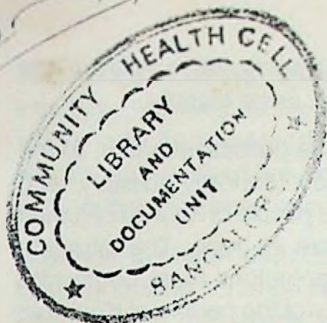




# FACTS *against* MYTHS

VIKAS ADHYAYAN KENDRA

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INFORMATION BULLETIN

## A Disputed Legacy: The Myths Behind the Kashmir "Problem" — II

Ram Puniyani

### COMMENT

The 'paradise on earth' or 'Switzerland of the East' as Kashmir was once described, today has the dubious distinction of being one of the 'hot spots' of the world. It is recognised as one of the vexatious issues in the world that can lead to a major war affecting the peace of the entire region (South Asia) and can also draw in other countries into the conflagration directly or indirectly. The nuclear tests by the two contenders – India and Pakistan – three years ago (May 1998) make the situation even worse. Scenarios of the future trajectory of events do not rule out a 'limited nuclear war' (?) over the Kashmir issue. There is no need to say that however 'limited' such a conflagration may be it would spell the near destruction of both the countries and it will plunge their people into the past, negating all gains made in decades! (This may, of course, be the fulfilment of the cherished dream of the fundamentalist and/or communal elements from both the countries!) Fanatics from both sides of the border did at the time of the armed conflict in the Kargil sector of Kashmir (1999) did advocate the use of nuclear weapons.

The international position over Kashmir too has changed quite dramatically in the recent past. Historically the western powers, particularly USA and UK, supported the efforts of Pakistan to internationalise the Kashmir issue and its demand for plebiscite in the territory. They chose to read (or remember) only one part of the relevant UN resolution on the issue. They kept silent about the fact that the Pakistani occupation of a part of the territory (POK) had never been vacated and hence the precondition for the plebiscite had not been

fulfilled. The USSR on the other hand consistently supported the Indian position and even used its veto power in the Security Council to frustrate the efforts of Pakistan.

In the post-cold war world, with the collapse of the USSR, the emergence of the unipolar world, and the globalisation of economies Pakistan is no longer very important to the USA. It has now shown a greater 'understanding' of the Indian point of view. It has also attempted to mediate in the conflict. The erstwhile President of USA, Mr. Clinton, has reportedly recently claimed that he prevailed upon the Pakistan authorities to get the intruders to withdraw from the Kargil sector. There have been open and disguised offers to use the good offices of USA to bring about a peaceful settlement. This time around, Pakistan would be suspicious of any such effort!

The Kashmir issue is by now obviously a complex one. Within Kashmir itself, there are numerous organisations with different ideologies and ultimate goals. The Kashmiri people protest against non-development of the territory, abject poverty, lack of employment and livelihood opportunities, great disparity, political corruption, limited political representation, excesses of security forces, human rights violations, educational and cultural deprivation, and distrust by the rest of the nation. These grievances were not addressed for decades, nor have they been redressed even now. This situation has alienated the Kashmiris, and created a strong perception of deprivation and injustice. The anger is directed towards the state and the central governments. It cannot however be said that the

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Kashmiri people are all in favour of independence – probably only some are. Even fewer in all probability would support any merger with Pakistan.

The alienation of the Kashmiris has been exacerbated by the general social distrust of the Kashmiri people in India. In common perception they were always pro-Pakistan when in reality they were quite opposed to Pakistan. A popular feeling, propagated mainly (but perhaps not exclusively) by the Hindu right wing (the rulers today) was that the Kashmiris made unjust demands, and had extracted a heavy price from India. Kashmir was seen as a pampered place, a prime example of the appeasement of the minorities. This opinion, masquerading as nationalist, also held that only the virtual destruction of the Kashmiri identity would resolve the Kashmir problem! Even the BJP held that Article 370 of the Constitution of India that confers a 'special status' on Kashmir is the root cause of the whole 'Kashmir problem' and a 'total integration of Kashmir into India' is the only solution. (See box for an example of this view.) This simplistic solution smacks of a colonial mentality. These 'ultra-nationalists' wanted a settlement of non-Kashmiris (read also non-Muslims) in large numbers in Kashmir so that the Kashmiris would no longer be a majority in their own territory. They do not seem to have learnt even from the failure of the Jewish settlement policy in Palestine.

