable of creating this hulchul. The electorate seems to be disillusioned and disenchanted with NC.

If Azad provides an alternative, it shall majorly impact the dynamics of politics in Jammu and Kashmir.

### Only Raman Bhalla in Jammu Sides With GA Mir

The only popular Congress leader who is seen siding with PCC president Ghulam Ahmad Mir is Raman Bhalla, who represented the Gandhi Nagar segment in the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly. If Azad quits the Congress, nothing shall remain of the grand old party in



Raman Bhalla

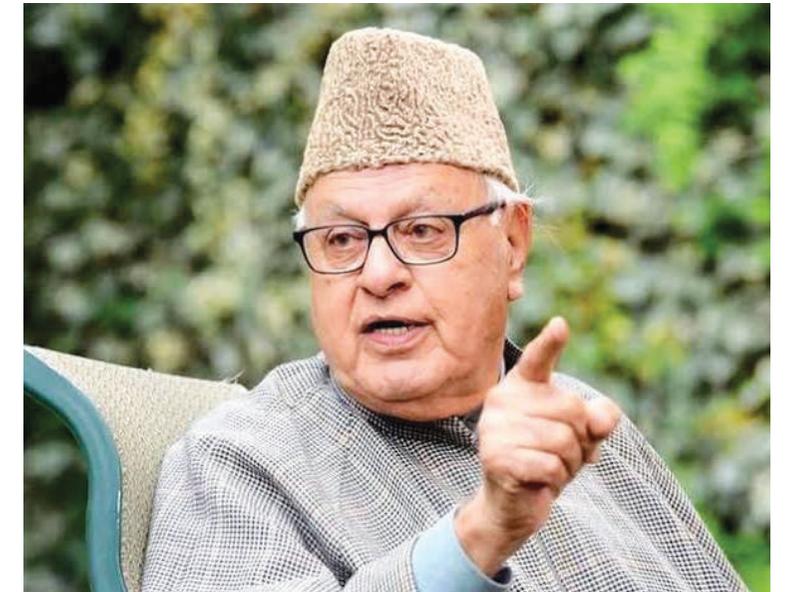
**IT SHALL BENEFIT SAJAD LONE AND ALTAF BUKHARI TO BE POTENTIAL ALLIES FOR GHULAM NABI AZAD. JOINING AZAD CAN BE A WIN WIN FOR THEM**

### DR FAROOQ ABDULLAH'S CHARISMA AND APPEAL HAVE WEAKENED POST THE ABROGATION OF ARTICLE 370. AFTER THE ABROGATION, THE ELECTORATE SEEMS TO BE DISILLUSIONED AND DISENCHANTED BY NATIONAL CONFERENCE AND ALSO PDP

### NC Does Not Enjoy Same Stature Any More

National Conference does not enjoy the same stature in Jammu that it had earlier when political heavyweight Devender Rana was in the party. Rana was extremely close to both Dr Farooq Abdullah and Omar Abdullah. The fact that Rana has moved on is indicative of the loosening hold of National Conference over the politics of Jammu and Kashmir. Rana left evidently because he calculated that in the given circumstances, he cannot sail in the NC boat.

Farooq Abdullah's charisma and appeal have weakened post the abrogation of Article 370. After the abrogation, the electorate seems to be disillusioned and disenchanted by National Conference and also PDP.



