KASHMIR INSIGHT

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"KASHMIR CANNOT REMAIN THE VALLEY OF SILENCE. IT IS TIME FOR THE WORLD TO LISTEN."

27 OCTOBER BLACK DAY

THE DAY THE TROOPS LANDED

HOW OCTOBER 27, 1947, CHANGED KASHMIR FOREVER



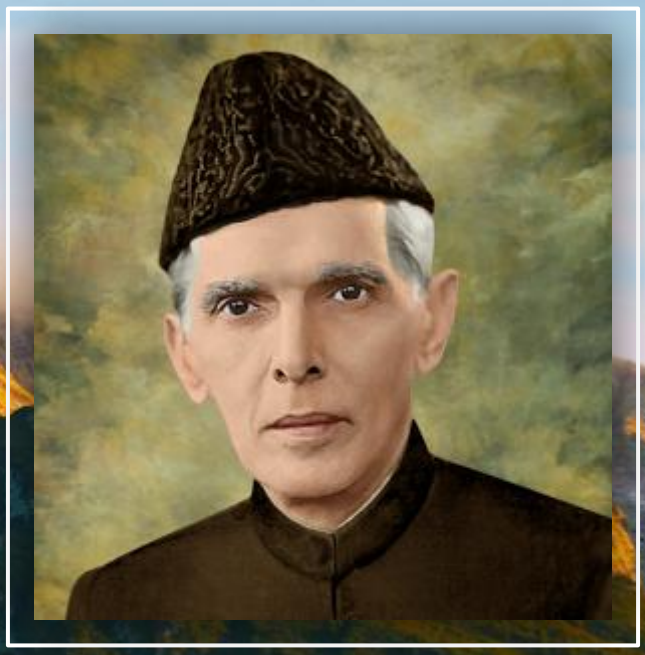
EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW
GULAM MOHAMMAD KHAN SOPORI





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KASHMIR IS THE JUGULAR VEIN OF PAKISTAN



"Kashmir is the jugular vein of Pakistan and no nation or country would tolerate its jugular vein remains under the sword of the enemy".

QUAID-E-AZAM MUHAMMAD ALI JINNAH,
Pakistan's First Governor General during his stay in Ziarat 1948

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ATROCITIES BY INDIAN TROOPS

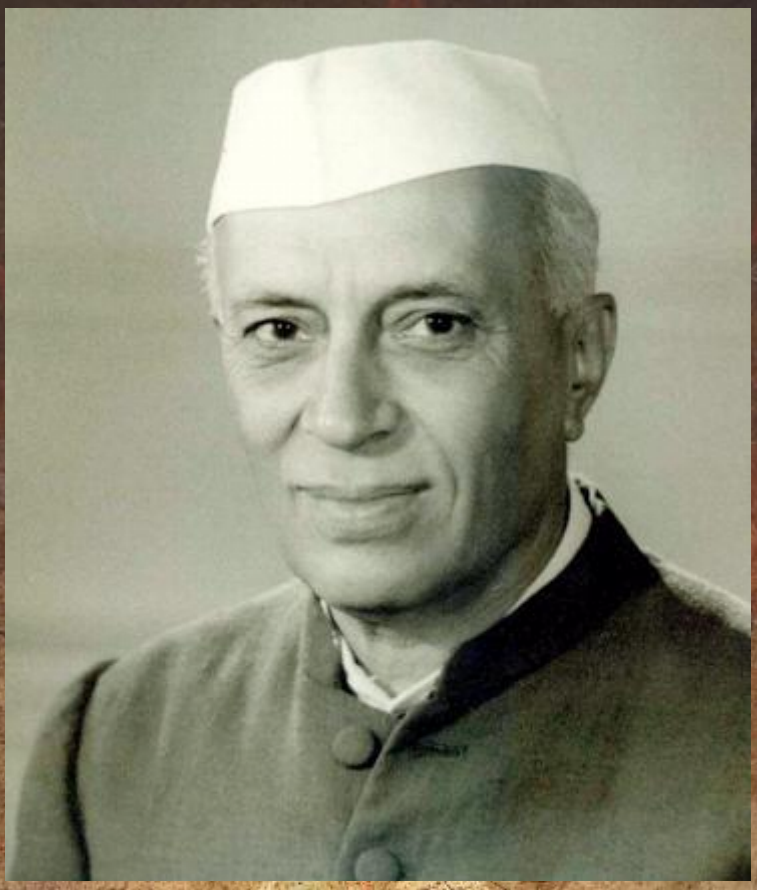
January 1989 to October , 2026

Total Killings*	96,502
Custodial Killings	7,421
Civilians Arrested	184,722
Structures Destroyed/Damaged	110,614
Women Widowed	22,993
Children Orphaned	108,011
Women Gangraped/Molested	11,285

** Including custodial killings*

Source: Kashmir Media Service (www.kmsnews.org)

REMINDER TO INDIA



"...where the State has not acceded to that Dominion whose majority community is the same as State's, the question whether State has finally acceded to one or other Dominion should be ascertained by reference to the will of people"

Indian Prime Minister
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU'S
Telegram to Pakistan Prime Minister
Liaquat Ali Khan
November 8, 1947)

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KASHMIR INSIGHT
OCT 2026

CONTENTS

Cover Story

The Day The Troops Landed *By Humayun Aziz Sandeela* — 05

Interview

Interview with Ghulam Muhammad Khan Sopori — 12

Reportage

79 Years On, Oppressed Kashmiris — 15

Opinion

October 27, 1947 The Indian Intervention in Kashmir — 19

Interview

Interview With Sardar Masood Khan — 22

Pictorial

27 October Black Day — 25

Overview

Kashmir Dispute: A Historical Overview — 29

Article

Kashmir: Seventy-Nine Years of a Promise Unfulfilled *Dr. Ghulam Nabi Fai* — 34

Analysis

October 1947: The Chronology That Challenges Kashmir's Accession — 37

Reminder

Unfulfilled promises — 41

Review

Kashmir's Culture Under Pressure Since 1947 — 47

05



15



19



22



THE PROMISE THE WORLD LEFT BEHIND

October 27 is not merely a date in Kashmir's troubled history. For millions of Kashmiris, it marks the beginning of a military occupation that transformed their political future into one of the world's longest-running unresolved international disputes.

Nearly eight decades later, the military realities may have changed, the political landscape may have shifted and generations may have passed, but the fundamental question remains: when will the people of Jammu and Kashmir be allowed to determine their own future?



Kashmiris on both sides of the Line of Control and across the world observe October 27 as Black Day because it was on this day in 1947 that Indian troops landed in Srinagar against their will and in total disregard to the Partition Plan. The events that followed did not settle the future of Jammu and Kashmir. Instead, they led to war, division, international intervention and, ultimately, a promise that the people of the territory would be given an opportunity to determine their political destiny.

That promise remains unfulfilled. This is the tragedy of Kashmir. The dispute did not remain confined to the boundaries of a former princely state. It reached the United Nations, where the Security Council debated the issue and adopted resolutions that envisaged a settlement in accordance with the wishes of the people.

The international community, therefore, did not regard Kashmir as an ordinary internal question to be settled unilaterally. It acknowledged the disputed nature of the territory and placed the people of Jammu and Kashmir at the centre of the proposed political process.

Yet somewhere along the way, the world's commitment began to fade.

The resolutions remain part of the international record, but the political will to implement them has steadily diminished. The promise of self-determination survived in documents, while the people for whom that promise was made continued to live under the shadow of military control, political uncertainty and an unresolved conflict.

This disconnect between international commitments and political reality represents one of the most serious failures of the modern international system.

The same international community that speaks forcefully about sovereignty, democracy, human rights and the right of peoples to determine their future has shown remarkable reluctance to translate its commitments on Kashmir into meaningful action.

The reasons are not difficult to understand. Kashmir has become a victim of international double standards.

Major powers increasingly view the dispute through the prism of strategic partnerships, economic interests and geopolitical calculations. India's growing political and economic importance has created a reluctance among influential states to confront New Delhi over Kashmir. Concerns that might otherwise provoke diplomatic pressure are often reduced to carefully worded expressions of

concern.
The result is a politics of selective principle. When self-determination serves geopolitical interests, it is celebrated as a universal right. When it threatens strategic partnerships, it becomes an inconvenient complication.
For the people of Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir, however, this selectivity has had a devastating human cost. A right recognised in principle but denied in practice cannot be regarded as a right fully realised.



This is why October 27 continues to carry such profound significance.
It is a reminder that the passage of time does not erase an unresolved dispute. Indian military control cannot substitute for political consent. Economic development cannot replace political rights. Nor can constitutional or administrative changes imposed unilaterally by New Delhi settle the future of a people whose political status remains disputed.
These realities became even more pronounced on August 5, 2019.
The BJP government, led by Narendra Modi, revoked the special status of occupied Jammu and Kashmir and placed the territory under a new constitutional and administrative arrangement. The move was accompanied by an unprecedented military lockdown, communications restrictions and the detention of political leaders.
For Kashmiris, the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) and Pakistan, August 2019 represented a new and more aggressive phase in the decades-long conflict.
The revocation of Articles 370 and 35A was followed by changes in domicile rules, land laws, electoral arrangements and administrative structures. Kashmiri leaders and political organisations maintain that these measures are designed to alter the demographic and political character of the Muslim-majority territory and consolidate Indian control.
Pakistan has repeatedly warned that unilateral actions cannot alter the internationally recognised disputed status of Jammu and Kashmir. The APHC, meanwhile, has described the post-2019 measures as part of a wider attempt to weaken Kashmiri political identity and permanently undermine the struggle for self-determination.
This is precisely why the world cannot treat August 5 as merely an internal constitutional matter of India.
The post-2019 developments must be viewed against the backdrop of the unresolved international dispute that emerged in 1947. A territory does not cease to be disputed merely because one party changes its domestic laws. Nor do international commitments become irrelevant because a new constitutional arrangement is imposed unilaterally.
International disputes cannot be erased by domestic legislation.
Yet the response to India's post-2019 actions has again exposed the weakness of the global commitment to principles that the international community claims to uphold.
The question is no longer whether the world knows about Kashmir.
It does.
It knows that the dispute remains unresolved. It knows that the United Nations adopted resolutions concerning the political future of Jammu and Kashmir. It knows that Kashmiris continue to demand the right to determine their future. It knows that political dissent and human-rights concerns persist

in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir.
It also knows that continued instability over Kashmir remains one of the gravest threats to peace in South Asia.
India and Pakistan are both nuclear powers. They have fought wars over Kashmir and repeatedly been brought to the brink of wider confrontation. The Line of Control remains vulnerable to escalation.
Any serious discussion about peace and stability in South Asia must therefore begin with the recognition that Kashmir cannot simply be wished away.
Pakistan's position has consistently been that it extends political, diplomatic and moral support to Kashmiris in their struggle for self-determination and seeks a settlement in accordance with the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions and the aspirations of the people of Jammu and Kashmir.
But the present moment demands more than the repetition of established positions.
Pakistan's renewed international relevance, strengthened by its resilience during last year's conflict with India and its recent diplomatic engagement in the wider US-Israel-Iran crisis, has created an opportunity that Islamabad should not allow to pass without strategic purpose. Kashmir should occupy a more central place in Pakistan's engagements with major powers, regional capitals and international institutions.
Islamabad must consistently remind the world that it cannot indefinitely manage crises between India and Pakistan while ignoring the dispute that has repeatedly brought the two nuclear-armed neighbours to the brink of conflict. The objective should not be to seek confrontation or expect the international community to impose a solution, but to move Kashmir beyond the narrow framework of periodic crisis management and restore it to the realm of serious international diplomacy.
Pakistan should use every available diplomatic channel to emphasise that lasting stability in South Asia requires a credible process aimed at resolving the underlying dispute, while linking the Kashmir question with wider concerns about regional stability, nuclear risk, human rights and the credibility of the international system.
The APHC, representing a broad spectrum of Kashmiri political opinion, continues to maintain that Kashmiris must remain central to any process aimed at resolving the dispute. This is the principle the international community, and all parties seeking a settlement, must finally confront.
No durable settlement can be imposed over the heads of the people whose future is under discussion. No map can permanently erase their aspirations. No military presence can manufacture consent. And no unilateral constitutional action can substitute for a genuine political settlement.
October 27 is therefore not simply an anniversary of the past.
It is an indictment of the present.
It reminds the world that promises made to oppressed peoples cannot be placed indefinitely in diplomatic archives. It reminds the United Nations that resolutions are not meant to become historical exhibits. It reminds major powers that strategic interests do not absolve them of their responsibilities to international law and justice.
But it should also remind Pakistan of its own responsibility.
At a moment when Pakistan has regained diplomatic visibility and demonstrated its importance in a rapidly changing geopolitical environment, Islamabad has an opportunity to give the Kashmir cause renewed strategic and diplomatic momentum. That opportunity should not be reduced to symbolism or allowed to disappear with the next international crisis.
The world must be reminded that Kashmir is not merely a historical dispute to be managed when war appears imminent. It is an unresolved political question whose continued neglect carries consequences for regional and international peace.
Seventy-nine years after Indian troops landed in Srinagar, the essential question remains unchanged:
When will Kashmiris be allowed to determine their own future?
The answer will not come from the passage of time, military control or unilateral measures. It will require political courage, sustained diplomacy and genuine respect for the wishes of the Kashmiri people.
Until that happens, October 27 will continue to be remembered as Black Day.
Not because Kashmiris refuse to move beyond history, but because history itself has yet to deliver the promise it made to them.
The promise has not disappeared.The world has simply left it behind.
Pakistan, too, must ensure that the opportunity to bring that promise back to the centre of international diplomacy is not left behind.
And the people of Kashmir continue to wait.

THE DAY THE TROOPS LANDED

HOW OCTOBER 27, 1947, CHANGED KASHMIR FOREVER

For Jammu and Kashmir, 27 October 1947 was more than the beginning of an Indian military presence; it was the moment when a profoundly contested political question became inseparable from military power. Indian troops landed at Srinagar on that day against the wishes of the Kashmiris, transforming a rapidly escalating crisis over the future of the princely state into a conflict whose political, territorial and human consequences have endured for nearly eight decades.



The landing did not resolve the question of Kashmir's political future. Instead, it embedded that question within war, territorial division and competing claims of sovereignty. What followed was the first India-Pakistan war, the division of the former princely state, intervention by the United Nations and repeated international efforts to establish a framework through which the people of Jammu and Kashmir could determine their political future.

Nearly eight decades later, the consequences remain visible. The territory is divided by the Line of Control, generations of Kashmiris have grown up amid conflict and militarisation, and the question of who has the legitimate authority to determine Kashmir's final political status remains fiercely contested. Time has altered the political and constitutional landscape, but it has not resolved the dispute that emerged in 1947.

For India, 27 October is rooted in its account that Maharaja Hari Singh acceded to India on 26 October, and that the subsequent deployment of troops was therefore a lawful response to an external attack. For Pakistan and the Kashmiri leadership, however, the chronology and circumstances surrounding the accession remain deeply contested, while the subsequent international record is seen as evidence that the final disposition of Kashmir was never regarded, at least in the early years, as a matter settled beyond question.

That divergence is central to understanding why 27 October continues to carry such political significance. The controversy is not simply about where troops landed or when a document was signed; it concerns the larger question of whether military intervention could determine the political destiny of a territory whose future had yet to be conclusively settled.

The events of October 1947 consequently created a chain of developments that continues to shape South Asian politics: war, United Nations intervention, proposals for a plebiscite, territorial division, successive rounds of conflict and diplomacy, and, decades later, the sweeping constitutional changes imposed by India in August 2019.

For Kashmiris who observe 27 October as **Black Day**, the date therefore represents more than a historical anniversary. Their argument is that neither the passage of time nor the consolidation of Indian control on the ground can substitute for a political settlement addressing the aspirations of the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

A state caught between Partition and political choice

For Kashmir, the roots of the crisis lay in the political upheaval surrounding the Partition of British India.

At the time of Partition in August 1947, Jammu and Kashmir was one of the largest princely states in the subcontinent. Its population was overwhelmingly Muslim, while its ruler, Maharaja Hari Singh, was a Hindu.



The end of British rule placed princely states in a new and uncertain political environment. In Jammu and Kashmir, geography, demography, competing political aspirations and the strategic interests of India and Pakistan combined to create a crisis.

Pakistan and the Kashmiri leadership have consistently maintained that the future of the state could not legitimately be determined through a unilateral decision by a ruler whose political authority was already being challenged by his subjects. They point to the territory's Muslim-majority population, its geographical contiguity with Pakistan and the political aspirations of its people.