The Government of India has unfortunately had a vacillating policy in Kashmir. It has on the one hand talked of liberal, political solutions that would respect the autonomy and the identity of the Kashmiri people. On the other hand, it has always been distrustful of the ground situation in Kashmir. It showed a similar ambiguity in dealing with the insurgents. It was not able to talk to the genuine Kashmiri elements that represented the broad sentiments of the people. It was also not able to isolate the clearly Pakistan inspired or mercenary elements. Fundamentalism is in reality not in tune with the Islam prevalent in Kashmir. The Government of India was not able to make use of this fact at all.

The current events are too recent. There was a 'unilateral cessation of hostilities' for six months. The apparent lull in military initiatives was not followed up vigorously enough with political efforts. The 'truce' has been withdrawn as the talks show a sign at last of being possible. This has been further complicated with the timing of the invitation to the CEO of Pakistan Gen. Pervez Musharraf. The position of India for a long time was that it could negotiate only with a democratic government of Pakistan. The stance has suddenly changed for no apparent reasons. Any efforts to improve relationships with Pakistan and to inaugurate possibilities of peace are of course welcome. The long-term effects of the invitation however need to be considered. There are also questions, particularly in the wake of the recent statements by Mr. Clinton,

whether India has at last accepted a 'third party mediation' (however hidden) in the dispute.

Kashmir demands a genuine political solution. At the core is the respect for the autonomy, identity, and democratic aspirations of the people of Kashmir. Human rights violations must cease at once. The situation must be demilitarised. Negotiations must begin with the genuine representatives of the people of Kashmir.

One can only hope that the forthcoming talks with the CEO of Pakistan will help to ease the tension and make democratic solutions possible.

**MYTH: The migration of Kashmiri Pandits is mainly because of a) the growth of militancy and b) the hostilities between Hindus and Muslims.**

**FACT:** The present armed militancy in the valley is generally dated to 1989 and intensified from 1990 onwards. Mass agitation over deeply felt issues is not new to the valley but the systematic use of arms is new. Prior to 1990, there was no such migration of Pandits. Many migrated to Himachal Pradesh and others States. Some 40,000 are in refugee camps in New Delhi.

It is not however true that the Pandits have been the only victims of the militants. The militancy by and large has not been directed against Hindus or other non-Muslims. Only in the recent past have some extremist groups, reportedly made up of non-Kashmiri elements sought to massacre non-Muslim non-combatants to impart a communal colour to the entire issue and to frustrate the efforts to restore peace and start a dialogue.

A Times of India report (5th Feb.1992) states that militants killed 1585 men and women, including 982 Muslims, 218 Hindus, 23 Sikhs and 363 security personnel between January 1990 and October 1992.

The Kashmiri Pandits had first considered migration in 1986 but this decision was held in abeyance due to the appeals of a goodwill mission constituted by reputed Kashmiris. In 1990, the militancy increased. This time around Mr. Jag Mohan, the present BJP minister was the Governor of Kashmir and he dissolved the goodwill mission to Pandits persuading them to migrate to Jammu<sup>14</sup>. He maintained that the decision was based on the fact that the armed forces would not be able to provide security for the widely dispersed Pandit community and advised them to therefore leave the valley. While this reasonable-sounding argument that the Administration could not assure security to the entire community was for public consumption his private motive was different. The migration of the whole community would give the unrest a communal colour, which was the image that suited the kind of propaganda India wished to undertake..."(Blood) This motive was evident from the Governor's reaction to attempts by eminent personalities to bridge the communal divide.