Dr Farooq Abdullah



Devender Rana



Omar Abdullah

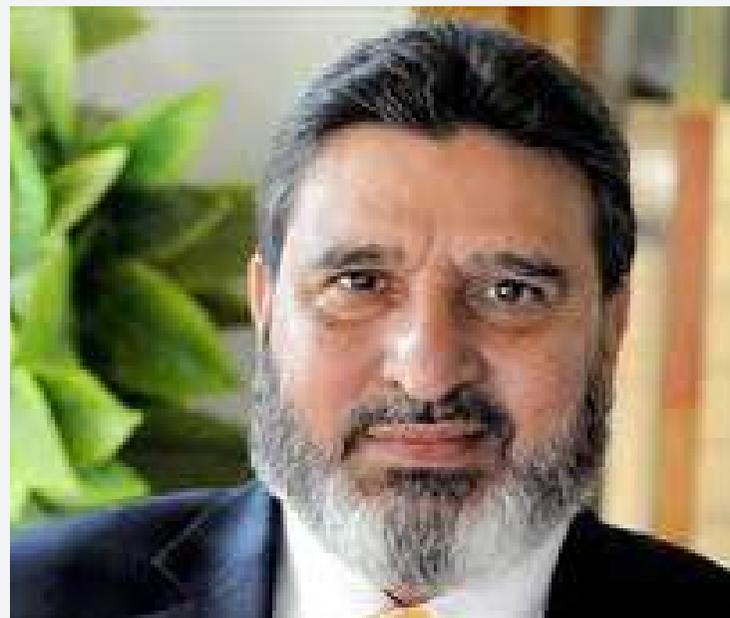
# If Azad floats a new party, who could be his allies in Kashmir?

**W**ith his new party, Amarinder will have only limited influence in Punjab. If Azad quits the Congress and contests under his own banner, he will change the entire dynamics of politics in Jammu and Kashmir.

If Azad floats a new party, who could be his allies in Kashmir?

Certainly not National Conference. Firstly, with his personal stature Azad will dwarf National Conference and Dr Farooq Abdullah. Farooq, the old political warhorse, shall not settle for this.

Sajad Lone



Altaf Bukhari

Second, post abrogation Kashmir is in a different situation. If at all Azad floats new party, NC cannot be a viable ally for him.

Meanwhile, it shall go to the benefit of Sajad Lone and Altaf Bukhari to be potential allies for Ghulam Nabi Azad. It can be a win win for them to join Azad.

The old political horses of Jammu and Kashmir hail from National Conference or PDP. The electorate is disenchanted with both parties. Azad may emerge as the best bet. If Sajad and Altaf ally with Azad, it may strengthen their political clout.

## The story Till Now

Azad, the senior-most politician from Jammu and Kashmir in the Congress, has seen a gradual souring of relations with the party high command. On November 19, Congress interim President Sonia Gandhi dropped Azad from the panel of the newly-constituted disciplinary committee of the party.

Azad has been a member of the Congress disciplinary committee for a long time. Why did the Congress drop him from the panel? No reason given. But joining the dots is easy here. Azad is among the G-23 group of the Congress that advocated for sweeping changes in the party structure a year ago.

There is also a recent development that may have been seen as the trigger for the decision by the Congress high command. A day before Azad was dropped from the Congress disciplinary committee, about 20 Congress leaders from Jammu and Kashmir including four former ministers and three ex-legislators resigned from their party positions. All these Congress leaders are considered close to Azad. They include former ministers GM Saroori, Vikar Rasool and Dr Manohar Lal Sharma; former MLAs Jugal Kishore Sharma, Ghulam Nabi Monga, Naresh Gupta, Mohammad Amin Bhat, Subash Gupta; State Congress vice-president Anwar Bhat, and member of Kulgam District Development Council Anyatullah Rather.

Some analysts believe that Sonia Gandhi does not want to



**GOING BY THE WAY THE CONGRESS IS CLIPPING AZAD, HE MAY DO THE AMARINDER IN JAMMU AND KASHMIR. WHEN THE SHIFT HAPPENS IS A QUESTION OF TIME**

give space to leaders with strong opinion in any important bodies of the Congress – especially those who advocate organizational reforms in the party.

Azad's cozy relationship with Prime Minister Narendra Modi may play a role in the recent political developments around him. In February this year, some politicians and political analysts were hinting that Azad may be groomed as the saffron face in Jammu and Kashmir.

Azad had vociferously denied this and had said, "I will join the BJP when we have black snow in Kashmir. Why BJP -- that's the day I'll join any other party."

Much water has flown down the Jhelum since Azad said that. His cryptic comments on the resignations of the Congress leaders give strength to these speculations. When questioned by the media, Azad denied that he had

knowledge of resignations of some state Congress leaders who are close to him. When asked whether he would be the Congress chief ministerial candidate in the next assembly elections keeping in view the demand raised at the recent public rally in Kathua district, Azad said, "I will do what the people of Jammu and Kashmir want me to do for the betterment of this state."