Beneath these competing political positions lay a fundamental question: **who had the right to decide the future of Jammu and Kashmir?**

That question became increasingly urgent as the political and security crisis intensified after Partition.

The crisis of October

By October 1947, Jammu and Kashmir had entered a period of intense political and military turmoil. Violence had engulfed parts of the region, political tensions had deepened and armed forces were moving towards the Kashmir Valley.

As the crisis intensified, the Maharaja's administration sought Indian military assistance. What followed remains one of the most contested episodes in the history of the dispute.

According to India's official position, Maharaja Hari Singh signed the Instrument of Accession on October 26, 1947, and India accepted the accession before flying troops into Srinagar the following day. New Delhi maintains that its military intervention was lawful and undertaken at the request of the ruler.

The chronology of Kashmir's accession has also been subjected to sustained historical scrutiny. British historian Alastair Lamb, after comparing V.P. Menon's official account with the recollections of key Indian officials and contemporary British records, questioned whether the Instrument of Accession could have been signed on 26 October 1947, as India maintains. His doubts were reinforced by discrepancies between Menon's account and the recollections of Kashmir's Prime Minister C.M. Mahajan, as well as by the diary of British Deputy High Commissioner Sir Alexander Symon, which placed Menon in Delhi on 26 October and indicated that he intended to travel to Jammu only the following day.

Historian Victoria Schofield subsequently examined the same chronology and additional British diplomatic evidence, including a communication indicating that Menon had not yet returned from Jammu on 27 October, while Indian troops were already being flown into Srinagar.

Taken together, these accounts do not by themselves settle the legal question of accession, but they complicate the conventional chronology and leave open a fundamental historical question: whether the Instrument was executed before the arrival of Indian forces, or whether the military intervention preceded the formal accession.

Pakistan and the Kashmiri leadership reject India's interpretation. They question the circumstances in which the Instrument of Accession was executed and argue that the arrival of Indian troops fundamentally altered the situation before the people of Jammu and Kashmir had been given an opportunity to determine their political future.

The controversy therefore extends beyond the authenticity or timing of a historical document. It goes to the larger question of political legitimacy and the authority to determine the future of a disputed territory.

October 27: the troops land

Against this contested backdrop, Indian troops were flown into Srinagar on October 27, 1947. The military airlift marked a decisive transformation in the crisis, bringing military power to the centre of the struggle over Kashmir's political future.

Military confrontation intensified and the first India-Pakistan war over Jammu and Kashmir followed. What had begun as a crisis surrounding the future of

a princely state rapidly became an international conflict between the two newly independent countries.

For Kashmiris, the significance of the troop landing lies not only in the military operation itself but in what it changed politically. The question of Kashmir's future would henceforth be negotiated, contested and resisted against the backdrop of armed conflict and territorial control.

The consequences were far-reaching. The conflict divided the former princely state, established competing zones of administration and eventually produced the ceasefire line that later became the Line of Control.

Yet the military confrontation did not produce a final political settlement. Instead, the dispute moved from the battlefield towards diplomacy and international intervention.

The promise of the people's will

One of the most consequential developments after the troop landing was the emergence of an explicit political commitment to allow the people of Jammu and Kashmir to have a role in determining the territory's future.

The documentary record from the weeks that followed is particularly important.

India's Governor-General, Lord Mountbatten, stated that "the question of the State's accession should be settled by a reference to the people".

Jawaharlal Nehru expressed the same principle in a telegram on October 27, 1947, stating that "the question of accession in any disputed territory or State must be decided in accordance with wishes of people and we adhere to this view".

The following day, Nehru reiterated that the accession was "subject to reference to people of State and their decision".

On October 31, he went further, describing India's assurance as one made not merely to Pakistan but "also to the people of Kashmir and to the world". He stated that after peace and order were restored, India would leave the decision regarding the state's future to its people.

The commitment was repeated in subsequent weeks.

In a November 21 communication to Pakistan's Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan, Nehru stated that once peace had been established, "the people of Kashmir should decide the question of accession by plebiscite or referendum under international auspices such as those of the United Nations".

In another communication, he proposed that India and Pakistan jointly request the United Nations to conduct a plebiscite. He also stated that where there was a dispute over accession, the final position should be ascertained through "reference to the will of the people".

Even in private correspondence with Maharaja Hari Singh on December 1, 1947, Nehru acknowledged that the proposed settlement involved "a plebiscite under U.N.O.", writing: "we are bound down to that proposal".

These statements do not, by themselves, resolve the competing legal interpretations of accession. India maintains that the Instrument of Accession legally integrated Jammu and Kashmir into India. Pakistan and the people of Kashmir, however, argue that the subsequent commitments and the UN process demonstrate that the final political disposition remained subject to the will of the Kashmiri people.

What the historical record does establish is that, in the immediate aftermath of October 27, India's political leadership repeatedly linked the future of Jammu and Kashmir to the wishes of its people.

That commitment became the basis for the next major phase of the dispute: its internationalisation through the United Nations.

Kashmir reaches the United Nations

On January 1, 1948, India took the Kashmir issue to the United Nations Security Council.

The move transformed the dispute from a military confrontation into an international political question.

The United Nations considered the matter and adopted a series of resolutions concerning the future of Jammu and Kashmir. The most significant was Security Council Resolution 47, adopted on April 21, 1948.

The resolution envisaged a process involving the restoration of peace and order, demilitarisation and a plebiscite through which the people of Jammu and Kashmir would determine the future of the territory.

The UN Commission for India and Pakistan subsequently developed this framework further.

For the people of Jammu and Kashmir, the UN process was significant because it placed their political future within an internationally discussed framework rather than treating the dispute solely as a matter of bilateral territorial control.

But the proposed settlement was never implemented.

Decades passed. Governments changed. Wars were fought. Agreements were signed and the Line of Control replaced the old ceasefire line. Yet no final settlement emerged.

The plebiscite that never came

For Pakistan and the Kashmiri leadership, the

unfulfilled plebiscite remains one of the central failures in the history of the dispute.

The right to self-determination is not viewed merely as an abstract political slogan. It is seen as a commitment arising from the history of the dispute, the repeated public assurances of Indian leaders and the resolutions adopted by the United Nations.

The Kashmiri struggle has therefore continued around one central demand: that the people of Jammu and Kashmir should be allowed to determine their political future without coercion.

The All Parties Hurriyat Conference has consistently maintained that no unilateral action by India can replace that right. Pakistan, meanwhile, continues to argue that durable peace in South Asia is impossible without a just settlement of the dispute in accordance with the relevant UN resolutions and the aspirations of the Kashmiri people.

Yet the passage of time has made the dispute increasingly complex. Instead of moving towards self-determination, Kashmiris believe that the political space available to them has steadily contracted.

The situation changed dramatically again in August 2019.

From October 1947 to August 2019

For Kashmiris and Pakistan, August 5, 2019, represented not a break from the history of the dispute but a profound new phase.

The Bharatiya Janata Party government, led by Narendra Modi, revoked the special constitutional status previously enjoyed by Jammu and Kashmir under Articles 370 and 35A of the Indian Constitution. The territory was divided and placed under direct federal control.

The decision was accompanied by a major security lockdown, communications restrictions, the detention of political leaders and restrictions on public life.

For the APHC, Pakistan and a large section of the Kashmiri population, these measures represented a new phase in the decades-long conflict.

The subsequent changes in domicile rules, land regulations, electoral boundaries and administrative structures deepened concerns that New Delhi was seeking to alter the demographic and political character of the Muslim-majority territory.

Kashmiri leaders argue that India is seeking to reshape the territory's future through demographic and administrative measures. Pakistan has repeatedly raised these concerns internationally, warning that unilateral actions cannot alter the disputed status of Jammu and Kashmir.

From this perspective, August 2019 represents the latest major chapter in a dispute whose modern history began with the crisis of 1947.

A land divided, a people separated

The conflict that began in 1947 eventually divided the historic territory of Jammu and Kashmir between India and Pakistan.

The Line of Control today separates families, communities and regions. For ordinary Kashmiris, this division has had profound human consequences.

Families have remained separated for generations. People have lost access to ancestral homes and relatives. Communities that once existed within a single political and geographical space have been divided by a heavily militarised frontier.

The Line of Control represents the military reality of the present, but it has not resolved the political question.

As the decades have passed, the division has become more physically entrenched while the dispute over Kashmir's final status has remained unresolved.

The human cost

The history of Kashmir is often told through military deployments, diplomatic negotiations and international resolutions. Behind these developments lies the experience of the people who have lived through the conflict.

Every generation has inherited its consequences.

During the last 37 years people in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir have borne the brunt of Indian military operations, as reflected in the following figures

January 1989 till July, 2026	
Total Killings	96,502
Custodial/Fake Encounter Killings	7,421
Civilian Arrested	184,675
Structures/Houses Destroyed/Damaged	110,614
Women Widowed	22,993
Children Orphaned	108,011
Women gang -raped/Molested	11,285

The figures represent not merely statistics but the human cost carried by successive generations of

TIMELINE: THE 24 HOURS THAT CHANGED KASHMIR

October
Political and military crisis intensifies in Jammu and Kashmir.
October 26
The Maharaja seeks Indian military assistance as the situation deteriorates.
October 26
According to India's official account, Maharaja Hari Singh signs the controversial Instrument of Accession.
October 26–27
The Indian leadership considers and approves military intervention in Jammu and Kashmir.
October 27, Dawn
Indian troops are airlifted into Srinagar.
October 27
The first Indian troops land at Srinagar Airport.
October 27
Indian military control begins to expand across strategic areas.
Following weeks
The conflict develops into the first India-Pakistan war over Jammu and Kashmir.
January 1, 1948
India takes the Kashmir issue to the United Nations.
April 21, 1948
The UN Security Council adopts Resolution 47.
January 5, 1949
The UNCIP resolution sets out the framework for a plebiscite.

Kashmiris.

One generation witnessed the first troop landings and the beginning of war. Another lived through decades of political conflict. A later generation witnessed mass resistance and armed struggle in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The present generation of people living in occupied Jammu and Kashmir has experienced the communication restrictions, political detentions and restructuring that followed August 5, 2019.

For them, October 27 is not ancient history. It remains part of the political memory through which the present is understood.

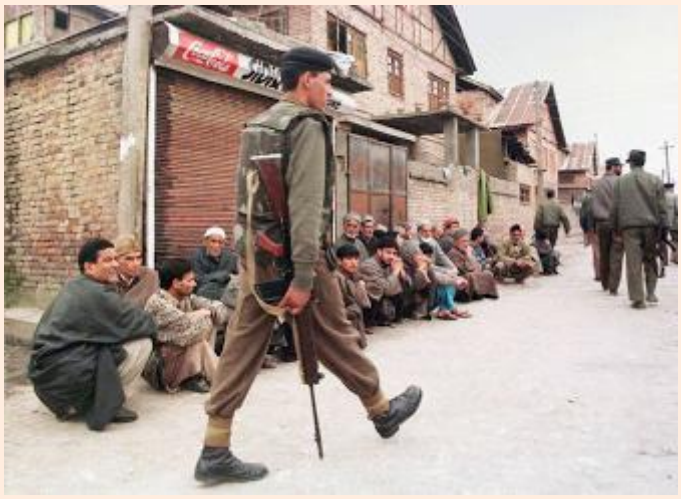
In IIOJK, political leaders have been detained, activists and human-rights defenders have faced restrictions, media organisations have operated under pressure, public demonstrations have been curtailed and Kashmiri voices demanding self-determination have faced restrictions.

The APHC leadership itself has been subjected to arrests, detention and restrictions over the decades.

Yet the political demand for self-determination has

• FROM SRINAGAR AIRFIELD TO THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL

• **October 27, 1947**
• Indian troops land in Srinagar.
• **1947–48**
• The first India-Pakistan war over Jammu and Kashmir begins.
• **January 1, 1948**
• India approaches the United Nations Security Council.
• **April 21,1948**
• UN Security Council Resolution 47 calls for steps leading towards a plebiscite.
• **1948–49**
• UNCIP resolutions develop a framework for demilitarisation and a plebiscite.
• **January 1949**
• A UN-supervised ceasefire comes into effect.
• **1972**
• The Simla Agreement renames the ceasefire line as the Line of Control.
• **5 August,2019**
• India revokes the special status of Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir, triggering a new phase of political and constitutional change.
• **October 27, 2026**
• Kashmiris mark 79 years since the Indian troop landings in Srinagar.



survived.

Why Kashmiris remember October 27

Each year, Kashmiris on both sides of the Line of Control and across the world mark October 27 as Black Day.

In Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Pakistan, rallies, seminars and demonstrations express solidarity with the people of Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir. Across the world, members of the Kashmiri diaspora use the occasion to draw attention to the unresolved dispute and continuing human-rights concerns.

For the APHC, the day remains an expression of political resistance. For Pakistan, it represents a reaffirmation of political, diplomatic and moral

support for the Kashmiri people's right to self-determination.

For Kashmiris, it is a day of remembrance — but also a reminder that the political question emerging from 1947 has never received a final settlement.

The observance therefore challenges the assumption that the passage of time alone can transform a contested political question into a settled one.



An unfinished chapter

Seventy-nine years after Indian troops first landed in Srinagar, the central question remains unanswered: **who will determine the future of Jammu and Kashmir?**

India maintains that the question has been settled and regards Jammu and Kashmir as an integral part of the Indian Union. Pakistan rejects this position and maintains that the territory remains internationally disputed. The Kashmiri leadership argues that neither India nor Pakistan should determine the future of the people without their participation and consent.

This is why October 27, 1947, remains politically relevant.

The date marks a decisive moment in the militarisation of the dispute, but the historical record that followed also produced international commitments and a UN process centred on the political future of Jammu and Kashmir.

The events following August 5, 2019, have added another layer to that unresolved history. The continued dispute over political rights, constitutional status, representation and demographic change has ensured that the question remains embedded in South Asian politics.

For Kashmiris, the passage of nearly eight decades has not diminished the demand for a political settlement.

The first Indian troops landed in Srinagar on October 27, 1947.

The landing was followed by war. The war was followed by international intervention. The international process produced resolutions. Those resolutions envisaged a political mechanism for determining the territory's future.

That mechanism was never implemented.

Generations passed.

The territory remained divided.

And the political question that emerged in 1947 survived the passage of time.

That is why October 27 is remembered as **Kashmir Black Day**.

It is remembered because, for millions of Kashmiris, it marks the moment when military power became inseparable from the struggle over their political future.

It is remembered because the promise of self-determination remains, in the eyes of Pakistan and Kashmiri political leadership, unfulfilled.

And it is remembered because Kashmir's political status remains contested despite decades of conflict, diplomacy, constitutional change and international engagement.

Nearly eight decades after the first troops landed in Srinagar, the Kashmir dispute remains unfinished.

Indian troops landed on October 27, 1947. But the political question of Kashmir did not end with them.

HUMAYUN AZIZ SANDEELA
The author is an Islamabad based journalist.



INTERVIEW

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW - GULAM MOHAMMAD KHAN SOPORI

KASHMIR: A CONTINUING QUESTION OF SELF-DETERMINATION

Senior All Parties Hurriyat Conference leader, Gulam Mohammad Khan Sopori, argues that October 27 remains a living political issue for Kashmiris, symbolising an unresolved question of self-determination and political rights. He highlights the impact of post-2019 constitutional and political changes, restrictions on dissent, and concerns over demographic and institutional transformation in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir. He calls for greater international attention, meaningful Kashmiri participation, and Pakistan's continued diplomatic support for a peaceful and just resolution.

KI. For Kashmiris living inside Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), what does October 27, 1947, mean today: a historical event, a political symbol, or a continuing reality?

KS: For Kashmiris, October 27 is not merely a date in history. It remains a political symbol and, for many, a continuing reality. Kashmiris remember that day as the beginning of a prolonged period of political uncertainty, conflict and denial of their right to determine their own political future in accordance with the relevant UN resolutions and the principles underlying the two-nation theory.

For us, the central issue is not simply what happened in 1947, but the unresolved question of the political aspirations of the Kashmiri people. Until that question is addressed in accordance with their wishes and international commitments, October 27 will continue to carry deep political significance.

KI. How has the meaning of Kashmir Black Day evolved for a new generation that was born decades after 1947 but has grown up amid military presence and political restrictions?

