



JAMMU KASHMIR COALITION OF CIVIL SOCIETY (JKCCS)

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The Informative Missive is a monthly newsletter published by Jammu Kashmir Coalition of Civil Society (JKCCS). The Informative Missive is a collection of all human rights related news, stories and data on a monthly basis. The Informative Missive provides monthly figures of killings due to violence in Jammu and Kashmir and information on related human rights violations and abuses.



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The Informative Missive

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1. Editorial

Cost of India's Occupation of Kashmir

During an interaction with the prominent members of Indian civil society activists on how the non-resolution of Kashmir dispute is draining Indian resources, JKCCS members pointed out that the Indian taxpayers need to be aware of the cost of India's occupation of Kashmir and how important that is to bring accountability. It seems that the human right violations, impunity and human sufferings in Kashmir are not issues in a country like India where human life doesn't count. Unfortunately, the idea didn't take off for different reasons. It would have been ideal and important if the study would have been initiated by Indian civil society members. Despite more than two decades, Indian state's control of Kashmir with its massive army has not worked for India. It is unlikely that India can sustain Kashmir militarily, where the freedom movement has progressed into the third generation. History tells us that all occupational countries have to give up on the military occupation however powerful such countries have had been. India cannot afford such militarized control over Kashmir for long. India is a country which is far ahead in poverty than many Sub-Saharan African countries and yet, it is obsessed with retaining Kashmir through violence and deceit, particularly the ruling class who fear that secession or resolution of J&K will have domino-effect in other states (North East, Punjab etc) in India and that it will set into motion the process of balkanization of India. Thereby India has been justifying this occupation in the name of democracy, secularism, territorial integrity and fighting terrorism. They are hell-bent for maintaining the status quo whatever the cost.

According to the 2007 Arjun Sengupta Committee report, 77% of Indians live on less than Rs. 30 per day. India lags behind at the 171st spot in the world in public health spending which is less than what is spent by Sub-Saharan countries. According to the UN Development Report, 55% of the Indian population is poor. There is one doctor for 1700 people and only one Operation Theater for one hundred thousand people. More people die in road accidents than anywhere in the world i.e. 13 people die every hour. According to Lancet, a medical journal, 23 lakhs (2.3 million) children died in India in 2005 alone. India figures among top-ten countries for communicable diseases. A report by Save the Children shows that more than 100 million children in India don't have enough to eat. 24% of the children go without food for one day. In 2009, 17368 farmers committed suicide. Planning Commission Report reflects the gross inequality in assets wherein 5% of the population possesses 38% of the total assets and bottom 60% own a mere 30%. According to Oxfam richest 1% Indians have cornered 73% of wealth generated.

According to Washington based Center for Strategic and International Studies estimate, India has spent an estimated \$80 Billion on military modernization program by 2015. The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute's report India accounted for 9% of all international arms import 2001-2010 making it the world largest weapon import country. India has signed 50 billion dollar worth weapon-deals after the Kargil War of 1999. India is obsessed with its hegemony and furthering its global ambitions and believes that arms can provide security and hegemony both, contrary to saying of the world-renowned economist, Mahbub-ul-Haq, "security lies in the development, not in arms". India has refused to take lessons from the then mighty Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), which collapsed because of over-militarization. According to SATP - 5055 soldiers were killed and 13000 injured besides hundreds of army persons have committed suicide in Kashmir and India has spent between 1989 and 2017, approximately 68 billion rupees on security-related expenditure in Kashmir.

Indian army is facing a shortage of fifty thousand officers, in the air force, navy and regular army. The parliamentary standing committee is considering five years' conscription for those seeking

government jobs in the army. Conscription has been abolished in many countries with an exception of Israel. The jingoistic corporate Indian media, which are shouting war in their “war studios” against the neighbouring countries like China and Pakistan and are igniting war hysteria are sending their children to corporate jobs and not to the army. The human losses made in the war in Kashmir are also of the Indians who are joining the army out of compulsion and out of patriotism. The US Army General Mr. Patton’s most incisive remark seems relevant for India, “no bastard ever won a war by dying for his country. He won it by making some other poor, dumb, bastard die for his country.” Further as is said in military parlance it is always glorious to another man to die for his country. It is amazing that in other occupational countries be it France, Britain, Holland, Italy or even Israel, there have been dissenting groups questioning the state against the occupation. The legendary anti-Vietnam war campaign in the US ended the Vietnam War after it compelled the states to see the writing on the wall. However, in India, there is a disproportionate outcry for continuing the war in Kashmir. In 2008, 2010 and 2016, massive agitations - more powerful and widespread than those in Eastern Europe in the 1990s - were brutally suppressed through the unprecedented militarization of Kashmir. The Indian government is of the view that as long as they are able to hold and suppress people by brute military force against their will, they can attain the goals of this occupation.

Kashmir is becoming a liability for India internationally, particularly when she is ambitious to get a permanent seat in the UN Security Council. A microscopic section of the Indian civil society is concerned about the image of India. From a moral standpoint, India has lost its war in Kashmir long back and the external pressure and the cost exacted is likely to add into the liability for the government of India. The cost of the occupation is affecting the dispossessed and marginalized sections of the Indian social structure, like tribals and Dalits who have no interest in retaining Kashmir. They are already consumed in their own political struggles and a considerable section of such have-nots are in open armed resistance against the Indian State, disillusioned with the system controlled by the elite and chronic capitalist ideologies.

It is a pity that the public intellectuals who have played a very important role in mobilizing the public opinion are afraid of speaking truth to power about Kashmir. Though sometimes they give vent to their feelings in papers there is no effective campaign in India against the war in Kashmir or an advocacy to disinvest from Kashmir. In this case, it would have been relevant to educate the Indian people about the cost which Indian taxpayers paying in retaining Kashmir where the majority of the people are fighting for the right of self-determination and for the UN resolutions passed in 1948 and 1949. It is unlikely that even after seventy years the government of India can neutralize the resistance, which has passed to the third generation and relying on the brute military force is unlikely to retain Kashmir forever.

2. Chronology of Incidents

Jan 01: Another JeM militant was killed in an encounter which erupted on December 31 at CRPF’s camp in Lethpora area of Pulwama, after militants stormed the camp. The slain militant, officials said, was a Pakistani national. In Drubgam, as per local sources, the government forces laid a cordon around the village to prevent people from reaching the village and also to prevent militants from appearing at the funeral. The cordon led to stone throwing by some local youth following which the forces allegedly opened fire, leaving one youth, Manzoor Ahmad Rather, critically injured. “He has bullet wounds on his face and shoulder. We have shifted him to SKIMS where, I am told, he has been operated upon. He is stable,” Dr Rashid Parra, MS at the Pulwama district hospital, told media.

Jan 02: Armed forces launched their first cordon and search operation (CASO) of 2018 in more than a dozen villages of Shopian. As many as a dozen villages were cordoned off and searches were conducted. Police said that there were ‘intelligence inputs’ about the presence of militants in the area. Locals from Chakoora village said that about five residential houses were searched in their village.

Jan 03: Unidentified gunman shot dead a 26-year-old youth in outskirts of Sopore. Official sources told media that Arif Ahmed Sofi, son of Muhammad Maqbool Sofi, presently living at Herwan Unisoo Sopore, was shot by unknown gunmen at his home. He succumbed to his injuries on way to hospital. While a BSF soldier was killed when targeted by a sniper rifled from across the border along international border in Samba, Jammu.

Jan 04: BSF claimed it has foiled an infiltration bid by killing an unidentified intruder along IB in Arin sector in Jammu.

Jan 05: The Pakistani Army resorted to shelling and also fired from small arms and automatic weapons along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district. While clashes erupted during search operation at Kareemabad, Pulwama.

Jan 06: Four policemen including an Assistant Sub Inspector (ASI) were killed in a powerful Improvised Explosive Device (IED) explosion triggered by militants in Sopore town of north Kashmir's Baramulla district. Jaish-e-Mohammad has claimed responsibility of the IED blast, which is first since 2015. The IED blast took place near Gole Market at main Chowk Sopore at around 10 am when policemen were deployed in the area to maintain law and order in view of the shutdown called by the pro-freedom groups to against massacre of over 50 civilians by armed forces on this day in 1993. 6-7 shops were damaged in the explosion, which created a big crater near the blast site.

Jan 07: An army soldier committed suicide by shoot himself dead with his service rifle in Uri area of Baramulla district. While a man was hit by a bullet near LOC in Naushera sector in Jammu.

Jan 08: A local militant was killed and a house blasted to rubble during a fierce gunfight at Zohama Chadoora in Budgam district, police said. Soon after the news of the gunfight spread in adjoining villages, several youths assembled near the encounter site. They pelting the government forces with stones and tried to breach the cordon. Shabir said that the forces lobbed teargas shells and fired pellets to disperse the stone-throwing youths. In the forces action two persons sustained pellet injuries. Internet services were snapped in Budgam during the gunfight. While an army soldier deployed on fence duty got injured when a forward Indian army post came under firing from Pakistani side in Hamirpur area on Line of Control in Mendhar.

Jan 09: A civilian was killed and another critically injured when the army, according to the police, opened fire on stone-pelting youths in Khodweni area of Kulgam district after a local Hizbul Mujahideen (HM) militant was killed in a gunfight with armed forces in the forests of Larnoo in Kokernag area of Anantnag. The slain civilian was identified as Khalid Ahmad son of Abdul Salam Dar of Redweni, Pulwama.

Jan 10: A CRPF soldier belonging to 164 BN, committed suicide inside his camp in main town Kokernag of Anantnag district. He was identified as head constable, Balister Tyagi, a resident of Delhi. He shot himself with his service rifle.

Jan 11: Cordona and Search Operation was conducted in villages of Anantnag while search operation was launched in upper reaches of Kokernag in south Kashmir.

Jan 12: Militants fired towards a police post in Shopian district triggering panic in the area. While Indian and Pakistani troopers exchange fire and shelling along LOC in Kamalkote area of Uri, Baramulla. In a landmine blast, a soldier was injured when he stepped over a planted landmine during patrolling in Kamalkote village.

Jan 13: An army soldier was killed in cross LOC firing in Rajouri district while a boy sustained critical injuries in a blast at Bandi Cahachain area of Poonch. A 60-year-old man and a 50-year-old woman were hit by bullets that army soldiers fired at Shalteng, HMT, Srinagar. SSP, Srinagar, Imtiyaz Ismail Parray said that the army soldiers were at Shalteng on information of some suspicious activity there. He said the army opened fire when it signalled a car to stop. The SSP also said that a case has been registered into the incident and investigations are on. Soon after the incident, the injured were rushed to SKIMS Bemina. The hospital authorities identified the man as Abdul Aziz laway, a resident of Fruit Mandi Shalteng. "He has received a bullet in his right thigh," a doctor at the hospital said. "He was standing at Shalteng when he was hit by the bullet." The other injured was identified as Syeda Salaam, a resident of Shalteng Maloora. In south Kashmir's Wanpoh area army resorted to aerial firing when their convoy was pelted with stones by the youth.

Jan 14: Police claimed it has recovered and defused an IED at Maloora area in Srinagar.

Jan 15: Army and police claimed it has foiled an infiltration bid by killing six unidentified militants associated with JeM in a joint operation along LOC in Dulanja, Uri in north Kashmir's Baramulla district. While armed forces resorted to aerial firing after their vehicle was pelted with stones by youth at Rajpora chowk in Pulwama township of south Kashmir.

Jan 16: A 50-year-old man hit by bullets last month in Batmurren village succumbed to his injuries. The deceased was identified as Muhammad Ayoib Mir, son of late Ghulam Qadir Mir, of Molu-Chitragam. While two army porters were injured in an "accidental" explosion at the army's 21 field ammunition depot at Khundroo in Shangus area of Anantnag district. A senior police official identified the injured as Jahangir Ahmad and Bilal Ahmad, both residents of Khundroo. In cross LOC firing an army officer was injured in Poonch district of Jammu division.

Jan 17: An Indian army Captain was injured in cross LOC shelling along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district. While panic gripped Soibug area of Budgam on Wednesday when clashes erupted between government forces and local youth after an army vehicle was attacked with stones.

Jan 18: A border security force head constable and a minor girl were killed and four others, including three civilians, injured as Indian and Pakistani soldiers exchanged heavy fire and shelling along the international border in Jammu and Kashmir. The girl was identified as Sabity (aged 13 years), daughter of Sat Pal, a resident of Dayala Chak, Kathua.

Jan 19: Two civilians, army man and a BSF soldier were killed and 23 others, including 2 BSF men, were injured in heavy mortar shelling by Pakistan, along the International Border (IB), in three districts of Jammu and Kashmir, officials said. The killed civilians were identified as Sahil Kumar, 25, alias Johny R/o Kortana village in R S Pura sector and a 50-year-old woman Bachno Devi wife of Jeet Raj R/o of Saikhurd in Arnia succumbed to injuries," an official said. While eight cops were injured in a grenade attack on a police party in Pulwama district.

Jan 20: Three civilians and an army soldier and six injured in cross LOC shelling at various parts of J&K. An army soldier was killed after being hit by bullet in cross border firing in Krishan Ghati sector of Poonch district. While the three civilians - 17-year-old Gaura Ram of Kapur R S Pura, 45-year-old Gour Singh of Abdullian and twenty-five-year-old Tarsem of Kanchak- were killed in cross LOC shelling. While a grenade was hurled on police station Shopian in south Kashmir. No damage was caused. While an army soldier Chandan Kumar succumb to his injuries he received during cross LOC shelling at a forward post in Mankote sector of Poonch district.

Jan 21: Cross LOC shelling continued at various places along LOC and international border. The continuous cross border shelling triggered migration of over 10,000 people from their border hamlets as the authorities sounded a red alert and asked people to move to safer areas. Over 300 educational institutes along the IB and LoC in the Jammu region have been closed for the next three days by the administration in the wake of increased tension due to the shelling.

Jan 22: A civilian was killed and two others injured including a woman in cross LOC shelling along international border in Jammu province. The slain civilian was identified as Gopal Das Bawa son of Bansi Lal Bawa of Kanachak, Jammu. While suspected militants lobbed two grenades in in Khrew Chowk Pampore and on Police Station Baramulla in which a civilian and a policeman were wounded. In Pulwama militants attacked a police party. The injured civilian was at Panpore was identified as Mohammad Shafi Bhat son of Suna Ullah of Kadlbal Pampore.

Jan 23: No incident of violence reported.

Jan 24: A 17-year-old boy and two militants were killed in a gunfight at Choiegund-Adoo village of Shopian district. Two ladies, including a militant's sister was also injured. The deceased boy was identified as 17-year-old boy Shakir Ahmad Mir, son of Muhammad Maqbool Mir, resident of Kalanpora village of Shopian. The slain militants were identified as Sameer Ahmad of Choiegund-Adoo village and Firdous Ahmad Ganowpora Shopian. Both the killed militants were affiliated with Hizbul Mujahideen. The two-storey residential house of Abdul Lateef Wani where the militants were holed up was also razed to the ground during the encounter. While an army soldier wounded in cross-LoC firing in Poonch district of Jammu and Kashmir died. Reports said, the army man had suffered

bullet injuries in Mendhar area of the district. Two motor shelling fired by Pakistani forces exploded in a school in Rajouri. No damage was caused. The forces claimed it has defused an IED near Pampore railway station.

Jan 25: A 10-year-old boy was injured seriously after a shell exploded near the encounter site at Chaigund area of south Kashmir's Shopian. The boy was injured as Musharraf Ahmad.

Jan 26: A grenade was hurled by suspected militants on police station Pulwama. No damage was caused.

Jan 27: Two students were killed by army in Shopian's Ganowpora village. The slain youths were identified as Suhail Javid Lone, son of Javid Ahmad Lone of Ganowpora, a Class 12 student and Javid Ahmad Bhat, son of Abdul Rasheed Bhat, resident of Balpora village, an undergraduate student. While two hand grenades were hurled at a police post in Sopore area of Barmulla district leaving two cops injured.