The Congress leaders who shared stage with Azad at the rally in Kathua and resigned from their posts in the Congress said only Azad is acceptable to them as the party's face in Jammu and Kashmir as well as the chief ministerial candidate, not state Congress chief Gulam Ahmed Mir.

Going by the way the Congress is clipping Azad, he may do the Amarinder in Jammu and Kashmir. When the shift happens is a question of time.

# Ghulam Nabi Azad's Stature As A Political Leader



**T**he immense goodwill enjoyed by Ghulam Nabi Azad has worked in his favour, making him popular among the Congress rank and file. Equally, Azad is the only political leader who enjoys popularity and acceptability in all regions of Jammu and Kashmir.

Azad's dedication and sincerity to the party has been beyond question. He was a popular chief minister who worked hard and was able to bring about positive changes at grass-roots.

Azad could connect with the people emotionally too, and people would connect with him. Capt Amarinder was regarded as a Congress heavyweight, but he offered his services to the party only within Panjab.

He has not worked outside Punjab as a Congress man.

On the other hand, Azad has worked hard for the party throughout the country. He was considered one of the most successful troubleshooters for the Congress. In addition, he has always had a cordial relationship with the opposition, sans any acrimony.

Azad has been the Incharge and the General Secretary of the Congress for many states. He has provided to be very capable and worked wonders for the Congress.

Over the last one year, it has been felt that BJP's prospects in Jammu are not as bright as they were earlier. In such a scenario, the Congress would be expected to make gains.

But Congress without Azad shall not be able to draw voters in Jammu.

If the Congress denigrates Ghulam Nabi Azad, it shall be a serious self-goal by the party.

Compared to Azad, J&K Congress President Ghulam Ahmad Mir is small fry. Azad towers over Ghulam Ahmad Mir in stature. Nobody else from the state Congress can match Azad's stature.

The Congress may be able to draw in some votes in Jammu and Udhampur. Azad belongs to the Jammu region and enjoys good popularity across board. In addition, he is also acceptable to those in Kashmir who believe in and participate in electoral democracy. This gives Azad an edge over all other political leaders of

Kashmir. With Azad, the Congress appeal spreads to the Chenab region, the Pir Panjal region, Kathua and Samba. People may not vote for the Congress. But if Azad is the chief ministerial candidate for the Congress, he can swing votes in his favour.

The operative part here is - if Azad is the chief ministerial candidate for the Congress.

Over the last one year, there have been indications that he is not comfortable with the Gandhi family, and vice versa. If Azad quits the Congress and forms his own party for contesting in Jammu and Kashmir, the dynamics of electoral politics in the region will change.

The signs are there.

# Former Minister Peerzada Mohammad Sayeed Insists Ghulam Nabi Azad Won't Leave The Congress



**G**hulam Nabi Azad is visiting Kashmir next week. He is likely to address a rally in Kokernag in South Kashmir.

Peerzada Mohammad Sayeed, a senior Congress leader who represented the Kokernag constituency several times, told KZINE that the question of Ghulam Nabi Azad leaving the Congress party does not arise. "Azad sahib won't leave the party. We have certain grievances as far as the functioning of Congress party is concerned, both in Jammu and Kashmir as well as in other parts of the country. There is infighting within the Congress in Rajasthan, Punjab, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir. But we only want reforms in the Congress party."

"The man installed as JKPC president is incapable. He could not take the cadres along. That is why the party is in disarray in Jammu and Kashmir. In other states too, which I have named, the party is facing the same problem. Azad sahib is highlighting these crucial issues before the party high command. He is a Congress man with so much experience and organizational skills. He has contributed to strengthening the party. The party cannot afford to lose him."

When asked whether he would follow the suit if Ghulam Nabi Azad quits the Congress, Peerzada said neither Azad sahib nor he would quit the party. "We will stay with Congress but not without reforms," he said.