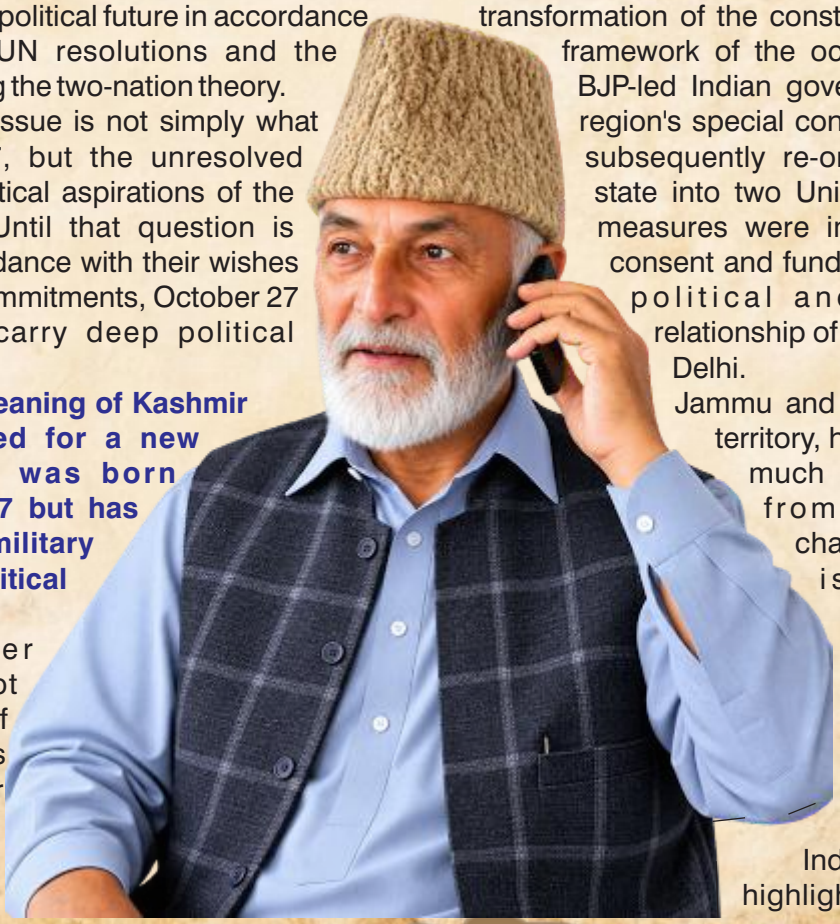
KS: The younger generation did not witness the events of 1947, but it has inherited their consequences. Its understanding of Kashmir has been shaped by the experiences of its own lifetime, military presence, security restrictions, the use of stringent laws, arrests, killings, human rights abuses, political uncertainty, contested narratives and the absence of a durable political settlement.

For young Kashmiris, therefore, Black Day is understood not simply through historical memory but also through a basic question: why does the Kashmir dispute remain unresolved after 79 years? Their aspirations increasingly centre on justice, dignity, political rights and a peaceful future.

The responsibility of the political leadership is to communicate the historical dimension of the Kashmir dispute while also addressing the aspirations, identity and concerns of the younger generation.

KI. What has changed most dramatically in everyday life in Jammu and Kashmir since the revocation of Articles 370 and 35A in August 2019?

KS: The most significant change has been the transformation of the constitutional and political framework of the occupied territory. The BJP-led Indian government revoked the region's special constitutional status and subsequently re-organised the former state into two Union Territories. These measures were imposed without our consent and fundamentally altered the political and constitutional relationship of the territory with New Delhi.



Jammu and Kashmir, a disputed territory, has since come under much more direct control from New Delhi. The changes have affected issues including domicile, land, employment, political representation and local decision-making.

At the same time, the Indian government has highlighted investments in

infrastructure and development. Development is important, and Kashmiris want better roads, education, healthcare, employment and economic opportunities. But development alone cannot resolve a political dispute. Roads, buildings and economic projects cannot substitute for political rights or a settlement that commands the confidence of the people.

KI. Do ordinary Kashmiris still have space to express their political aspirations openly, and how would you describe the current environment for political dissent and civil society?

KS: The space for political expression remains constrained. There are formal political institutions and elections, but the broader environment for dissent, public mobilisation and civil society remains difficult.

Restrictions, arrests and the application of stringent laws have created an atmosphere in which people remain cautious about expressing political views openly. When people believe that expressing an opinion can expose them to legal, professional or social consequences, genuine political debate naturally becomes narrower.

A sustainable peace requires more than elections. It requires an environment in which people can peacefully express their political views and aspirations without fear or intimidation.

KI. How have restrictions on political leadership, religious activity, media and public mobilisation affected Kashmiri society and the political movement?

KS: These restrictions have created a climate in which political and social activity has become more cautious and fragmented. Restrictions on political leaders and organisations have reduced the space available for society to debate its political future openly. Constraints affecting journalists, activists and civil society have also made it more difficult for competing perspectives to be heard.

Since the abrogation of Article 370, the Indian government has introduced significant changes to laws and administrative arrangements relating to domicile, land, employment, political representation and the media in occupied Kashmir. From the perspective of the Kashmiri people, these measures have further weakened their political and institutional space.

Religious and public spaces have traditionally played an important role in Kashmiri society. When public mobilisation is restricted, political expression often moves away from open forums and becomes more private.

The long-term consequence is a weakening of democratic political culture. If there is to be a peaceful resolution, there must be more space, not less, for peaceful political dialogue and expression.

KI. There are growing concerns about changes to land, domicile, electoral representation and demographic patterns. How do Kashmiris inside the territory view these developments?

KS: There is deep concern among Kashmiris about changes to land laws, domicile rules, electoral representation and the broader demographic character of the territory. For many people, these are not simply administrative or legal changes; they are seen as issues that could affect their political voice, economic opportunities, cultural identity and relationship with their homeland.

There is also concern that non-local populations are increasingly occupying positions and gaining opportunities that were traditionally available to local residents, while Kashmiris face restrictions and uncertainty in employment and economic affairs.

These developments are viewed by Kashmiris as part of a broader process of demographic and political transformation. The concern is not limited to individual laws but relates to their cumulative impact on the identity, political representation and future character of Jammu and Kashmir.

People have different political opinions and priorities, but a central concern remains that decisions affecting the future character and political representation of Kashmir should involve the people themselves. Any process perceived as being imposed without meaningful local consultation inevitably creates mistrust and insecurity.

KI. The Indian government maintains that normalcy and development have returned to Kashmir. How does this official narrative compare with the experience of people on the ground?

KS: Development and improvements in infrastructure are certainly important, and ordinary Kashmiris want better roads, education, employment, healthcare and economic opportunities. But development alone cannot be equated with political normalcy while the Kashmir dispute remains unresolved and the region continues to experience a heavy military presence.

The situation on the ground is more complicated. A society can have new infrastructure and increased economic activity while people continue to experience political restrictions, uncertainty, fear or a lack of meaningful political participation.

Therefore, the real measure of normalcy should not simply be statistics about tourism, roads, investment

or construction. It should also be whether Kashmiris feel secure, free and politically empowered to express their views and participate in determining their political future.

KI: After decades of conflict, how can the Kashmiri political movement preserve its historical identity and aspirations while engaging a younger generation with different experiences and expectations?

KS: The Kashmiri political movement needs to preserve its historical identity while also speaking to the aspirations and concerns of the younger generation. Young Kashmiris have grown up in a very different environment from previous generations. Their concerns include education, employment, technology, economic opportunity, freedom of expression and their place in an increasingly connected world.

The answer is not to abandon history, but to explain why that history still matters while developing a forward-looking political vision. The movement should invest in education, dialogue, peaceful political engagement and young leadership to strengthen the Kashmiri political voice and press for a peaceful resolution of the Kashmir dispute.

Young people must also be given space to articulate their own aspirations rather than simply being asked to inherit the slogans of earlier generations. This is particularly important in a rapidly changing social and technological environment.

A credible political movement must connect the principles of dignity, political rights and self-determination with the everyday concerns of young Kashmiris. That is how historical identity can remain relevant without becoming trapped in the past.

KI: What role do you expect from Pakistan, particularly at the diplomatic and international level, in supporting the Kashmiri people's right to determine their political future?

KS: Pakistan has an important role to play, particularly at the diplomatic and international levels. Its strongest contribution should be to consistently advocate for the political rights and aspirations of the Kashmiri people through peaceful and diplomatic means.

Pakistan should continue to keep the Kashmir issue on the international agenda, engage governments and international organisations, support credible institutions and human rights monitoring, and encourage meaningful dialogue involving genuine Kashmiri leadership, including the All Parties Hurriyat Conference.

Pakistan should also ensure that its position remains focused on the political future, rights and aspirations of the Kashmiri people rather than allowing the Kashmir question to be reduced to merely a bilateral dispute between India and Pakistan.

Ultimately, Kashmiris must remain central to any process concerning their political future. People of Kashmir have always appreciated the moral, political and diplomatic support provided by Pakistan, but any lasting settlement must take into account the aspirations and consent of the people most directly affected.

At the same time, efforts for the release of Hurriyat leadership, political activists and young Kashmiris detained under various cases remain particularly important. The continued detention of political voices further narrows the space for peaceful political expression and dialogue.

KI: On this October 27, what is your message to the international community, and what concrete action do you believe is necessary to move Kashmir from conflict towards a just and lasting peace?

KS: My message to the international community is simple: Kashmir should not be treated as a forgotten conflict or reduced to a dispute over territory. At its heart is the political future, dignity, fundamental rights and aspirations of millions of people.

The international community should move beyond expressions of concern and support meaningful and peaceful efforts towards a political resolution of the Kashmir dispute. This requires sustained attention to human rights, credible and independent monitoring, protection of fundamental freedoms, meaningful dialogue among the relevant parties and, most importantly, the inclusion of genuine Kashmiri representation in any process concerning their future.

October 27 should therefore serve as a reminder that unresolved disputes and prolonged conflicts do not disappear simply because the world stops talking about them. A lasting peace in Kashmir will require justice, dignity, political participation and a settlement that respects the aspirations of the Kashmiri people.

The objective should not merely be the absence of violence, repression and fear. It should be a political settlement that people can genuinely accept as fair, legitimate and durable.

REPORTAGE

79 YEARS ON, OPPRESSED KASHMIRIS REMAIN VICTIMS OF AN UNRESOLVED DISPUTE

October 27: The Beginning of a Long and Unfinished Tragedy

October 27, 1947, is observed by Kashmiris as a Black Day, marking the arrival of Indian troops in Srinagar and the beginning of India's military occupation of Jammu and Kashmir. Seventy-nine years later, the Kashmir dispute remains unresolved, while the people of the territory continue to bear its political, humanitarian and security consequences.

At the end of British suzerainty over the Indian subcontinent in 1947, more than 550 princely states were given the option of acceding to either India or



Pakistan, with geographical contiguity and the wishes and interests of their populations forming important considerations. Most princely states acceded to one dominion or the other without prolonged dispute. However, India also illegally annexed Hyderabad and Junagadh through political manipulation and the use of force.

Jammu and Kashmir, a Muslim-majority princely state with close geographical, economic and cultural links to Pakistan, became the centre of a major conflict. While the people largely favoured accession to Pakistan, but the sinister designs of its Hindu ruler Maharaja Hari Singh, and Indian National Congress leaders, backed by the British, shattered their aspirations.

On October 27, 1947, Indian troops were airlifted to Srinagar. From the very first day, Kashmiris rejected the Indian military intervention and launched an armed and political resistance, succeeding in liberating a vast area now known as Azad Jammu and Kashmir, while the remainder remained under Indian occupation.

For Kashmiris, October 27 therefore marks not merely a historical event, but the beginning of a conflict whose political and human consequences continue to this day.

Jammu Massacre and Forced Displacement

The events of October and November 1947 left a particularly devastating legacy in the Jammu region. Large numbers of Muslims were killed, displaced or forced to flee amid widespread communal violence. The killings were carried out by extremist Hindutva Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and Sikhs, aided and abetted by the forces of Maharaja Hari Singh. The activists of the RSS played a key role in planning and executing the riots. An estimated over 350,000 Muslims were massacred in the Jammu region alone.

Historical accounts have documented attacks on Muslim villages and localities across Jammu, Kathua, Udhampur, Akhnoor, Samba, Chenani, Ramnagar, Reasi and other areas. Scholars and journalists, including Ian Copland, Ilyas Chattha and Ved Bhasin, have examined the role of the state administration, armed forces and communal groups in the violence and mass displacement.

Accounts cited by historians describe Muslim communities being attacked, homes being looted and burned, and large numbers of people were driven towards Pakistan. Some accounts also describe Muslims being transported from Jammu under military escort and subsequently attacked outside the city, with women abducted.

In his book *Kashmir: The Unwritten History*, Christopher Snedden cites accounts of large-scale killings in areas including Akhnoor and Samba. The scale of the violence and displacement remains an enduring and deeply painful chapter in Kashmir's modern history.

According to Ian Copland, the Jammu and Kashmir administration carried out a pogrom against its Muslim subjects in Jammu partly, partly out of revenge for the Poonch rebellion that started earlier. Other observers have argued that the aim of Hari Singh and his administration was to alter the

demographics of the region by eliminating the Muslim population in order to ensure a Hindu majority in the region.

The human cost of displacement extended far beyond 1947. Reportedly, more than 3.5 million Kashmiris have been displaced from their homes over the decades, including those who migrated to Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Pakistan and other parts of the world. Since the late 1980s, at least 8,601 families, comprising over 40,000 individuals, are reported to have migrated to AJK and Pakistan due



to Indian state terrorism.

The Kashmir Question Goes to the United Nations

The conflict between India and forces supporting accession to Pakistan soon developed into an India-Pakistan war. Sensing imminent defeat, India brought the Kashmir issue before the United Nations Security Council in January 1948, seeking international intervention.

On April 21, 1948, the Security Council adopted Resolution 47, which called for measures to restore peace and order and provided a framework for determining the future of Jammu and Kashmir through a free and impartial plebiscite to determine whether the people wished to accede to Pakistan or India.

The UN framework subsequently became a central part of the international history of the Kashmir dispute. A ceasefire eventually came into effect, leaving the territory divided between areas under Indian and Pakistani administration. The area under Indian control came to be known as Indian occupied Jammu and Kashmir, while the area under Pakistani administration came to be known as Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK).

Nearly eight decades later, the Kashmir dispute remains unresolved, and the political settlement envisaged under the UN framework has yet to materialise.

India's continued refusal to accept a settlement based on the wishes of the Kashmiri people has remained one of the central obstacles to resolving the dispute. The issue has consequently persisted as one of South Asia's longest-running conflicts.

Promises Made, Plebiscite Denied

The commitment to allow the people of Kashmir to determine their future was also repeatedly articulated by senior Indian leaders.

Mohandas Karamshand Gandhi, while addressing a prayer meeting on July 29, 1947, said: “The people of Kashmir should be asked whether they want to join Pakistan or India. Let them do as they want. The ruler is nothing. People are everything.”

On October 26, 1947, Gandhi reportedly stated: “If the people of Kashmir are in favour of opting for Pakistan, no power on earth can stop them from doing so. They should be left free to decide for themselves.”

India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, also repeatedly affirmed that the ultimate decision concerning Kashmir belonged to its people.

In a radio broadcast on November 2, 1947, Nehru stated: “We have decided that the fate of Kashmir is ultimately to be decided by the people of the state.”

In a telegram to the UN Representative for India and Pakistan on August 16, 1950, he reiterated: “It has always been our view that, in the event of a plebiscite, the people of Kashmir should decide their future for themselves.”

Addressing the Indian Parliament on February 12, 1951, Nehru further said: “We had given our pledge to the people of Kashmir and subsequently to the United Nations; we stood by it and we stand by it today. Let the people of Kashmir decide.”

Speaking in Srinagar on June 4, 1951, he again maintained that the Government of India would stand by its pledge that the people of Kashmir should decide their fate without external interference.

These statements form an important part of the historical record of the Kashmir dispute. Yet the political commitment they represented has never resulted in the promised plebiscite.

Decades of Human Suffering

The unresolved dispute has exacted a heavy human cost.

According to data compiled by the Research Section of Kashmir Media Service for the period from January 1989 to October 2026:

Total killings: 96,502

Custodial/fake-encounter killings: 7,421

Civilians arrested: 184,720

Structures/houses destroyed or damaged: 110,614

Women widowed: 22,993
Children orphaned: 108,011



Women reportedly gang-raped/molested: 11,285

For Kashmiris, the dispute is therefore not merely a question of competing territorial claims. It is also a story of lives lost, families shattered, homes destroyed, political freedoms curtailed and generations growing up amid prolonged uncertainty.

The unresolved dispute has also carried serious implications for regional security. Since India and Pakistan became overt nuclear powers in 1998, Kashmir has remained a potential flashpoint between the two countries, making its peaceful settlement important not only for Kashmiris but for wider South Asian stability.

