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THE REVOLUTIONARY RESURGENCE





We begin with a heavy heart and mourn the tragic boat capsizing incident in Srinagar Kashmir on 16 April. Our deepest condolences go out to the families who have lost their loved ones, most of whom were innocent school-going children. As some bodies remain unrecovered, our thoughts and prayers are with those awaiting closure during this painful time.

While India incessantly paints a facade of normalcy and development in the region, the ground realities for Kashmiris are altogether different. Despite collecting taxes from people, the Indian authorities fail to provide even basic amenities. Last year, India's attempt to project an image of prosperity to G20 members through beautifying military bunkers, and painting roads, electric poles and buildings in the colors of the Indian colonial flag, was nothing short of a theatrical performance. When the truth threatened to surface, journalists were coerced into a blackout that actually reveals the extent to which media freedom has been stifled. The fascists only want a certain kind of reporting from the region.

Now, we face another assault on our land and livelihood with India's proposed railway line cutting through the rich and dense apple orchards of south Kashmir's Shopian and Islamabad districts. The apple industry, our economic backbone, is under threat as India seeks to disempower Kashmiris and render us entirely dependent on them (our colonizers). This move not only jeopardizes our livelihoods but also signifies India's blatant disregard for our cultural and economic heritage.

Besides this, the electricity produced in Jammu and Kashmir, a resource that should benefit its people, has been leased out to outsiders. As a result, we witness frequent power cuts. This winter Kashmiris witnessed a massive power crisis that left the entire population, especially the poor, devastated. India's exploitation of our resources is not just economic plunder; it is a violation of our basic rights and dignity. India continues to loot our resources in the region.

Adding insult to injury, there are severe restrictions on religious activities. Prominent religious leaders are imprisoned, and the dictates of the RSS from Nagpur dictate our lives. This Eid, Kashmiris were denied the right to pray congregational Eid prayers at Eidgah Srinagar, and the historic Jama Masjid is frequently shuttered.

We cannot allow this continuous erosion of our rights, our culture, and our identity. We have to rise against this naked fascism and destroy every apparatus of military occupation in our beloved homeland. Our resilience has been tested time and again, but we remain steadfast in our resolve.

To my fellow Kashmiris, I say: Remain steadfast in your faith and determination. We must devise strategies to counter the nefarious designs of the Indian occupying state. Our struggle for freedom and justice is not just a fight for ourselves but for future generations who deserve a life of dignity, freedom, and prosperity in their homeland.

Every action, every injustice is being monitored, and the world is watching. Our nation must unite in resistance and we must strengthen our resolve, and stand firm against the oppressive forces that seek to suppress us to unprecedented levels. Together, we will reclaim our rights, our land, and our future.

SYED SALAHUDDIN AHMAD

UJC Chief and Supreme Commander of Hizbul Mujahideen

Monthly



THE REVOLUTIONARY RESURGENCE

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WORLD FREE PRESS DAY AND KASHMIR

Gowhar Farooq



Practicing journalism has never been a cakewalk in war-torn Kashmir. Journalism once stood, to a great extent, as a guardian of truth and reflection of ground realities. Not so long ago, we used to read pro-resistance, critical and engaging opinion pieces written by Kashmir's renowned and revered academicians, journalists, doctors and political and religious heads. We used to wait for a specific day every week to read our favourite authors' write-ups. Besides this, Kashmir's daily and weekly newspapers somehow managed to shed light on all kinds of violations perpetrated by Indian military and paramilitary forces in the region. The press was not completely free but was not completely compromised either.

Since 5th August 2019, the once vibrant space of this journalism has fallen apart. Censorship, coercion, and compromised integrity loom large over the profession. As the winds of political change swept through the valley, journalism in Kashmir too has changed. Repressive media policies have destroyed Kashmiri journalism and intimidated media outlets into serving as government mouthpieces and created an information vacuum in the region. Journalists are surveilled, jailed, threatened with dire consequences and strong-arm tactics used against media outlets to ensure favorable coverage. The DIPR, an apparatus of the occupation, has been bestowed the power to deem any news fake, anti-national and even unethical! Ironically enough, they stated that it was done to promote the highest standard of journalism!