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# Pakistan, the benefactor from all that makes Kashmir cry

## Disruptive Diaspora And Nexus Desperate To Paint Kashmir In Black Colours

by Waseem GUL

**T**he disruptive diaspora and the nexus are suddenly active again. There is a desperate attempt to paint Kashmir in black colours. Most of these voices were muted or silent on the series of killings by the terrorists in last few weeks.

It is true that the Hyderpora incident has caused damage. It has provided fodder to terror apologists to instigate people. It is absolutely right to hold security forces to high standards. But it is wrong to use any mishap or tragedy as tools of propaganda to instigate violence.

The lack of Kashmiri casualties forced the shift of propaganda machine to cries about collateral damage to houses when terrorists took shelter in these houses. The bigger the blast or more the number of houses affected, the bigger was the glee of these propaganda photo artists. The damage to houses are the favourite images of the gloom and doom amplifiers who are masquerading as journalists.

The restraint of the security forces in almost all operations did not suit their narrative. It needs to be remembered that restraint in the face of armed terrorists means restraint when the security men are faced with life threatening situations.

**PROPAGANDA MACHINES WERE WAITING FOR IMAGES OF GLOOM FROM KASHMIR**

These propaganda machines have been waiting for images of gloom from Kashmir for last two years. They were disappointed when Kashmiris did not die from the endless cycle of violence constantly manufactured in the Valley. They were disappointed when Covid was handled fairly well in Kashmir.

The conflict merchants were disappointed when the stone pelting machinery was defanged. They were disappointed when pellet injuries stopped happening.





**THESE PROPAGANDA MACHINES HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR IMAGES OF GLOOM FROM KASHMIR FOR LAST TWO YEARS. THEY WERE DISAPPOINTED WHEN KASHMIRIS DID NOT DIE FROM THE ENDLESS CYCLE OF VIOLENCE CONSTANTLY MANUFACTURED IN THE VALLEY**

They were disappointed at their inability to rake up emotions and deny space to logic.

They were disappointed when they found that end to janaza programs and stone pelting effectively ended the cycle of Kashmiri youth getting injured or killed. The Geelani era strategy to ensure a Kashmiri death every alternate day was over.

Last year, the disruptive diaspora and its nexus converted the death

of an old man Bashir in Sopore to a propaganda opportunity. The disruptive diaspora did not care that the old man died in the Lashkar-e-Taiba attack carried out hiding in a mosque. He was passing by in a car with his three-year-old grandson.

Pakistan, the benefactor from all that makes Kashmir cry, marked the old man's death with a song and even a postage stamp. These merchants of Kashmiri deaths use

every tragedy as an opportunity for propaganda.

**CLEAR PATTERN IN PAKISTAN'S MORBID INTEREST IN KASHMIR**

There is a clear pattern in Pakistan's morbid interest in Kashmir. It lives on propaganda and survives on death. The Pakistan Army and the weak government sustain

on this propaganda. Hence, their proxies in Kashmir show the same character traits.

Loss of civilian life in an anti-terror operation is highly tragic and unfortunate. Immediately, these proxies swing into action. Photos, clips, statements, short videos and even songs appear within hours of any tragedy. The social media is flooded with tales that feed victimhood.

Last year Babar Qadri was killed within hours of requesting sense and well-being of Kashmiri youth in a Facebook live session. This nexus said some platitudes about the pain of his young daughters. The voices that are shrill now were silent at the killing of a Kashmiri who was only seeking an open debate for the future of the youth of Kashmir. His plea to the youth did not suit their agenda. Hence the silence. They were scared then, they are scared now of the merciless targeting by the terror proxies of Pakistan. They are also complicit in the nexus propaganda.

In the last few months, JK Police have given enough examples of restraint during an operation. Only a few days ago, terrorists escaped while a policeman was injured in the neck. Police showed restraint to avoid civilian casualties, and this allowed the terrorists to escape. Last month the Army gave a Pakistani terrorist a chance for surrender on the Line of Control. The Army stayed true to its promise of giving a chance to the misguided. The Hyderpora incident is worth an investigation. Justice should be delivered and seen to be delivered.