August 5, 2019: A New Phase of the Dispute

The constitutional changes imposed by India on August 5, 2019, marked another major turning point.

The Indian government revoked occupied Jammu and Kashmir's special constitutional status and subsequently reorganised the former state into two Union Territories. The measures fundamentally altered the territory's constitutional and administrative position without the consent of its people.

They were followed by a series of legislative and administrative changes concerning land ownership, residency, political representation and governance.

On October 27, 2020, the Indian Ministry of Home Affairs introduced changes to land laws that removed longstanding restrictions on the purchase and transfer of land in Jammu and Kashmir. The Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Adaptation of Central Laws) Third Order, 2020, repealed or amended a number of existing laws, including provisions governing land and property.

Critics have viewed these measures as part of a broader effort to alter the political, economic and demographic character of the disputed territory. The introduction of new domicile rules further expanded eligibility for certain rights and opportunities that had previously been linked to permanent residency.

For Kashmiris, these changes generated renewed concerns about their political identity, land rights, economic opportunities and the demographic future of the territory.

Silencing Political Voices

After failing to subjugate the Kashmiris through use of brute force for decades, the India's Hindutva BJP government, alongside constitutional and administrative changes, has intensified restrictions on political and religious activities in IIOJK.

A number of political and religious organisations have been banned, while offices and properties belonging to some groups have been sealed or attached. Among the organisations facing bans or restrictions are the Jammu and Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party, Jammu and Kashmir Muslim League, Tehreek-e-Hurriyat Jammu and Kashmir, Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front, Dukhtaran-e-Millat, Jamaat-e-Islami Jammu and Kashmir, Awami Action Committee, Muslim Conference Jammu and Kashmir, Jammu Kashmir National Front, Jammu Kashmir Peoples League, Jammu and Kashmir Peoples Freedom League and Jammu and Kashmir Ittihadul Muslimeen.

The headquarters of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference has also been sealed.

Notwithstanding that these organizations are striving for the realization of Kashmiris' UN-acknowledged right to self-determination, the BJP regime is hell bent on strangling every voice representing the true aspirations of the people of the occupied territory. It goes without saying that New Delhi's reprehensible move to ban political and religious parties and sealing their offices in IIOJK is in blatant violation of democratic norms, UN resolutions and international laws. Banning organizations whose legal demand is

UN resolution on Kashmir dispute is a proof that the Indian BJP government has failed to subdue the Kashmiris.

Critics argue that India's BJP government led by Narendra Modi can't win the Kashmiris' hearts and minds by banning parties representing their sentiments, and that the only way to soothe their anger towards India is to respect their fundamental rights and freedoms, including the right to self-determination. The experience of the past decades



also demonstrates that political aspirations cannot be permanently addressed through coercive measures.

Kashmir Needs a Political Solution

After 79 years, the Kashmir dispute remains unresolved. Military deployments, restrictions, arrests and political bans may provide temporary administrative control, but they cannot eliminate the underlying political question.

Kashmiris have consistently maintained that dialogue and negotiations remain an important instrument for achieving a peaceful and lasting settlement, provided that all three principal parties — India, Pakistan and the people of Jammu and Kashmir — are meaningfully involved.

Creating conditions conducive to dialogue requires concrete measures to reduce fear, restore political space and rebuild public confidence.

These should include:

- Genuine demilitarisation and a reduction in the excessive Indian military presence in Jammu and Kashmir.
- Release of political prisoners and detainees held for peaceful political activities and expression.
- An end to arbitrary arrests and excessive use of coercive measures.
- Review and withdrawal of draconian laws, including the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, Public Safety Act and Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, to ensure their application conforms with fundamental rights and due process.
- An end to restrictions on the media, allowing journalists and newspapers to report freely and independently.
- Restoration of political and civil liberties, including freedom of expression, assembly and peaceful political activity.
- Establishment of the rule of law and accountability, with credible and impartial investigations into human rights violations by Indian troops.
- Meaningful and sustained dialogue involving India, Pakistan and the people of Jammu and Kashmir, aimed at achieving a peaceful settlement consistent with international commitments and the aspirations and rights of the people.

Seventy-Nine Years On

October 27 is not merely a date in Kashmir's history. For Kashmiris, it represents the beginning of a political and humanitarian crisis that has endured for 79 years.

The passage of time has not erased the dispute. Nor have Indian military measures, constitutional changes, administrative restructuring or restrictions on political activity resolved it.

The central question remains: **How can lasting peace be achieved without addressing the political aspirations, rights and dignity of the people of Jammu and Kashmir?**

A durable solution cannot be imposed indefinitely through force or administrative measures. It requires political courage, meaningful dialogue, respect for human rights and a process through which the people of Kashmir can have meaningful voice in determining their future.

Seventy-nine years after October 27, 1947, Kashmir needs not another generation of conflict, but for a credible path towards peace, justice and a lasting political settlement of the Kashmir dispute.

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RAIES MIR
The author is a Kashmiri journalist based in Islamabad.



OCTOBER 27, 1947: THE INDIAN INTERVENTION IN KASHMIR—THE LONG HISTORY BEHIND A CAREFULLY CONSTRUCTED NARRATIVE

October 27, 1947 marks a decisive turning point in the history of Jammu and Kashmir, when Indian troops landed at Srinagar airport and India's military intervention in the territory entered its formal phase. New Delhi has long presented this intervention as an unavoidable defensive response to the tribal incursion that began on October 22. The familiar Indian narrative is straightforward: had Pakistani tribesmen not entered Kashmir, India would not have sent its forces there.

But history demands a more complete chronology. The evidence does not support treating October 22 as the beginning of the entire military crisis, nor does it establish that October 27 was simply an unavoidable response to that event.



British historian Alastair Lamb, among others, documented the presence of Patiala State Forces in Jammu and Kashmir before the tribal incursion. According to Lamb, a Patiala infantry battalion and a mountain artillery battery were dispatched to Jammu and Kashmir in the second week of October 1947, with their movement completed by October 18. This places Patiala forces inside the territory before October 22 and, consequently, before the arrival of the first Indian Army formations at Srinagar on October 27. [Alastair Lamb, Kashmir: A Disputed Legacy]

That chronology raises an unavoidable question: if forces from Patiala, a state aligned with India, were already deployed in Jammu and Kashmir before October 22, how can India's subsequent military intervention be explained exclusively as a reaction to the tribal incursion?

The tribal incursion of October 22 is a historical fact and cannot responsibly be erased from the record. Nor should the violence committed during that episode be minimized. But acknowledging that event does not require historians to erase what preceded it. October 22 must be studied alongside October 17–18, not substituted for it.

This distinction matters because political narratives often transform complex sequences of events into a single cause-and-effect story. The assertion that "the tribes came first, therefore India came in response" leaves out the earlier military movements and the political circumstances surrounding the Maharaja's accession. A credible historical account must examine the entire chronology rather than begin the story at the point most convenient to one side.

Jammu 1947: Beyond the Disputed Numbers

The massacres and mass displacement of Muslims in Jammu in late 1947 constitute one of the darkest chapters of the Kashmir conflict. Estimates of the number killed vary substantially among historians and researchers; therefore, assigning one disputed figure as definitive is neither necessary nor academically sound. What is beyond serious dispute is that large numbers of Muslims were killed, expelled, or displaced, producing a profound demographic transformation in Jammu. [Ilyas Chattha; Ian Copland; Christopher Snedden]

Research has also examined the involvement of Dogra state forces, elements of the administration, RSS activists, and other armed groups in the violence. Contemporary political correspondence provides evidence that senior Indian leaders were aware of RSS activity in Jammu. In a letter to Vallabhbhai Patel dated October 30, 1947, Jawaharlal Nehru referred to reports concerning RSS volunteers being sent to Jammu and allegations of a campaign against Muslims. [Nehru Archive, October 30, 1947]

The historical responsibility for the Jammu tragedy therefore deserves serious examination rather than reduction to a simple episode of spontaneous

communal violence. The atrocities associated with the tribal incursion and the violence inflicted upon Jammu's Muslim population are separate historical questions. One cannot erase the other.

From Military Intervention to Political Control

The deeper question is whether India's involvement in Kashmir was merely a temporary military intervention or the beginning of a much broader process of political and constitutional integration.

The events of August 9, 1953, when Sheikh Abdullah was dismissed as Prime Minister of Jammu and Kashmir and arrested, marked a critical turning point. A.G. Noorani's extensive documentary study of Kashmir's constitutional history examines the arrest of Sheikh Abdullah, the subsequent constitutional evolution of the state, and the gradual erosion of the autonomy associated with Article 370. [A.G. Noorani, Article 370: A Constitutional History of Jammu and Kashmir]

A.G. Noorani's writings also discuss the broader ideological environment surrounding the concept of Akhand Bharat and the political thinking that emerged in India following Partition. Such material is important not because every ideological proposition can automatically be equated with formal government policy, but because it helps researchers



examine the intellectual and political currents within which the future of Muslim-majority regions—including Kashmir—was being contested. [A.G. Noorani, relevant writings]

This broader context cannot simply be separated from the subsequent history of Kashmir. The gradual expansion of New Delhi's constitutional authority, the weakening of the state's autonomous institutions, the 1953 political rupture, and later constitutional developments form a historical continuum that deserves examination rather than being treated as unrelated episodes. Noorani's documentary work specifically traces the erosion of Article 370 and the changing constitutional relationship between Jammu and Kashmir and the Union of India.

August 5, 2019: A Decisive Constitutional Break

On August 5, 2019, the Government of India fundamentally altered Jammu and Kashmir's constitutional status, effectively abrogating Article 370 and reorganizing the former state into the Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh. India's Supreme Court subsequently upheld the



constitutional validity of the 2019 measures in December 2023.

The post-2019 period also brought major changes in domicile, land, employment, and administrative regulations. These measures have generated substantial debate over their potential political and demographic consequences. International human rights mechanisms have raised concerns about changes to domicile rules and their possible implications for the demographic character of the territory.

There can now be no room for doubt that these developments are not isolated administrative reforms, but the latest phase of a much longer process aimed at consolidating political control and systematically eroding Kashmir's distinct constitutional, political, and demographic identity.

Whether one accepts that interpretation in its entirety or not, the question deserves serious international scholarly scrutiny: Is the dispute being resolved through a political settlement, or is the political character of the disputed territory being transformed through unilateral constitutional, administrative, and demographic measures?

The United Nations Question Remains

The Kashmir dispute was brought before the United Nations in 1948. UN Security Council Resolution 47, adopted on April 21, 1948, addressed the restoration of peace and order in Jammu and Kashmir and incorporated the principle of determining the future of the territory through a plebiscite.

Consequently, unilateral constitutional or administrative changes cannot by themselves erase the historical international dimension of the dispute. Control over territory and resolution of the political aspirations of its people are not the same thing.



India points to highways, tunnels, railways, and other infrastructure projects as evidence of development in Kashmir. Infrastructure can certainly improve people's lives. But in a disputed territory, development cannot be evaluated solely through roads and construction. Political rights, civil liberties, representative government, rule of law, and the political aspirations of the people are equally fundamental.

History Must Be Read in Full

The historical record from 1947 to 2019 presents a sequence that demands serious examination: the presence of Patiala forces before October 22, the arrival of Indian troops on October 27, the consolidation of Indian military and political control, Sheikh Abdullah's dismissal and arrest in 1953, the gradual erosion of Kashmir's constitutional autonomy, and the decisive constitutional changes of August 5, 2019.

It would be methodologically unsound to claim, without direct documentary evidence, that every one of these developments was governed from the outset by a single written master plan. But it is equally unsound to accept without scrutiny the opposite claim—that India's intervention was simply an emergency response to the tribal incursion and had no broader strategic or political trajectory.

The central historical question therefore remains:

If Indian-aligned forces were already present in Jammu and Kashmir before October 22, 1947, why should October 27 be understood solely as a reaction to the tribal incursion?

The answer cannot be found in political slogans. It must be sought in documents, chronology, archival records, constitutional developments, demographic evidence, and the testimony of historians on all sides.

History does not belong to governments. It belongs to evidence.

And that is precisely why October 27, 1947, should not be remembered merely as the day India claims it came to Kashmir in response to an invasion. It should be examined as the beginning of a much longer historical process—one whose political, constitutional and demographic consequences continue to shape Kashmir today.

Until the political future of Kashmir is addressed in a manner that genuinely takes into account the will and rights of its people, the Kashmir question will remain unresolved, regardless of how extensively its political or administrative reality is altered on the ground.

MUSHTAQ HUSSAIN
Kashmiri Activist based in Islamabad



INTERVIEW

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW - SARDAR MASOOD KHAN

OCTOBER 27: KASHMIR'S UNFINISHED CHAPTER

Sardar Masood Khan describes October 27, 1947 as the beginning of an illegal occupation that remains at the heart of the unresolved Jammu and Kashmir dispute. He argues that the international community has long recognized Kashmir as an international issue, but India has obstructed implementation of the UN framework through repression and unilateral measures, particularly since August 5, 2019. He calls for a renewed, unified and multipronged Kashmir diplomacy involving Pakistan, the Kashmiri leadership and the diaspora, backed by international law, human-rights advocacy, research and sustained engagement with the UN, P5, OIC and Global South.

KI. As a historian of Kashmir's diplomatic struggle and a former diplomat, how do you interpret the events of October 27, 1947, and why do you consider them central to the unresolved Kashmir dispute?

KS: October 27, 1947, is a dark day in the history of Jammu and Kashmir. As the subcontinent was moving towards independence with the creation of India and Pakistan, it was the natural aspiration of the Muslim-majority state of Jammu and Kashmir to join Pakistan. However, this aspiration was suppressed by the brutal and illegal occupation of a large part of the state on October 27. By then, the people of Poonch, Muzaffarabad and Mirpur had liberated the territory now called Azad Kashmir and established a government there on October 24. Similarly, Gilgit-Baltistan was liberated by its people on November 1, 1947.

KI. What were the most important political and military decisions taken between October 26 and 27, 1947, and how did those decisions shape the future of Jammu and Kashmir?

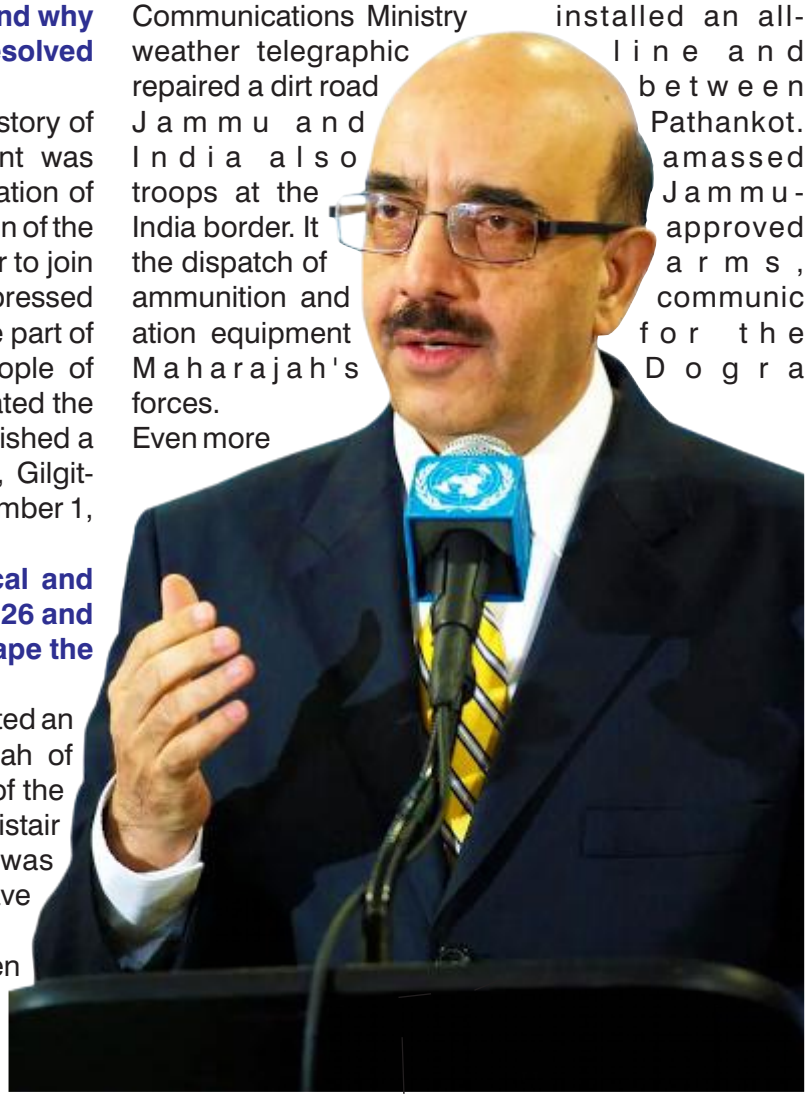
KS: During October 26–27, 1947, India extracted an Instrument of Accession from the Maharajah of Kashmir under duress to justify its invasion of the state. Many historians, most prominently Alistair Lamb, have argued that the document was forged and that the Maharajah may not have signed it.