Jan 28: An injured woman in cross LOC shelling succumbed to her injuries in a Jammu hospital. She was injured on January 22. The deceased was identified as Bimla Devi, 25, of Kana Chak in Jammu. While three people were injured after an unidentified object exploded at an orchard in Shopian district of south Kashmir, police said. "While digging the fields at Chermarg in Zainapora area of Shopian, some suspicious object exploded, injuring the three people," a police spokesperson said. The injured were identified as Ghulam Nabi (55), Zubair Ahmad (18) and Umar Farooq (19), he said.

Jan 29: No incident of violence reported.

Jan 30: Indian and Pakistani troopers exchanged fire in Uri and Rajouri area of J&K. No causality has been reported.

Jan 31: Rayees Ahmad Ganie son of Mohammad Yousuf Ganie (21) of Narpora, Shopian succumbed to injuries after battling for life for about five days in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) of the Sher-i-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS) Soura. His brain was critically damaged as he was hit by bullet on his head," sources in SKIMS said. The death of Rayees has taken death toll in the Shopian firing incident to three.

3. Killings in January 2018

In January 2018, a total of 39 killings took place in different incidents of violence, which included 15 civilians, 10 militants and 14 armed forces. The day to day break up of killings is given below.

Table of Killings

| Date | Armed Forces | Militants | Civilians |
|---------------|---------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Jan 01 | - | - | - |
| Jan 02 | - | - | - |
| Jan 03 | 1 | - | 1 |
| Jan 04 | - | 1 | - |
| Jan 05 | - | - | - |
| Jan 06 | 4 | - | - |
| Jan 07 | 1 | - | - |
| Jan 08 | - | 1 | - |
| Jan 09 | - | 1 | 1 |
| Jan 10 | 1 | - | - |
| Jan 11 | - | - | - |
| Jan 12 | - | - | - |
| Jan 13 | 1 | - | - |
| Jan 14 | - | - | - |
| Jan 15 | - | 5 | - |
| Jan 16 | - | - | 1 |
| Jan 17 | - | - | - |
| Jan 18 | 1 | - | 1 |
| Jan 19 | 2 | - | 2 |
| Jan 20 | 2 | - | 3 |
| Jan 21 | - | - | - |

| | | | |
|---------------------------------------|----|--------------------|----|
| Jan 22 | - | - | 1 |
| Jan 23 | - | - | - |
| Jan 24 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| Jan 25 | - | - | - |
| Jan 26 | - | - | - |
| Jan 27 | - | - | 2 |
| Jan 28 | - | - | 1 |
| Jan 29 | - | - | - |
| Jan 30 | - | - | - |
| Jan 31 | - | - | 1 |
| Total | 14 | 10 | 15 |
| Total Killings in January 2018 | | 39 Killings | |

4. Human Rights Stories

Army’s pinpointed bullets kill three students in Shopian Police register murder case, army says it faced intense stone-pelting from mob

On January 27, army soldiers killed two civilians and injured few others in Shopian’s Ganowpora village in south Kashmir. One of the injured died later, in the hospital, taking the toll to three killings. The killings invited immediate condemnations from different political parties except the BJP, the coalition partner of PDP government. Divisional Kashmir ordered magisterial probe. The police registered a murder case against Major Aditya of 10 Garhwal Regiment and his unit for killing two civilians in Shopian district. Filing FIR, not for the first time, against army has not gone down well with the BJP, which demanded withdrawal of it, instead, demands FIR against the youth. The party even justified the army action against the civilians. While on the other side, Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti ensured the investigation ordered into killings would be taken to its logical conclusion. The Chief Minister maintained that her government took action against the army only after consulting the Central Government. The army in its ‘written report’ submitted to police has claimed that soldiers resorted to direct firing on “crowd” after following the standard operating procedure (SOP). The

killings further deteriorate the already fragile Kashmir’s political situation. Pro-freedom leadership called for a strike to protest the killings. The killing of two militants and a civilian by the armed forces, on January 24, in the same district has already put the area on boil.



Javed Ahmed Bhat



Suhail Javed Lone

Photos of only two boys were available

The victims, all students, were identified as, Suhail Javiad Lone, son of Javid Ahmad Lone of Ganowpora, a Class 12 student, Javid Ahmad Bhat, son of Abdul Rasheed Bhat, resident of Balpora village, an undergraduate student and Rayees Ahmad Ganai, 20, son of Mohammad Youusf Ganai of Rakh e Narpora, Shopian studying in 12th class.

None of the killed students were part of any protests. One of them was shot while obtaining a gas connection from an outlet while the two others were shot when they were standing at one spot looking at the damages caused by the army’s firing.

The army’s lynching theory of JCO was unanimously rubbished by the victim families and local, who accused the forces of killing the boys on the time when there was no stone pelting.

- None of the killed students were part of any protests. One of them was shot while obtaining a gas connection from an outlet while the two others were shot when they were standing at one spot looking at the damages caused by the army's firing.
- Irked by the waving of the black banner, army wanted the people to remove it. The villagers resisted the army diktat to bring down the banner.
- As the worried villagers gathering started swelling, two bullets were fired from the halted army vehicles.
- That is an unfortunate thing. In such a case a generic FIR should have been filed. I think they have prematurely put the name of an individual, I am sure when they investigate truth will come out.

The Indian electronic media held various television debates over the incident justifying the army firing on civilians.

Researchers from *The Informative Missive* visited the families of all the three victims of firing to collect their versions of the incident.

The incident of the killings connects with the defiance show by the locals to the army who wants a black banner removed from the house of a slain militant killed on March 25.

There was a deep anger among the people over the civilian killings. Residents of Ganawpora alleged that the army opened fire indiscriminately on civilians. "They (army) first came in the village at around 11am in two bullet-proof vehicles and started removing banners and flags in and around the local graveyard where a militant was buried on January 25," locals said. On January 25, a civilian and two Hizb militants were killed in a gunfight by armed forces and one among the militants belonged to Ganawpora village.

Locals said the army soldiers came again at 3 pm and continued removing the flags. When people protested, army soldiers opened indiscriminate fire, resulting in the killings of the two students and injuries to several others.

"They tried to kill us all," villagers said.

The visiting researchers first talked to the family of Suhail Ahmad Lone. Suhail's father Javaid Ahmad Lone was not fully in a position to repeat the incident as it discomforts him. While calibrating his emotions, he blamed armed forces for killing his son and two other boys.

"The situation in Shopian was quite sensitive after the killing of a local youth and a local militant from Ganawpora on March 24 by the armed forces personnel. The boy Shakir Ahmad who had received fatal injury near the encounter site later succumbed in the hospital. The killings have angered people particularly the youth. In protest against these killings shopkeepers didn't open their shops and traffic was off the roads for the third day on March 27", Javaid said while starting his conversation with the researchers.

On the third day of protest, i.e. on March 27, at 10:30 am, Javaid said, army of 44 Rashtriya Rifles of Balpora camp entered Ganawpora village in two trucks. Nobody understands why the armed forces entered the village, as situation was calm. Balpora camp is hardly half-a-kilometre from the village. Since the slain militant hailed from Ganawpora, so there were rush of people for

condolence at his house. A black banner with *Kalima* (religious verse) written over it was erected at his house. Irked by the waving of the black banner, army wanted the people to remove it. The villagers resisted the army diktat to bring down the banner. The village elders stepped in and requested the army to leave the place to avoid the confrontation. The army left the spot.

After half-an-hour, one army vehicle heading towards Balpora Camp passed through the same village. The soldiers on board, as per locals, hurled stones towards the people standing outside the slain militant's house. The youth returned the stones at the vehicle and the vehicle passed by peacefully.

"At around 1:30 pm, an army convoy comprising around 30 army trucks from Balpora camp passed through Ganawpora. On reaching near grid station, some 100 meters away from the village, the soldiers opened fire indiscriminately. Two of the army vehicle collided with each other in the process. But I have no idea whether there was any stone pelting or not," Javaid stated.

He further stated, "From the grid station the convoy take a U-turn and were returning back towards the camp. Naturally, they had to pass through the Ganawpora. I saw some boys were hurling stones on the returning convoy. While passing through the village soldiers, some of them walking by foot, fired ceaselessly in every direction, targeting houses of Ganawpora village. The stone pelting wasn't intense that it could warrant bullet firing that too in every direction. In the firing, window panes of many houses got damaged, luckily, nobody was injured."

Javaid Ahmad Lone alleged that the army doesn't use that much of ammunition during encounters as they showered on the village that day. The army convoy was moving very slow and sometimes they stopped their vehicles. The firing continued till the forces leave the village and halted at some distance from the village. The road from Ganawpora to Balpora camp is straight as an arrow and elevating, so the villagers were able to see the military vehicles and the army also were able to see the villagers. The people came out of their houses to ascertain the damages and many were worried of human casualties.

While the villagers were enquiring about the welfare of the people, Suhail also came out of his house. He was on a video call with his cousin Zahid showing him the damages caused to the residential houses by the firing. Three bullets had hit the wall of Suhail's room.

“As the worried villagers gathering started swelling, two bullets were fired from the halted army vehicles. One of the bullets hit Suhail, who was standing just outside his house. The bullet hit him on right side of his neck. The other bullet hit Rayees Ahmad Ganai, resident of nearby village Narpora, on his forehead. Rayees and Suhail were together at that time,” stated Javaid while defining the situation in which the boys were fired.

The firing was unprovoked, as the convoy was well away from the village and there was no stone pelting or protest in the area.

“I had seen myself bullets hitting Suhail and Rayees. I saw my son felling to the army bullets and went to take him in my arms. I was quite able to see the army who fired at the boys, as they were quite visible to me due to elevation of the spot, where they had halted their vehicles, well within their firing range,” stated Javaid who was eyewitness to his son’s killing.

That day, Javaid said, the intentions of the army were quite clear as they want to punish the villagers for showing defiance to their diktat.

The injured boys were taken to Primary Health Care Bathpora. Suhail was declared brought dead while Rayees was shifted to SKIMS at Soura, Srinagar.

Javaid said, the army were from Balpora camp manned by 44 RR (10 Garwal Regiment). “We only know the army was from Balpora army camp. After firing at the boys, we clearly saw them entering the same camp,” Javaid averred.

Rayees Ahmad:

On 27-01-2018, at around 3:30 pm, Rayees had gone to his Aunt’s house in Keegam, some 3 km away from his village Rakhe Narpora. Rayees left his aunt’s house only after the military guns fell silent. Due to strike, the traffic was off the roads so he to walk the distance. To reach home he has to pass through Ganawpora.

“As soon as he reached Ganawpora, the army fired few rounds of bullets and targeted Rayees and Suhail. Rayees was shot on the left side of his forehead,” stated Khursid, Rayees’s elder brother.

The family of Rayees was informed by the locals of the village at around 5 pm. At that time Rayees was taken to Bathpora Primary Health Care. When his elder brother Khurshid Ahmad Ganai reached Primary Health Care Rayees was in a position able to talk. From there he was referred to District Hospital Pulwama where he was provided first aid. For advance treatment he was moved to SKIMS, Srinagar.

“In SKIMS, a surgery was conducted over Rayees. Post-operation, he slipped into coma. During coma, many a times, he vomited blood, some of which gone down to his stomach. The doctors had to drain blood from his stomach to prevent the infection. In the process, he lost lot of blood. On January 30, at 3:30 am, he breathed his last”, stated Khursid, who attended Rayees in the hospital.

Javaid Ahmad Bhat:

On March 27, at around 1 pm, Javaid left his home to get a gas connection from Gratwalipora, Shopain. Javaid was hit by a bullet on his head while he was busy filling the formalities for gas connection at an outlet.

Javaid father Abdul Rasheed was reluctant to talk about the incident. After long persuasion, he shared some part of the details he knows.

He said, “When army opened fire at the Balpora power grid station Javaid was submitting the gas form at the nearby outlet in village Gratwalipora, some 80 meters away from the grid. The army bullet hit him in his head and probably he died there.”

The locals present there took Javaid to Primary Health Care Bathpora. From there he was referred to District Hospital Pulwama where he was declared dead.

“We have no idea what actually happened that day in Ganawpora. I was at home on time of the incident. It were some locals who informed me about the incident,” stated Raseed as he was not willing to speak more on the incident.

The *Sarpanch* (village Head) had visited the house Javaid’s house, after few days, to summon them to District Magistrate’s office. Abdul Rasheed Bhat had appeared before the District Magistrate to record his statement. After that he has no information about the progress of the case.

FIR filed:

The Police booked an army Major and his unit for charges of murder over killing of two youth at Ganowpora village in Shopian.

Police has named army Major, Aditya, of 10 Garwal and his unit in the FIR.no 26/2018 registered at a police station in Shopian on January 27.

Probe ordered:

Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Baseer Ahmad Khan, on March 27, ordered a magisterial inquiry into killing of two youths in a Shopian village in army firing.

Baseer Ahmad Khan according to media said that Deputy Commissioner (DC) Shopian, Muhammad Aijaz has been appointed as the inquiry officer to ascertain the facts about the killings of a youth.

DC has been directed to submit his report within 15 days.

CM’s statement:

Jan 29: Maintaining that action against guilty army personnel would not demoralize the force, Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti, on January 29, said the investigation ordered into Shopian killings would be taken to its logical conclusion.

The CM said her government took action against the army only after consulting the Central Government. “I spoke to the Defence Minister after the killings took place. Her response was very positive. She told me I should take action if any negligence has happened,” she said.

BJP demanded withdrawal of FIR

On January 29, the ruling BJP demanded withdrawal of FIR against the army men involved in the killing of two civilians in Shopian district. The demand came a day after the party justified the army action.

Participating in discussion over the killings in the Assembly, BJP MLA R.S. Pathania said: “Our party’s stand is that FIR should be withdrawn against the army personnel and a fresh FIR should be lodged without naming anybody.”

On Jan 28, BJP MLA Ravinder Raina justified the killings, saying the army “did the right thing.”

Army submits ‘report’ to police

Jan 31: The army in its ‘written report’ submitted to police has claimed that soldiers resorted to direct firing on “crowd” after following the standard operating procedure (SOP).

A source in the army confirmed to media that the army has submitted a written report about the sequence of events that unfolded on January 27 at Ganawpora resulting in the killing of three youth.

"In the report, the army has said soldiers came under intense stone pelting from the crowd and also from the windows of the nearby houses," said the army source. "The army has also stressed that they followed the SOP first by issuing verbal warnings, repeatedly requesting the crowd to disperse and firing single-shots in air. The army in its report has also said that petrol bombs were hurled on the army vehicles amid stone pelting in which junior commissioned officer (JCO) sustained injuries. And when crowd refused to disperse, soldiers were left with no choice other than to open fire at the crowd."

The reports said the report was submitted to police station Shopian on January 28, a day after the killings.

Demand of filing of FIR against youth

Jan 30: A BJP legislators demanded FIR should be registered against youth, who pelted stones on Army in Shopian.

BJP MLA Rajeev Sharma along with other party members questioned the government why no FIR was registered against the youth, who pelted stones on army personnel in Shopian.

Army files counter-FIR

Jan 31: Northern Army Commander Lieutenant General Devraj Anbu said that the army opened fire into a crowd

in Shopian in the face of the 'ultimate provocation' by a stone-pelting crowd.

The Army filed a counter first information report in response to the one lodged by the Jammu and Kashmir police over the killing of two civilians in Shopian district.

The Army has submitted its version of the incident to the Jammu and Kashmir Police and explained its reasons for opening fire at the stone pelting mob, officials said.

Calling the FIR against the army as 'unfortunate', Lt Gen Anbu said that there should have been generic FIR in the matter.

"That is an unfortunate thing. In such a case a generic FIR should have been filed. I think they have prematurely put the name of an individual, I am sure when they investigate truth will come out. Notwithstanding what the state government did, we had our own inquiry and are clear that we responded when we were provoked to the ultimate," he added.

The Army has also submitted photographs of the vehicles damaged in the stone pelting.

The FIR filed by the state police names no accused but states that a company of 10 Garhwal led by Major Aditya was on its way for official duty when it was attacked by an unruly mob with stones.