In times like these it is the re-



**THERE IS A CLEAR PATTERN IN PAKISTAN'S MORBID INTEREST IN KASHMIR. IT LIVES ON PROPAGANDA AND SURVIVES ON DEATH**

sponsibility of the general population, the civil society and also the politicians to act in a wise manner and find a way towards solutions. But unfortunately, there are many opportunists. They can play with a whole region to sustain their relevance.

Pakistan plays on this opportunism to indirectly justify the terror activities it is carrying out in Kashmir. A political stunt which leads to chaos and mistrust is part of the terror factory which is running in Kashmir for the past 30 years.

**IT IS IMPORTANT THAT JUSTICE IS DONE, AND IS ALSO SEEN TO BE DONE**

The pain of the families who have lost their loved ones is understandable. They deserve jus-

and they deserve the empathy of the nation. Let the incident be judged on the basis of evidence. We hope that the truth comes out soon.

The police handling of the incident and public messaging left lot to be desired. Flip-flops on OGW or not, evidence, contesting witness statements etc gave the intifada factory room to create a 'doubt' narrative and create an emotional furore. In contrast, better handling and sharing of information could have shown the security forces action in true light.

The actions by the administration to handover the bodies of the dead civilians to the families and the ordering of judicial enquiry are steps in the right direction as per the law of land. We hope that justice is done, and it is also seen to be delivered.

**THE PAIN OF THE FAMILIES WHO HAVE LOST THEIR LOVED ONES IS UNDERSTANDABLE. THEY DESERVE JUSTICE AND THEY DESERVE THE EMPATHY OF THE NATION. LET THE INCIDENT BE JUDGED ON THE BASIS OF EVIDENCE. WE HOPE THAT THE TRUTH COMES OUT SOON**

# Social Chaos In Kashmir - Pakistan's Time Tested Strategy

by Iqbal AHMAD

**P**akistan's mixed warfare strategies in Jammu and Kashmir continue to pose a challenge to the security forces. When a neighbouring country is bent upon proxy warfare, constant alert and proactive strategy are vital for national security.

Earlier, Pakistan's proxy war in Kashmir was mainly waged through infiltration of trained militants into the Valley. With social media, Pakistan has written new chapters on violent acts of extremism. Pakistan has intensified the dark spectacle of radical extremism, using e-jihad to brainwash and galvanize vulnerable youth.

Narco terror is emerging as the fuel for this proxy war. This is evident from the drugs confiscated by the Army and the security forces, the investigations made by the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI), and the data available with the Jammu and Kashmir Department of Health. This strategy is double-edged. It is employed for direct creation of funds to finance terrorism in the Valley. It is also used to weaken the youth of Kashmir and make them fall prey to drugs.

**With social media, Pakistan has written new chapters on violent acts of extremism. Pakistan has intensified the dark spectacle of radical extremism, using e-jihad to brainwash and galvanize vulnerable youth**

# Proxy War, Narco Terror Unlikely To End Soon



**Drug use among Kashmiri youth is partly due to the social and psychological effects of the protracted conflict, unemployment and family/social problems. There is also a bigger design at work, with Pakistan intent on damaging the already stressed social and moral fabric of the Valley**



### **KASHMIR YOUTH BEING CAUGHT IN THE DRUG TRAP**

Over the past several months, the army, police and other agencies have conducted successful operations and have recovered not only weapons but also large consignments of narcotics. Army intelligence sources reveal that there are strong links between Kashmiri militants and drug trafficking in Punjab.

In the last few years, national media has focused much on the drug abuse among the youth of Punjab. But the scenario in Kashmir too is bad. Five years ago, a report published by the United Nations Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) estimated that there are around 70,000 thousand people who are drug addicts in Kashmir division. Approximately 31% of them were stated to be women. The situation is worse now. It is mostly the Kashmiri youth which have been caught in the drug trap. According to the date at Government Psychiatric Hospital, Srinagar, about 90% drug abusers are in the age group of 17-35.