Independent media outlets who dared to speak truth to power were shut and those running them were put behind bars. We all know how Asif Sultan, Sajad Gul, Fahad Shah, Irfan Mehraj, and many others were jailed under false charges. The plight of journalists in Kashmir is a tale of courage marred by injustice, of voices silenced by the heavy hand of occupational authorities. Those who dare to report the truth are often met with punitive measures, branded as enemies of the state, and subjected to the tyranny of incarceration under draconian terrorism charges.

Since media has been termed as a major tool that influences public opinion, the Indian occupation in Kashmir has now left no stone unturned to use it as per its convenience or vested interests. The occupational apparatus has now been blacking out any news they want. When Qaid-e-Inqilaab Syed Ali Shah Geelani left this world, the news was either blacked out in the region or mentioned only briefly. Currently, numerous anti-Kashmir projects are going on in the region like the project of Settler Colonialism. When India began to bulldoze thousands of homes in the name of "anti-encroachment drive", the news was partly blacked out and partly shown as a victory against influential and illegal land grabbers. Greater Kashmir, an English daily, tried to pass it off as war against influential people who had grabbed land illegally over the years. There was no mention of poor Kashmiris becoming homeless or people showing valid documents of the lands, let alone highlighting it in the context of India's settler colonialism project. Pro-occupation news dominates the front pages of Kashmir dailies. Indian politicians especially from the ruling BJP are shown as saviours and Kashmir's occupation is being ornamented on a daily basis.

Many journalists have self-censored themselves or have quit. Some well known journalists have fled into exile and some have been put on the no-fly list to prevent them from leaving the region and speaking out against the excesses of the Indian occupation. Today, there is barely any news outlet that dares to question the official policies that are overly anti-Kashmir and anti-Islam.

However, amidst the clamor of compromise and capitulation, we should always remember that journalistic integrity is not a commodity to be bartered or compromised. For every journalist who succumbs to the pressures of oppression, there are countless others who refuse to bow to the dictates of tyranny, and who remain steadfast in their commitment to truth and justice. If Asif Sultan, Fahad Shah, Sajad Gul can prefer jail than becoming journo-pimps, everybody else can do it. Becoming a stooge is a choice. Someone ask this Fayaz Kulloo what happened to your plans of upholding journalistic ethics and showing the reality of the region in the name of which you used to collect lakhs from different organizations?

Indeed, there are those who argue that in the face of insurmountable odds,

journalists have little choice but to acquiesce to the demands of those in power, to become complicit in the perpetuation of oppression in order to safeguard their own safety and livelihoods! However, such arguments ring hollow in the face of the undeniable moral imperative to resist injustice and uphold the principles of truth and transparency. For those who find themselves trapped in the web of censorship and coercion, there is a simple yet powerful solution: to walk away. To refuse to lend legitimacy to oppressive regimes by serving as their mouthpieces.

COLONIALISM ON TRACKS: NEWLY PROPOSED RAILWAY LINES IN KASHMIR

Ehsaanul Haque Qureshi



Indian colonial government in Kashmir has proposed various new railway lines in Kashmir that include Islamabad-Bijbehara-Pahalgam (77 kms), Baramulla-Uri (50 kms), Awantipora-Shopian (27 kms) and doubling of the existing Baramulla-Banihal section (135 kms). This may look like a case of development, but in a colonized region reeling under a brutal military occupation, development is always a tool of an occupier to further entrench its control over the occupied territory. That's what all development done by India has been in Kashmir. Otherwise, these new railway projects wouldn't have been proposed, given the fact that the loss they will cause will far outweigh the 'benefits' of these projects. What's certain is that it will deepen the Indian control over the territory and make hundreds of people landless. Take for example the proposed Awantipora-Shopian track that only covers a distance of 27 kms. Why do we need a railway link line for such a short distance? It's clear that it's unnecessary and obviously will be developed for military purposes. Also, it will gulp down a large area of fertile horticultural and agricultural land, so will the other proposed projects.

People from the areas through which these railway lines are supposed to pass have

raised hue and cry over the loss to their only sources of income i.e. their horticultural/agricultural land. Anyone who has been associated with farming knows the hard work and patience needed to turn a piece of land into a fruitful orchard. It's years of effort and huge sums of money in various regular investments. A common farmer then expects to sustain his livelihood through it for his whole life. The land gives its owner a sense of purpose and belonging in this desolate occupied land where alternate economic avenues have been scuttled. The lives of people have turned upside down since they became aware of the survey that marked their lands to be taken over for these railway projects. It will be a disaster and a huge setback to local agricultural/horticultural economy, a majority of those being apple farmers.