The period preceding October 26–27 is even more significant, especially since June 1947, when the British government announced the partition of the subcontinent. Indian leaders aggressively pursued a two-pronged political and military approach to occupy the state. Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel undertook several visits to build high-level political pressure on the Maharajah to accede to India. Other visitors included Lord Mountbatten, the Viceroy of India, the rulers of the states of Patiala and Kapurthala, and Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi.

Since the Maharajah lacked popular support, Indian leaders pressured him to release Sheikh Abdullah, who had shown an inclination towards India.

The clandestine military and logistical preparations included securing the state's land connectivity to India through the Radcliffe Award, which gave the Muslim-majority Gurdaspur district to India. After independence on August 15, 1947, India's Communications Ministry installed an all-weather telegraphic line and repaired a dirt road between Jammu and Pathankot. India also amassed troops at the Jammu-India border. It approved the dispatch of arms, ammunition and communication equipment for the Maharajah's Dogra forces.

Even more



significantly, hundreds of armed personnel from the states of Faridkot, Patiala and Kapurthala were dispatched to reinforce the Dogra army. To support the upcoming Indian operation, the state of Nabha deployed combat troops to the Punjab-Jammu frontline.

Historian Alistair Lamb argues that since Patiala and Faridkot had already acceded to India, the presence of their troops in Jammu and Kashmir by October 17–18, 1947, before the so-called Instrument of Accession, constituted a "covert" and direct military intervention by India. This demonstrates that India had already intervened militarily in Jammu and Kashmir before October 27, 1947.



KI. India took the Kashmir issue to the United Nations in 1948, where the Security Council adopted resolutions regarding a peaceful settlement and the wishes of the people. Where did the international process fail?

KS:I don't think the international process has failed. India has blocked it. Since 1948, the UN, Pakistan and the people of Jammu and Kashmir have been ready for a UN-mandated plebiscite. Only India has been blocking it by annexing the occupied territory to its federation, making dubious internal arrangements and resorting to military suppression.

KI. You have described October 27 as the beginning of a long period of occupation and suffering. How do you see the connection between the events of 1947 and India's post-August 2019 policies?

KS: The steps taken by India on August 5, 2019, are a continuation of the illegal occupation of one part of Jammu and Kashmir in 1947. Before 2019, India had created a thin façade of autonomy to delude Kashmiris. It did away with that pretence and has since tried to fully absorb the state into its federation. I would say it has done so unsuccessfully.

KI. Has the international community effectively normalised the status quo in Kashmir, or do you still see meaningful diplomatic and legal avenues for reviving international engagement?

KS: Well, the international community sees Kashmir as a perilous powder keg that can explode at any time. Last year, the Pahalgam incident and its aftermath, especially India's aggression against Pakistan, our befitting response and the resulting escalation, made the international community realize that the unresolved Jammu and Kashmir dispute was a nuclear flashpoint that could scorch the entire globe.

KI. How should Pakistan recalibrate its Kashmir diplomacy at a time when global politics is increasingly dominated by strategic and economic interests?

KS: Lately, Pakistan has been preoccupied with global diplomacy, the Iran-US war and other international issues. This has won Pakistan unprecedented prestige on the world stage. This should create more space for Kashmir diplomacy.

We should upscale our diplomatic outreach. In the past three years, there has been more focus on Azad Kashmir. We should revert to our Kashmir policy more forcefully by involving the leadership of Pakistan, Azad Kashmir, IIOJK and the diaspora to advance the cause of Kashmir, which is still unfinished business.

Kashmiris must get their right to self-determination. President Trump, after Marka-i-Haq last year, proposed diplomacy on Kashmir. That thread needs to be picked up with the help of like-minded countries.

KI. In your view, what role can international law, human-rights advocacy and UN mechanisms realistically play in advancing the Kashmiri right



to self-determination?

KS: On Jammu and Kashmir, Pakistan's case is essentially legal, anchored in international law, international human rights law and international humanitarian law.

Pakistan has done well in keeping the Kashmir issue alive in international forums. Pakistan has a strong diplomatic presence in international forums at the UN, especially the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council.

To strengthen our advocacy in these forums, we must focus on data collection and collation on human rights violations in IIOJK, as well as academic research.

KI. Do you believe the Kashmir issue should now be presented internationally not only as a territorial dispute but also as a question of political rights, identity and demographic change?

KS: The Kashmir dispute is not only about territory but also about the exercise of the right to self-determination by more than 20 million Kashmiris. The international community is fully aware of how the rights of Kashmiris are being trampled in IIOJK and how the demographic composition of the territory is being changed to reduce the representation of the Muslim majority.

The real problem is not a lack of awareness but the international community's inaction because of *realpolitik*. That logjam needs to be broken.

KI. How can Pakistan and the Kashmiri leadership build a more effective international narrative to counter India's claim that Kashmir is exclusively an internal matter?

KS: The issue of Jammu and Kashmir has been an international issue from the word go. It was one of the hottest issues on the UN Security Council agenda in its formative phase.

Kashmir as an internal matter is India's favoured mantra, but it does not hold water against compelling historical and legal evidence. The issue became more internationalized after Pakistan and India became nuclear-weapon states.

The hard ground reality is that India has not been able to absorb the occupied territory over the past several decades despite all sorts of allurements offered to the Kashmiris and its brutal repression by hundreds of thousands of troops deployed in IIOJK.

We will continue to keep the international community informed about the latest developments.

KI. Seventy-nine years after October 27, what practical roadmap do you believe can move Kashmir towards a just, peaceful and durable settlement?

KS: For one, we mustn't lose hope. We have come this far, making sacrifice after sacrifice.

Second, we must explore new avenues for diplomacy on Kashmir, including advocacy with the five permanent members of the UN and awareness-raising not only in Western capitals but also among OIC and Global South countries.

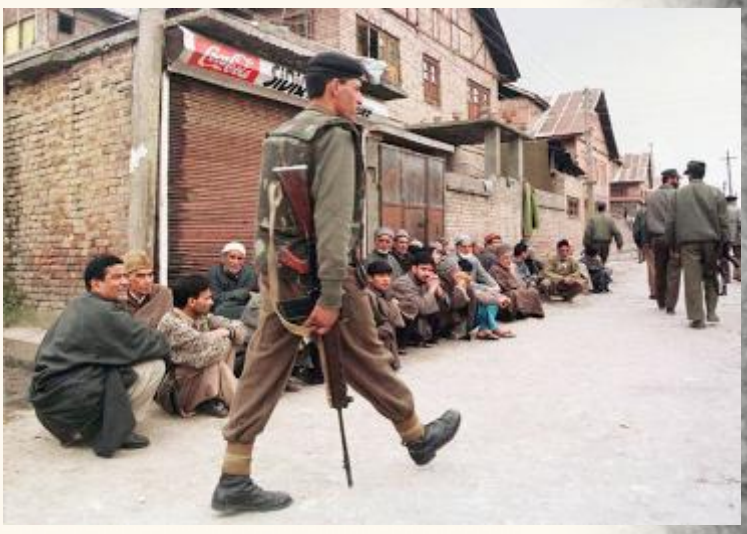
But first and foremost, all political parties in Pakistan should develop consensus on a multilayered, multipronged Kashmir policy. No internal politics on Kashmir!

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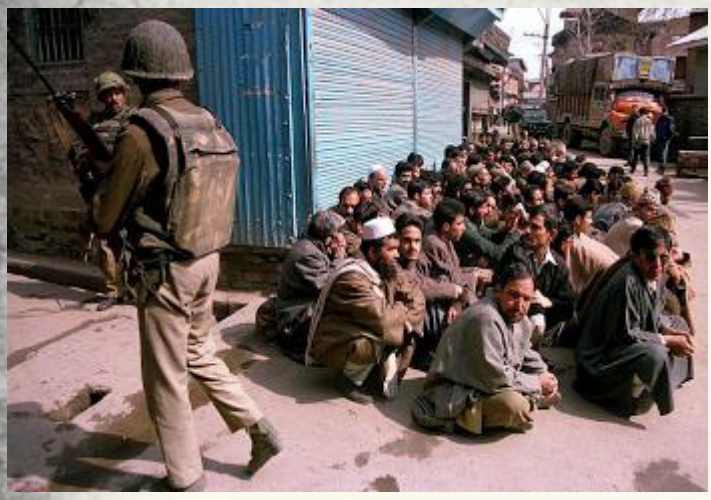


























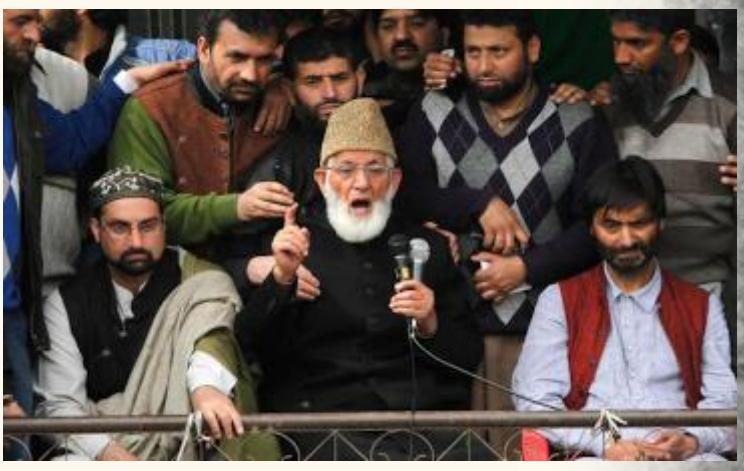









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J.K.P



KASHMIR DISPUTE
A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

From October 27, 1947 to August 2026 — The Unresolved Question of Kashmir

The dispute over Jammu and Kashmir remains one of the most enduring and complex territorial conflicts in modern international relations. Emerging from the partition of British India in 1947, it has evolved into a multidimensional political, legal, strategic and humanitarian issue, deeply embedded in the security architecture of South Asia.

From Pakistan's perspective, the dispute is not merely a bilateral disagreement but an unresolved question involving international commitments and the principle of self-determination, linked to United Nations Security Council resolutions concerning the future of Jammu and Kashmir. The trajectory of the conflict, shaped by wars, political upheaval, international intervention and constitutional changes, reflects a persistent gap between political realities on the ground and the framework historically envisaged for a final settlement.

1947: Partition and the Origin of the Dispute

At the time of the partition of British India in August 1947, princely states were required to determine their future relationship with either India or Pakistan. Jammu and Kashmir, with its Muslim-majority population but a Hindu ruler, became the focal point of competing political and strategic claims.

The territory's geographical contiguity with Pakistan, economic links with areas that became part of Pakistan and the political aspirations of its population made its future particularly contentious.

Pakistan's position has consistently been that the accession process was contested and that the final political disposition of Jammu and Kashmir was to be determined through a plebiscite under international supervision, as envisaged in subsequent United Nations resolutions.

The crisis intensified in October 1947. Political unrest, armed resistance and fighting spread through parts of the state as Maharaja Hari Singh sought military assistance from India. India maintains that the Maharaja signed the Instrument of Accession on October 26, 1947, providing the legal basis for Indian military intervention.

The chronology surrounding the accession, however, remains contested. Historical accounts by Alastair Lamb and Victoria Schofield have questioned aspects of the conventional chronology presented by V.P. Menon, particularly concerning the Maharaja's movements, Menon's journey to Jammu and the timing of the accession in relation to the arrival of Indian troops.

On October 27, 1947, Indian troops were flown into Srinagar. The troop landing marked a decisive turning point. What had been a crisis surrounding the future of a princely state rapidly developed into an India-Pakistan war and an international dispute.

For Kashmiris and Pakistan, October 27 is therefore remembered not simply as the date of a military intervention but as the beginning of a prolonged period of conflict and political uncertainty. The competing interpretations of that day remain central to the historical narratives surrounding the Kashmir dispute.

The controversy also extends beyond the timing of the accession to the question of political legitimacy. Even after the Indian intervention, India's political leadership repeatedly referred to the wishes of the people of Jammu and Kashmir when discussing the territory's eventual political future. These assurances subsequently became closely associated with the internationalisation of the dispute through the United Nations.

The United Nations and the Question of Self-Determination

India brought the Kashmir issue before the United Nations Security Council on January 1, 1948. The move transformed the conflict from a military

confrontation between India and Pakistan into an issue considered by the international community.

The United Nations Security Council subsequently adopted a series of resolutions concerning Jammu and Kashmir. These included resolutions addressing the cessation of hostilities, demilitarisation and the proposed holding of a plebiscite concerning the future of the territory.

UNSCR 38 (1948)

Adopted on January 17, 1948, Resolution 38 was an early Security Council response to the deteriorating situation. It called upon India and Pakistan to refrain from aggravating the situation and requested information regarding material changes in circumstances.

UNSCR 39 (1948)

Adopted on January 20, 1948, Resolution 39 established a commission mechanism to assist the Security Council in investigating the dispute and facilitating efforts towards a peaceful settlement.

UNSCR 47 (1948)

Adopted on April 21, 1948, Resolution 47 became one of the central resolutions associated with Kashmir. It envisaged measures concerning the restoration of peace and order, the reduction of military forces and the holding of a plebiscite to determine the future of Jammu and Kashmir.

For Pakistan, the resolution remains a principal international reference point for the argument that the people of Jammu and Kashmir should determine their political future through a free and impartial process.

UNSCR 51 (1948)

Adopted on June 3, 1948, Resolution 51 addressed the continuing situation in Jammu and Kashmir and reaffirmed the Security Council's involvement in efforts to resolve the conflict.

UNSCR 80 (1950)

Resolution 80, adopted on March 14, 1950, addressed the composition of forces and conditions required for progress towards a settlement. It remained part of the broader UN framework concerning the future of Jammu and Kashmir.

UNSCR 91 (1951)

Adopted on March 30, 1951, Resolution 91 stated that action by the Constituent Assembly of Jammu and Kashmir regarding the future status of the territory would not constitute a final disposition of the state.

UNSCR 98 (1952)

Adopted on December 23, 1952, Resolution 98 dealt with proposals concerning the demilitarisation of Jammu and Kashmir and the conditions required for implementation of the UN framework.

UNSCR 122 (1957)

Adopted on January 24, 1957, Resolution 122 reiterated that action by the Jammu and Kashmir Constituent Assembly purporting to determine the future status of the territory would not constitute a final settlement.

UNSCR 1172 (1998)

Adopted following the nuclear tests conducted by India and Pakistan in 1998, Resolution 1172 called on the two countries to resume dialogue and address outstanding issues affecting peace and security in South Asia.

UNCIP and the Plebiscite Framework

The United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan played a central role in developing the framework for addressing the Kashmir dispute in 1948 and 1949.

The UNCIP resolutions dealt with the cessation of hostilities, the withdrawal and reduction of forces and arrangements for a plebiscite. The proposed process was intended to create conditions under which the people of Jammu and Kashmir could determine the future status of the territory.

For Pakistan, these developments established an international framework that placed the aspirations of the Kashmiri people at the centre of the dispute.

The plebiscite, however, was never held.

The passage of decades transformed the political and military circumstances surrounding Kashmir, but the underlying dispute remained unresolved.

Major Historical Developments 1965 War

The 1965 India-Pakistan war represented a major

escalation in the Kashmir conflict. The war ended with the Tashkent Declaration, but the fundamental political dispute over Jammu and Kashmir remained unresolved.

1971 War and the Simla Agreement

The 1971 war was primarily centred on East Pakistan and resulted in the creation of Bangladesh, but it fundamentally altered the strategic balance in South Asia.

The subsequent Simla Agreement of 1972 committed India and Pakistan to resolving their differences through peaceful means and bilateral negotiations. India subsequently placed particular emphasis on this bilateral framework, while Pakistan has maintained that the agreement did not extinguish the relevance of existing UN framework concerning Jammu and Kashmir.

1989–1990 Uprising

A major civilian uprising, followed by an armed struggle, emerged in occupied Jammu and Kashmir in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The movement reflected deep political discontent and a renewed assertion of self-determination.

The uprising was met with extensive militarisation and security operations, marking another major phase in the conflict.

2016: Burhan Wani and Renewed Unrest

The killing of prominent youth leader and militant commander Burhan Wani in July 2016 triggered widespread protests and a major Indian military crackdown, resulting in nearly 150 civilian killings and hundreds of injures across the Kashmir Valley.