Unabated encounter sites killing

Shakir's father says aim of the bullet says it all

One more example of "intention killing" came to fore by the armed forces on January 24 during cordon and search operation (CASO) aimed at to track down the militants in south Kashmir's Shopian district. The boy killed by the forces was identified as Shakir Ahmad Mir, 17, a labourer, son of Mohammad Yousuf Mir of Qalampora, Shopian who was shot hour before an encounter started between the armed forces and holed up militants.

A researcher of *The Informative Missive* visited Qalampora village of Shopian to collect the details of Shakir's killing case. The locals and relatives of Shakir accused the armed forces of killing Shakir with intent. They



after the announcement, people from different villages started gathering around the site. Among the people were Shakir and his four friends Zahoor Ahmad Shah, Mashooq Ahmad Parry, Shahid Ahmad Mir and Ishfaq

Ahmad Mir who left cricket to join the gathering like many others who left their respective engagements to respond to the call made from the Masjid. Shakir was living over 1.5 km away from the encounter site.

"As soon as Shakir along with his friend reached near the Audu village, the forces engaged in CASO fired at Shakir targeting his temple. The aim of the bullet tells it all. He was murdered with intent", stated Shakir's uncle while talking to *The Informative Missive* at his

"I believe the forces fired at my son to disperse the gathering. They want to terrorize people by killing my son, as there was no stone pelting or protest at that time, only gathering"

blamed forces for killing the boy at the time when there were no protests or exchange of fire between armed forces and tapped militants.

On January 24, 2018 at around 4 pm, Audu village of Shopian district was cordoned off by the army of 44 Rashtriya Rifles and 14 BN CRPF (as mentioned in the FIR) on a tip off of presence of two local militants in a house. As the forces laying the cordon of the village, the locals said, an announcement was made through a Masjid loud speaker informing people about the cordon. The people were urged to gather near the encounter spot to help the hold-up militants to escape. Momentarily,

house.

Shakir was fired well before the encounter started or people have started protesting against the armed forces operation. "People have assembled near the site but they all were watching peacefully. No protest, no stone pelting or sloganeering were going there. Suddenly, one of the armed forces personnel shot at Shakir and killed him on the spot," further stated Shakir's uncle while relating the circumstance in which his nephew was killed.

While Shakir's uncle was talking his father Mohammad Yousuf was silently hearing the

conversation. After a while Yousuf joined the conversation he wants his statement also be recorded said, "I was at home when I heard a single gunshot. When I went out to ascertain what had happen some villagers shortly informed me it was my son who was shot by the forces. I became speechless thinking as to why my son was shot at"

Yousuf said, within there was a hope, a father's hope, that his son may survive the bullet injury. In a short while he was shocked with the news of his son's death. "When I heard the news of his injury I became restless hoping I will be able to see my son alive talking and demanding things from me. But in a while I was jolted with his killing news. He was shot at a vital part of his body leaving no chances of his survival," the father stated while mourning his son's killing.

More precisely Shakir was shot some 300 meters away from the encounter site. Shakir was taken to Rajpora Primary Health Centre by his relative

Mohammad Rafiq Dar and friends along with he had reached there. There he was declared brought dead by the doctors. Rafiq was informed by village Srapanch (village head) about Shakir's injury.

After Shakir was shot people get dispersed thinking the forces can opened fire at them as well. "I believe the forces fired at my son to disperse the gathering. They want to terrorize people by killing my son, as there was no stone pelting or protest at that time, only gathering," the dejected father stated.

Police has filed FIR no. 21/2018, in police post Keegam but in the FIR Shakir and his father's name was entered wrongly. Later Shakir's family filed the application to police to rectify the mistakes. However, the family was unaware at the time of the researcher's visit whether police has corrected the mistake or not.

Family has no planning to take legal recourse citing failure of judiciary in delivering justice in human rights violation cases.

BSc Student fired in chest dies

Twenty-two-year, college student Khalid Ahmad Dar, son of Abdul Salaam Dar of Kulgam district in south Kashmir was killed in the state police action on January 9. Khalid's family accused the police forces of killing him in cold-blood. The police version that the student was killed during clashes was rubbished by the family saying the boy was killed with intent and to cover up the crime its men committed, police is creating a smokescreen of lies.

A researcher of *The Informative Missive* visited Khalid's family to collect the details of the circumstances in which the youth was killed. At the time

The area falls under the jurisdiction of Qaimoh police post which also serves as a SOG camp, but the family has no information about the camp and battalion of CRPF. The number of people was increasing as the people from surrounding villages also joined the protest. At around 3 pm, the State forces present there used tear smoke shells to disperse the protestors. In retaliation the protestors also hurled stones over the forces. In the meanwhile, few gunshots were fired by the forces and three boys received bullet injures. One of them was Khalid Ahmad.

Abdul Salaam further stated, "Khalid was

"I am convinced he was killed with target fire. The bullet in his chest simply explains the intentions of the police force of killing the boy who was just passing through the area where protests were on-going"

of the researcher's visit, people were keeping coming to express their condolence with the family.

Khalid's father Abdul Salaam Dar, who was also busy attending the people who come for condolence, while talking to the visiting researcher said, "It is beyond doubt that my son was killed cold-bloodedly by the forces. He has never participated in any protest nor has he ever in his life pelted stones on the forces. There was no case against him in any police station for participating in any protest activity."

Khalid was perusing graduation in Science and used to spend most of his time with studies.

In the intervening night of 8 January 2018, there was an encounter between the forces and militants at Larnoo area of Kokernag in Anantnag district. A militant was killed in the encounter. In the morning of 9 January 2018, the news spread that the militant killed in the encounter belonged to the village Khodweni. As the news spread in the village a spontaneous shutdown was observed. All the shopkeepers shut their shops and traffic movement was also stopped. At around 2:00 pm the villagers gathered in the main market of Khodweni to protest against the killing and demanded the dead body of the slain militant.

Jammu and Kashmir police personnel and Special Operations Group (SOG) wing of the police from Qaimoh police post along with Central Reserved Police Force (CRPF - paramilitary forces) also reached the spot.

returning from his college but as there was no traffic on the roads due to the shutdown over local militant's killing, he was coming back on foot. Village Redweni is around 1 km ahead of village Khodweni, where protests were ongoing. To reach his village he had to pass through village Khodweni. By the time he reached the main market of Khodweni there were protests ongoing and at the same time forces fired some gunshots and one of the bullets hit Khalid on his chest."

The father said see the area of his body where Khalid was shot. "I am convinced he was killed with target fire. The bullet in his chest simply explains the intentions of the police force of killing the boy who was just passing through the area where protests were ongoing," the dejected father stated while blaming the police for killing his son with clear intent.

Khalid was with another boy of the same village who also received bullet in his right shoulder. Just a while before Khalid was shot he called his elder brother Tariq Ahmad Dar who was also returning from the same college in Anantnag town and he told him not to return through Khodweni main market as there were clashes going on. But, nonetheless, Tariq still chose the Khodweni route to reach home. At Khodweni main market he saw clashes ongoing between protestors and forces but he could not see his brother Khalid. He confirmed that it was just CRPF, local police and SOG personnel deployed in the main market. It was only after

reaching his own residence that he heard gunshots (subsequent to Khalid being shot some local people came and informed Tariq and the family that Khalid had been shot). Another youth whose name and address is not known received bullet in one of his thighs. The people present there took the injured to Sub-District Hospital Qaimoh and from there they were referred to District Hospital Anantnag. At District Hospital Anantnag, Khalid was declared dead at 4:45 pm. The dead body of Khalid was brought back to his village and a huge number of people attended his funeral. The dead body of the militant killed in encounter was handed over to the villagers at 9 pm in the same day.

Khalid was youngest among five brothers and one sister. Khalid's father is a tailor and is the lone

earner of the family. The sister of Khalid is married and all the brothers are studying.

Perpetrators are believed to be personnel of the Jammu and Kashmir Police (including of the SOG wing) and CRPF. This belief is based on eye-witnesses, specifically the boy accompanying the victim Khalid (whose identity is not disclosed) and the brother of the victim Khalid, i.e. Tariq Ahmed Dar.

The family has yet to approach any State organ. They say they need some more time to process the death of their son, and they do not have hope from the State institutions as they blame the same State for the killing of their son.

Police post Qaimoh has summoned the family through *Numberdar* (village head) but the family has replied that police can visit their house for any enquiry.

Father of four injured by bullets last month dies

Jan 16: A 50-year-old man hit by bullets last month in Batmuran village succumbed to his injuries.

Muhammad Ayoib Mir, son of late Ghulam Qadir Mir, of Molu-Chitragam, father of four died on January 16, Tuesday, morning, when the family was preparing to take him to Srinagar hospital for a checkup.

"At around 9 am we were leaving for Srinagar for checkup but as we were leaving he fell on ground unconscious. We tried to take him to hospital but he was not breathing and later doctors at Shopian hospital declared him dead," Gul Muhammad, a neighbor of Mir said.

Hundreds of people participated in his funeral, as he was laid to rest amid pro-freedom slogans. His body was wrapped in a Pakistani flag while several Pakistani flags were raised during the funeral.

Emotional scenes were witnessed as women beat their chests wailing his death. Ayoib is survived by his wife, (a non local) three sons and a daughter.

Mir's daughter, a 5th grade student, was wailing as women around her held and consoled her.

Mir, a labourer, was hit with three bullets on December 19 during clashes at Batmaran-Wanpora village of Shopian when government forces were leaving from a gunfight in which two militants and a woman was killed. Five residential houses and two cowsheds were razed to ground in the gunfight. Mir had gone to attend the funeral of militants.

Mir had undergone a surgery and another surgery was expected by the end of this month.

Villagers said that Mir was a poor labourer with four children, and had no resources. His treatment expenses were borne by the villagers, they said. He lived in a single storey house shared with the family of his brother.

A family member told media that Mir's elder son (16) left studies before his matriculation to help his father.

"Gowhar too was now helping his father to meet the two ends of family. All the expenses for the treatment of Ayoib were borne by his native villagers since the family had no means to do so," Bashir Ahmad, a villager said.

Mir had faced trouble last year too. He was arrested by government forces on February 23 when militants killed three troopers in an ambush near his home and an elderly lady was killed in what described a cross fire.

He was in detention for 10 days and later admitted in dental hospital for 20 days. "He was ruthlessly beaten by army. Then they handed him over to police, all the expenses of treatment were provided by villagers even then," Bilal Ahmad Mir, another local resident said.

Unknown gunmen kills youth

BJP claim of slain as its cadre rubbished by his family

Jan 3: Unidentified gunman shot dead a 26-year-old youth in outskirts of Sopore.

Media quoting official sources reported that Arif Ahmed Sofi, son of Muhammad Maqbool Sofi, presently living at Herwan Unisoo Sopore, was shot by unknown gunmen at his home. He succumbed to his injuries on way to hospital.

The area was sealed by government forces to nab the attackers.

"We have received information about this incident, and a team has been send there," SHO Bomai said.

On January 4, protests were held in Unisoo village on the outskirts of Sopore against the killing of a local youth by unknown gunmen. During the funeral procession, locals also raised pro-freedom and pro-Pakistan slogans.

The BJP's Kashmir unit claimed in a statement that Arif was an active worker of their party.

The state party leadership Sat Sharma, state general secretary (Org) Ashok Kaul, state general secretary and in-charge Kashmir affairs Dr Narendra Singh and BJP Kashmir unit said that they are deeply saddened over the brutal murder of party worker by militants.

However, his family denied the association. Imtiyaz Maqbool Sofi, younger brother of slain youth, told media that neither Arif, nor the family had any links with the BJP, which he described as 'anti-Kashmir and anti-movement'.

Arif's father Mohammad Maqbool Sofi is a former chairman of Jammu and Kashmir Peoples League – a constituent of Hurriyat conference. He has spent 12

years in various jails in Kashmir and outside and is now bed ridden due to back problem.

Besides working as medical representative, Arif ferried school children in a cab for livelihood.

35-year-old woman succumbs

Jan 28: A 35-year-old woman, critically injured in Pakistani firing along the International Border (IB), succumbed to injuries today, raising to 14, the number of deaths due to cross-border shelling since January 18, police said.

Bimla Devi of Kana Chak in Jammu was critically injured in Pakistani shelling on January 22 and

The eldest of his siblings, Arif, is survived by three sisters and two brothers, besides his ailing parents.

was undergoing treatment at the Government Medical College hospital.

"She died this morning and after postmortem the body was handed over to her relatives for last rites," a police officer said.

Youth returning from Pulwama militants' funeral hit in face by bullets Pulwama SP says 'first details point towards Rashtriya Rifles personnel'

Jan 12: A youth returning from the funeral of militants killed in the gunfight at Lethpora, Pulwama, was hit by bullets allegedly fired by soldiers of the army's Rashtriya Rifles on Monday. According to the survivor's family, 18-year-old Manzoor Ahmad Rather of Tahab village, Pulwama, had a close shave with death at Drabgam village when bullets allegedly fired by the Rashtriya Rifles hit him in the shoulder and left side of his face, leaving him unconscious and defaced.

"It was scary and there was panic all around when the army's Rashtriya Rifles opened indiscriminate firing on people who were returning from the funerals of two local militants," Manzoor's cousin, Bilal Ahmad, told media.

"Manzoor was hit when the army targeted him as he ran for safety towards the fields," Bilal said.

According to Manzoor's father, the incident happened at about 8.30am on Monday. He said Manzoor was hit by two bullets in his face and shoulder, and he was lying unattended in Drabgam village, groaning in pain.

"No one helped my son for almost 30 minutes after he was hit by the bullets. Then, some locals gathered courage and shifted him to Pulwama District Hospital, where doctors gave him first-aid and referred him to SKIMS Soura," said Manzoor's father, Abdul Salam Rather.

"The impact of the bullets has affected his face so much that it has swollen and a deep scar is still visible even after surgery," Abdul Salam said.

Doctors at SKIMS Soura said Manzoor's left zygomatic bone (cheekbone) has been shattered due to the bullet injury, leaving him defaced.

"We have operated on him and fixed the cheekbone through an internal fixation. He may need long-term care and repeated rounds of plastic surgery to treat the scar and damage," said a doctor on duty in SKIMS' Post-Operative Ward.

"We are accessing him for specific diagnosis and damage. We may have to do multiple surgeries to treat the scars," he said.

Meanwhile, the police have filed an FIR and started an investigation to ascertain the series of events which led to the severe injury to the youth.

"We are investigating the case in which a youth received bullet injury. The incident occurred around an army camp in Shadimarg area where RR is posted," Superintendent of Police Pulwama Muhammad Aslam media.

He said some reports said that soldiers from the the Rashtriya Rifles camp opened fire on a group of youth who tried to attack them with stones.

"Although we are yet to be clear about the incident, first details point towards RR personnel who retaliated to stone-pelting from a group of youth," he said.

Pulwama teen loses eyesight after hit by tear gas shell

A teenager who was injured, on January 24, during clashes at Chandgam village of South Kashmir's Pulwama district four days ago has lost eye sight in one eye after undergoing a surgery at a Srinagar hospital.

The only son of parents, Nayeem Ahmad Thoker, 17, a resident of Chandgam village, is undergoing treatment at Shri Mahraj Hari Singh Hospital (SMHS) Srinagar. "His left eye has been completely damaged by a teargas canister," said

Dr Saleem Tak medical superintendent SMHS Srinagar, adding he has lost vision in the eye.

He further said that his right eye was also affected, but there was only a minor damage. "He has eyesight in right eye and can see with it," he said.

Nayeem was injured by a teargas shell on January 24 during clashes between some youth and government forces at his native village. The clashes had erupted after government forces launched a cordon and

search operation in the village. He was immediately shifted to SMHS Srinagar.

"Doctors advised a surgery in the left eye which was severely damaged," said his father, Ghulam Mohammad Thoker.

The dejected father said that doctors informed him that Nayeem has lost 20 percent vision in the right eye. The parents had a hard time to inform their son that he has lost sight in one eye. "He was informed today only. He broke down after the news," said his cousin.