Kashmir is a small valley. The area of land suitable for farming being even smaller, covering plains and karevas. All of these railway projects are planned through the most fertile regions of Kashmir. It's clear that it's a deliberate attempt to destroy the local horticultural/agricultural sector. A 27 km indirect railway link is simply a useless redundant thing. If these projects were meant for benefits of people, then it must have been obvious to them that trucks and other forms of road transportation on such a small stretch of land would fully serve the transportation needs from the existing station. But they still went ahead with the project and why?

People of these areas are aghast at the fact that none of them have ever demanded any railway line or the fact that none of them has even been consulted as owners of the lands that need to be taken over. They are fully aware that their transportation needs are easily met by trucks and other road transportation vehicles and they have no need for a railway link line. They see it as a conspiracy of snatching away their livelihood and keeping them bereft of the dignity they have achieved in the form of economic autonomy that they have achieved over the years through these orchards and farms.

Kashmir has seen one onslaught after another since 2019. Kashmir's economy is already going through its worst phase and such additional measures of land-grab by Indian occupation will further throw Kashmiris into despair. This is a systemic effort by Indian occupation to destroy every kind of autonomy in Kashmir, be it food, economy, social or political. Indian state has already removed import duty on apples, walnuts, and almonds imported from other countries, thus significantly affecting the prices of Kashmiri fruits. The last two years saw deliberate blocking of highway as well, which led to tons of apples and other fruit rotting away while trucks were stranded on the highway.

Then there's the issue of substandard insecticides/pesticides supplied to Kashmir, so

much so that even more than a dozen sprays in a single season aren't enough to protect the trees and the fruit. Indian state has unleashed all kinds of onslaughts upon Kashmiri populace to destroy them and uproot them from their lands.

These railway projects have deliberately ignored the concepts of sustainability and ecological viability that every well meaning agency takes into account. Indian occupation is well aware of the limited farmland available in Kashmir and the huge number of people dependent on it. Agriculture/horticulture is still the highest revenue and employment generating sector in Kashmir. It becomes evident in the light of these facts that why an occupational state like India is hell bent upon destroying the most fertile lands in occupied Kashmir. Even though people have been protesting these railway projects, the Indian state is adamant on imposing its colonial will upon hapless Kashmiris and turning their lives upside-down. These projects will affect fruit production of apples, plums, almonds, walnuts, rice crop production and even honey production drastically. These proposed railway projects will occupy thousands of hectares of most fertile plain lands and karevas of Kashmir. People have rejected the farce monetary compensation that the Indian govt has offered them. As the monetary compensation will not replace the fertile lands that will not only sustain the current generation but many generations to come after them.

It's also obvious to us that this project will be implemented at gun-point like every other Indian project has been implemented in Kashmir. Indian military forces already occupy lakhs of kanals of precious land in every corner of Kashmir. Now they want even more for these farcical developmental projects. The aim is simply dispossession of Kashmiris.

It will also be a huge environmental disaster. Think about thousands and thousands of trees axed for an unnecessary railway link line project when the road transportation clearly fulfils the needs of local Kashmiri stakeholders.

The evident militarized nature of these railway projects can also be gauged from the fact that a survey for land acquisition is being done in the presence of heavily armed Indian forces. They openly threaten people with violent consequences for not falling in line and silently handing over the land.

People who have known only farming all their lives, learned the skills of developing crops and orchards will be left unemployed and forced into a life of indignity. Many Kashmiri youngsters who are associated with farming in these areas have said that it would be better to die fighting than live a life of such humiliation.

The cost of physical labour, pesticides, fertilizers, machinery, and other expenses accumulated over years of developing these orchards can't be compensated by a meager

monetary compensation, especially the emotional labour and the social and ecological cost that destroying these orchards and farms will incur upon Kashmiris.

These orchards and farms give a sense of belonging to the people of these areas, the farmers belong to these lands and these lands belong to them, which are being snatched away by the Indian occupation in order to snatch the very breathing space away from Kashmiris.