Jagmohan did not allow this effort to succeed arguing...“so long as the Kashmiri identity exists, it will be exploited by America and Pakistan and that ‘if Hindus and Muslims live together in the valley, that will demoralise the armed forces’”.

However, in March 1990 Balraj Puri stated “I found no hostility among common Muslims in Kashmir against Pandits, and that allegations of gross violations of Human rights by security forces needs to be investigated”<sup>15</sup>. At the same time, Hindu communal groups launched a campaign of fear among the Pandits. “Much disinformation is being spread in Jammu and Delhi that scores of Hindu temples and shrines have been desecrated or destroyed in Kashmir. This is completely untrue and it is baffling that the Government has not thought it fit to ask Doordarshan to do a program on *mandirs* in Kashmir just to reassure people that they remain unharmed.”<sup>16</sup>

Evidently, the problem of the migration of Kashmiri Pandits is the outcome of a number of factors: their disenchantment and alienation from the policies pursued by the State that triggered widespread militancy among the people, and the fear psychosis spread by the Governor Jag Mohan. It had nothing to do with any Hindu-Muslim hostility.

**MYTH: *The demand for autonomy is equivalent to secessionism and therefore such a demand is anti-national.***

**FACT:** As we have seen in the previous section the accession of Kashmir to India took place under the treaty of accession as per which Kashmir was to have its own constitution, its own Prime Minister, *Sadr-e-Riyast*. India was to have control on defense, external affairs, communication, and currency. This is what Article 370 is all about.

Autonomy in no way means separation from the Indian Union. It only means respect of the accession treaty under which Kashmir acceded to (*not merged with*) India. Most of the free elections in Kashmir have seen the victory of the party (National Conference), which advocated autonomy. It shows what the real aspirations of the people are. Even today in Kashmir due to the kind of Government policies imposed upon the people, a section of the Kashmiris are calling for *Azadi* (Independence). On the other hand, another section owes allegiance to India but desires autonomy, devolution of power, and empowerment of people.

**MYTH: *The armed forces in Kashmir are the best guarantee of peace in Kashmir.***

**FACT:** With the rise of militancy there has also been an increase in the strength of the army (and other security forces under central control) in Kashmir. There is hardly any civilian rule in Kashmir. The Indian army behaves like an occupation army, and little wonder therefore is seen as such by the people in the valley.

The Army has been indiscriminate in arresting Kashmiri youth on the grounds of suspicion and then torturing them, sometimes even leading to death. “A study prepared by Bakshi Ahmad Dabla of University of Kashmir for ‘Save the Children Fund’ shows that 60,000 people had died in Kashmir until 1999, and there were 20,000 orphans and 16,000 widows. The same study based on random sample of cases shows that 80% of deaths were due to ‘cross-firing’ killings by security forces, or in custody by renegades. The Government Mental Hospital in Shrinagar treated 31,000 patients in 1999. Their records show that 60-70 % of them were victims or witness to atrocities committed by the security forces.”<sup>17</sup> Military deployment and atrocities on civilians is furthering the process of alienation the local population.

**MYTH: *The trifurcating of Kashmir into a) Muslim dominated valley b) Hindu dominated Jammu and c) Buddhist dominated Laddakh is the only solution to the Kashmir issue.***

**FACT:** This myth is the brainchild of the Sangh Parivar. Despite the predominance of one or the other community in the respective regions, a great deal of inter-mingling prevails in these regions and none are ethnically homogenous.