The resulting unrest highlighted continuing political grievances and drew renewed international attention to the human-rights situation in the territory.

2019: The Constitutional Turning Point

The events of August 5, 2019, marked another major turning point.

The Government of India revoked the constitutional provisions associated with the special status of occupied Jammu and Kashmir and subsequently reorganised the former state into two federally administered Union Territories: Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh.

The decision was accompanied by extensive security restrictions, communications measures and the detention of political figures.

Pakistan viewed the move as a unilateral attempt to alter the political and constitutional status of a disputed territory. It argued that India could not unilaterally determine the future of Jammu and Kashmir while the dispute remained subject to international consideration.

For Kashmiris and Pakistan, August 5, 2019, therefore represented not an isolated constitutional event but a new phase in the longer conflict that had begun in 1947.

Post-2019: Political and Demographic Transformation

The years following August 5, 2019, witnessed extensive administrative and political restructuring in Indian-administered Jammu and Kashmir.

Changes to domicile regulations, land ownership rules, electoral boundaries and administrative structures became central to political debate. Pakistan has repeatedly argued that such measures risk altering demographic and political realities in a disputed territory and could prejudice the outcome of any eventual settlement.

India, meanwhile, has presented the post-2019 period as one of administrative integration, development, investment and improved governance.

The competing interpretations illustrate the continuing divergence between New Delhi's position that Kashmir's constitutional status has been settled and Pakistan's position that the territory remains an international dispute.

2024: Elections and the Return of an Elected Government

The so-called 2024 Jammu and Kashmir Assembly elections represented the first major electoral exercise in the territory since its reorganisation as a Union Territory.

The National Conference emerged as the largest party and formed the government under Omar Abdullah.

The election restored an elected legislative government but did not restore the former statehood or the special constitutional status revoked in 2019.

The National Conference subsequently made restoration of statehood a major political demand.

For Pakistan, the elections did not alter its position that the broader Kashmir dispute remains unresolved. India, however, has cited democratic participation and electoral processes as evidence of political normalisation following the 2019 changes.

At the same time, continued Indian military crackdown, including cordon and search operations and raids, killings, arrests, property seizures and the dismissal of employees, have raised serious concerns and belie New Delhi's claims of normalization in the territory.

2025: India-Pakistan War and Kashmir's Renewed Strategic Centrality

The Kashmir dispute again became the immediate focus of a major India-Pakistan military confrontation in 2025.

Following the April 2025 attack in Pahalgam, which killed tourists, India accused Pakistan of supporting cross-border militancy. Pakistan denied involvement and called for an impartial investigation.

Tensions escalated sharply in May, with India launching military strikes against targets in Pakistan and Pakistan responding with military action. The confrontation included missile, drone and air operations and represented one of the most serious escalations between the two nuclear-armed neighbours in years.

A ceasefire was subsequently reached, bringing the immediate military confrontation to an end.

The episode demonstrated that the Kashmir dispute remains capable of rapidly escalating into a wider India-Pakistan security crisis.

It also reinforced the strategic significance of the Line of Control and the wider Kashmir region in South Asian security calculations.

For Pakistan, the confrontation reinforced its argument that Kashmir cannot be treated as a settled question, because unresolved political grievances continue to carry direct implications for regional peace and international security.

2026: Kashmir Remains Politically Unresolved

Seven years after the August 2019 constitutional changes, the political question remains unresolved.

The political landscape even within IIOJK remains contested. The debate has shifted in part from the restoration of Article 370 to the narrower but still significant demand for restoration of statehood, while political parties continue to disagree over the future constitutional status of the territory. The restoration of statehood or Article 370, however, remains distinct from the larger international dispute over Jammu and Kashmir.

Kashmir and the Wider Regional Strategic Environment

The significance of Kashmir has also expanded beyond the traditional India-Pakistan framework.

The territory sits at the intersection of South Asia, Central Asia and China. Its geography connects the region to the wider Himalayan security environment and places India, Pakistan and China in close strategic proximity.

The Kashmir dispute therefore intersects with broader questions involving military security, water resources, border management, infrastructure and regional connectivity.

The 2025 India-Pakistan war further demonstrated that developments in Kashmir can rapidly acquire international significance because both countries possess nuclear weapons.

The continued militarisation of the Line of Control means that even limited incidents can carry consequences beyond the immediate battlefield.

The Human Dimension

The Kashmir dispute is not confined to diplomatic documents, military confrontations or constitutional provisions. Its consequences have been experienced by generations of Kashmiris.

Occupied Jammu and Kashmir has witnessed

prolonged periods of violence, political unrest, security restrictions, displacement, detentions and restrictions on political activity.

For successive generations, the conflict has shaped political expression, social life and relations between communities separated by the Line of Control.

The human-rights dimension remains contested. Human-rights organisations and UN mechanisms have periodically raised concerns regarding violations and restrictions in IIOJK, while India has maintained that its security measures are necessary to address militancy and maintain public order.

The continuing political dispute has also produced competing narratives over security, militancy, governance and human rights, making an objective assessment of conditions particularly important.

August 2026: The Dispute Remains Active

As of August 2026, Kashmir remains a live political, diplomatic and security issue rather than a concluded historical dispute.

India continues to regard Jammu and Kashmir as an integral part of the country and maintains that the constitutional changes introduced in 2019 are an internal matter.

Pakistan continues to reject this position and maintains that Jammu and Kashmir is an internationally recognised disputed territory whose final disposition must take into account the relevant UN resolutions and the aspirations of the Kashmiri people. Islamabad reiterated this position in August 2026 after remarks by the US ambassador to India Sergio Gor's characterising Jammu and Kashmir as part of India.

The Line of Control remains heavily militarised, while periodic security incidents continue to demonstrate the fragility of the ceasefire environment.

Meanwhile, the wider strategic environment has become even more complicated following the 2025 India-Pakistan confrontation and shifting regional alignments in 2026.

From October 27, 1947 to August 2026

The historical connection between October 27, 1947, and August 5, 2019, remains central to understanding the contemporary Kashmir dispute.

October 27 marked the arrival of Indian troops in Srinagar and the transformation of the Kashmir crisis into a full-scale India-Pakistan conflict. The subsequent UN intervention established an international framework for addressing the dispute.

August 5, 2019, marked a different kind of turning point: the transformation of Jammu and Kashmir's constitutional and administrative structure by India.

The developments of 2019, 2024, 2025 and 2026 demonstrate that neither event produced a universally accepted political settlement.



Meanwhile, the continuing Line of Control tensions demonstrate that the military dimension has not disappeared.

The events on both sides of the Line of Control also underline a broader reality: the Kashmir dispute cannot be reduced to a single constitutional provision or a single bilateral disagreement.

It encompasses competing claims of sovereignty, historical narratives, questions of self-determination, human rights, security, territorial control, political representation and regional stability — making it one of South Asia's most persistent and consequential unresolved disputes.

ARTICLE

KASHMIR: SEVENTY-NINE YEARS OF A PROMISE UNFULFILLED

October 27 marks one of the most consequential dates in the modern history of Jammu and Kashmir. It was on that day in 1947 that the first Indian troops arrived in Srinagar. For the people of Kashmir, that moment marked the beginning of a political and military dispute that, nearly eight decades later, remains unresolved.

The Government of India maintains that the accession of Jammu and Kashmir to India was legally completed when Maharaja Hari Singh signed the Instrument of Accession (IOA) on October 26, 1947. New Delhi argues that the document settled the question of sovereignty once and for all.

But that claim deserves examination—not merely through competing political narratives, but through the historical record and India's own statements before the international community.

The question is not simply what happened in October 1947. The deeper question is whether the people of Jammu and Kashmir were ever given the opportunity to determine their own political future, as India itself repeatedly promised.

What Happened in October 1947?

The chronology surrounding the alleged signing of the Instrument of Accession has long been contested.

Thousands of Kashmiris from the Poonch region, many of whom had served in the Maharaja's forces, had revolted against his rule by October 1947. Fighting subsequently spread toward Srinagar. On October 25, forces led by Major Khurshid Anwar crossed the Kohala area after overcoming resistance from forces loyal to the Maharaja. Brigadier Rajendra Singh, who had been tasked with blocking the advance, was killed during the fighting.

The rapidly deteriorating military situation reportedly caused Maharaja Hari Singh to leave Srinagar for Jammu. Accounts of his journey describe difficult road conditions and an overnight halt at Patnitop before his arrival in Jammu.

This chronology raises an important question: if the Maharaja did not reach Jammu until October 27, how could he have signed the Instrument of Accession there on October 26, as the official Indian account maintains?

The question becomes even more complicated when different contemporary accounts are examined.

V. P. Menon, a senior Indian official who played a central role in the integration of princely states, later wrote in The Story of the Integration of the Indian States that he traveled to Jammu with Mehr Chand Mahajan, Deputy Prime Minister of the State on October 26, 1947 and obtained the Maharaja's signature on the Instrument of Accession before returning to New Delhi.

Yet Mahajan's own account, published in Looking Back, is cited as contradicting the claim that he traveled to Jammu on October 26.

There are also accounts concerning the British High Commission's records that have been cited by critics of the official chronology. According to these accounts, Menon attended a Defence Committee meeting in New Delhi on the morning of October 26 and was scheduled to travel to Jammu by air later that afternoon. The flight allegedly did not depart because of the absence of night-landing facilities, after which Menon met British High Commissioner Alexander Symon in New Delhi that evening.

If these records are accurately represented, they raise legitimate historical questions about the precise circumstances and timing of the alleged signing.

Where Is the Original Instrument?

The controversy does not end with the chronology. British journalist and historian Andrew Whitehead has written about attempts to examine the original Instrument of Accession and the difficulties encountered in gaining access to it. British historian Alastair Lamb also questioned the provenance and authenticity of the document and wrote that attempts to examine the original encountered claims that it was unavailable.

Whether one accepts Lamb's conclusions or not, the controversy illustrates a broader problem: the documentary history of Kashmir's accession has never acquired the transparency that a matter of such enormous historical and geopolitical consequence deserves.

If the document is the definitive legal foundation for the territorial status of Kashmir, why should its provenance, custody and contents remain the

subject of such persistent controversy?

The Principle of the People's Will

There is another, perhaps even more important, contradiction in India's historical position.

The subcontinent contained more than 500 princely states at the time of Partition. The question of accession was not always treated simply as a matter of a ruler's personal decision.

The cases of Hyderabad and Junagadh are particularly relevant to this debate. India argued in those cases that the wishes of the population mattered and that the ruler could not necessarily determine the political future of millions of people by himself. Kashmir therefore cannot be examined in isolation from the principles India itself invoked elsewhere.

More importantly, India repeatedly told the international community that the people of Kashmir would ultimately have a say in determining their future.

On November 2, 1947, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru declared that the fate of Kashmir would ultimately be decided by its people and that India would not retreat from that pledge.

India's representatives made similar statements before the United Nations. Indian delegate Sir Benegal N. Rau told the Security Council in 1951: "The people of Kashmir are not mere chattels to be disposed of according to a rigid formula; their future must be decided on their own interest and in accordance with their own desires."

During the Security Council's deliberations in 1952, Indian representative M. C. Setalvad likewise emphasized the principle that the people of Jammu and Kashmir should freely determine their future. These statements matter.

If accession had already been regarded as completely and irrevocably settled, why did India repeatedly speak of the wishes of the Kashmiri people before the United Nations? And if the matter was purely an internal issue, why was it brought before the Security Council in the first place?

A Conflict That Never Went Away

Nearly eight decades later, Kashmir remains divided, militarized and politically unresolved.

The people of Jammu and Kashmir have endured decades of violence, displacement, political repression and human rights violations. International and Indian human rights organizations have documented serious allegations concerning excessive use of force, arbitrary detention, disappearances, sexual violence and other abuses. These allegations deserve independent investigation, accountability and due process regardless of political affiliation.

The scale of the Indian military presence in the region has also profoundly affected everyday life.

India argues that its security measures are necessary to combat terrorism and protect its territorial integrity. Kashmiris who oppose Indian rule, however, see the extensive military and security apparatus as a system of occupation and political coercion. A durable settlement cannot emerge simply by imposing one side's narrative on the other.

August 5, 2019: A New Chapter

On August 5, 2019, the Indian government fundamentally altered the constitutional and political arrangements governing Jammu and Kashmir. Article 370 was effectively rendered inoperative, the state was reorganized into two Union Territories, and a sweeping security and political crackdown followed.

Thousands were detained, including political leaders and activists. Communications were restricted, and journalists, civil society organizations and human rights defenders faced an increasingly difficult environment.

New Delhi presented these measures as necessary for development, integration and security. Critics saw them as another unilateral step taken without the consent of the Kashmiri people.

The dispute over Kashmir therefore remains not merely territorial but fundamentally political: who has the right to determine the future of the people who live there?

The Illusion of Normalcy

New Delhi has increasingly emphasized a return to normalcy in Kashmir. But political normalcy cannot be measured simply by the number of tourists visiting the region, government buildings functioning or large crowds attending official events.

The circumstances surrounding Prime Minister Narendra Modi's March 7, 2024, rally in Srinagar illustrate why claims of normalcy should be examined critically.

Senior officials described attendance as voluntary and enthusiastic. Former Chief Ministers Mehbooba Mufti and Omar Abdullah, however, alleged that government employees and schoolchildren had been pressured into attending. Abdullah publicly alleged that employees were ordered to assemble in the early morning and threatened with disciplinary consequences if they failed to appear.

These competing accounts demonstrate precisely

why independent journalism and credible monitoring remain essential. A government may produce images of large crowds, but those images alone cannot establish political consent.

Normalcy is not merely the absence of open violence. Normalcy means freedom of expression, political participation, accountability, dignity and the ability of people to determine their political future without coercion.

The Danger Beyond Kashmir

The international community should not regard Kashmir as an endlessly frozen dispute.

The Pahalgam attack of April 2025 and the subsequent escalation between India and Pakistan demonstrated once again how quickly violence surrounding Kashmir can push two nuclear-armed states toward confrontation.

That is what makes Kashmir different from an ordinary territorial dispute. India and Pakistan are nuclear powers. China, another nuclear power, is also directly involved in territorial disputes in the wider Himalayan region. More than a billion people live in South Asia.

The consequences of a major military confrontation would therefore extend far beyond Kashmir.

The international community cannot afford to wait for another crisis before recognizing the danger.

The United Nations Must Recover Its Voice

The United Nations has been involved in the Kashmir dispute since its earliest years. Security Council resolutions, international diplomacy and repeated commitments to the principle of self-determination form an important part of the dispute's historical record. Yet decades have passed without a political settlement.

The credibility of international institutions suffers when commitments remain indefinitely on paper while realities on the ground move in the opposite direction. The answer is not another round of empty statements.

The United Nations should appoint a credible Special Envoy, strengthen independent human rights monitoring, encourage meaningful confidence-building measures and facilitate sustained negotiations among the three essential stakeholders: India, Pakistan and the genuine leadership of the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

Any lasting settlement must ultimately address the aspirations and political rights of the Kashmiri people.

History provides examples of conflicts once considered impossible to resolve. East Timor's long struggle ultimately resulted in an internationally supervised process of self-determination. South Africa demonstrated that systems of entrenched political domination can eventually give way to democratic transformation. The Palestinian question, despite its continuing tragedy, remains a powerful reminder that the world's conscience cannot indefinitely ignore the rights of a people. So why should Kashmir remain the exception?

The Valley Cannot Remain a Valley of Silence

The people of Kashmir have waited for generations. They have lived through wars, ceasefires, insurgency, repression, displacement and political upheaval. They have seen promises made and promises deferred. Their suffering has too often been reduced to statistics or treated as an inconvenient footnote in the rivalry between India and Pakistan. That must change.

Kashmir should not be viewed merely as territory to be possessed by one state or another. It is also a question of human beings, political rights and the principle of self-determination.

The international community should insist that all parties respect human rights and return to meaningful negotiations. India, Pakistan and Kashmiri representatives must come to the table.

The objective should not be to reward one side or punish another. It should be to create a political process capable of producing a settlement that is peaceful, credible and acceptable to the people most directly affected. The world has waited long enough.

If the United Nations is serious about the principles it has proclaimed for generations, Kashmir is an opportunity to demonstrate that those principles still mean something.

The time for empty declarations has passed. What is required now is sustained diplomacy, independent monitoring and a genuine political process. Kashmir cannot remain the valley of silence. It is time for the United Nations to redeem its credibility—and for the world to listen.

Dr. Ghulam Nabi Fai is Chairman of the World Form for Peace & Justice and Secretary General of the World Kashmir Awareness Forum.