Nayeem had passed his 10th class examinations with good percentage and is a commerce student of 12th standard at government Boys Higher Secondary school Pulwama.

"On that fateful day he was returning from his coaching centre in Pulwama and had walked only few steps after alighting from a passenger vehicle when he was caught in clashes," his father said, adding that

frightened Nayeem attempted to runaway but stumbled and fell down.

The father said that when Nayeem attempted to regain himself forces fired a teargas shell which hit his face and left him in a pool of blood.

Ensuring impunity

State Information Commission (SIC) order directs disclosure of ML Koul Report

Jan 16: In response to the second appeal filed by Advocate Parvez Imroz, who had sought information regarding the copy of Retd. Justice Makhan Lal Koul Commission Report on 2010 killings under JK RTI Act, the State Information Commission (SIC) has directed the Home Department to provide the copy of the report to the appellant. In its order dated 11.01.2018, the SIC directed “that the PIO, Home Department shall provide the copy of the report to the appellant subject to the condition that contents of the report in full or part, are not covered by any of the provisions of section 8, as may be determined by the Public Authority/Home Department to exempt the same from disclosure.” The SIC order further directed the Home department to provide the report within a period of 30 days from the date of the order.

The SIC order is a positive one as it underscores the need for transparency and accountability, for which the Commission was constituted by the previous government. However, it’s somewhat strange that the order invokes provisions of section 8 of JK RTI Act (2009) when the Home department in their counter-reply hasn’t invoked any provisions of JK RTI Act and

rejected disclosing information on the grounds that ‘the ML Koul Report is currently under examination’.

The Retd. Justice Makhan Lal Koul Commission Report on 2010 killings was submitted to the government in December 2016 but the copy and findings of the report were not made public. Owing to the public interest served by the report, as it is the right of the victim families who have participated in the investigation process to be made aware of the results of that process, Advocate Parvez Imroz had filed an RTI dated 10 January 2017 seeking a copy of the report. The information wasn’t provided to the appellant even after filing of the first appeal.

The denial of information by the home department demonstrates that the present government is strengthening the impunity of the crimes, which took place in the previous government. It was the previous government, headed by Omar Abdullah, who instituted the ML Koul Commission to investigate the killings of civilians in 2010 but it seems clear the present government too isn’t interested in seeking accountability of crimes committed by the armed forces.

Kathua Minor Rape:

Sexual Violence And Communalization In A Vulnerable Community

Jan 31: In response to a question in the J&K Legislative Assembly, the government of Jammu and Kashmir stated on 16 January, 2018 that there were 297 reported cases of rape in the year 2017, in contrast to 189 in 2016, as per media reports. These recent figures are alarming, even accounting for a rise in rate of reporting cases. They show a significant increase in the number of civilian rape cases. It is pertinent to note that for the increased number of cases, there are disproportionately fewer cases resolved. In the highly militarised context of Jammu and Kashmir, where impunity for gruesome human rights violations is the norm, cases of violence against women, whether by state actors or civilians are plagued by the same culture of impunity – aggravated by militarised governance structures which strengthen existing hierarchies of gender, community, class and caste. The Indian State has sustained an environment of impunity both through draconian laws and through the wider state machinery that has obfuscated the truth by shielding perpetrators of violence and injustice.

The recent case of the rape and murder of a minor girl, in the second week of January in Rasana Village, Kathua district of Jammu region, reveals the vulnerability of communities living in highly militarized border areas. Members of the Gujjar-Bakarwal community, a predominantly Muslim minority community in the Jammu region, have had a long history of persecution, exploitation, violence and displacement at the hands of the state forces due to their nomadic lifestyle, and knowledge of the local terrain. Mobility, grazing and trade routes, and everyday lives and livelihoods of people in these isolated and highly militarized border areas have been restricted, and they are vulnerable to different forms of social exploitation

and violence. Increased militarization and high incidences of sexual violence have particularly affected lives of Gujjar –Bakerwal women, who must try to earn a living in these precarious and violent conditions. The ‘exceptional’ circumstances of border life, including denial of access to their villages and grazing grounds, land mines and frequent shelling, means that an issue like sexual violence fades into the background.

This case should be seen and understood within this context of existing climate of impunity and human rights violations. The role of the police and the local BJP MLA in particular has raised serious suspicions of the state’s intention in shielding perpetrators and polarising communities. According to local activists on the ground, who have spoken to JKCCS the filing of the police complaint was deliberately delayed by the SHO, and the investigations conducted thereafter were cursory and repeatedly transferred from one team to another. Copies of the FIR and the medical examination report have not been provided to the family. Despite the local community having a strong inkling of the identity of the perpetrators, after the child’s body was recovered, a single individual—‘15 year old boy’ was arrested as the sole culprit. The case also exposes a long-standing pattern of communalizing issues that take place in Jammu, by local and Jammu politicians, particularly from the BJP. Local activists told JKCCS that the majority Hindu community, which was initially supportive of the agitation for justice, has now been ‘persuaded’ to withdraw their support. In a familiar move, police also arrested local activist Advocate Talib Hussain, who was vocal in voicing the community’s misgivings and threatened to apply the preventive detention provisions of the Public Safety Act (PSA).

The case requires greater attention, and follow up to prevent communalization and impunity for perpetrators. JKCCS appeals to women's groups and civil society in Jammu and elsewhere to come out in support of the local Gujjar – Bakerwal community's struggle for justice, and closely monitor developments in the case to

prevent miscarriage of justice, and intimidation of witnesses. The authorities should ensure that there is a fair and time bound investigation in this case and greater transparency and disclosure of information to the public to settle local concerns of a cover up.

5. Harassment against Kashmiris Living Outside

The harassment and arrest of Kashmiris in Indian cities shows no decline even after multiple assurances from the GOI and J&K government from time to time. This month also the disturbing reports of harassment and arrests of Kashmir were pouring in creating panic in the families of all those Kashmiris who work or studying in various India cities. The unabated violence against Kashmiris indicates that there appears no government policy in place to put an end to this perpetual harassment.

➤ **Kashmiri arrested in Maharashtra, booked for 'suspicious movement'**

Jan 03: The Thane police in Maharashtra have arrested a man hailing from Jammu & Kashmir after he was "found moving in a suspicious manner near the Air Force Station" in the city.

Shoukat Ahmed Sayyed (35) was spotted moving near the boundary wall of the Air Force station in Kolshet here, a restricted area, yesterday morning.

Sayyed, who hails from Srinagar, was booked under section 447 (criminal trespass) of the IPC, said police spokesperson Sukhada Narkar. However, his appearance was bedraggled, and he seemed to be mentally unsound, a source in the Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) said.

ATS officials were also questioning him, the source said. PTI

➤ **Man arrested from Mathura a bonafide resident of Jammu and Kashmir: UP Police**

Jan 8: The Uttar Pradesh Police said a person detained in Mathura on suspicion of being a terrorist has turned out to be a bonafide resident of Jammu and Kashmir. Inspector General of Police (IG) Anti-Terror Squad (ATS) Aseem Arun said: "As of now no terror link has been established."

The person in question, Bilal Ahmad Rani, was detained on January 7, Sunday, after he was caught travelling without a ticket on board the New Delhi-Bhopal Shatabdi Express.

Rani was behaving suspiciously and had to be taken for interrogation, Arun said. During which it was established that Rani was "a bonafide resident of Anantnag where his family runs a medical store".

The details of two other Kashmiris living with Rani in a Delhi hotel were also confirmed. They are also residents of Jammu and Kashmir. But they might face some more questioning, an officer said.

➤ **Kashmiri man's family protest over his arrest in Delhi**

Jan 12: Family members of Bilal Ahmad Kawa, who Delhi police and Gujarat Anti-Terror Squad claimed was Lashkar-e-Toiba suspect in 2000 Red Fort attack, on Friday staged protest in Srinagar demanding his release. They appealed the state government to intervene so that

their son is not falsely framed in the case as happened with several other Kashmiris in last three decades.

Kawa was sent to 10-day police custody by a Delhi court on Thursday, a day after he was arrested at Delhi airport. He was accused of facilitating money through hawala in Red Fort attack in 2000.

Carrying banners emblazoned with, "My name is Bilal Kawa, I am not a terrorist, I am innocent", at Srinagar's Press Enclave, Kawa's family members said their son was being framed in false case.

Kawa's cousin, Hinna, said that Bilal had gone to visit his family including his wife and two daughters in Delhi.

"Bilal's brother, Niyaz Ahmad Kawa, resides in Delhi. Bilal and his family would stay with him every winter to avoid cold winters," she said.

Mohammad Shafi, Kawa's uncle, said that his nephew was only a teenager when Red Fort attack took place. "He went to Delhi under his own name, carrying vegetables and Kashmiri bread for his family," he said.

"My son is a leather dealer and has no connection with militants. If my son was involved in the 17-year-old case, why he was not arrested by the police since then," questioned Kawa's mother while appealing the government to intervene and get his son freed.

On January 14, Superintendent of Police (SP), North, Srinagar, Sajjad Shah told media, "We were not told by anybody that he was in any way an offender, nor did anybody send a warrant before making the arrest."

Shah said there was no adverse reporting against Kawa, a resident of old Srinagar, with them.

"There is no adverse report against Kawa in the police station Maharaj Gunj," the SP said. "He is not a proclaimed offender."

During a preliminary investigation, Shah said Kawa along with his brother was doing animal hide business and he used to frequently visit Delhi.

"They have an accommodation in Delhi. Every year they used to visit Delhi and stay for a longer period during winters," Shah said. "He used to visit Delhi every year for the past 18 years."

➤ **Robbed off belongings, arrested on suspicion, and maligned by Delhi media**

Jan 13: A youth from Sopore returning home from Saudi Arabia was robbed off in New Delhi, arrested on suspicion, and maligned by media.

Television news channels claimed that Suhail Bashir Makhdoomi, 23, a resident Nathipora village in outskirts of Sopore, was arrested by army from Dwarka flyover in a military area after dropping a bag at some place.

Suhail's family said that while he had been arrested on suspicion, and police after investigation released him, the media wasted no time in maligning him. They also claimed that two passports, an Indian and

a Saudi Arabian, have been recovered from his possession.

Suhail's father, Bashir Ahmad Makhdoomi, a private school teacher told media that Suhail is innocent and has been released by Delhi Police after investigation.

"My son went to Saudi Arabia in August last year through a private company on a two year contract job in medical field as he has done general nursing management in Rajasthan. On 10th of January he called us and told us that he is coming home on vacation," Bashir told media.

But on 11th, Bashir said, Delhi police called him around 5.30 pm and informed him about Suhail's arrest.

"They told me that your kid was roaming around here in Delhi, 'we have taken him into custody, if you want us to release him, you take the next flight and take him along', but I told them, you can release him as of now that you have confirmed it to me already," Bashir Ahmad said.

After some time, he said, the police called him again and asked details about family and address, and again told him to fly to Delhi to get his son.

"But as soon as they dropped the call, I received another call but this time it was my son, Suhail. He was calling from police number and told me that 'I am safe, don't worry'," Bashir said.

"But I was shocked to see the news on TV that a suspected person has been caught in Delhi, who was running away after leaving bag at some place in Delhi

and they also claimed that they have recovered two passports from him, one of Saudi Arabia and another India. We all were worried now."

"I received a call from local police who asked the details about my son and later an army major of the local camp gave me a call and said that your son is safe and has been looted by some men in military zone area and asked me to visit his camp next morning," he said.

Next morning, Bashir visited the local army camp, where the officer informed him that Suhail has been arrested by army and handed over to Delhi police. The Major advised Bashir to contact local police, which he did.

"I immediately visited the DSP office at Sopore, who called Delhi police and they agreed on releasing my son," Bashir said.

"My elder son has gone to Delhi, Suhail has been handed over to him and they are now on way to Kashmir from Delhi and they might reach until late evening. We all are so eager to see our son safe. It was difficult to imagine it after seeing the news circulated by some news channels and social media but thanks to the local police and army who helped us to get our son back," Bashir said.

Senior Superintendent of Sopore police, Harmeet Singh Mehta told media that Suhail had not been arrested but detained on suspicion

"We told them that he is not involved in any case here but I have no information that is he been released yet or not."

No rules or procedures for slapping PSA: Home department

Jan 03: The Jammu and Kashmir government has been booking people under the draconian Public Safety Act (PSA) for the past forty years without any rules and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), an RTI has revealed.

The J&K Home department replied to a query filed under Right To Information (RTI) that it has not framed any rules and SOPs under the PSA.

"No rules have been framed so far," reads the Home department's response, which adds, "SOPs not framed."

Adeela Shah and Naveed Bukhtiyar had filed the RTI query under the supervision of Dr Sheikh Ghulam Rasool, Chairman RTI Movement, and Venkatesh Nayak, Programme Coordinator for Access to Information Programme Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative. They had asked the Home department, among other questions, for the latest version of rules and SOPs under PSA.

The Home department and District Magistrates, which are the key authorities to approve a PSA order and issue it, had from March 2016 to August 2017 detained more than 1,000 people under PSA, the Home department said in reply to the RTI.

The Home department refused to reveal the identities of the persons detained under PSA. It cited a

section of the RTI Act that gives them discretion to not disclose the information.

The activists had also asked about procedures for ascertaining the age of a person being detained under PSA, in case he or she is a minor. The Home department said that "there is no specific procedure for ascertaining the age of the detainee. However, date of birth issued by the competent authority is relied upon."

Individual RTIs filed before District Magistrates fetched responses that contradicted the Home department's statements. A reply from DM Anantnag stated that "The J&KPSA is a rule book consisting upon (sic) 711 pages and is in binding shape. It is not possible to Photostat the book. The Book is available at Govt. Press, Srinagar."

Regarding the SOPs issued under J&KPSA, the DM Anantnag said: "The Standard Procedures (SOPs) is a rule book consisting upon (sic) hundreds of pages. It is not possible to photostat the same. The book is available at Govt. Press, Srinagar."

The Public Information Officer (PIO) of DM Kishtwar said that PSA Act is itself the Rules. The PIO of DM Srinagar said that the Home Department should be approached for knowing about Rules and SOPs of the Public Safety Act.

Jammu and Kashmir: Missing minor girl found dead in Kathua, protests held

Jan 17: An eight-year-old girl, who had gone missing a week ago, was found dead under mysterious circumstances in Hiranagar tehsil of Kathua district of Jammu and Kashmir on Wednesday, triggering protests.

"A minor girl missing for the past one week was found dead in Rasana village of Hiranagar tehsil of the district," said a police official.

"We have shifted the body to the District Hospital Kathua for postmortem," he added.

Reports said that there were serious injuries on the face of the girl. The police has formed a Special Investigation Team to probe the case.

“We have filed an FIR. A SIT has been constituted,” SD Jamwal, Inspector General of Police, Jammu, told NDTV.

Meanwhile, the family and the relatives of the girl staged a protest, demanding swift investigation into the case and arrest of the culprit.

6. Crackdown on Communication

JK tops India’s internet blacklist with 59 shutdowns in 2017

Jan 03: Internet was suspended 59 times in Jammu and Kashmir in 2017, the most, by far, in any state of India. In the internet blacklist, JK is 42 notches above the next state, Rajasthan, which saw internet shut down 17 times, then Haryana with 11 shutdowns in the year, followed by 10 in Gujarat.

The portal internetshutdowns.in, which tracks internet curbs, said of last year’s data: “Instances of internet shutdowns in India are increasing at a worrisome pace. As the internet is a key enabler of many fundamental rights, including freedom of speech and expression, such frequent disruptions have been a cause for concern.”

“They threaten the democratic working of nations,” the portal commented, “and also point to the gradual normalisation of the mindset that permits such blanket restriction on Internet access.”

The website said that of the 19 states it tracked, internet was suspended once in seven states, and twice, thrice or four times in others.

According to the website, of the 73 internet shutdowns it recorded since 2012 in Jammu and Kashmir, of which 59 were enforced in 2017, 27 lasted for less than a day, 17 lasted between 1 and 3 days, and 16 lasted for more than 3 days.