The solution to the Kashmir ‘problem’ is not merely complex but positions on it are wide and varied. For instance,

- a. Indian Government maintains Kashmir is an integral part of India and so any solution has to be within the framework of the Indian Constitution, and that third party mediation is not acceptable.
- b. Pakistan has accorded the status of *Azad Kashmir* to the part of Kashmir forcibly occupied by it. It maintains that people of Kashmir do not want to remain in India so Kashmiris should be permitted to unite and *Azad Kashmir* should be formed uniting both the parts of Kashmir. Pakistan wants the third party mediation.
- c. A part of Kashmir has been given by Pakistan to China, which the latter had claimed to be its part.
- d. The Kashmir Government wants more autonomy as per the status of Kashmir before 1953. Though free and fair elections have been a rarity most of the state Governments have asked for more autonomy, most of the time.
- e. Kashmiri militants, the indigenous, and the infiltrators have different positions on the issue but most of them have been demanding an Independent Kashmir, Pre-1947 accession of Kashmir to India.



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### *A Historical Outline of the Kashmiri Struggle*

- ❖ The beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century saw the rise of Sikh rule in Punjab, and it was only by 1819 did Ranjit Singh of Punjab manage to defeat the Sikh rulers and planted the despotic Dogra rule (Hindu Maharaja). Thus with the Treaty of Amritsar between the East India Company and Raja Gulab Singh of Jammu – who become the ruler of the new state on a payment of Rs. 75 lakhs – British ensured their influence in Kashmir through their puppet rulers. Kashmir population was reeling in abject poverty under the rule of the Dogra kings.
- ❖ By 1931, there were mass demonstrations all over the state demanding political reforms. This led to the Maharaja appointing a commission that recommended basic reforms and the All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference in 15-17 October 1932 was formed. In 1939 the Muslim Conference splits and the National Conference (NC) with Sheikh Abdullah as its founder and leader is formed;
- ❖ The programme adopted by NC on 29 and 30 September 1944 – called Naya (new) Kashmir – stated that "the problem of Kashmir was surrounded by the wider concentric circles of the problems of India and [that] of the world as a whole...it (NC) too must formulate more concretely its own conception of the New Kashmir it strives to build".
- ❖ In 1945 the NC launched a mass struggle against the despotic rule in Kashmir and in 1946 the Treaty of Amritsar was abrogated restoring the sovereignty to the people of Kashmir. The "Quit Kashmir" movement was then launched resulting in the arrest of Abdullah and his colleagues. Raja Hari Singh's govt. resorts to violent action.
- ❖ The transfer of power on August 15, 1947 was accompanied by the division of the sub-continent into India and Pakistan on religious line. Hari Singh enters into a standstill agreement with Pakistan. On 29 September, Sheikh Abdullah is released from prison and on October 5, the India declares that the accession of Jodhpur, Junagadh, Hyderabad and Kashmir would be considered only after the plebiscite among the people of these respective princely states. Raja Hari Singh fails to commit himself to the Indian entreaty. He instead appoints MC Mahajan as Prime Minister of J&K and offers friendship to both India and Pakistan;
- ❖ On October 26, bellicose tribesmen in the northwestern regions with the tacit support of Pakistan attack Kashmir. Hari Singh asks for India's help. India puts the precondition of accession. Raja Hari Singh relents and signs the instrument of accession endorsed by Abdullah. Thus the Indian army relieves Kashmir. In reaction to the capitulation of Hari Singh, popular upsurge breaks out with the king fleeing



from Kashmir. Abdullah is appointed as the head of the emergency administration. Nehru follows up by assuring the people to conduct a plebiscite once order is restored.