The Islamabad-Pahalgam line also has another face to it. It's clearly a Hindutva settler-colonial project apart from the overt occupational one. This stretch is being specifically developed to cater to Hindu pilgrims going to Amarnath. Those Hindu pilgrims aren't just motivated by their religious beliefs to visit Amarnath, but they are strongly motivated by the extremely bigoted Hindutva political ideology.

Apart from destroying farmlands, this project will also destroy the ecologically fragile zone of Pahalgam forests, mountains, rivers and glaciers. These Amarnath yatris have already caused Hepatitis outbreaks in Pahalgam region due to their open-defecating habits which causes extreme pollution of the rivers, streams and glaciers. It will be a huge ecological disaster, that will severely affect the spread of glaciers in that region as well, which have already been reduced significantly in size by the unchecked and ever-increasing footfall of Hindu pilgrims to Amarnath.

These railway lines going to every corner of Kashmir will also accelerate the Indian settler-colonial project that's already started, bringing in hordes of unwanted settlers from all regions of the occupying Indian state to even the furthest regions of Kashmir where these railway lines are planned. This is an open attack on Kashmir in the name of development. These projects will also allow easy loot of our natural resources, one of the things that we will definitely see is our forests being massacred for timber and transported outside, besides other resources.

Lastly and most importantly, these new railway projects are clearly colonial in nature and Kashmiris have every right to resist these colonial efforts through every means possible. These so-called developmental projects are only meant to serve our occupiers and tormenters. These newly proposed railway lines are part of the larger Indian Hindutva project of depriving Kashmiris of every possible space in Kashmir and eventually ethnically cleansing the Muslim population of the region.

A special article on Shaheed Muhammad Ashraf Sehrai will be published on 5th may, his martyrdom anniversary.

CRISIS MANAGER: REMEMBERING THE GREAT REYAZ NAIKOO

Sheikh Eijaz Amin Shopiani



The month of May marks the martyrdom of Reyaz Naikoo, a name synonymous with bravery, courage and resistance in Kashmir. Kashmir's armed resistance against Indian rule saw many great guerilla commanders since 1989 and Reyaz Naikoo is one among them. Confronting, with all his might, the occupation that outnumbered him exponentially, Reyaz's prowess was not merely his physical presence that scared India's military apparatus in Kashmir. He was a strategist and a visionary whose keen intellect, sharp tactical acumen and outstanding military mind shattered in tatters the arrogance of Indian military, paramilitary and JK Police. In an interview given to Aljazeera over phone in November 2018, Naikoo on being asked whether he still believed in armed resistance, said, while quoting Nelson Mandela, that a freedom fighter comes to realize through harsh experience that the oppressor sets the rules of the struggle, leaving the oppressed with no choice but to employ tactics reminiscent of those used by their oppressors. While he was leading the resistance on the armed front, he was not against the resolution of the conflict through dialogue given that it takes between parties that recognize each other as equals and is never meant aimed at deceiving the colonized or just a

tactic of capitulation. He was of the opinion that certain Indian leaders advocate for dialogue within the framework of the Indian constitution, but their true intention is to enforce submission. They have no genuine interest in addressing our rightful political aspirations. Instead, they aim to implement policies and mechanisms that solidify the existing occupation, he believed.

Reyaz Naikoo's leadership was unparalleled. Following Zakir Musa's controversial decision to form Ansar Ghazwatul Hind, there was fear of disintegration and Kashmiris were looking at the situation with disappointment. The situation was getting out of hand with Zakir Musa openly threatening to behead Hurriyat leaders publicly at Srinagar's historic Lal Chowk. It was indeed the most vulnerable time in the history of Kashmir's armed struggle. There were defections as some fighters belonging to Hizbul Mujahideen left it to join Musa's newly formed Ansar Ghazwatul Hind. Recognizing the potential pitfalls of internal strife, Reyaz championed the cause of unity, and hosted meetings with top Hizbul Mujahideen commanders to foster dialogue and understanding. He held meetings where dozens of top HM commanders were present. His public addresses urged his fellow fighters and the Kashmiri populace to remain steadfast and unite against external provocations. It was indeed not so easy for any commander to keep his fellow fighters under one umbrella and avoid any huge confrontation when Indian agencies had cunningly started to exploit the situation in their favour. In a situation where the whole occupational apparatus was, armed with all available resources, trying very hard to trace him, commander Reyaz took it upon himself to personally visit different fighters at their locations. His ability to move stealthily through apple orchards and dense forests while evading detection and striking when it was least expected had frustrated his enemies to the extent that IG Kashmir Police and Indian military's Lieutenant General had to call seven high profile meetings to review the situation and trace Reyaz who was then serving as the operational chief of Hizbul Mujahideen in Jammu and Kashmir.