“Of the 73 shutdowns recorded since 2012, 37 were preventive in nature, i.e. imposed in anticipation of a law and order problem, while 36 instances were reactive in nature, i.e. imposed in response to an ongoing law and order problem,” reads the website.

Last year, the International Federation of Journalists said in its report, “Kashmir’s Media in Peril: A Situation Report”, that internet is “routinely shut or slowed down on Fridays”. It said these shutdowns and censorship have restricted the information flow and the rights of journalists to report.

In April last year, the government shut dozens of social media websites in Kashmir for nearly a month, to restrict exchange of information.

7. Vandalism

There appears to be no end to the alleged ransacking of the property by the armed forces as suggested by this month’s incidents.

➤ Forces ‘ransack property, beat locals’ during CASO at Midoora

Jan 13: The government forces allegedly vandalised property during a cordon-and-search operation in Midoora village of Awantipora township in Pulwama district.

Witnesses said that on January 13 afternoon, the forces barged into a few residential houses at Shah Mohalla Midoora and conducted door-to-door searches.

During the operation, the forces damaged property and thrashed several residents in the village. Awantipora superintendent of police Muhammad Zahid Malik said the forces did not vandalise properties or beat up the people. However, he said, he will look into the accusations.

➤ Panic in Pinjora village as it comes under unprovoked ransacking, aerial firing

Jan 17: The grim tally of incidents of forces assaulting civilians and vandalising private property began for 2018 in Shopian district’s Pinjora village where dozens of parked vehicles, residential houses and shops were ransacked and civilians were assaulted at the hands of army troopers.

Pinjora residents told media that army men went “berserk” in the village without any reason, damaging dozens of parked vehicles, motorcycles and shops. The villagers said that when they protested the

forces’ highhandedness, the troopers resorted to aerial firing in the village, creating panic in the area.

They said that the windowpanes of about 12 houses and two dozen parked vehicles were damaged in the assault.

The villagers said that there was no protest or stone pelting in the village but that the forces started beating people and ransacking private property as soon as they de-boarded their vehicles. An employee of Jammu and Kashmir Bank said that the forces smashed all the windowpanes of the bank building.

Police sources said that there had recently been clashes between government forces and protesters during a cordon and search operation (CASO) in Pinjora village, which later ended without establishing contact with militants.

Ghulam Muhammad Beig, an elderly Pinjora resident, said that the forces beat everyone who came their way. “They beat me with sticks and gun butts despite my being 70 years old,” he said.

Villagers added that the forces entered several houses and beat the inmates, including women and children. “They (the forces) entered my house and beat my two sons and husband without any reason,” a housewife from the village said.

Last year around 25 villages of the district came under attack during CASOs and in nocturnal raids. The villages assaulted in 2017 include: Turkwangam, Maldera, Kannipora, Wathoo, Brethipora, Vehil, Sandoo Shirmal and several other villages of the district.

Senior Superintendent of Police, Shopian, SA Dinkar told media that vehicles belonging to the army’s

44 Rashtriya Rifles came under unprovoked stone pelting. "To disperse the mob, some ariel shots were fired. Later the mob dispersed, and army vehicles proceeded on their course. Nobody was injured, however; the situation was normal," he said.

Talking to media, Srinagar-based Defence spokesman Colonel Rajesh Kalia refuted the claims of ransack and of people being beaten. "No damage to property or ransack took place, nor was anyone beaten by the soldiers," he said.

➤ **Forces 'ransack' houses, damage vehicles in Kulgam village**

Jan 21: The government forces allegedly ransacked dozens of houses and damaged vehicles at Redwani Bala village of Qaimoh in Kulgam district during a cordon and search operation.

The forces action triggered massive protests in the area today even as police assured action "if allegations of excesses proved right."

A source said that police, army and paramilitary forces on Saturday evening started cordon and launched search operation around Redwani Bala and adjoining Hawoora village following inputs about presence of militants in the area.

"As the cordon was being established, people came out and pelted stones on the forces who retaliated by resorting to aerial firing and lobbing tear shells," he said.

People alleged that before the cordon was lifted, government forces went "berserk" and barged into houses. "They vandalized property and also damaged vehicles parked outside in Redwani Bala village. The forces smashed window panes, washing machines and other household items that came their way," said one of the members of local Auqaf committee.

He said that the committee 36 houses were ransacked and 10 vehicles damaged in the incident.

"One of the motor bikes parked outside was also set ablaze by the forces," he alleged. The forces, locals alleged also damaged house of a local militant, Javed Ahmad Bhat.

People in the morning assembled in the village and staged protests against the "excesses."

Superintendent of Police (SP) Kulgam Sridhar Patel assured action "if the allegations proved right."

"If there has been ransacking of houses, people should come forward and file a complaint with us. We are not going to tolerate this behavior and would

definitely take necessary action after investigations," SP said.

He, however, said that preliminary reports suggest that the vehicles parked outside might have suffered damages due to stone pelting.

"There was heavy stone pelting from the mob and it is quite possible the vehicles or window panes of houses were damaged after being hit with stones during clashes," SP said.

➤ **Dar-ul-Uloom Sopore accuses army of vandalizing property**

Jan 22: Soldiers from 22 Rashtriya Rifles based in Sopore allegedly ransacked a reputed seminary in Sopore and harassed the staff.

Officials of the Dar-ul-Uloom Sopore, which boasts of hundreds of students and scholars from several areas of northern Kashmir, told media that soldiers barged into the seminary in the intervening night of January 21 and 22 vandalized the place.

"We told them that this is a place of religious study and winter break is on but the soldiers didn't listen to us. Instead, they were abusive and went about damaging the property. Few students present at the seminary were also harassed," the Dar-ul-Uloom officials alleged.

They said that 11:30 pm the soldiers forced their way inside the seminary located at Mehrajpora locality in Sopore.

"They vandalized the campus even as we informed them that the seminary is on a winter break and there is no one here except few staff members and students. They left around 3:30 am. and we were all night awake. This is grossly inappropriate and we hope authorities take note of this interference by the army in centres of religious education," they added.

Superintendent of Police Sopore Harmmeet Singh, told media that no such report has been brought to his notice. Srinagar based defence spokesperson Col. Rajesh Kalia also denied the report and termed it baseless.

"Neither any property was vandalized nor destroyed in the institution at Sopore," Col Kalia said.

It is for the second time during this month that army has been accused of damaging public property in Sopore. Earlier this month residents of Kaushal Madoo Mohalla and the families of few active militants alleged that soldiers entered the locality and damaged properties. Irate residents have appealed authorities to look into the matter.

8. Harassment During Raids and CASO's

➤ **Kulgam family accuses forces of thrashing in night raid**

Jan 18: A family from South Kashmir's Kulgam district alleged that forces manhandled and thrashed them in the middle of the night and even didn't spare the girls and women of the household.

The family of Manzoor Ahmed of Panewa Kulgam village said that "on January 16 night armed Forces including SOG Kulgam and 9 Rashtriya Rifles of Indian Army cordoned off their house."

"They barged into our houses and demanded cell phones and identity cards from us. When we resisted,

they unleashed a reign of terror and thrashed us without any mercy," said the women folk.

The family members and locals from the village on January 18 assembled outside District Magistrate Office Kulgam and demanded stern action against the forces.

"The DDC asked us to approach to SSP Kulgam and we know no action will be initiated against the men in uniform," said on the family members.

The family members said that they fail to understand why their house was attacked; given the fact no one in their family is a militant or a stone-pelter.

“After taking our mobile phones, they asked us to report at army camp and take them back there,” said the family members.

“My wife Rozy Jan, two daughters Saima Jan and Mena Jan, my brother Abdul Ahad Bhat and her daughter Firdousa Jan, my two other nieces Bisma Jan and Aaisya Jan were manhandled and thrashed by forces,” Manzoor Ahmed Bhat told news agency CNS.

A police official said that one of the members of the family is involved in stone-pelting incident who is evading arrest for quite some time.

➤ **Medicos allege harassment at PHC in Pulwama village**

Jan 19: Three staffers working with primary health centre (PHC) at Tahab on Thursday alleged that they were harassed by the government forces when they were serving their duties during night hours in the intervening night of Wednesday.

Bashir Ahmad, a pharmacist told media that at about eight in the evening two personnel from Rashtriya Rifles came and said that the officials of PHC were informed to remove a green flag from the Wifi tower installed in the premises.

“The two security personnel left soon after they were assured that they would take up the matter with their immediate officer as the staff was meant for night duty,” he said adding that two personnel left but as soon as they reached the gate of the PHC few more personnel barged inside and yelled upon the staff.

Chief Medical officer told media that she received a representation in which the staffers expressed inability to serve during night hours due to the reign of terror spread by government forces. “I immediately took up the matter with deputy commissioner Pulwama who directed the additional deputy commissioner to accompany me and take stock of the situation,” she said.

Deputy Commissioner GM Dar told media that he has got assurance from SSP that such act would not be repeated. SSP Pulwama, Mohamamd Aslam Choudhary said nobody was ready to file a complaint but he got official communication from deputy commissioner and CMO Pulwama. He said that they were going to hold an enquiry.

➤ **Forces ‘go berserk’ in Lassipora**

Jan 23: Army soldiers on Tuesday allegedly went berserk in Lassipora village of Pulwama beating residents without provocation. The villagers said four people from the village were also detained.

Residents said the assault came a day after a police post in industrial area (SIDCO) was attacked by suspected militants.

Villagers alleged that around 5:30pm on Tuesday troopers of 55 RR from nearby Lasipora garrison appeared in the village and started thrashing and assaulting people.

“They beat everyone who came in their way. They stopped us when we were on way from work and

beat us ruthlessly without any reason,” an elderly man from the village said.

Villagers said the forces detained four persons and snatched mobile phones of several people.

Head of village Awkaf committee, Gazi Muhammad told media that forces beat people without any reason. “They first beat us including village head, imam of Masjid and then arrested four persons and snatched identity cards and mobile phones of several persons,” he said.

Villagers said that when the villagers resisted the assault by protesting, the forces fired tear smoke and pava shells to disperse them.

“After assaulting us they tried to make us blind with pellets and smoke shells. The toxic smell caused by the chilly shells is not letting villagers to stay at their houses,” a villager said.

Numberdar Javid Ahmad also said that four persons from the village were detained by the forces.

Station House Officer (SHO) Lasipora told media that no complaint was received by the station from the village.

“If anything had happened there, they (villagers) can file a complaint in the station and we will see,” he said.

Srinagar based Defense spokesperson of army, Col. Rajesh Kalia denied the allegations. “None of our soldier was involved in any kind of misbehavior or beating people in the village,” he said.

➤ **Forces conduct nocturnal raid in Srinagar’s tourist hub**

Jan 25: Houseboat owners in Chont Kul area in Dalgate said government forces created scare in the tourist hub by raiding their boats late evening early this week.

The owners pleading anonymity told media that on January 22, when they were dining with their families, CRPF soldiers entered the boats.

“Around 10 pm on Monday, while I and my family were having dinner, we heard some noise from outside but we didn’t pay any heed to it. After a few minutes the CRPF soldiers entered inside our boat,” he said.

According to him, they searched every corner of their boat and vandalised everything that came their way.

Another houseboat owner pleading anonymity because of the fear of reprisal said the soldiers entered without carrying any permission.

“All the members of my family almost fainted and panic gripped in the area after watching the CRPF soldiers in darkness,” he said adding troops even entered in the prayer rooms with their shoes on.

On being asked why they entered the boat, soldiers replied that they were doing their duties, he said. However, nothing was found during the searches.

The station house officer Ram Munshi Bagh Police Station Ishaq Ahmad said searches were carried because of security reasons ahead of R-Day.

Sumbal youth framed as OGW, summoned to police station not captured, alleges family

Jan 10: Family members of Idrees Ahmad Baba, an alleged over-ground worker (OGW) of militants who was arrested by police earlier this week from north Kashmir’s Bandipora district have refuted the police claims saying

Idrees was already in police custody and charges leveled against him were false.

Police on January 7 claimed that Idrees, a resident of Asham village of Sonawari, was arrested by a police party of sub division Sumbal along with marine

commandos (MARCOS) from fringes of Wular Lake at Banyaria area of the district on the intervening night of January 6 and 7 with arms and ammunition.

“During wee hours a suspicious person was noticed and was challenged to stop. When the person found himself encircled by the forces, he surrendered by raising his hands” the police in its statement claimed. “On his search, one pistol, 4 pistol magazine rounds, one AK 47 magazine, 30 AK rounds, 2 UBGL grenades and a Chinese hand grenade was recovered from his possession,” the statement added.

Sajad Ahmad Baba, Idrees’s brother, told media that Idrees was not arrested from Banyaria because he was in police custody from more than a week. “We were shocked to hear the news that my brother was arrested from Banyaria along with arms and ammunitions as he was in their custody from December 25,” Baba said.

Baba claimed that his brother had received a telephone call from Sub-District Police Officer (SDPO), Tahir Amin, on December 24 and asked him to report at police station Sumbal. “The next day he went to the police station Sumbal where he was detained,” Baba said adding that how was it possible that a person in custody would be arrested from some other place with arms and ammunitions.

He said that elders of the village along with his father met Idrees couple of times in the police station Sumbal after he was detained. “My father and the elders

of the village spoke to the SDPO regarding his detention, however, the police officer told them that the matter was lying with Inspector General of Police,” Baba said adding, “Charges leveled against him are baseless and fabricated. Idrees was presented before media as an OGW in police custody.”

Tahir Amin, SDPO Sumbal, termed family claims as allegations. “This area has over one lakh population and why would we harass someone without any reason,” he said.

Amin said that police had called Idress for talks before being arrested in Banyaria. “He was let off that day,” Amin said adding, “Since his elder brother, Rayees, was detained earlier and there were recoveries from him, we felt Idress too might be having contacts with militants. Although earlier investigation did not reveal such things but further investigations revealed that he has something to do with all this.”

“We launched a search operation and his movement was there. He tried to flee the spot and we picked him from there,” Amin said.

Baba said that Idress runs a shop at his village where he sells blankets. He said the he would spend most of the time at his shop. “It did not seem that he has contacts with militants only God knows whether or not he was an OGW.”

Baba said that his family is being targeted because they are associated with Jamaat-e-Islami and support the pro-freedom sentiments.

Amnesty launches postcard campaign, online petition seeking ban on pellet firing

Jan 16: Pellet firing pump-action shotguns have been responsible for killing, blinding and injuring thousands of people in Kashmir, said Amnesty International India as it launched a postcard campaign and online petition seeking ban on the use of the shotguns.

An official statement issued in Srinagar said the campaign aims to bring people from across Jammu and Kashmir to write postcards to the chief minister Mehbooba Mufti.

“It is shameful that the serious concerns raised repeatedly regarding the use of pellet-firing guns have

failed to receive sufficient attention from the state government,” said Aakar Patel, Executive Director, Amnesty International India.

“The use of pellet shotguns is inherently inaccurate and indiscriminate. These so called ‘non-lethal’ weapons have killed at least 14 people since July 2016. Thousands more have suffered extensive and debilitating physical and psychological harm. It is unconscionable for authorities to continue using pellet-firing shotguns despite being aware of the damage they cause.”

Tihar prisoners under constant fear of getting killed: Report by Delhi HC panel

Jan 29: The report of three-member committee constituted by the division bench of Delhi High Court to study the plight of prisoners at Tihar Jail in New Delhi has stated all the prisoners lodged there are “living under constant fear of getting killed at one or other pretext.”

The committee, which was constituted on November 23 last year, has painted a grim picture about the plight of prisoners. On November 21 last year, 18 prisoners including four Kashmiris were severely thrashed by the personnel of Tamil Nadu Special Police (TSP). The incident triggered massive resentment in the wake of grave injuries inflicted on the prisoners including Kashmiris - Shahid Yousuf son of Hizbul Mujahideen chief Syed Salahudin, Ahtesham Farooq of Sopore, Mushtaq Ahmed Lone of Bijbehara and Showkat Ahmed.