There have been several media reports that opium cultivation is being taken up, especially in South Kashmir, to finance militant violence and foment

trouble. The alarming trend of drug use among Kashmiri youth is partly due to the social and psychological effects of protracted conflict, unemployment and family/social problems. There is also a bigger design at work, with Pakistan intent on damaging the already stressed social and moral fabric of the Valley.

### **PROCEEDS FROM HEROIN SMUGGLING USED TO FINANCE MILITANT ACTIVITIES**

After the Taliban occupation of Afghanistan, there are fears that drug trafficking in Kashmir may increase. According to a 2018 report by the Special Inspector General for Afghan Reconstruction, the Taliban earned 60 percent of their income from the drug trade. These same narcotics are channeled into India through Pakistan.

A senior police officer in Kashmir told KASHMIR CENTRAL that following serious action by law enforcement agencies against hawala operators in recent years, Pakistani agencies have crossed the Line of Control to push terrorism, narcotics trade and fake currency. In 2019, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) cited "illicit arms, drugs and counterfeit

## **YOUNGSTERS INTRODUCED TO DRUGS BY FRIENDS**

### **Case Study Of Ahmad And Manzoor Dar**

Ahmad's forays into drugs began in 2013, when he was pursuing MBA in Delhi. When he returned to Kashmir on a two-week leave in 2018, he was introduced to heroin. "Some of my childhood friends started taking heroin. They gave me the first two doses for a kick. The first time I took it in. The second time, it was injected into my veins," Ahmad said. He was recently admitted to the de-addiction center in Srinagar.

In 2019, Ahmad became a regular drug addict and lost his job. "I got a call from an old acquaintance who had joined the militants. He offered me Rs 2 lakh to deliver me one kg of heroin in Shopian. I agreed. At the address where I delivered the packet, I was given Rs 18 lakh in cash, which I gave to my militant friend. He gave me Rs 2 lakh as reward," said Ahmad. "A few weeks later, the militant was killed in a clash with the security forces. I continued to use heroin until last month, when my parents admitted me the de-addiction center."

Manzoor Dar (name changed) from North Kashmir's Baramulla district is now 27. He started taking heroin in the company of friends. Manzoor says that he did not face shortage of money at home. But after he started taking drugs, he began making excuses to take more and more money from his parents. His mother brought him to the drug de-addiction centre, and he was able to quit drug abuse. Manzoor says he used to go to border areas to buy heroin, since it was easily available there.



# DRUGS

## “BIGGER CHALLENGE” THAN TERRORISM



Jammu and Kashmir Police has recognized the growing menace of narco terrorism as a major challenge in the last few years. In early July 2018, Shesh Paul Vaid, then police chief of Jammu and Kashmir, had termed drugs as a “bigger challenge” than terrorism in the region. Police had to work 24X7 to address this menace. His successor Dilbag Singh had expressed similar concerns.

The erstwhile state government provided land to the police to set up a full-fledged de-addiction center near Idgah in Srinagar. A similar facility was provided in Jammu. The government was considering the proposal to provide drug de-addiction sections in district hospitals all over the state. All these initiatives are good, but they are largely reactionary and defensive. The police and the security forces shall have to initiate concrete and proactive action to break the drug supply chain.

The history of terrorism in the Valley shows that social anarchy in Kashmir is a deliberate tactic adopted by Pakistan for decades. The proxy war is unlikely to end soon. First Kashmir lost its Pandits, and then we lost an entire generation to gun culture. It is tragic to witness that we are losing our youth to drug abuse.

Pakistan has continuously upgraded and calibrated its proxy and hybrid warfare strategies in Kashmir. The Indian state can no longer afford to be caught on the back foot. It is extremely important to initiate action that shall stem the evil designs of Pakistan in Kashmir.

currency traps” as the reasons for the closure of trade across the LoC.

When trade across the LoC was shut down, narco-trading started flourishing. Some of those arrested in the drug trade were from terrorist organizations like Lashkar-e-Taiba and Hizb-ul-Mujahideen. Proceeds from heroin smuggling are used to militant activities.