One of Reyaz's most audacious moves was his response to the abduction of armed fighters' family members by the notorious Kashmir police. In a strategic counter-move, Reyaz orchestrated the abduction of police family members from various parts of the occupied region. This bold maneuver sent shockwaves through the military administration, leading to the dismissal of the then police chief, SP Vaid, who was deemed unfit to counter Reyaz's tactical brilliance.

After being active for nearly a decade in different areas of the occupied territory, Reyaz

Naikoo met his martyrdom in his beloved Beghpora village, surrounded by a massive contingent of Indian occupational forces. Thousands of India's military and paramilitary troops cornered him in his village where he had come to visit his ailing mother. Whole Kashmir was put on red alert as India feared mass agitation knowing well that the commander was loved by Kashmiris from all walks of life. He fought bravely for many hours and wrote his verdict with his blood. We will forever remember this brave commander who will continue to inspire freedom loving people across the globe.

INDIA'S ADMISSION OF EXTRATERRITORIAL KILLINGS INSIDE PAKISTAN

Muhammad Lateef Parray



**The
Guardian**

Indian government ordered killings in Pakistan, intelligence officials claim

In April, a long report by The Guardian revealed how India was behind the transnational killings in Pakistan, Canada and US. The report reveals that the top Indian intelligence officials spoke to The Guardian and confirmed it was systematically killing its perceived enemies in foreign lands especially Pakistan where at least twenty such killings, majority of them high profile personalities, happened in different regions of the country. This was further backed by the sensitive documents about the issue shared by Pakistani intelligence officials, pointing towards a systematic strategy of foreign Indian agencies to assassinate people as part of an "emboldened approach to national security after 2019". It is pertinent to mention that India's Research and Analysis Wing RAW, believed to be behind these killings, is directly controlled by the office of India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The surge in deaths in 2023 in

Pakistan was attributed to Indian intelligence sleeper cells primarily based in the United Arab Emirates. These cells are alleged to have lavishly funded local criminals or financially vulnerable Pakistanis to execute the assassinations by offering them substantial amounts in millions of rupees.

Days after the Guardian report was published, Indian defense minister Rajnath Singh while giving an interview to an Indian television news network confirmed extrajudicial killings in Pakistan and threatened to kill their enemies inside its neighboring country. He further said that their prime minister had made it very clear that their policy (to kill people on foreign soil) was right and that Pakistan too has now understood it very well! India has been publicly accused by Ottawa and Washington of involvement in the murder of Khalistani Sikh activist Hardeep Singh Nijjar in Canada and a botched assassination attempt on another Sikh activist Gurpatwant Singh in the US last year. Interestingly, India outrightly denied any involvement in these cases and termed their agent who was caught in US as "rouge" or disgruntled element, disassociating themselves from him. While they couldn't openly acknowledge being behind these killings, they openly admitted their involvement in Killings inside Pakistan thereby brazenly laying bare their intentions and foreign policy towards the country. Despite India's brazen attempts to destabilize its neighboring country or what Pakistan's foreign office termed as "brazenness of Indian-sponsored terrorist acts inside Pakistan", the newly appointed ministers of the country were recently seen bating for trade with India and normalize ties with them.

There arise some important questions. First, has Pakistan failed to provide security to Kashmiris who had migrated to there after Kashmiris decided to start an armed rebellion against the Indian rule? Kashmiris have every right to be there in AJK which is under the administration of Pakistan and involve themselves in different resistance activities and it was the responsibility of Pakistani government to provide security to them. How is it even possible that the rouge Indian agencies have been successful in assassinating Kashmiris without facing a robust counter strategy. If India can eliminate individuals at will within Pakistani borders, does it possess the capability to significantly destabilize or inflict harm on Pakistan at any given moment? How deeply is India entangled in current waves of anti-Pakistan terrorism? And, can Pakistan go the Canada way and publicly call out India's extraterritorial killings and devise strategies to counter such terrorist acts? Pakistani government must answer these and other related questions and revisit its policy of normalizing relations with the Indian state. Nobody is against any kind of bonhomie and trade between the two countries, but it should not come at the cost of national security and strategic interests of the country.