The report has been prepared by Harsh Prabhakar (Advocate Legal Aid), Reeteb Singh (Joint Registrar Rules) and Lorren Bamniyal (Registrar Appellate).

“The prisoners in the high risk ward, especially those in ward C and ward F are living in a state of fear. They apprehend that they might be killed at one or the other pretext,” reads the report, a copy of which is with media.

“Even though the members of the committee extended all possible assurances to them, but the November 21 incident and the severity of the physical assault has shaken them,” the report states.

The report reads that clause 61 of the Delhi Jail Manual provides for use of minimum force for controlling any incident of rioting and mandates that any officer of the prison shall use as little force and inflict as little injury to a person as may be consistent with restoring order.

“The (present) incident was not one of rioting. The handling of the incident by the Tamil Nadu Special Police (TSP) as well as by the Assistant Superintendent cannot be justified in any manner,” the report states.

Prisoners of Ward F had returned to their cells immediately after the alarm was sounded and there was no reason for the TSP or the QRT to use the force, the report added.

The report quoted standing order number 2/17 which prescribes humane treatment for all prisoners and respect to their inherent dignity and value as human beings, the report said: "Despite such unequivocal statutory guidelines, an incident has been perpetrated where prisoners were beaten up with such severity that it has resulted in harbouring a constant fear of being killed by the prison authorities."

The committee feels that the incident (thrashing of inmates) is a "gross violation of fundamental, human and other legal rights of prisoners who have been subjected to severe physical torture without any justifiable reason."

The report said the committee was informed that during the routine search of the high risk ward on (November 21, 2017), which is done twice in a day, the prisoners had objected to a fresh direction for withdrawal of pillow covers from the prisoners. "The (Nov 21) incident was the result of some arguments between the prisoners and the search team which comprised the personnel of the TSP."

The report states that the high risk ward of Jail number 1 has different cells. "The Committee expressed

its desire to first meet Shahid Yousuf, whose vest was submitted to the court. Yousuf was found housed in the Cell C-9(1) and was injured," report reads. "He stated that the search team came around 8:30 pm (November 21, 2017) and carried out an intensive and vigorous search of their cell under the supervision of MuthuPandi, SI, TSP. After completing the search, the team locked the cell from outside and left."

The report said that at around 9:15 pm, the TSP personnel, who had earlier come for checking, entered the 'C' ward in large numbers, started beating the inmates with 'fibre' as well as 'wooden' sticks or whatever else came in their hands.

"He (Yousuf) stated that he was hit on his head many times consequent where to he started bleeding. He informed that he also sustained injuries on his back and left hand. He complained of having pain in his left shoulder."

According to the report, Yousuf clarified that the 'baniyan' (vest) which was given by him to his advocate was not worn by him at the time of "incident but was used by him to wipe blood from his body."

It may be recalled that separatist leaders arrested and booked by National Investigation Agency (NIA) and Enforcement Directorate (ED) are also lodged in Tihar.

Ajas remembers its five men killed 26 years ago by BSF One family denied body, no FIR registered so far

Ghulam Rasool, 81, a resident of Ajas village in Bandipora district, has not forgotten the cold February morning of 1992 when the villagers woke up to the preparations for one of the holiest nights in Islam, – Shab-e-Mehraj (Night of Ascension).

He was 55 years old, and those were the early years of popular armed uprising in Kashmir. The morning prayers followed by supplications reverberated through the entire village, preparing people to welcome the holy night with fervour.

The villagers had hoped for a peaceful day, given the festival, even though crackdowns were a routine those days.

However, as the sun rose, troops of Border Security Force (BSF) arrived in the village and announced a crackdown asking men to assemble in the lawn of the Masjid for an identification parade.

Rasool says, villagers pleaded with them to leave in peace as a mark of respect for the holy day, but the troops refused.

"Many people resisted the BSF call by hurling kangris (fire pots) and shouting slogans, the forces turned hostile and dragged people out of their houses," Rasool said, seconded by other villagers.

"BSF men dragged us from our houses and huddled us together in Jamia Masjid," other villagers said.

"Following the identification parade the troopers started to interrogate the youth, as some men tried to raise voice. In between a man tried to hurl a firepot towards troopers. BSF officer in rage turned the barrel of his sub-machine gun towards jam packed people, showering bullets on them", recalled Rasool.

"It felt like they shot tens of thousands of bullets towards us. Our ears went deaf as we fell on each other. You can still see the marks of those bullets on the

walls of the Masjid, the biggest in the village," said Rasool.

Four people were shot dead which included an 18-year-old student, Muhammad Maqbool Rather. The other killed were Abdul Rashid Ganie, a driver, Abdul Rahim Rather, 32, a labourer, Muhammad Sultan Lone, 40, a labourer.

A fifth victim Wali-Ul-Rehman Khan, an employee, was "killed during torture after the BSF shot four people dead" said Rasool.

"The torture lasted from 6 in the morning till 8 in the night," Rasool said, who was among the group of people kept in the lawn.

In the crackdown, "the youngest men were picked one after another and taken outside the village, we called it Pari waan. There the troopers tortured them mercilessly, in that torture Wali died, his body was never returned, another two dozen men were injured," Rasool said.

Another six persons including two women were grievously injured in the firing.

Wali, according to witnesses, was dragged by BSF in injured condition and put in a lorry and declared dead. However, his body was not handed over to his family.

After the incident, an internal enquiry was launched by the BSF.

"A Sikh officer came and took our statements," Rasool said

Wali's family lamented that despite the inquiry no FIR is registered in any police station regarding the incident.

Posters about the anniversary commemoration from youth union of Ajas appeared in the village on Wednesday with pictures of the victims. The poster

briefly recalled the incident and explained why February

1 is observed as a shutdown.

9. Militarization

➤ **21,400 hectares of land under illegal possession of troops in JK: CM**

Jan 10: Over 21,400 hectares of land are under unauthorised occupation of Army and other forces in Jammu and Kashmir, Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti said.

In a written reply, Mehbooba informed the Legislative Assembly at Jammu that over 18,846 hectares are under unauthorised occupation of the forces in Kashmir division including Ladakh.

She said over 2,555 hectares of land are under unauthorised occupation of Army in Jammu division.

The chief minister maintained that this was in addition to thousands of hectares of state, acquired, requisitioned, leased and hired land under the illegal occupation of Army and other forces in the state.

Mehbooba, who also heads the home portfolio, shared the information in response to a question by National Conference legislator Sheikh Ishfaq Jabbar, who sought district-wise details of land occupied by forces in the state.

The CM said a major chunk of over 12,940 hectares of land are under the illegal occupation of Army and other forces in Ladakh region, followed by 5,906 hectares in Kashmir valley and 2,555 hectares in Jammu division.

"Kishtwar in Jammu region is the only district where the Army and other forces do not hold any unauthorised land," she said.

The CM said Leh district of Ladakh was leading the table with over 7,197 hectares of land under the unauthorised occupation of Army and other forces, followed by Kargil (5,742.9 hectares).

North Kashmir districts of Bandipora and Baramulla together accounted for 3,403.8 hectares of land under the unauthorised occupation of forces, she said.

In Kashmir division, Shopian district accounted for 31.3 hectares of land under unauthorised occupation of forces, lowest in the division, the chief minister added.

➤ **Forces pay Rs 12 cr annual rent for private land in Kashmir: Govt**

Jan 16: The Jammu and Kashmir government revealed that the defence establishments in Kashmir valley including that of Ladakh region pay an annual rent of Rs 12 crore for the private land under their occupation.

In a written reply to MLA Shopian, Mohammad Yousuf Bhat, the home ministry led by chief minister Mehbooba Mufti said that the land rent under the occupation of defence forces is being revised after every five years.

"The defence forces pay an annual rent of private land of Rs 12, 38, 21, 481," said Mehbooba in the legislative assembly.

The details given by the government said that the most of rent being paid to private land holders by defence forces is in Baramulla district in northern Kashmir and amounts to Rs 3, 06, 71, 280 followed by Pulwama where defence forces pay Rs 2, 47, 71, 022.

In Ladakh region, defence forces pay a rental of Rs 83, 20, 120 to private land holders in Kargil while it is Rs 41, 04, 451 in Leh.

The government also said that 2887 kanals and 17 marlas of horticulture land is under occupation of defence forces in Valley. "Efforts are being made to vacate the horticulture land from defence forces," it said. The government also told that assembly on January 10 that at least 4,30,933 kanals of land across the entire state are under the occupation of various forces agencies including the Army.

Of 4.3 lakh kanals of land, 3,79,933 kanals are being occupied by security agencies in the Kashmir region, including Ladakh.

At least 1,21,125.07 kanals of land are under the occupation of government forces including the Indian Army, the CRPF, BSF and other agencies in the Kashmir Valley alone.

➤ **JK govt making efforts to vacate 140 hectares of horticulture land**

Jan 16: The Jammu and Kashmir government on Tuesday said efforts are being made to vacate over 140 hectares of horticulture land which is under the occupation of the defence establishment in the state.

"Efforts are being made to identify the alternate land for accommodating the security forces suitably in order to vacate the horticulture land from the occupation of defence establishment," Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti said in a written reply in the state Assembly here.

Replying to a question by Mohammad Yousuf Bhat, Mufti, who is minister-in-charge (Home), said a total of 2887.17 kanals (144.35 hectares) of horticulture land is under the occupation of defence establishment in the state.

She said over 12.38 crore is being paid as rent annually to the owners of the private land under the occupation of the defence establishment in the Kashmir division. In pursuance to Jammu and Kashmir requisitioning and acquisition of the Immovable Property Act, the chief minister said the rentals are being revised after every five years in respect of the land under the occupation of defence forces, in consultation with the Ministry of Defence.

Mufti said while over 18,846 hectares of land are under the occupation of the security forces including 18,025 hectares under the Army in the Kashmir division, a total of 17,734 hectares of land are under the use of security forces, including 16,364 hectares in the Jammu division.

It includes state land, acquired land, requisitioned land, land on hiring basis, leased land and private land under unauthorised occupation of the Army and other forces in the state, the chief minister said.

She said over 678 hectares of land are under the occupation of the forces for which they are providing rent annually.

This includes 518 hectares in Kashmir and 160.4 in the Jammu division.

➤ **16 lakh kanal land under illegal occupation in J&K**

Jan 17: At least 16.64 lakh kanal land in Jammu and Kashmir is under illegal occupation, the government informed the legislative assembly.

In written reply to a cut motions of legislators Muhammad Yousuf Tarigami and Hakim Muhammad Yasin, the minister for revenue Abdur Rehman Veeri has said that 16,64,299 kanal state land is under illegal occupation and of this, 12,15,382 kanal is in Jammu and 4,48,917 kanal in Kashmir.

The district-wise break-up of such land, as per the government, is: Srinagar (39,414 kanal), Budgam (27,804 kanal), Anantnag (33,710 kanal), Pulwama (44,404 kanal), Baramulla (64,666 kanal), Kupwara (55,802 kanal), Ganderbal (38,490 kanal), Bandipora (17,444 kanal), Kulgam (92,432 kanal) and Shopian (34,751 kanal).

For Jammu province, the district-wise figures for such land are: Jammu (1,62,384 kanal), Samba (77,538 kanal), Kathua (85,598 kanal), Reasi (1,54,654 kanal), Udhampur (60,089 kanal), Doda (87,998 kanal), Kishtwar (30,215 kanal), Ramban (1,15,985 kanal), Rajouri (2,97,417 kanal) and Poonch (1,43,504 kanal).

According to the minister, 7,14,082 kanal land has been retrieved from the occupants—4335 kanal in Kashmir and 6,70,747 in Jammu province.

The minister, in his written reply, said that “sincere” efforts are being made to retrieve the remaining state/kaccharai/evacuee land from illegal occupants.

A comprehensive eviction scheme has already been notified and circulated amongst all revenue field agencies for strict compliance, the reply states.

➤ **Army setting up camp on popular cricket ground**

Jan 18: Hundreds of locals, majority of them youths, reached the Anantnag Deputy Commissioner’s (DC’s) office Thursday afternoon to protest against the army’s move to occupy a playground for setting up camp in Shamsipora village of Anantnag district here.

Early on January 18, Thursday morning, more than a dozen army vehicles reached the playground and started taking measurements of the land. Locals told media that some youths who had gone to the ground to play a game of cricket were asked to leave.

“The army men threatened the children, as well as some elders of the village, if any one ventured near the field,” the locals alleged. They said the army soldiers told them to go talk to the Deputy Commissioner and not bother them.

“We have come to ask the DC why the only place for our children to play is being snatched,” the locals said.

They alleged that the government’s claims of promoting sports in Kashmir valley were a farce.

“On one hand they talk about promoting sports and on the other hand our play fields are being turned into army camps,” the villagers said.

They said the playground was used by players from many parts of Kulgam and Anantnag districts as well.

Following the protests, elected legislator from the Homshalibugh constituency, Abdul Majeed Bhat (Larmi), raised the issue in the Legislative Assembly as well.

Deputy Commissioner Anantnag, Mohammad Younis Malik, said that the issue has been taken up with the army officials as well as with senior police officers.

“I have talked to the DIG and the army commander. Hopefully the issue will be resolved soon,” Malik said.

General Officer Commanding (GOC) Victor Force, Major General BS Raju, acknowledged that there was a plan to set up a new camp in the area.

“It’s an operational requirement. However, I will look into it and if it is indeed a play field, we can find alternatives,” Raju said.

➤ **Forces, civil depts illegally occupy over 5,500 kanals Waqf land: Govt**

Jan 26: The Jammu and Kashmir government has clarified the quantity of Waqf land in the state under the unauthorised possession of the military and paramilitary forces and various civil departments, saying that the property so occupied measures 5,632 kanals and 8 marlas.

The government responded after a ruling Peoples’ Democratic Party (PDP) legislator, Zaffar Manhas, said that the administration should clarify whether it was a fact that 6,000 kanals of land was under illegal occupation.

Earlier, the legislator claimed that the government had said it would retrieve occupied Waqf land in the state within six months. The government, however, denied the claim.

“It was informed that efforts would be taken to retrieve the Wakf property under the unauthorised occupation,” the government stated.

“So far, an area measuring 210 kanals and 10 Marlas has been retrieved. It may, however, be mentioned here that nearly 3,300 kanals of Waqf property is under the unauthorised occupation of various defence, paramilitary forces and other government departments.”

The bulk of the Waqf land under illegal possession lies in the Jammu region.

The government stated that it has taken up the matter with the Home and other departments for them to either vacate the property or pay user charge rents.

Reminded that the Waqf Act does not allow the allotment of Wakf land to non-Muslims in Jammu and elsewhere, the government stated that the J&K Wakf Board does not provide for the allotment of Waqf land to members of the non-beneficiary community.

“No Waqf land has been leased out/rented to any non-Muslim after the commencement of the Wakf Act, 2001,” it stated.

“However, some of the lease rent deeds under the Wakf Act, 1978, were subsequently renewed as fait accompli with the approval of the state wakf council, after the coming into force of the Wakf Act, 2001,” it added.

In 2016, the government had said that 96,650 kanals and 13 marlas have been notified as Wakf land in J&K.

It stated that out of this, 55,014 kanals and 16 marlas are in Kashmir province and 41,635 kanals and 17 marlas in Jammu province. The Waqf land in Auqaf possession was said to be 90,653 kanals and one marla.

The government had then said that 2,710 kanals and 16 marlas of land were under the illegal occupation of the army and other paramilitary forces. It

further informed that 896 kanals of land were in the possession of government departments while civilians were occupying 2,390 kanals and one marla of Waqf land.

Besides, the government had then claimed that it had appointed a Special Officer, Auqaf (SOA), to separately identify the land under the unauthorised occupation of the army, BSF, CRPF and police, so that the matter could be taken up at appropriate levels for regularisation or vacation.

It had further said the SOA was given instructions to pursue with the civilian departments to either vacate the land or seek its regularisation.