In this connection, National Investigation Agency (NIA) arrested Afaq Ahmad Wani, a bank manager from Handwara in North Kashmir. Wani was stated to be part of a drug syndicate. 21 kg heroin and over Rs 1.35 crore in cash were seized from the drug syndicate. The total cash recovered as part of the investigations is said to be over Rs 200 crore. The police raid also uncovered a cash counting machine – commonly found in banks. This indicates that a large amount of money was transferred to terrorist networks.

In 2019, Jammu and Kashmir Police confiscated over 200 kg of heroin. Last year, 152 kg of heroin and 49 kg of brown sugar were seized from different parts of the tribal areas in the Union Territory.

### ANTI-DRUG TASK FORCE, DE-ADDICTION CENTERS

Assessing the gravity of the problem, the Jammu and Kashmir government last year constituted an Anti-Drug Task Force (ANTF) to tackle the growing menace of drug terrorism in the region. But despite repeated campaigns, heroin use has reached alarming levels. The seriousness of the problem can be gauged from the admission to the De-Addiction Center (DDC) of Government Medical College, Srinagar. A total of 6,234 patients were admitted to the De-Addiction Center

during the lockdown, from April 2020 to June 2021. More than 95% of them were addicted to heroin.

Dr Yasir Rather, DDC In-charge in Srinagar said that the number of people treated for heroin use is just a grain of a mustard seed compared to the total figure of addicts. The exact number of addicts is much higher. The easy availability of heroin over the past two or three years is a big reason for the spurt in cases,” said Dr Yasir Rather.