- ❖ On January 1948, India complains to the UN Security Council about Pakistan's aid to tribal raiders and offers to hold an internationally monitored plebiscite on the states' future after the raiders are cleared. The cease-fire between India and Pakistan leaves 84000-sq. km. area under Pakistani control.
- ❖ Thus by October 17, 1948, the Indian Constituent Assembly props up Article 370 of the Constitution to tactically ensure "special status" to Kashmir.
- ❖ An agreement is reached on 24, July 1952 on centre-state relationships, which provides autonomy for the state within India. Meanwhile, on November 17, the Jammu Praja Parishad, supported by the Bharatiya Jana Sangh, Hindu Mahasabha and Ram Rajya Parishad agitates for accession of Kashmir to the Indian union;
- ❖ Without solving the issue of accession to the Indian Union, on 1 August 1953, Sheikh Abdullah is put under house arrest for the next 22 years on his alleged role in divisive politics. On 20<sup>th</sup> August, an agreement is reached between the Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan to appoint a plebiscite administration by the end of April 1954. But by February 1954 all leaders of Kashmir are put behind bars and efforts are in the upswing from the Indian Union to execute the accession treaty.
- ❖ An unamendable provision in the Constitution adopted for J&K, by the J&K Constituent Assembly on 30 October says that it is an integral part of the Indian Union.
- ❖ Nehru declares on 4 March 1957 that under no circumstances plebiscite will be conducted. The constitution of J&K is further amended to extend the jurisdiction of the Union Election Commission to the state and also to bring its High Court at par with those in the rest of India.
- ❖ On 8<sup>th</sup> April 1963 Abdullah unexpectedly released and the conspiracy case against him withdrawn. Abdullah immediately negotiates the future of the state first, with Nehru and then Ayub Khan. He visits Pakistan with an offer of India-Pak-Kashmir confederation, only to be rejected. A meeting with Chou-en-Lai in Algeria and statements against India, lead to his re-arrest to be kept under confinement for the next ten years. The former Prime Minister Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad is arrested under the Defense of India Rules on 22<sup>nd</sup> September.
- ❖ By 21 December 1964 the Indian Union extends Articles 356 and 357 of the Indian constitution to J&K, a declaration that leads to massive protests.
- ❖ The adopted constitution of J&K is further amended in 1965 to scrap the provision which entitles only those having 25 years of domicile in J&K as eligible citizen to be elected as head of states. On 2 February 1967 the People's Representation Act is applied to J&K.
- ❖ The Jammu Autonomy Forum is launched on 18<sup>th</sup> April followed by the formation of the Gajendragadkar Commission to examine the demand of the former. On 29 November 1968, the commission recommends statutory regional development boards.
- ❖ The Plebiscite Front launched by Abdullah is banned on 14<sup>th</sup> January 1971 by the union home ministry under Unlawful Activities Act, to prevent the Front from participating in the ensuing 'elections'.
- ❖ The Indo-Pak War comes to an end with the signing of Shimla Agreement on 2 July 1972. This rationalizes the cease fire line as the Line of Actual Control (LAC) and



commits the two Governments to resolve the Kashmir issue bilaterally thus reducing it as something between India and Pakistan.