➤ **Army vacates land for AIIMS in Awantipora**

Jan 27: The army has vacated some land for construction of an All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in Kashmir Valley. The land vacated by the army is part of the nearly 1500 kanals of land acquired by the state government and handed over to the Central Public Works Department (CPWD)

GM Dar, Deputy Commissioner of Pulwama, the district where the hospital is to come up, media that out of 1,792 kanals of land required for the project, 1,490 kanals have been acquired and handed over to the executing agency of the project, the CPWD.

“The process for the rest is on, and will soon be completed,” he said. “A portion of land was also under army, used as a firing range, which has been retrieved, too.”

The Rs 2000-crore AIIMS project, to have a capacity of nearly 1,000 beds, was approved in 2016 by the Government of India. The AIIMS is to be established at Awantipora near Srinagar-Jammu Highway in Pulwama district. Its construction is yet to begin.

Dar said the delay was due to the size of the project, and it required multiple procedures in the pre-execution stage.

“An approach road had to be laid, power connection and water supply had to be installed, land had to be acquired, which has been done now. CPWD has also visited the site. They were making the design, which is complete now. In coming days, a high-level meeting will be chaired by the Chief Minister regarding the hospital,” he said. “The beginning of the construction is not far away. It will be started soon.”

Dar added that the money for the acquirement of the land has also been paid to people as per their satisfaction.

“The money was paid on negotiating rates, and the rest of acquisition will be done on the same,” he said.

For the acquirement of the land under the army, he said, the state paid nothing because it was the land of the state and was given to them for time being. “We neither paid any sum, nor offered them any alternative land. It was our land, and retained it,” he said.

➤ **Protest against allotment of HMT industrial land to forces**

Jan 30: Various industrialists’ bodies on Tuesday staged a protest demonstration against the allotment of 246 kanal of land at Zainakote industrial site to the government forces.

Protesting here at press enclave, the industrialists here criticised the allotment of 246 kanal of land at erstwhile Hindustan Machine Tools (HMT)

premises for a proposed police housing colony and another 80 kanal, 12 marla for paramilitary Sashtra Seema Bal.

Industries Association, Zainakote has also criticized the allotment of land at HMT to police housing colony and paramilitary forces

Nazir Hussain, President Industry Association of Zainakote said the industrial land at Industrial Estate Zainakote which was allotted to HMT watch factory is being illegally occupied by the CRPF.

“As if that was not enough the land use is being violated by none other than the government itself by allotting it to police Housing Corporation and SSB,” said Hussain

Hussain said land bank that was proposed in the industrial policy in vogue is nowhere in sight and instead the land that is with the Kashmir industry is being snatched from it on one pretext or the other.

The industrialist’s bodies demand that the land should be use only for the industrial purpose.

➤ **Zainakote residents, industrialists resent transfer of HMT land to forces**

Jan 31: The transfer of erstwhile HMT land to J&K Police and SSB has brewed up resentment amongst residents and local industrialists in Zainakote.

The land was recently retrieved by the state government from the possession of union Ministry of Heavy Industries.

Out of the retrieved land, however, 246 kanals have been transferred to J&K Police for setting up a housing colony and 80 Kanals have been provided to SSB for raising sector headquarters.

Moreover, a large portion part of the industrial land is already under occupation of Central Reserved Police Force.

Local residents say that the government’s decision of transferring the land to forces would result in more violence and bloodshed in the area.

They said that they had staged protests and requested authorities for removal of CRPF camp as they face harassment at the hands of forces.

“This land was given by us to set up industries that would generate employment for our youth. We didn’t give it for camps” a group of residents said.

A shopkeeper in the vicinity said that the area would remain peaceful until 2010. After CRPF camp was installed on the industrial land, protests started and it took a heavy toll on their business, he said.

“Their presence is a problem. From the day they occupied this land, we started witnessing stone pelting,” he said alleging that after every incident of stone pelting, forces damage property and shopkeepers have to shut down their shops.

“Last time they pelted stones on window panes and barged into a local mosque,” he said.

There are also apprehensions among locals that the government intends to establish a cantonment on the land, with shopkeepers and industrialists fearing that it may result in closure of the market and industrial units.

Nazir Ahmed Dar, father of Gowhar Ahmed Dar – a youth who was killed by government forces near the CRPF camp in November 2015-, said that they had formed a committee to fight for removal of the camp.

“Setting up industries on the land would create livelihood opportunities and installing more camps on the land will invite trouble,” Dar said.

President, Industrial Association Zainakote Nazir Hussain said the establishment of camps is aimed to disempower industrial units in the valley. "The government wants to transfer economic power from Srinagar to Jammu," he said adding the industrial units have scope to provide livelihood to tens of thousands of people "but it seems they don't want it to happen".

"We have 120 working industrial units right now providing livelihood to nearly ten thousand people directly or indirectly," he said. "The land should be used

for industrial purpose only and then we can flourish and provide livelihood to our youth."

Another local industrialist said that the Kashmir valley has world's biggest reserve of limestone but India still imports 2700 metric tonnes per day.

Industrialists added that the presence of forces in the area has forced the women who worked in these industrial units to quit their jobs.

10. Violations Due to Littered Explosives

➤ **Unexploded shell goes off in Shopian village, boy injured**

Jan 25: A 10-year-old boy was injured seriously after a shell exploded near the encounter site at Chaigund area of south Kashmir's Shopian district.

Official sources told media a group of people were clearing the debris of a house which was gutted during an encounter between militants and government forces last evening.

In the meantime, an unexploded shell went off resulting in injuries to a minor boy namely Musharraf Ahmad.

He was immediately shifted to Pulwama district hospital where from he was referred to SKIMS Soura in critical condition.

Pertinently, a firefight took place January 24 evening at Chaigund village where two militants and a civilian were killed while as two girls were injured.

➤ **3 injured after unidentified object explodes in Shopian**

Jan 28: Three people were injured after an unidentified object exploded at an orchard in Shopian district of south Kashmir, police said.

"While digging the fields at Chermarg in Zainapora area of Shopian, some suspicious object exploded, injuring the three people," a police spokesperson said.

The injured were identified as Ghulam Nabi (55), Zubair Ahmad (18) and Umar Farooq (19), he said.

The injured were taken to the district hospital in Anantnag for treatment. Their condition was stated to be stable, the spokesperson said.

The police have taken cognisance of the matter and the nature of the explosion is being investigated, he said.

11. Official Statements

➤ **9 persons subjected to disappearance in 2017, say complaints to SHRC**

Jan 01: Nine persons have been subjected to enforced custodial disappearance in 2017, according to the complaints received by the State Human Rights Commission.

Three of the disappeared people hail from Baramulla district, two from Pulwama and one each from Srinagar, Kupwara, Bandipora and Anantnag districts.

No fresh case has been reported from the rest of the districts-- Budgam and Ganderbal.

The commission disposed of 28 cases of disappearances last year: 10 from Kupwara, five from Budgam, four from Anantnag, three each from Baramulla and Srinagar and one each from Bandipora, Ganderbal, and Pulwama.

"The cases disposed of by the commission in 2017 were pending from the past years. This year we received nine fresh cases of disappearances," said an official at SHRC.

In 2014-15, the commission had received nine cases of disappearance—5 from Kupwara, two from Srinagar and one each from Budgam and Ganderbal districts.

➤ **8992 SPOs recruited from Kashmir: CM**

Jan 03: Over 10,758 Special Police Officers (SPOs) were engaged in the last two years in Jammu and Kashmir with over 83 per cent of them getting selected from the Valley, Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti said.

While 8992 SPOs were engaged in Kashmir zone, 1,457 were appointed in Jammu zone, the chief

minister, who is minister- in-charge (Home), said in a written reply in the Assembly.

In addition, 309 others were selected for other wings of police like Armed, Criminal Investigation Department (CID), crime wing, railway, security, traffic and Special Security Group (SSG), she said.

The highest number of 1,392 SPOs were engaged in border district of Kupwara followed by 1,377 in Baramulla district and 1,275 in Srinagar district, the chief minister said.

The four districts of Anantnag, Kulgam, Shopian and Pulwama in south Kashmir, saw a total of 2,556 SPO appointments in 2016 and 2017. Pulwama district leads with 885 appointments followed by Anantnag (812), Kulgam (531) and Shopian (328), Mufti said.

In Jammu zone, 385 SPOs were engaged in Jammu district, including 23 in Police Control Room. It was followed by Rajouri (270), Udhampur (185), Doda(142), Reasi(136), Ramban (115), Kathua (64), Sabma(58), Poonch (52) and Kishtwar (50) during the last two years.

Among them, 1,406 were appointed last year against 51 in the previous year, Mufti said.

➤ **14,460 bunkers to be built in border districts of Jammu**

Jan 03: The Ministry of Home Affairs has sanctioned construction of 14,460 bunkers in the border districts of Jammu, the J&K government told the Legislative Assembly

In reply to a question about construction of bunkers approved by the Home ministry, the government informed that 14,460 bunkers are to be constructed at a cost of Rs 415.73 crore.

It stated that the Home ministry has asked the state government to specify the building norms for all areas up to 5 km from the border. "Priority should be given to bunkers which are nearest to the existing BOPs," it quoted the Home ministry as saying.

The government further informed that every bunker will be within 3 km from the border and the first line of sight from IB/ LoC. "The Project will be funded on reimbursement basis through SRE (security related expenditure) as it relates to relief and rehabilitation of individuals. It must be ensured that said work has not been funded by any other source/scheme of the government. The work would be executed as per norms. Due procedure would be followed while execution of the above work. For construction of the bunkers, central agency like CPWD, NBCC etc is set to be engaged," the government's written reply reads.

In September 2017, Home Minister Rajnath Singh had given approval to construction of 19,000 individual and 4,700 community bunkers in five border districts of Jammu region including Jammu, Samba, Kathua (all along the International Border), Rajouri and Poonch (along Line of Control).

➤ **2,729 youth arrested, 129 booked under PSA in 2017: Police**

Jan 04: At least 2,729 youth were arrested in Kashmir and 129 others booked under the Public Safety Act in 2017 on charges of stone-pelting and participating in street protests, the police data has revealed. This is in sharp contrast to such figures in 2016, when at least 2,897 incidents of "law and order" were recorded in Kashmir following which 11,449 youth were arrested and 439 booked under the PSA.

The data and observations accessed by media from the zonal police headquarters reveal that the "hangover" of 2016 uprising continued for about first five months of 2017, but the situation thereafter was "brought under control."

The records maintain that a total of 879 incidents of "law and order" took place during 2017, mostly in southern districts of Kashmir including Anantnag, Pulwama, Kulgam and Shopian. About 1,900 youth were arrested from these districts alone for their alleged role in stone-throwing and street protests during the year, the police data says.

It says that of 129 youth booked under PSA in 2017, 90 were from southern areas of Kashmir.

The other arrests, according to official records, have also taken place in districts of Budgam, Baramulla, Bandipora and Kupwara.

According to an official source, the first "litmus test" for the government in 2017 was to hold by-polls for the Srinagar parliamentary seat comprising three districts of Srinagar, Budgam and Ganderbal, on April 9. However, he said, it turned out to be very challenging as massive protests took place in all the three districts and nine people were killed on the poll day in action by government forces, while the poll percentage dipped to mere seven percent.

A senior police officer at zonal police headquarters, who said the police are monitoring developments on ground, asserted that there is a "visible

decline in stone throwing and street protests" in Kashmir. He said that there were several weeks since the later part of 2017 when not even a single incident of stone pelting was reported.

"During 2016, there used to be about five dozen stone-throwing incidents taking place almost every day," he said. "Our figures indicate that there is a huge improvement in law and order situation in Kashmir."

➤ **Over 9,000 injured in forces' action in 8 months: Govt**

Jan 12: At least 9,042 persons were injured in Kashmir from July 8, 2016 to February 27, 2017, the government informed the legislative assembly on Friday.

In a written reply, the chief minister Mehbooba Mufti, who holds the portfolio of Home department, said that 9,042 persons were wounded in Kashmir due to bullets, pellets, PAVA shells and "other causes."

The figures, according to the reply, were based on medical records.

Kashmir witnessed massive public protests following the killing of Hizbul Mujahideen commander Burhan Muzaffar Wani in southern Anantnag district on July 7, 2016. The government forces used massive force to quell the uprising that continued for months together.

Among the injured, 6,221 were wounded with pellets, 368 with bullets, four by PAVA shells and 2,449 by "other causes", the reply reads.

1434 were wounded in Anantnag, 756 in Bandipora, 1293 in Baramulla, 257 in Budgam, 137 in Ganderbal, 1400 in Kulgam, 989 in Kupwara, 1571 in Pulwama, 1002 in Shopian and 203 in Srinagar, the reply reads.

EYE INJURIES

As many as 782 persons suffered eye-injuries during the "turbulent" period in Kashmir, the reply states.

"510 such cases were referred to tertiary-care institutions while 272 were managed at district hospitals," the government said.

The government also disclosed that 15 persons, including Insha Mushtaq, were permanently blinded while 39 suffered partial blindness

➤ **Only 51 civilians killed: Govt.**

Jan 12: The government informed the legislative assembly that 51 persons were killed by government forces in Kashmir during the uprising triggered by the killing of Hizbul Mujahideen commander Burhan Wani in July 2016.

In a written reply, the government said that 51 civilians died between July 2016 to February 2017.

Interestingly, the government has already agreed to provide compensation to families of 76 civilians killed during this period. However, the civil society groups and newspapers suggest that more than 100 civilians were killed during the six-month-long uprising.

➤ **726 arrested under PSA in last two years: Govt**

Jan 12: At least 726 persons were booked under the draconian Public Safety Act (PSA) in Kashmir during the last two years, the government told the assembly.

The government stated in the ongoing assembly that 525 persons were booked under the controversial PSA during the year 2016.

"All of them have been released," said the home department, headed by Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti, in response to NC legislator Mubarak Gul.

In the year 2016, pro-freedom protests were witnessed across Kashmir after the killing of Hizb-ul-Mujahideen commander Burhan Wani.

Similarly, the government said, in the year 2017, around 201 persons were arrested under the PSA. Of them, 124 persons were released, the government said.

The government, however, said it cannot disclose the details of the arrested persons as it was concerned about "their security and their families". "More so when the government has already announced amnesty to the first-time offenders/stone pelters," it added.

However, Jammu Kashmir High Court lawyers claim that in the year 2016, 738 people were booked under PSA, while in 2017 there were 371 PSA detainees up to the November 25.

The last two years have witnessed the past decade's highest number of PSA detention orders – above 1,100 – being deployed against pro-freedom leaders, activists and protesters in the Valley.

The PSA allows the State to take a person into preventive detention to prevent him or her from indulging in an activity which, in the opinion of the State, constitutes a threat to State security.

➤ **5,946 SPOs appointed in J-K in 2017: JK govt**

Jan 16: The Jammu and Kashmir government Tuesday said 5,946 special police officers (SPOs) have been appointed in the state in 2017.

However, the engagement of SPOs is made district-wise and unit-wise basis in the state.

In a written reply to the question of member Krishen Lal in the Assembly, Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti said 5,946 people have been engaged as SPOs during the year 2017.

Of these, the highest number of 1,017 SPOs were appointed in Kupwara district, followed by 604 in Srinagar, 571 in Budgam, 397 in Baramulla, 362 in Jammu and 291 in Bandipora, she said.

Kashmir witnesses highest number killings of armed forces in 2017: Govt

Jan 17: Jammu and Kashmir government on Wednesday said that 2017 witnessed highest number killings of government forces.

In a written reply to MLC Ramesh Arora, chief minister Mehbooba Mufti said that 48 forces personnel were killed in last year while as 30 personnel of J&K police including SPOs were killed in militancy related incidents in Kashmir valley.

In 2016, Mehbooba, who holds charge of Home Affairs as well, said that 58 forces personnel including Indian army soldiers were killed in 2016 while as 16 JKP cops were killed in the same year.

The government data said that 33 government forces personnel were killed in 2015 including 10 JKP cops.

➤ **363 militants, 71 civilians killed in last two years: Jammu and Kashmir Govt**

Jan 17: Government said that 363 militants and 71 civilians were killed while 176 were arrested during last two years in Jammu and Kashmir.