DR. GHULAM NABI FAI
The author is the Secretary General of the World Kashmir Awareness Forum.



OCTOBER 1947
THE CHRONOLOGY THAT CHALLENGES KASHMIR'S ACCESSION

State of Jammu and Kashmir

At the time of Partition, Muslims constituted approximately 85 per cent of the population of Jammu and Kashmir. (1) The State shared a 540-kilometre frontier with Pakistan, (2) while its principal overland routes to Srinagar passed through Pakistani cities, including Sialkot and Rawalpindi.(3) Against this geographical and demographic backdrop, many Kashmiri Muslims expected the Maharaja to accede to Pakistan.(4)

Discontent with Maharaja Hari Singh's rule, however,



had deeper roots. Anger among sections of the Muslim population over what was regarded as oppressive rule had been building since the 1930s. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah launched the *Quit Kashmir* movement in 1946, further intensifying the political challenge to the Maharaja. (5)

As Hari Singh continued to delay a decision on accession, the Poonch revolt developed into a broader armed resistance. The Maharaja and the Indian leadership accused Pakistan of assisting the rebels, an allegation Pakistan rejected. Islamabad maintained instead that Muslims in the region were joining what it described as a struggle by their fellow Muslims.(6) Fighting subsequently expanded, and the rebels captured substantial areas of the State that later came to constitute Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

Indian troops landed in Jammu and Kashmir on 27 October 1947 and subsequently pushed the rebels back from several positions. India's official position is that Hari Singh had signed an Instrument of Accession to India on 26 October, thereby making Jammu and Kashmir part of India and giving India the legal basis for assuming responsibility for its defence. (7) Pakistan rejected that position. On 30 October 1947, it declared that the accession was "based on fraud and violence" and therefore could not be accepted. (8) India referred the dispute to the United Nations on 1 January 1948.

The contested chronology of accession

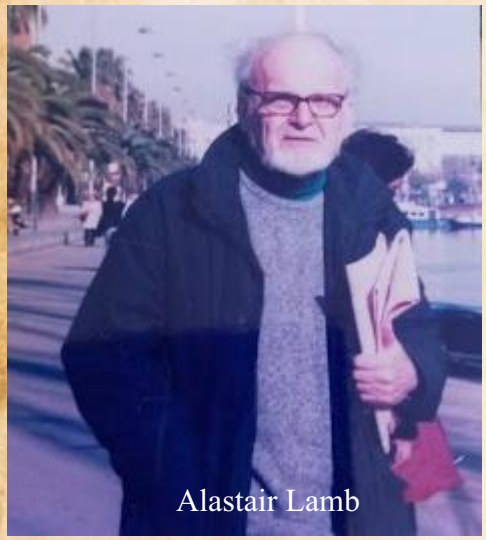
The chronology surrounding the accession remains one of the most disputed aspects of the Kashmir question. Three principal objections have been advanced against the conventional Indian account: first, that the claim that the Instrument was signed on 26 October is contested; second, that the accession, even if accepted as having taken place, occurred amid circumstances of extreme pressure and conflict; and third, that the accession was accompanied by conditions concerning the eventual determination of the State's political future.

The first of these concerns the timing itself.

For many years, the official account presented by V.P. Menon was widely accepted. Menon's narrative provides a relatively seamless sequence of events

1. V. P. Menon, *The Story of the Integration of the Indian States* (Orient Longmans, 1956), p. 393.
2. H. V. Hodson, *The Great Divide: Britain, India, Pakistan* (Hutchinson, 1969), p. 428.
3. Alice Thorner, "The Kashmir Dispute," *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (1949), p. 173.
4. Pitman B. Potter, "The Principal Legal and Political Problems Involved in the Kashmir Case," *American Journal of International Law*, Vol. 44 (1950), pp. 361, 363.
5. *Indian Independence Act 1947*, Section 2.
6. V. P. Menon, *The Story of the Integration of the Indian States*, p. 399.
7. Government of Pakistan, Letter to the United Nations Security Council, 16 January 1948, S/646.
8. V. P. Menon, *The Story of the Integration of the Indian States*, p. 404.

leading to the accession. However, when that account is compared with other Indian and British records, a number of chronological inconsistencies emerge. British historian Alastair Lamb subsequently subjected Menon's account to detailed scrutiny, arguing that the conventional story could not be reconciled with several contemporary accounts. (9) Lamb characterised the official narrative as fabricated and described the deception as being insufficiently convincing.(10)


Alastair Lamb

Lamb compared Menon's account with the recollections and records of officials who were directly involved in the events. On that basis, he concluded that it was not possible for the Instrument of Accession to have been signed before the Indian military intervention on 27 October. Victoria Schofield, after examining additional evidence, reached a similar conclusion regarding the chronology. (11)

The events between 24 and 27 October are therefore central to the dispute.

According to Menon's account, the Government of India received an urgent appeal from the Maharaja for military assistance on 24 October. The Defence Committee, chaired by Lord Mountbatten, met on the morning of 25 October to consider the situation. Menon states that the request for immediate military assistance was not accepted because Mountbatten considered intervention unlawful in the absence of an Instrument of Accession. (12)

Stanley Wolpert similarly records Mountbatten's position as being that sending troops into a State that remained formally independent, and had not yet chosen between India and Pakistan, would be "the height of folly". (13)

Menon then maintained that he was dispatched to Jammu and Kashmir to assess the situation. He met the State's Prime Minister, C.M. Mahajan, and proceeded with him to the Maharaja's palace. Menon subsequently described leaving Srinagar in the early hours of 26 October after Mahajan warned that it was no longer safe to remain there. Hari Singh was also advised to leave Srinagar and reportedly departed at approximately 2 a.m.

Menon's account then places him before the Defence Committee in Delhi, where he reported on the deteriorating situation and the need to prevent Kashmir from falling to the raiders. According to Menon, Mountbatten again maintained that Indian troops could not properly be sent into what was still an independent State because Kashmir had not yet acceded to either Dominion. (14)

Menon nevertheless states that, following the Defence Committee meeting on the morning of 26 October, he flew to Jammu with Mahajan to meet the Maharaja. According to this account, Hari Singh had travelled throughout the night from Srinagar. Menon says that he met the Maharaja, who prepared a letter addressed to the Governor-General and signed the Instrument of Accession. Menon then returned to Delhi and attended the Defence Committee's evening meeting.

At that meeting, according to Menon, the Government of India accepted the accession but did so on the understanding that a plebiscite would be held once law and order had been restored. (15)

This chronology was accepted by H.V. Hodson, who relied substantially on Menon's account. (16) Lamb, however, identified significant contradictions between Menon's narrative and other contemporary evidence.

One of the principal contradictions concerns Mahajan himself.

9. V. P. Menon, *The Story of the Integration of the Indian States*, p. 401.
10. Alastair Lamb, *Incomplete Partition: The Genesis of the Kashmir Dispute 1947–1948* (Oxford, 1997), p. 159.
11. Victoria Schofield, *Kashmir in the Crossfire* (I.B. Tauris, 1996), p. 148.
12. Stanley Wolpert, *Nehru: A Tryst with Destiny* (Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 417.
13. H. V. Hodson, *The Great Divide: Britain, India, Pakistan*, p. xii.
14. Alastair Lamb, *Incomplete Partition: The Genesis of the Kashmir Dispute 1947–1948*, p. 156.
15. Mehr Chand Mahajan, *Looking Back: The Autobiography of Mehr Chand Mahajan* (Asia Publishing House, 1963), p. 152.
16. Ibid., pp. 152–153.

Menon states that he travelled to Jammu with Mahajan after the Defence Committee meeting on 26 October. Mahajan's own account does not support this sequence. He recalled that, after meeting Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, he went to the residence of Defence Minister Baldev Singh, where he rested. Mahajan subsequently stated that Nehru sent him a message around dinner time instructing him to travel



to Jammu with Menon. Mahajan said he declined to leave immediately and told Nehru that he would not fly to Jammu until he received confirmation from the Srinagar aerodrome that Indian forces had landed there. Nehru, according to Mahajan, agreed that he could travel the following morning, 27 October. (17)

The discrepancy is significant because Menon's account places Mahajan on the flight to Jammu on 26 October, whereas Mahajan's own recollection places the journey on 27 October. (18)

The contradiction becomes even more striking when considered alongside a judgment of the Supreme Court of India. In *Prem Nath Kaul v. The State of Jammu and Kashmir*, the Court stated that the Maharaja had signed an Instrument of Accession on 25 October 1947. (19) That judicial statement itself differs from the official chronology that identifies 26 October as the date of accession.

The evidence of Sir Alexander Symon

Lamb's second major piece of evidence comes from the diary of Sir Alexander Symon, the British Deputy High Commissioner in New Delhi, who was acting in the absence of High Commissioner Sir Terence Shone. (20)

Symon's diary records that on the afternoon of 26 October he contacted Menon's office to arrange a meeting. He was told that Menon was preparing to leave for Jammu. Symon went first to Safdarjung airport and then hurried to Palam after learning that Menon had gone there. When Symon reached Palam, however, he found that Menon was returning to Delhi because, according to the account, it had become too late for an aircraft to reach Kashmir before nightfall. (21)

Symon subsequently went with Menon to his residence. Menon told him that he would travel to Jammu the following morning, 27 October.

For Lamb, this evidence fundamentally disrupts Menon's chronology. If Menon was still in Delhi on the evening of 26 October and intended to travel to Jammu only on 27 October, the claim that he had already travelled to Jammu on 26 October, met the Maharaja and obtained the signed Instrument before returning to Delhi becomes difficult to reconcile with Symon's contemporary record. (22) Lamb therefore concluded that the accession could not be established as having occurred on 26 October. At the same time, he acknowledged that the evidence available to him did not justify an absolutely final conclusion and left open the possibility that further documents could alter the assessment. (23)

Schofield subsequently examined additional evidence and broadly endorsed Lamb's chronological concerns. Among the material she considered was a demi-letter from Symon to Sir Archibald Carter at the British Foreign Office. Dictated at 4 p.m. on 27 October, the document records that Symon's attempt to contact Menon resulted in the information that Menon had not yet returned from Jammu. (24)

The same document also recorded that ten aircraft had transported Indian troops from Delhi to Kashmir on the morning of 27 October. This evidence is significant because it places the Indian military airlift

17. V. P. Menon, *The Story of the Integration of the Indian States*, p. 399.
18. *Prem Nath Kaul v. The State of Jammu and Kashmir*, AIR 1959 SC 749, para. 5.
19. Alastair Lamb, *Incomplete Partition: The Genesis of the Kashmir Dispute 1947–1948*, p. 156.
20. Alastair Lamb, *Incomplete Partition: The Genesis of the Kashmir Dispute 1947–1948*, p. 157.
21. Alastair Lamb, *Birth of a Tragedy: Kashmir 1947* (Roxford Books, 1994), p. 103. The book's bibliographic details and 1994 Roxford edition are independently confirmed.
22. Alastair Lamb, *Birth of a Tragedy: Kashmir 1947*, p. 147.
23. Victoria Schofield, *Kashmir in the Crossfire*, p. 148.
24. *Government of India Act 1935*, Section 6(9).

at a point before Menon's reported return from Jammu and therefore raises a further chronological question about whether accession had preceded the arrival of Indian forces. (25)

Schofield also questioned whether the Maharaja could physically have reached Jammu early enough on 26 October to meet Menon as described in the official narrative.



Hari Singh reportedly left Srinagar during the early hours of 26 October, with Mahajan placing his departure at approximately 2 a.m. The journey from Srinagar to Jammu, particularly under the conditions prevailing at the time, would have required many hours. The convoy reportedly reached the Banihal Pass as daylight was beginning and stopped at Kud during the journey. (26)

Hari Singh's son, Karan Singh, later recalled that the Maharaja reached Jammu only on the following evening and had already gone to sleep before Menon's arrival. This recollection presents another chronological difficulty because Menon's account places him back in Delhi on the evening of 26 October attending the Defence Committee meeting. Schofield therefore posed the fundamental question: if the Maharaja did not reach Jammu until the evening of 26 October, and Menon was in Delhi that evening, when could the two men have met to complete the accession process? (27)

Taken together, these accounts challenge the conventional sequence of events. The evidence presented by Lamb and Schofield suggests that Indian troops may have entered Jammu and Kashmir before the accession was completed, rather than arriving only after a legally completed accession.

That interpretation directly conflicts with the conventional Indian account, which places the accession on 26 October and the arrival of Indian troops on 27 October.

The Instrument itself

The controversy does not end with the question of chronology. Lamb also raised questions about the documentary record itself.

He pointed to the absence, in the material available to him, of the original Instrument of Accession and drew attention to the requirements of the Government of India Act 1935. Under section 6(9), copies of Instruments of Accession were required to be laid before Parliament, while courts were required to take judicial notice of such instruments and their acceptance. (28)

Lamb therefore questioned why, if the Indian government possessed a properly executed Instrument of Accession, it had not published the document in the 1948 White Paper on Kashmir. In his view, such a document would have provided exceptionally important documentary support for India's position. (29)

He went further, arguing that what he described as "fabrication" and "document-laundering" contributed to the construction of the official accession narrative. (30) He also claimed that a pro forma version of the document began circulating around the time of the second India-Pakistan war in 1965. (31)

This research draws on excerpts from the article "Re-colonisation of Jammu and Kashmir and the Right to Self-determination" by Niaz A. Shah, Professor of Law, University of Hull.UK published in the International Human Rights Law Review.

25. Alastair Lamb, *Incomplete Partition: The Genesis of the Kashmir Dispute 1947–1948*, p. 166.
26. Ibid., p. 178.
27. Ibid., p. 178.
28. Ibid., p. 178.
29. Ibid., p. 178.
31. Ibid., p. 178.
31. Ibid., p. 178.

UNFULFILLED PROMISES



KARAMCHAND GANDHI

"What will happen to Kashmir will depend on you, the people of Kashmir."During his visit to Kashmir in August 1947

"If the people of Kashmir are in favour of joining Pakistan, no power on earth can stop them from doing so. They should be left free to decide the question for themselves."Speech at Prayer Meeting October 27, 1947



LORD MOUNTBATTEN

The question of the State's accession should be settled by a reference to the people."
(Letter to Maharaja of Jammu & Kashmir October 27, 1947)



JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

"We have declared that the fate of Kashmir is ultimately to be decided by the people. That pledge we have given not only to the people of Kashmir but to the world. We will not and cannot back out of it."
All India Radio broadcast, November 3, 1947



GOPALASWAMI AYANGER

"We desire only to see peace restored in Kashmir and ensure that the people of Kashmir are left free to decide in an orderly and peaceful manner the future of their State. We have no further interest, and we have agreed that a plebiscite in Kashmir might take place under international auspices after peace and order have been established."
Statement at the Security Council January 15, 1948)



KRISHNA MENON

"We adhere strictly to our pledge of plebiscite in Kashmir – a pledge made to the people because they believe in democratic government ..... We don't regard Kashmir as a commodity to be trafficked in."
(Daily Statesman, New Delhi August 2, 1951)



VIJAY LAKSHMI PANDIT

"We do not seek to go behind the UNCIP resolutions, or to ignore the vital elements of principle contained in them. ..... We have always adhered to the UNCIP resolutions... ..... We cannot be a party to the reversal of previous decisions taken by the United Nations Commission with the agreement of the parties."(Statement at the Security Council December 8, 1952)

VIEWS OF NOTABLES ON THE KASHMIR DISPUTE

Foreign and International voices



BERTRAND RUSSELL

"In Kashmir, India has refused to allow a plebiscite for many years, despite United Nations resolutions."
(Bertrand Russell – 1965)



BARACK OBAMA

"We should probably try to facilitate a better understanding between Pakistan and India and try to resolve the Kashmir crisis so that they can stay focused not on India, but on the situation with those militants."
(Barack Obama – Nov 3, 2008)



US PRESIDENT BILL CLINTON

"The Indian sub-continent is perhaps the most dangerous place in the world today because of the tensions over Kashmir."
(US President Bill Clinton – March 10, 2000)



NELSON MANDELA

"All of us remain concerned that the issue of Jammu & Kashmir should be solved through peaceful negotiations and should be willing to lend all the strength we have to the resolution of this matter."
(Nelson Mandela, President of South Africa 12th Non-Aligned Movement, October 2002)



JENS STOLTENBURG

"The Kashmir issue should be solved according to the United Nations resolutions and the wishes of the Kashmiri people."
(Jens Stoltenburg, Prime Minister of Norway)



Helen Clark

"Kashmir is a nuclear flashpoint."
(Helen Clark, Prime Minister of New Zealand October, 2004)