WHAT IS HAPPENING IN KASHMIR?

OUR SEDITIOUS MOON

Muhammad Yaqoob Mirza



Since our occupiers decided to revoke the semiautonomous status of our homeland, there has been an unprecedented surge in anti-Kashmir and anti-Islam projects. India has employed different stooges and proxies to remain at the forefront of such projects who now decide how and when a Kashmiri should act, behave and live in the region. Last year, a controversy arose regarding the announcement of Eid, with government-appointed muftis striving to declare the blessed day for Kashmiris in line with the wishes of our oppressors. Historically, Kashmir has celebrated Eid with Pakistan. For decades, we have eagerly awaited the announcement from Pakistan's Ruet-e-Hilal Committee on our radio and television sets to mark this holy day. Our occupiers have long been uneasy about Kashmiris celebrating Eid with Pakistan, for they view it as a de facto referendum by the local population.

Now that the Indian occupying state, with BJP in power at center since more than a decade, has tightened its grip on the region using iron fist policies, they are in no mood to allow Kashmiris to continue with their historical stand on this holy day. The announcement of Eid from Pakistan and India was interesting this year. Most Muslim countries across the globe including Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar and Pakistan declared that Eid will be celebrated on 10th of April while India announced that the Shawal Moon was not sighted in most of the cities and hence Eid will be on 11 April. Pakistan's announcement came minutes after India had declared that its Muslim population was going to celebrate the day on 11 April in the country. Kashmiris

were watching this space curiously and after Pakistan's announcement, their joy knew no bounds—not merely because Eid was imminent, but because they could celebrate the day without the country that illegally occupies their land.

India was not happy at all with the developments unfolding before its eyes. Although India did not officially prohibit Kashmiris from choosing to celebrate Eid with Pakistan, it has now decided to penalize Kashmiris for their historical alignment with Pakistan on this matter. The military administration has opted to deduct a day's salary from all government employees and place them on leave on 10th April, instead of declaring it a holiday in the occupied territory. Kashmiris see this as the military administration's first official move to discourage their allegiance to Pakistan on this significant religious occasion. It's important to note that the region, historically, geographically, and religiously, is more aligned with Pakistan than India. There is no religious, scientific, or geographical obligation compelling them to align their Eid celebrations with any country other than Pakistan.

India has established its own Ruet-e-Hilal Committee in the occupied territory and appointed a controversial religious cleric with a questionable past as its head to challenge Kashmiris on moon-sighting matters. Interestingly, unlike Pakistan, the government-appointed mufti lacks modern equipment for clearer Shawwal moon observation! It's also important to note that the occupying state has taken several prominent religious organizations under its direct control. The religious leaders of these organizations communicate directly with BJP's Darakhshaan Andrabi and core central and state agencies on crucial issues. The Waqf Board, chaired by Andrabi, directly oversees religious matters in the region.

After 2019, India imprisoned numerous prominent religious clerics across Jammu and Kashmir. Before the abrogation of Articles 370 and 35A, India also banned the major religious organization, Jamaat-e-Islami Jammu Kashmir, and incarcerated its core members in various jails across India and Kashmir. Recently, following an alleged agreement among the religious leaders of various organizations, except Jamaat-e-Islami, they were released from jail. They were permitted to resume their religious duties without speaking out against Indian occupation or human rights abuses in the region. After their release, these religious leaders were visited by notorious BJP figures and presented with flower garlands and Kashmiri shawls. The ban on Jamaat-e-Islami JK was extended for another five years in February by the Ministry of Home Affairs, and the organization's core members continue to languish in jail without any bail.