"363 militants including 117 locals and 246 foreigners were killed during operations in year 2016 and 2017", Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti said while replying to a written question by legislator Sat Paul Sharma.

71 civilians were killed by militants or due to cross firing in the state during the period, she said, according to GNS news agency.

"176 militants were arrested during this period in the state", she said.

The Chief Minister said that during the said period large quantities of arms and ammunition were recovered including 391 AK rifles, 182 pistols, 11 RPG/RL, 3 sniper rifles, 39 IEDs and 638 grenades/ hand grenades.

➤ **11,290 persons arrested in past 2 years: govt.**

Jan 18: The government informed the legislative assembly that 11,290 persons were arrested in the past two years on charges of stone-pelting and "damaging the government property."

This was revealed in a written reply by chief minister Mehbooba Mufti to a query raised by BJP MLA Sat Paul Sharma.

3,733 FIRs were registered by the police against 11,290 persons arrested in the past two years, the reply reads.

Meanwhile, to a separate query raised by MLA from Langate constituency Er Abdur Rashid, the chief minister has said that the government has granted "amnesty" to 9,730 youth who were booked for the first time from 2008 to 2017.

"51 civilians were killed during cross-firing or otherwise in 2017, while as 20 civilians were killed during 2016," the reply reads.

"213 militants were killed in 2017 which included 127 foreign and 86 local, while 150 militants were killed in 2016 including 119 foreign and 31 local," the reply reads.

The reply further stated that 79 militants or suspects were arrested in 2016, while 97 militants or suspects were arrested in 2017.

➤ Govt. to review cases of second time offenders: CM

Jan 22: Chief Minister, Mehbooba Mufti disclosed that the government was mulling to review case of the second time offenders in the Valley and asserted that the amnesty granted to over 9000 youth in various law and order related cases is aimed at bringing them back to their families and societies.

Intervening during the question hour in Legislative Council, Mehbooba hoped that the parents of the youth, who have been granted amnesty, would also play their role in getting these youth back into their social milieu.

She said over 9000 youth have been granted amnesty so that they can lead a peaceful life and restart their education, careers and other job pursuits

She said after carefully monitoring the results of this scheme, the government would also examine and assess the cases of youth against whom more than one cases are registered.

Earlier, replying to the main question raised by Firdous Ahmad Tak, the Minister for Agriculture, G N Lone Hanjura said by giving amnesty to the first time offenders, the government is involving their parents and families so that they encourage their wards not to indulge

in such activities in future. He said the government would consider the cases of second time offenders for amnesty.

He said no case has been recommended for amnesty under Section 120-B and 153-A CRPC from Doda, Kishtwar and Ramban.

He informed that 16 cases have been registered against 23 accused persons in Doda, 12 cases against 359 accused in Kishtwar and 15 cases against 155 accused have been registered in Ramban since 2008.

➤ **Kashmir saw curfew 168 times since 2016: Govt**

Jan 23: The Jammu and Kashmir government said that curfew and restrictions were imposed 168 times in nine districts of the Valley during the last two years. The government also said that there were at least 85 law-and-order incidents in 2016 while the government had recorded only 20 such incidents in the past year.

The government also said that no enquiry commission had been constituted since 2016 to probe civilian killings and rights violations.

Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti revealed this in the state Assembly in a written reply to a question by National Conference legislator Ali Mohammad Sagar.

She said that in Anantnag district, curfew and restrictions were imposed 51 times, followed by 37 times in Baramulla district, 25 times each in Srinagar and Budgam districts, 17 times in Pulwama district, 14 times in Shopian district, nine times in Bandipora district, seven times in Kulgam district and three times in Ganderbal district.

Besides these, curfew had also been imposed five times in Kishtwar district of the Jammu region.

Mufti said that the restrictions were imposed as necessitated by the situation and cordon and search operations were carried out on specific information.

About civilian killings and rights violations, the government said, "The range DIGs vide order number 93 of 2017 dated 09/01/2017 have been directed to constitute district level investigation teams headed by the concerned Dy SP (headquarters) for carrying out time-bound investigation of all such cases where deaths of civilians and police personnel are involved."

However, the DIG (SKR) was directed vide order number 92 of 2017, dated 09/01/2017, to constitute an SIT to probe case FIR number 156/2016 registered in Police Station Pampore. The case relates to the 17 August 2016 murder of college lecturer Shabir Ahmad Mangoo by the army in Pampore's Shaar -e-Shali village.

In another such case, the DIG (CKR) was asked to constitute an SIT to probe case FIR number 57/2016 registered in Police Station Karan Nagar. The case relates to the killing of an ATM guard, Riyaz Ahmad Shah, who was showered with a barrage of pellets allegedly by CRPF soldiers as he was returning from his duty late on the night of 2 August 2016.

"There are five magisterial enquires ordered in 2016," the Chief Minister said.

The chief minister added that there was a spurt in the number of militancy-related cases as 2017 recorded 48 such cases while there were only 17 in 2016.

The government said that 79 suspected militants were arrested in 2016 while, in 2017, 97 such persons were taken into custody.

The government also said that a total of 474 cases of NoK of civilians were pending disposal under SRO-43.

➤ **JK govt has no data about Kashmiri prisoners lodged in Indian jails**

Jan 23: The government said it has no data about Kashmiri prisoners lodged in different jails outside Jammu and Kashmir.

In a written reply to a legislator, the government however revealed that 2535 persons booked under militancy and other cases are detained in jails across Jammu and Kashmir.

It said that 69 foreign nationals are being held in the state jails of whom seven are convicted in militancy cases.

➤ **172 civilians, 162 security men, 363 militants killed in 2 yrs : Govt**

Jan 23: The government said that 721 people, including 196 civilians and 363 militants, were killed in law and order, militancy-related and cross-border shelling incidents during the last two years in the state.

In a written reply to a question of NC MLA Ali Mohammad Sagar, Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti informed the state

Assembly that 162 police and security personnel and 196 civilians were killed in such incidents.

She said that 172 civilians were killed in law and order and militancy-related incidents and 24 civilians were killed in border shelling.

The CM said that 213 militants were killed last year and 150 in 2016.

Besides, 176 suspected militants were arrested during the period, she said, adding that 79 suspected militants were arrested in 2016, as many as 97 were arrested in 2017.

The CM said that 104 civilians were killed in law and order and militancy-related incidents in 2016 as compared to 68 in 2017.

Thirteen people were killed in cross-border shelling in 2016 and 11 in 2017, she said.

An amount of Rs 23 lakh was paid to the next of kin of 23 deceased, Rs 6.20 lakh in favour of 110 injured people and Rs 43.66 lakh on account of 165 structures damaged due to border shelling during the period, she said.

The CM said that 474 cases of the next of kin of civilians killed in militancy-related incidents were pending for disposal for cash compensation or compassionate appointments and these were at various stages of consideration for want of requisite documents.

➤ **Rajnath announces fresh measures to restore normalcy**

MHA gives nod to withdrawal of stone pelting cases, asks JK Govt to frame surrender policy

Jan 24: Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh announced fresh measures which will be taken by the Jammu and Kashmir government to restore normalcy in the state.

Singh said the Ministry of Home Affairs has given its approval to the state government to enforce amnesty scheme that it announced on November 23 last year to give relief to 3,685 students and youth who were apprehended for participating in incidents of stone pelting against the forces.

Officials said that the matter was discussed during a meeting between Rajnath Singh and Chief Minister, Mehbooba Mufti, in New Delhi. Singh informed that the amnesty scheme for stone pelters also came under discussion.

"Under this scheme, nearly 3,685 students/youth have got relief so far. More than 9,000 students/youth are likely to be covered," officials said.

Rajnath Singh said that the amnesty is aimed at giving students and youth another chance to rebuild their lives and careers without being "under any kind of stress of being declared criminals." The state government, the minister further said, has been advised to appoint a high-level committee to review the remaining cases of stone pelting. This committee would be headed by a senior police officer.

"The MHA (Ministry of Home Affairs) is of the view that stone pelting cases of a non-grievous nature against the students/youth should be closed/withdrawn so that they get a chance to focus on their studies and pursue their careers without any psychological pressure," a statement issued from Rajnath's office said.

Earlier on January 22, Mehbooba had in the Upper House of the Legislature said that the government was mulling to extend amnesty to stone pelters, who are booked in more than one FIRs.

On 23 November 2017, state government on the advice of MHA announced an amnesty scheme for youth who were involved in incidents of stone pelting for the first time. The announcement was followed a formal order by state's Home department which had directed the constitution of a review committee on cases registered against youth from 2015 to 2017.

State government has also been advised to formulate a new surrender and rehabilitation policy that "will ensure economic rehabilitation and provide suitable training to the youth to run their own businesses, return to the mainstream and lead a dignified life."

The state government has also been advised by the Home Ministry to create an advisory board to redress grievances of migrants, displaced persons and West Pakistan refugees in the region and told to take steps to repair and renovate "old and dilapidated migrant camps" at Jagati and Talwara.

It has also been decided to restart work on an artificial lake in Jammu.

Moreover, the MHA has also asked the State Government to formulate a new surrender and rehabilitation policy to bring back youth to mainstream who have joined militancy.

"In order to provide an opportunity for alternative path of peace and prosperity to the Kashmiri youth who have joined militancy, MHA has also advised the state government to formulate a new surrender and rehabilitation policy," said an official, adding, "The policy will provide them with economic rehabilitation and suitable training to run their own business etc. enabling them to return to the mainstream and lead a dignified life."

➤ **25 killed, 163 injured in cross-border shelling in 2 yrs: Govt**

Jan 25: The government said 25 civilians were killed and 163 injured in cross border firing and mortar shelling along the Line of Control (LoC) and International Border (IB) in the state during the last two years.

In a written reply to a question of MLCs Ali Mohammad Dar and Showkat Hussain Ganaie, Minister for Revenue Abdul Rehman Veeri informed the Legislative Council today that in 2016, two people were killed in Jammu, six in Samba, two in Rajouri and three in Poonch while in 2017, one civilian was killed in Jammu, three in Rajouri, seven in Poonch and one in Baramulla.

The minister said that in 2016, 40 were injured in Jammu, nine in Samba, four in Kathua, six in Rajouri, 20 in Poonch and four in Kupwara.

He said that 18 got injured in Jammu, 10 in Rajouri, 47 in Poonch and four in Baramulla in 2017.

Of the 224 structures damaged in the shelling and firing during the period, the minister said 221 houses have been damaged, besides two mosques and a school.

➤ **13 pellet victims given govt jobs in Kashmir: Veeri**

Jan 24: Minister for Revenue, Abdul Rehman Veeri, replying to a question on behalf of Minister for Home, said 13 pellet victims have been appointed by the government in various departments on extreme compassionate grounds.

Replying to a clubbed question of Ali Mohammad Dar and Showkat Hussain Ganaie, the Minister further informed that 22 pellet victims have been provided financial assistance out of Chief Minister's Relief Fund.

He further informed that a Committee was constituted under the chairmanship of Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir to identify such persons who were permanently or partially disabled in the Kashmir Valley from July 8, 2016 to November 2, 2016.

"In the first phase, the Committee recommended 54 cases for grant of ex-gratia that has been sanctioned by the government while as 10 more cases which were recommended in second phase are under examination," he added.

➤ **Time has not come for any rethink on AFSPA: Bipin Rawat**

Jan 28: Time has not come for any rethink on AFSPA or making some of its provisions milder, Army Chief Gen. Bipin Rawat has said, asserting that the Army has been taking adequate precautions in protecting human rights while operating in disturb areas like Jammu and Kashmir.

Rawat's remarks assume significance as they come against the backdrop of reports that several rounds of high-level discussions have taken place between the defence and home ministries on the "need to remove or dilute at least some provisions" of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA).

"I do not think time has come to even rethink on AFSPA at the moment," Gen Rawat told PTI in a recent interview when asked about reports that government was re-examining the demand for a milder version of AFSPA in these states.

The Army chief said though AFSPA has certain strong provisions, the Army is concerned about collateral damages and ensuring that its operations under the law do not inconvenience the local people.

"We have never been strong in applying the force the way it could be applied (under AFSPA). We are very concerned about human rights. We are absolutely concerned about collateral damage. So do not get too

much concerned because we are taking adequate measures and precautions,” he said.

➤ **48 policemen killed in last 2 years: Govt**

Jan 29: The government on Monday informed the legislative assembly that 48 policemen were killed on duty in the last two years.

In a written reply to a question raised by BJP MLA Ravinder Raina, Minister in charge home said that since in 2016, 17 policemen including two assistant sub-inspectors were killed.

It said that in 2017, 26 policemen including one sub-inspector was killed in Jammu and Kashmir. Five SPOs were killed last year, it said.

➤ **Only 2 militants surrendered in 2017: MHA**

Jan 30: The Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has stated that only 2 militants have surrendered in Jammu and Kashmir in 2017.

In a reply under Right to Information Act (RTI), 2005, dated 17 January, MHA revealed that two militants surrendered from 1 January 2017 to 31 December

Jammu based RTI activist Raman Sharma had sought the number of surrendered militants from MHA. The revelation has come despite Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti vouching for soft approach against militants and frequent appeals by forces to the local militants to give up arms.

In its 2017 year-end press conference, police had, however, said that seven youth who had joined militancy returned back and re-joined their families.

On January 29 director general of police, Shesh Paul Vaid tweeted one more militant returned from militancy.

“A young boy who had earlier joined militant ranks has come back to the mainstream in south Kashmir and left the path of violence and destruction. Another family made complete,” he wrote.

Police was already working on the framing of new surrender policy to bring back local youth from militancy. Earlier, MHA had advised the State government to formulate a new surrender and rehabilitation policy aimed to provide economic rehabilitation and suitable training to surrendered militants and enable them to return to the mainstream.

Sharma had also sought the number of local and foreign militants operating in the state. However

MHA stated that the details were not available and advised the applicant to approach state government for the same.

The RTI reply also revealed that there were 342 militancy-related incidents in the state in 2017.

Out of 213 militants killed last year, 127 were foreign and 86 local while 80 forces personnel were also killed and 226 injured in militancy-related incidents, revealed the MHA reply to the RTI.

➤ **Laws like AFSPA for protection of armed forces: DyCM**

Jan 30: Senior BJP leader and Deputy Chief Minister Nirmal Singh said nobody would be allowed to demoralise the forces in Jammu and Kashmir and if somebody has committed a mistake that shall be inquired.

Speaking to reporters outside Legislative complex here, Singh said he spoke to Director General of Police and other security officers working on the ground about the registration of FIR against Army.

“They told me that the FIR has not been registered against the Major. I was told that the FIR mentions Garhwal unit led by a major,” he said.

Singh said they are not going to allow anybody to demoralize forces in J&K.

“It should be very clear that the armed forces have all protection from the law. This is very clear that forces have protection from the law... AFSPA is there...they have protection from the law,” he said.

The DyCM said even if somebody has committed any mistake that shall be inquired.

To a question that everybody in Assembly was talking against armed forces, Singh said, “BJP didn’t speak against armed forces in the house”.

He said they won’t spare hardcore stone pelters.

“We have given amnesty to first time stone pelters to give them chance to reform themselves. The lenient view has been taken by Government of India (GoI) to give them chance to reform. They might have done this under some provocation or some circumstances,” he said.

Police has registered an FIR against 10th Garhwal unit of army for murder, attempt to murder and endangering life after killing of two civilians in south Kashmir’s Shopian district.

12. Suicides by Armed Forces

➤ **Army man commits in Uri**

Jan 07: An army man shot himself with his service weapon in Uri area of Baramulla district.

An official said that the soldier, identified as Subbha Roy of 8 Rashtriya Rifles, shot himself with his service rifle at Gawalion Uri.

He said a case has been registered in this regard and further investigation has been started.

➤ **CRPF man commits suicide in Anantnag**

Jan 11: A CRPF soldier belonging to 164 BN, committed suicide inside his camp in main town Kokernag of Anantnag district. He was identified as head constable, Balister Tyagi, a resident of Delhi. He shot himself with his service rifle.