- ❖ On 25 February 1974 Delhi once again favours Abdullah as he is released from the prison and sworn back as the chief minister with the Congress Legislative Party offering to support him. The Plebiscite Front is dissolved on 5<sup>th</sup> July and National Conference is revived with Abdullah as the president. In the Indira Gandhi-Sheikh Abdullah accord in 1975, Abdullah reiterates his commitment to regional autonomy.
- ❖ The post-emergency period brings forth the resignation of Abdullah on 27 March 1977 as Congress withdraws support. Governors' rule is imposed and the assembly dissolved. 30<sup>th</sup> June saw the first "free and fair" elections to the state assembly. National Conference gets 47 out of 76 seats.
- ❖ Sikri Commission is appointed on 30 May 1979, to inquire into regional grievances after an agreement between the state government and the All Party Action Committee of Jammu.
- ❖ Sheikh Abdullah dies on 8<sup>th</sup> September, 1982 and his son Farooq is sworn in as the Chief Minister.
- ❖ On January 14, 6 Congress workers killed in police firing on a protest demonstration. On 11<sup>th</sup> February Maqbul Bhatt, founder of Kashmir Liberation Front is hanged and buried in Delhi jail. Article 248 of the constitution is amended so as to give powers to centre to look after the law and order situation in Kashmir. Further, Jagmohan is sworn in as the governor on 2<sup>nd</sup> April. The Farooq Abdullah ministry is soon shown the door as GM Shah is sworn in as chief minister on 2<sup>nd</sup> July. On August 15, 1985, police fire on anti-India demonstration.
- ❖ The state govt. is again dissolved on 7 March 1986. The JKLF chief Amanullah Khan is deported on 25<sup>th</sup> July from London. Farooq is reinstated as chief minister as he agrees to share power with Congress on 7<sup>th</sup> November.
- ❖ 14 Muslim parties together form the Muslim United Front on 19 January 1987. Many MUF leaders arrested; massive rigging to the elections to the state assembly on 23<sup>rd</sup> March.
- ❖ Three killed on 10 June 1988 as police fire on demonstration in Srinagar against power tariff hike. Three day bandh in the valley; curfew imposed in reaction to the wave of anti-India demonstrations on August 15. Four killed in police firing on 18 August followed by 3 on 26 August.
- ❖ Bandh observed on 13-14 February, 1989 against Salman Rushdie's Satanic Verses, fifty injured in clash with the police. Demonstrations and clashes with the police continue with occasional firing by the police and grenade attacks by the youth. On 20<sup>th</sup> July, communal clashes flare up in Leh. On 21<sup>st</sup> August a National Conference worker is shot dead by the militants while on 17<sup>th</sup> September, BJP leader Jia Lal Taploo is shot dead. Again on 4<sup>th</sup> November, former sessions Judge Neel Kanth Kranjoo (who sentenced Maqbool Bhat to death) is shot dead. Rubaiya Sayeed (daughter of union home minister Mufti Mohammed) kidnapped by militants; released in exchange for 5 JKLF militants.
- ❖ Farooq resigns as chief minister on 19 January 1990. Nightlong house to house search in Srinagar the following day; protest demonstrations against army excesses; 35 killed in Srinagar by security forces; curfew imposed.
- ❖ On 22<sup>nd</sup> January, 8 killed in firing by security forces in Srinagar. 200 state police personnel hold protest demonstration against killings of 3 of their colleagues by paramilitary forces. The Srinagar Doordarshan Director, Lassa Kaul is shot dead on 13<sup>th</sup> February. State assembly is again dissolved on the orders of the Governor on 16<sup>th</sup> February.