BLACKING OUT EVEN TRAGEDIES: MEDIA AS MOUTHPIECE OF THE OPPRESSORS

Muhammad Saqib

On 11 April, Kashmir woke up to a tragedy and went into a state of mourning. A boat ferrying people in Gandbal Batwara area of the Srinagar city capsized and several people, mostly teenage school-going children, died due to drowning in river Jhelum. As I am writing this report, the dead bodies of more than two children are yet to be retrieved from the waters of Jhelum and the whole region is in a state of shock. People across the erstwhile princely state took to social media and heavily castigated the military administration's "smart city" project while failing to build basic infrastructure on Kashmiri tax payers'



money. People also highlighted the fact that work on a footbridge connecting Gandabal with Batwara Badamibagh was initiated over a decade ago and has still not been completed due to negligence by the authorities and house negroes in the valley. They criticized the administrations attempt to showcase "smart city" by superficial ornamentation and beautification of military bunkers to G20 members last year while the inhabitants of the state face hardships due to the lack of basic facilities. Following this widespread criticism, journalists in the valley reportedly received a directive from Manoj Sinha's office to minimize coverage of the tragedy. The news was to be blacked out or given minimal coverage in print and electronic media. Initially skeptical, I found that the news was indeed true when Kashmiris checked local English and Urdu dailies the next morning. Nearly all newspapers had blacked out the news and failed to cover this significant Kashmiri tragedy in the manner it deserved. This incident further proved the complete surrender of Kashmir media outlets and Indian state's increasing grip over the institution in the valley. Kashmir media outlets have now become the "government" mouthpieces and every news that comes out from the region goes through multiple filtering process.

Indian state has employed a number of social media influencers to replace the independent and unbiased journalism in the valley. These "influencers" without any degrees in the relevant field have been installed to create a mess, construct and propagate Indian

narrative on the region and bury any atrocities perpetrated against the population of the state.

The situation in Kashmir gives us an idea of how the deeply troubling role media plays as a tool of suppression and control. Journalists, who are meant to be the watchdogs of democracy, have compromised their ethics and moral responsibilities in the region. Instead of providing unbiased and comprehensive coverage, they are being coerced into toeing the government line and suppressing stories that are critical or inconvenient to the military administration. This self-censorship and government control over media not only undermines the credibility of journalists but also deprive the public of their right to accurate and timely information. The stifling of voices and censorship of news reflects a broader pattern of authoritarianism and repression, where freedom of the press is sacrificed for political expediency. In such an environment, the role of independent journalism becomes even more crucial to hold those in power accountable and to give voice to the voiceless.

SURVILIENCE IN KASHMIR

Syed Suhaib Abdullah



A wave of dangerous surveillance has gripped Kashmir with people drawing parallels to the stringent monitoring and control mechanisms seen in conflict zones like Gaza, where Israeli forces exert extensive oversight over Palestinian lives. The Indian military's demands for personal data from residents have raised significant concerns about privacy, autonomy, and the sanctity of private spaces.

Residents in Kashmir have reported that the Indian army is demanding extensive personal information, including phone numbers, email addresses, and life-size photographs of all family members, with a particular emphasis on females. The occupying military seeks details about relatives and friends, the number of rooms in households, information about any additional properties, and specifics about land ownership and household income. This

exhaustive data collection exercise is far-reaching, extending beyond immediate family to include distant relatives and acquaintances.

Family members, particularly females, are being forced to maintain communication with military officers via WhatsApp. The intrusive nature of these demands has sparked widespread anxiety among the local populace.

The parallels with Israeli surveillance of Palestinians in Gaza are striking. In Gaza, Israeli forces employ a range of surveillance technologies and methods to monitor Palestinian activities, gather intelligence, and maintain control over the population. This includes extensive use of drones, CCTV cameras, and digital monitoring tools to track movements, communications, and online activities. Palestinians in Gaza often live under constant surveillance, with their privacy invaded and their every move monitored by Israeli forces. Similarly, in Kashmir, the Indian military's data collection efforts represent a significant invasion of privacy and an intrusion into the private lives of residents. The demand for personal data, including sensitive information like email accounts, bank details, and personal records, raises serious questions about the extent of surveillance and the protection of individual privacy rights.

This pervasive surveillance culture extends beyond individual households to encompass broader aspects of daily life in Kashmir. Public spaces, workplaces, educational institutions, and even online platforms are subjected to varying degrees of surveillance. The omnipresence of military personnel and the deployment of surveillance technologies contribute to a climate of constant monitoring and oversight.

The population's fears about privacy and the security of their personal information are not unfounded. With the growing reliance on digital platforms for communication, banking, and daily transactions, the potential for misuse of personal data is a genuine concern. The collection and storage of such vast amounts of personal information by the military raises questions about data security, confidentiality, and the potential for misuse or unauthorized access.