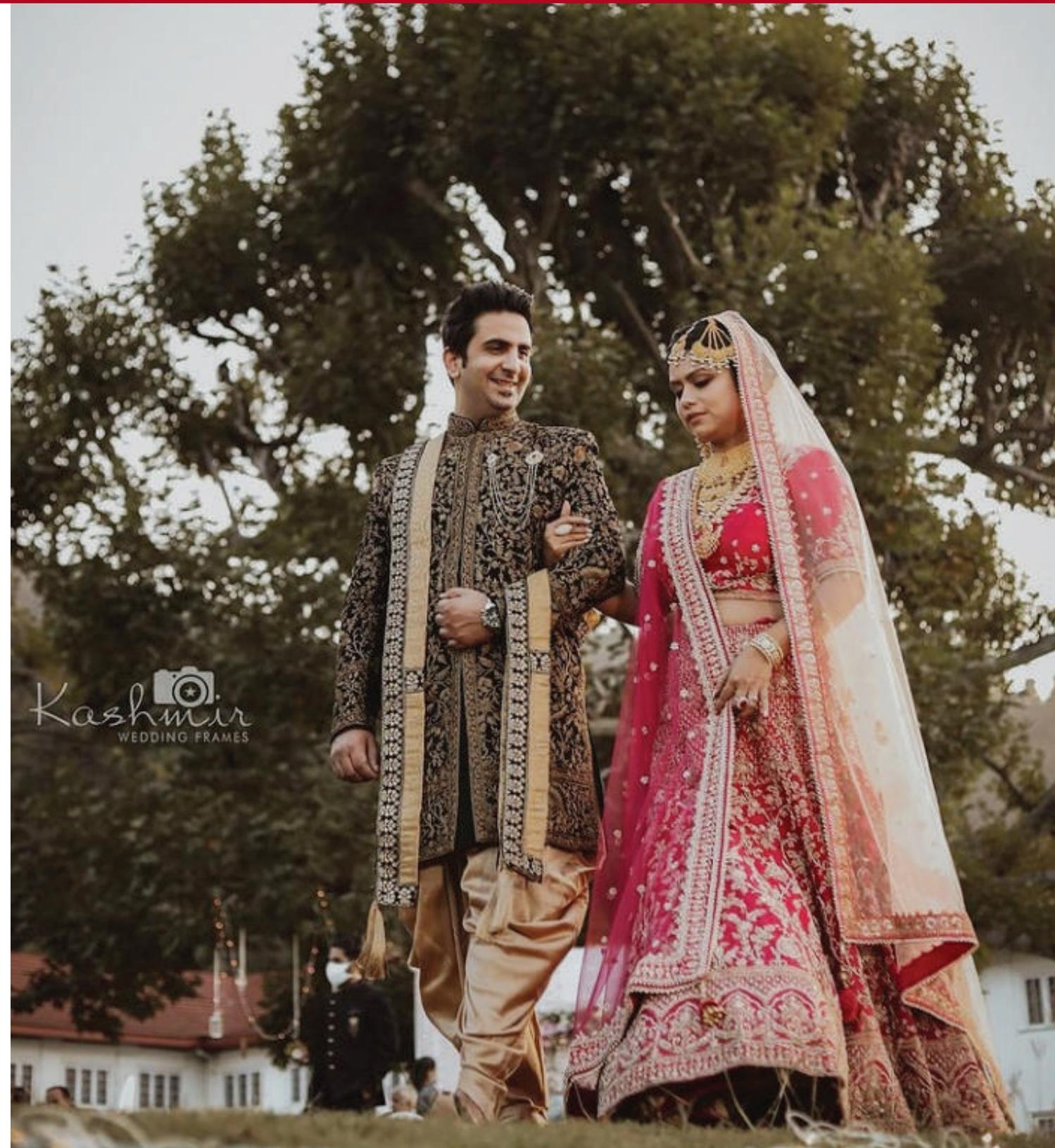
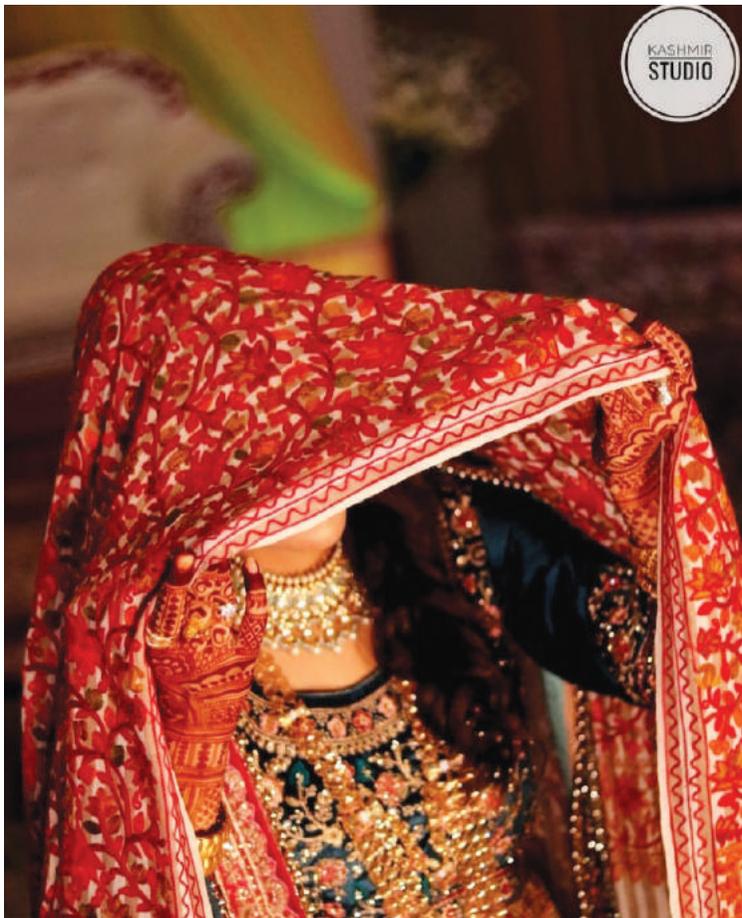
**The number of people treated for heroin use is minuscule compared to the total figure of addicts. The easy availability of heroin over the past two or three years is a big reason for the spurt in cases: Dr Yasir Rather, Srinagar**



**In the last few years, national media has focused much on the drug abuse among the youth of Punjab. But the scenario in Kashmir too is bad**

# Opulent And Beautiful Always Kashmir!

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The happy greens, our blessed land  
My wife and I walk hand in hand



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