- ❖ Mass exodus of Kashmiri pundits begins.
- ❖ 30 killed in firing at Zakura near Hazrat Bal and Barzala by-pass in Srinagar on 1<sup>st</sup> March. On 24<sup>th</sup> March, independent ex-MLA Mir Mustafa kidnapped and killed by Hazbul Mujahideen. On 6<sup>th</sup> April, Kashmir University VC Mushir-ul-Haq, his private secy. Abdul Ghani and HMT GM H.L. Khera kidnapped and later killed by J&K Student Liberation Front.
- ❖ 21<sup>st</sup> May saw the killing of Mirwaiz Maulavi Mahd. Farooq. Army fires on the mourning procession killing 50 people. Jagmohan resigns as Governor on 26<sup>th</sup> May and GC Saxena succeeds him. The Disturbed Areas Act is further amended to give a free hand to the army by July 1990.
- ❖ Anti-Pak demonstration in Srinagar following the killing of a JKLF area commander by Hizbul on 30 April 1991. JKLF is the only organization, which wants Kashmir to fully liberate from both India and Pakistan. JKLF openly condemns the unnecessary interference of Pakistan in Kashmir struggle. It also opposed the induction of foreigners by Pakistan into Kashmir struggle. With this Pakistan provokes the Hizbul Mujahideen armed, trained and strengthened by it, to launch armed attacks against the JKLF.
- ❖ JKLF chief Amanullah Khan leads a peace march in POK; tries to cross the LAC resulting in the killing of 12 persons (11 February 1992) in the clash with the police. On 30<sup>th</sup> March, Pakistani forces arrest 500 JKLF marchers in POK.
- ❖ 7 killed in a clash between JKLF and Hizbul Mujahideen on 15<sup>th</sup> May. On 15<sup>th</sup> July, JKLF and HM agree to bury their differences for the common goal of self-determination.
- ❖ In December, RSS holds a rally in Delhi demanding that the ex-servicemen of Dogra nationality be settled in Kashmir Valley.
- ❖ In December 1992 various political groups came together and formed a united organisation called the All Kashmir Hurriyat (freedom) Conference. Although Jamat-e-Islami, People's Conference, Muslim Conference and Ittehadul Muslimin are all part of Hurriyat, Jamat-e-Islami and its armed wing Hizbul Majuhideen have the hegemony over the Hurriyat.
- ❖ Para-military forces, in Sopore killed 50, on 7 January 1993, when militants injured two of their personnel in an attack. Later in Mominabad the security forces in an operation wipe out an entire family.. Speaking in Parliament, the Union Home Minister S.B. Chavan assures on 26 February and 1<sup>st</sup> March that the govt. is ready to create a safe-zone for Kashmiri Pundits (Hindus) anywhere in the Valley.
- ❖ JKLF leader Javeed Ahmed appeals to the Muslims of Srinagar to vacate before 10<sup>th</sup> June 1993 houses of Hindus if occupied when they left the state, so that they can come back and live comfortably. He appeals to Hindu brothers to come back to Kashmir and to take part in the ongoing liberation struggle.
- ❖ Between January 1992 and March 1993 the army conducted nearly 3,647 raids. In all, more than 300 died in Custody due to torture. In April 1993, the army went on a rampage in the historic Lal Chowk area killing about 280 people and burning many houses.
- ❖ The 50000 strong state police force resorts to a wildcat strike on 21<sup>st</sup> April holding up the top brass in the police control room following the death of their colleague Riaz Ahmed in army custody. Army intervenes on 27<sup>th</sup> April to disarm the striking policemen. The police relent once the officer responsible for Riaz's death is sent out of Kashmir. 110 policemen who had partaken in the strike suspended on 2<sup>nd</sup> May.



- ❖ In June 1993, under the aegis of JKLF, militant groups in Kashmir hold a meeting to jointly resist the growing attacks of the Indian army. They form a "Kashmir United Jihad Council" and decide to first liberate the Kashmir Valley and the Doda district of Jammu where Muslim population is in majority.
- ❖ Dr. Farooq Ashal and Dr. A.A. Guru, both reputed medical practitioners, trade unionists and well known Civil Rights activists were shot dead by security forces in broad day light as they were actively exposing the atrocities of the security forces.
- ❖ The Kashmiri Pundits, refugees in India, persistently demand that a special area be marked out for them Southwest of Jhelum River. They issue a press statement in this regard on 1<sup>st</sup> July in the name of an organization called Panun Kashmir (Our Kashmir); insists that they will settle down only in Kashmir. If their demand is conceded, the Kashmir Valley now inhabited by 95% Muslims will turn into a Hindu dominated area.
- ❖ After 32 days of the Indian army's siege of Hazratbal mosque—ostensibly to 'capture' top Kashmiri militants, possibly also some Pakistani Intelligence agents and to save the holy relic—comes to an end. While the siege is continuing the army on October 22<sup>nd</sup> clamps a curfew in Srinagar and firing and killing more than 50 and injuring about 75 at the Bijbehara town. On October 24<sup>th</sup> the victims are disposed off in a mass funeral.
- ❖ According to government statistics, in 1994 alone, the army killed 1,596 'militants'
- ❖ From January to December 1998 the total killings that were recorded in Kashmir touched 2939 out of which 306 killings occurred under custody of the army or police. Altogether 1408 houses were either burnt down or blasted in the valley.
- ❖ The Hijacking of the Indian airlines flight by militants to Kandahar by mid December. The hostages are released in return of four prominent militant leaders.

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