The normalization of surveillance in Kashmir has broader implications for freedom of expression, association, and assembly. The fear of being monitored, tracked, or targeted for expressing dissenting views or participating in peaceful protests stifles public discourse and creates a climate of fear where everyone has an impression that the Bg Brother is watching them. The chilling effect of surveillance on freedom of speech and association cannot be overstated, as individuals have self-censored or refrained from engaging in activities deemed sensitive or controversial by the Indian state.

The most concerning aspect of this dangerous surveillance is demanding the life size photographs of the female members. For Kashmiris, or for that matter for every individual across the globe, the honor and sanctity of female members is above all things and nobody would like to share personal and sensitive details about them, let alone share life

size photographs with a military that has been murdering them since decades. The use of rape as a weapon of war by Indian military is well documented and now the same military forcing Kashmiris for such details about their females is utterly fearsome. Last year, Indian authorities in the region installed GPS anklets on Kashmiri prisoners who were released on bail to track their activities.

JUNAID SEHRAI: CARRYING FORWARD THE LEGACY OF PROPHET ISMAIL (A.S)

Gowar Farooq

In Kashmir, Junaid Sehrai's story challenges common beliefs about the role of political leaders' children in freedom movements. Many in Kashmir, often belonging to the pro-Indian camp, would argue that the children of resistance leaders are protected from danger and have been living comfortably away from real struggles due to their family's position. This narrative was fueled and promoted by the Indian state to discourage the common masses from joining the resistance movement. However, Junaid Sehrai's active participation in armed resistance challenged this perception. While Junaid is not the only martyr son of a resistance political leader, many others include the martyr son of former Ameer Jamaat e Islami J&K Sheikh Muhammad Hassan and other Arkans of Jamaat have sacrificed their youth for the sacred cause of Kashmir's war of liberation.



Choosing to leave a comfortable life, Junaid joined Hizbul Mujahideen on 24 March 2018. This was a significant decision that showed his dedication and belief in his father's cause. His active role in the armed resistance and his martyrdom on 19 May 2020 during a gunfight with the Indian occupational forces broke the stereotype that the children and families of resistance leadership are distant from actual sacrifices. Instead, his actions served as an example of "leading from the front" or "charity begins at home" and highlighted a story of shared sacrifice and unity, closing the gap between leaders and common people. The statements of his father, Shaheed Ashraf Sehrai, remind us of the character of the companions of the Prophet (A.S), and Junaid reminds us about the legacy of Prophet Ismail (A.S) and Hussain (RA). This example set by the Sehrai family is unmatched and unparalleled. It is also a lesson for those children and families of the "resistance" leadership who sold Kashmir resistance for personnel benefits. It took a person like Sehrai to sacrifice his beloved son, an MBA graduate, to answer the critics that the men of resistance are the men of the book (Quran). They are not like the privileged children of the elite politicians in the pro-Indian camp. There is a huge difference between the two; on the resistance side, "charity begins at home,"

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When his father Shaheed Muhammad Ashraf Sehrai publicly acknowledged Junaid's decisions—from taking up arms to his martyrdom—it solidified Junaid's status as a martyr and a hero. This acknowledgment paralleled the recent sentiments expressed by Ismail Haniyeh, the chief of Hamas, when he spoke about the martyrdom of his own children and grandchildren in Israeli strikes, emphasizing that his children were no different from other Palestinian children. Such statements from leaders underscore the shared sacrifices made by families of resistance.

Junaid Sehrai's life and death exemplify that leadership and sacrifice in the fight for freedom and rights are not exclusive to those outside leadership. By engaging directly in the struggle, Junaid honored his father's legacy and reinforced the call for continued resistance against the Indian rule. His actions encourage the people of Kashmir to not only remember his sacrifices but to actively support and uphold the cause he and his father stood for.

یہ فیضانِ نظر تھا کہ مکتب کی کرامت تھی
سکھائے کس نے اسماعیل کو آدابِ فرزندگی

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“The Indian military occupation of Jammu and Kashmir which we are fighting against is the longest-running and the most brutal occupation in the contemporary era, which compares with the occupation of Palestine in its scope and intensity, yet the reality of abuses here is much less known.”

Reyaz Naikoo

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