ROBIN COOK

"The Kashmir problem is more dangerous than one hundred bombs. The core issue is that of Kashmir, if it is resolved many problems will be settled."
(Robin Cook, British Foreign Secretary, 1997)



MARRY ROBINSON

"The human rights situation in Indian Occupied Kashmir is very gloomy."
(Marry Robinson, Former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights – Nov 3, 2001)



TONY BLAIR

"The world has been reluctant to recognise the insurgency in Jammu and Kashmir as terrorism."
(British Premier Tony Blair – Sept 13, 2005)



MADELEINE ALBRIGHT

"Kashmir is one of the most dangerous and tragic places in the world. A referendum is the most logical way to find out the will of the Kashmiri people."
(Madeleine Albright, US Secretary of State Dec 3, 2003)



JAMES ELLES

"The best settlement of Kashmir issue lies in the UN resolutions."
(James Elles, Chairman Kashmir Committee, European Parliament – Sept 20, 2004)



CONDOLEEZZA RICE

"It (Kashmir) is a flashpoint. It's a place that has sparked conflicts in the region."
(Condoleezza Rice, US Secretary of State – House Foreign Relations Committee)



DAVID MILIBAND

"Resolution of the dispute over Kashmir would help deny extremists in the region one of their main calls to areas and allow Pakistan on threats to forces more effectively on tackling the threat on their western borders."
(David Miliband, British Foreign Secretary The Guardian, January, 2009)

UN COMMISSION ON KASHMIR'S

"The question of the accession of the State of Jammu & Kashmir to India or Pakistan will be decided through the democratic method of a free and impartial plebiscite."
(The UN Commission on Kashmir's Resolution January 5, 1949)

UN SECURITY COUNCIL

"The final disposition of the State of Jammu & Kashmir will be made in accordance with the will of the people expressed through the democratic method of a free and impartial plebiscite conducted under the auspices of the United Nations.
(UN Security Council Resolution – March 30, 1951)

US STATE DEPARTMENT

"Para military forces are deployed throughout India and have committed significant human rights abuses, particularly in Jammu & Kashmir."
(US State Department Report, 1995)

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

"Thousands of allegations of torture and deaths in custody have been reported in Jammu & Kashmir, since early 1990."
(Amnesty International Report – 1995)

INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF JURISTS

"The right of self-determination to which the people of Jammu & Kashmir became entitled as part of the process of partition has neither been exercised nor abandoned, and thus remains exercisable today. Unless the Kashmiris themselves can be made to feel that they have been given the freedom to choose their destiny, the issue may never be laid to rest. If this generation is silent, the next will learn the history, read about the plebiscite and seek, perhaps again through armed struggle, to achieve this aim."
(International Commission of Jurists, 1996)

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

"Access to redress for victims of human rights violations, a right guaranteed under international law, is being denied to victims in Jammu & Kashmir."
(Amnesty International – May, 1997)

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

"Torture, rape, deaths in custody, extra political execution and disappearances have been perpetrated by agencies in the State with impunity. The human rights abuses in the Kashmir Valley are facilitated by laws which provide the security forces with virtual immunity from persecution for acts "done in good faith."
(Amnesty International Report, 2004)

INDIAN VOICES



GANDHI

·"Kashmiris have changed beyond recognition. They have lost fear. Kashmir is lost to us."
(Rajiv Gandhi, Prime Minister of India, 1990)



JUSTICE M. V. CHALIA

"The international human rights organisations, like Amnesty International and Asia Watch should be given an opportunity to visit Kashmir to take an on-the spot account of the human rights situation in the Valley."
(Justice M. V. Chalia, Chairman, National Human Rights Commission of India)



RAJ MOHAN GANDHI

"India should fulfill promise of holding a plebiscite in Occupied Kashmir. I personally visited Kashmir and witnessed the sufferings of Kashmiris."
(Raj Mohan Gandhi, Grandson of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi November 5, 1998).



GENERAL V. P. MALIK

"Ultimately Kashmir has to have a political solution and deployment of huge army is not a solution of this dispute."
(Indian Army Chief General V. P. Malik September, 2000)



JAGJIT SINGH

"The Kashmir issue needs immediate world attention. The problem was created by the British in 1947 and they should solve it now."
(Jagjit Singh Chohan, Leader of Council of Khalistan May, 2001)



RAM JETH MELANI

"Nobody can say that Kashmir is not an international problem.
(Ram Jeth Melani, Chairman Kashmir Committee of India August 14, 2002)



NATWAR SINGH

"Kashmir issue is a nuclear flash point."
(Natwar Singh, Foreign Minister of India September 9, 2004).



ARUNDHATI ROY

"The biggest myth of all times is that India is a democracy. In reality, it is not... In the Kashmir Valley alone, some 80,000 people have been killed. In Iraq, there are 150,000 military personnel, whereas in Kashmir valley there are some 700,000."
(Arundhati Roy – May, 2006)



SONIA RAJ

"You may read about it but you only understand it when you get to Srinagar. You realise that atrocities are being committed against the entire race and they are being committed by our army."
(Sonia Raj, Advocate, Supreme Court of India – 2006)

REVIEW

KASHMIRI CULTURE UNDER PRESSURE SINCE 1947

A struggle over language, literature, memory, faith and history in a land where political control increasingly intersects with cultural identity

A land can be divided by a line. A people can be separated by borders, checkpoints and competing administrations. But culture is more difficult to



partition.

In Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), language, poetry, music, craftsmanship, shrines, architecture, cuisine and oral traditions have survived political upheavals, wars and successive changes in power. They form an inheritance that predates the modern political dispute and continues to connect generations across the Line of Control and the Kashmiri diaspora.

Yet culture does not exist outside politics. Prolonged political control inevitably influences the institutions, symbols and narratives through which a people understand themselves. The state exercising authority over a territory also has considerable influence over what is taught in schools, which languages receive institutional space, which historical figures are commemorated, which names appear on maps and what books remain accessible to students.

This makes the cultural dimension of Kashmir increasingly important.

The transformation of Kashmir's political and cultural landscape can be traced to October 27, 1947, when Indian troops landed in Srinagar following the so-called accession of Jammu and Kashmir to India. Whatever the competing interpretations of that moment, the arrival of troops marked the beginning of a prolonged military presence that would profoundly shape life in the region.

Over subsequent decades, Indian militarisation became more than a security phenomenon. Military camps, checkpoints, searches, curfews and restrictions became part of everyday life, while conflict disrupted communities and displaced people. The physical and psychological landscape of Kashmir changed, and so did the environment in which Kashmiri culture had evolved.

This culture, rooted in shared language, folklore, traditions and patterns of coexistence, depends on the transmission of memory from one generation to another. When conflict becomes a permanent feature of daily life, that transmission is inevitably affected. Political uncertainty, displacement and restrictions on public expression can narrow the spaces in which traditions, memories and identities are preserved and expressed.

This is where the idea of **erasure** becomes important.

Erasure is different from ordinary cultural change. Cultures naturally evolve. Languages absorb new words, traditions adapt, cities change and generations develop new identities. Erasure, however, occurs when the institutions, symbols, narratives and spaces through which an identity is preserved are progressively weakened, displaced or replaced.

In Kashmir, this concern extends across language, education, place names, literature, historical memory and demographic change. No single development necessarily transforms a culture. But when changes accumulate over generations, they can alter how a society understands itself and its past.

The occupation of IIOJK has been central to this transformation. The Kashmir freedom movement that intensified from the late 1980s brought a new level of militarisation, while laws such as the Armed Forces (Jammu and Kashmir) Special Powers Act, 1990 created an exceptional legal framework for security operations.

Human rights organisations have repeatedly raised concerns about accountability and documented

allegations of abuses by Indian troops. Militarisation has become part of Kashmir's physical and psychological landscape. Checkpoints, patrols, fortified installations, searches and identity checks are not simply symbols of a political dispute; for generations of Kashmiris, they have been features of everyday geography.

Culture requires space. It requires the ability to remember, speak, publish, assemble and transmit traditions. When those spaces contract, cultural expression can also become more constrained.



But Kashmir's identity cannot be understood only through conflict. At its heart is the older idea of Kashmiriyat, commonly associated with a distinctive Kashmiri ethos of shared traditions and regional identity.

Its history was never an uninterrupted story of communal harmony. Kashmir has experienced religious tensions, political conflict, violence and displacement, including the exodus of Kashmiri Pandits from the Valley in the early 1990s. Yet these experiences do not erase the existence of a shared cultural inheritance.

For many Kashmiris, identity cannot be reduced entirely to religion. Kashmiri Muslims, Pandits and Sikhs have shared elements of language, folklore, cuisine, music, architecture and historical memory. This composite inheritance remains one of the defining features of Kashmir's cultural landscape.

Language is perhaps its most durable vessel.

Kashmiri is not merely a means of communication. It carries folk songs, lullabies, proverbs, oral histories and generations of poetry. India's 2011 Census recorded more than 6.5 million people with Kashmiri as their mother tongue, demonstrating the language's continuing importance.

But numbers alone cannot guarantee linguistic survival.

A language remains alive when children speak it at home, when schools teach it, when writers publish in it, when journalists use it and when young people see value in mastering it. Following the constitutional changes of 2019, the Jammu and Kashmir Official Languages Act, 2020 designated Hindi, Kashmiri and Dogri alongside Urdu and English as official languages of the territory.

Official recognition can provide institutional support, but it does not by itself secure a language's future. Its survival depends on education, literature, publishing, media, digital platforms, employment and intergenerational transmission.

The same question applies to Urdu, which historically occupied an important position in the administration, education and literary life of IIOJK. Changes in language policy can therefore have consequences beyond administration. When one language gains institutional space and another loses it, literature can become less visible and historical memories preserved in that language can gradually lose prominence.

The politics of memory is also visible in place names.

A name may appear insignificant, but names establish an official vocabulary of the landscape. They appear on road signs, maps, government records, textbooks and digital platforms. Repeated over generations, they shape how people encounter their surroundings and understand their history.

India has undertaken various renaming initiatives involving roads, schools, institutions and public places in the occupied territory. The government has generally presented such changes as corrections of historical distortions, restoration of older names or administrative decisions.

Critics see these changes differently, arguing that replacing names associated with Kashmiri Muslim history can weaken the historical memory embedded in the landscape.

Changing one sign does not erase a civilisation. But thousands of such changes, reinforced through official maps, schools and public institutions, can gradually influence how a new generation encounters its past.

Cultural transformation does not always require the destruction of a monument.

Sometimes it begins by changing what the monument is called.

The schoolroom is even more consequential.

Every generation learns its history partly through family and partly through institutions. Families transmit stories, photographs and memories. Schools provide textbooks, examinations and official

narratives. Museums, public ceremonies and commemorations reinforce particular versions of the past.

In a disputed territory, education becomes especially sensitive because history itself is contested.

How is 1947 explained? How is the accession presented? How are wars and armed conflict described? How are political movements



remembered? How is the displacement of Kashmiri Pandits discussed? And what happens when the history taught in a classroom differs from the history remembered within a child's family?

These are not merely academic questions. They influence how a young Kashmiri understands the relationship between Kashmir, India, Pakistan and Kashmiri identity.

The struggle over historical memory has recently moved into another institution: the library.

In August 2025, the Jammu and Kashmir Home Department ordered the forfeiture of 25 books dealing with Kashmir, including works by writers, historians and scholars such as A.G. Noorani, Arundhati Roy, Sumantra Bose and Anuradha Bhasin. The IIOJK authorities said the books promoted a "false narrative", secessionism or glorified terrorism. Police subsequently searched bookshops across Kashmir for copies of the prohibited publications.

The significance of the action went beyond the fate of 25 titles.

A book can remain on a shelf for decades. It can be read by successive generations, consulted by researchers and used by students seeking interpretations different from official accounts. Restricting access therefore affects not only what is taught but what can be independently explored.

The issue moved closer to educational institutions in July 2026, when the authorities in IIOJK directed schools to scrutinise books in their libraries for objectionable material. The exercise was subsequently extended to colleges and universities.

The progression raises an important question: what happens when the state determines which interpretations of a disputed history can remain available to students?

The authorities have justified restrictions by citing secessionism, terrorism and material considered harmful or extremist. Yet Kashmir's history contains questions on which political and historical interpretations remain sharply divided.

A work examining accession may be regarded as historical scholarship by one reader and political propaganda by another. A biography of a pro-freedom leader may be considered an important primary source by a researcher but an attempt to glorify militancy by authorities. A critical account of Indian policy may be viewed as legitimate political analysis or as secessionist literature.

This makes access to competing histories particularly important.

A generation can be shaped not only by what it is taught but also by what it is prevented from reading.

The battle over Kashmir's identity is therefore no longer confined to territory, borders and political institutions. It also extends to the classroom, the library and the historical memory of the next generation.

Yet Kashmir's cultural inheritance is remarkably resilient.

Its history stretches far beyond the modern political dispute. The Neolithic site of Burzahom near Srinagar provides evidence of human settlement dating back thousands of years, broadly from the third to the first millennium BCE.

Kashmir did not begin with Partition in 1947, nor did its civilisation begin with the accession dispute. The political conflict is comparatively recent when measured against the depth of its cultural history.

That history survives in Pashmina, carpet weaving, papier-mâché, walnut wood carving, embroidery, cuisine, music, architecture, poetry and folklore. It survives in shrines and temples, family traditions and oral memory.

Religious sites are particularly important repositories of this history. A shrine can connect a family to generations of ancestors. A temple can preserve the memory of a community that was displaced. A mosque can remain a landmark around which generations organised their social lives.

The cultural landscape of Kashmir is therefore also a landscape of memory.

That makes the history of displacement particularly important.

The exodus of Kashmiri Pandits transformed the

Valley's social fabric and created a community whose memories of ancestral homes remain an important part of Kashmir's cultural story. A serious understanding of Kashmiri identity cannot ignore the trauma of the Pandits. Nor can it ignore the experiences of Kashmiri Muslims who have lived through decades of conflict, militarisation, political violence and restrictions.

Both memories belong to Kashmir's fractured



cultural inheritance.

Kashmiri culture cannot survive by remembering one community and forgetting another. Its preservation requires acknowledging the plurality of Kashmir's history and the experiences of all its communities.

This also makes cultural survival more complicated.

Kashmiri culture is not a museum object preserved behind glass. It changes, adapts and absorbs outside influences, as every living culture does.

The question is not whether Kashmir will change.

It is whether Kashmiris will retain meaningful space to shape that change.

This brings the demographic question into the cultural debate.

In 2020, India introduced new domicile rules that changed eligibility for government employment and other rights previously linked to the former permanent-resident framework. New Delhi presented the measures as removing discriminatory restrictions and extending equal rights.

Critics have warned that changes to domicile, land, employment and political representation could eventually alter the demographic and political character of occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

Population is never simply a statistic. Demographic composition affects political representation, economic opportunity, public institutions and cultural influence. Sustained demographic change can also influence which languages are spoken, which traditions receive public space and how communities understand their identity.

This is why demographic change has become inseparable from the broader debate over cultural preservation and identity. The concern is not simply about who lives in Kashmir today. It is about what the region could look in the coming decades if changes in domicile, land, employment, migration and political representation continue.

Erasure, in this context, need not mean that Kashmiri language, poetry or handicrafts suddenly disappear.

It can be gradual.

A historical name disappears from an official map. A language loses institutional space. A political figure disappears from mainstream historical narratives. A traditional form of literature receives less attention. A book disappears from a library. A younger generation grows up surrounded by different national symbols. Demographic change alters the social environment.

Individually, these developments may appear limited. Together, over generations, they can reshape collective identity.

This is why the events of October 27, 1947, the subsequent militarisation, decades of conflict and the restructuring of Jammu and Kashmir after August 5, 2019 form part of a longer historical continuum. Kashmir is not merely a territory on a map. It is a civilisation of memory.

Its identity lives in a language spoken at home, a poem remembered by heart, a craft learned from a parent, a recipe passed from one generation to another, a shrine visited for centuries and a place name whose meaning survives even when official maps change it.

Political borders may divide Kashmir. Governments may alter its administrative structures. Laws may redefine institutions. Military installations may dominate its landscape. Books may disappear from shelves. Political narratives may compete for historical legitimacy.

But the deepest struggle is over something less visible: the ability of a people to retain a sense of who they are while the political world around them is transformed.

The survival of Kashmir's cultural identity will ultimately depend not only on what governments preserve or change, but on whether its people continue to speak their language, remember their history, transmit their traditions and preserve the plurality of their cultural inheritance.

For Kashmir, that may be the most enduring form of resistance: cultural survival.

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