



**JAMMU KASHMIR COALITION OF CIVIL SOCIETY (JKCCS)**

**The**

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COALITION OF CIVIL SOCIETY (JKCCS)**

**AND**

**ASSOCIATION OF PARENTS OF DISAPPEARED  
PERSONS (APDP)**

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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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Editor: Parvez Imroz

## **T A B L E   O F   C O N T E N T S**

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<b>1</b>	<b>EDITORIAL</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>DESECRATION OF RELIGIOUS PLACES</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>CHRONOLOGY OF INCIDENTS</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>MILITARIZATION</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>KILLINGS IN DECEMBER 2018</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>OFFICIAL STATEMENTS</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>HUMAN RIGHTS STORIES</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>SUICIDES AND FRATRICIDES BY ARMED FORCES</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>HARASSMENT OF KASHMIRIS LIVING IN INDIA</b>		
<b>6</b>	<b>SURVEILLANCE</b>		

## 1. Editorial

For more than a decade JKCCS strived consistently to resurrect the unsung heroes of Kashmir. It is time to unmask those collaborators who deliberately chose to facilitate oppression and dispossession of Kashmiris for their petty interests.

For past many years, JKCCS has been working on the human rights issues facing Indian administered Jammu and Kashmir and have identified hundreds of perpetrators and are preparing dossiers with the view to investigate into the crimes they have committed in Kashmir. One of the important aspects which has remained un-debated in Kashmir civil society is the role of the collaborators. Collaborators exist in all societies particularly during times of alien occupation. Collaboration is a bridge over which occupation walks over nations. Since 1947, Kashmir has seen three generations of facilitators of tyranny, who have consolidated the occupation and are promoting the Indian control in Kashmir. A collaborator normally is defined as a person who cooperates treacherously with the enemy and at the cost of the natives is promoting the alien designs of the occupying power and allows for its hold on the natural resources of the occupied land.

Corruption and collaboration are two sides of the same coin, as without corruption collaboration will cease to exist. Since 1947, particularly after 1953, after the exit of first Prime Minister of Jammu & Kashmir, corruption was institutionalized. Contracts, permit-raj and distribution of public largesse to people at higher and lower level, workers of the political parties, especially National Conference continues even after seventy years through the help of collaborators which was even glamorized and got social sanctity. Many political activists who were opposed to Indian occupation were converted to collaboration, and they became part of the institution of collaboration and in this way a culture of collaboration was promoted in which people were competing for becoming collaborators for the Indian government. It was not only the political class who through fraudulent elections climbed to power but also at bureaucratic level illegal things were done, which were beyond their mandate.

The political class's omissions and commissions and the conduct of the police were debated within the society but at the bureaucratic level the illegality perpetrated remain unknown to bureaucrats themselves. The most vicious section of collaboration is by the police, who as an arm of the state actively stifled the dissent and converted the state into a *police-raaj*. Lot of police officials, responsible for crimes during their tenure, were promoted out of turn. Very few of officials are known. Most of the police officials, involved in playing dirty game of governments, after their retirement lead deceptively respected lives without any atonement. The failure of civil society in questioning and holding them (officials) accountable for the excesses, manipulations they have committed while stifling democratic voices of people of Kashmir is disappointingly conspicuous.

The failure of civil society gave social sanctity to the culture of collaboration. -The collaboration has been brazenly justified by the politicians though privately admitting that “nobody can stop Kashmir getting raped by the Indian State and our job is to minimize the pain and humiliation”. It is this section of people who would justify everything, as some

rationalist journalist observed that if they will piss at their faces they will sever its own dew falling.

Amongst the collaborators the worst section is of the so-called and deceptive intellectuals, who are justifying the *status quo* for their personal greed and lust for power and benefits. The point is what should be done to these collaborators. In any civilized society, strongly believing in due process of law, the collaborators have been accounted for i.e. to expose them before the people and at least seek moral accountability from them. They cannot get away with the roles they have played. For example take the case of government officials, who have been part and parcel of suppression and oppression and have carried the illegal orders in detaining the people and have never been questioned by the civil society. According to the principles laid down by the Nuremburg Trail, *it is a fiction that crimes are being committed by the state, the public servants are responsible for the illegal orders they are carrying out.*

Since the conflict in going-on and unfortunately is likely to continue in foreseeable future, the collaborators are confident that they will get away with the crimes they committed. As the first generation of collaborators have not been named and shamed or questioned during and after their life therefore the civil society is duty bound to put search lights to this invisible section of collaborators present in all the state institutions so that, just like the perpetrators, they could be identified and dossiers will be prepared against their illegalities. This exercise could help in discouraging and de-glamorizing the collaboration culture in Kashmir.

We believe, had the role of collaborators in Kashmir been debated and discussed thirty or forty years back it would definitely had an impact on the present brigade of collaborators. At present only moral accountability can be sought from them and as a civil society the public opinion is the only weapon we have to use to unmask them.

## **2. Chronology of Incidents**

**Dec 01:** Two Army personnel were killed and as many injured in an accidental blast along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir, an officer told media. A landmine exploded near the anti-infiltration obstacle system when an Army column was on patrol duty along the LoC in Akhnoor sector of Jammu district, the officer said, quoting preliminary information. While a civilian was injured in exchange of fire between militants at armed forces at Niloora village in Pulwama district.

**Dec 02:** No incident of violence reported.

**Dec 03:** Militants managed to escape after a brief exchange of gunfire with armed forces at Sangdan village of Shopian district. There were intense clashes after dawn in the village when forces were withdrawing from the area.

**Dec 04:** Youth resorted to stone pelting on forces in Bon Zanigam in Budgam district. However, no one was injured.

**Dec 05:** A woman died allegedly due to Cardiopalmonary arrest in Dangar Mohalla locality of Hajin after forces allegedly fired tear smoke shells while winding up Cordon and Search Operation in Mir Mohalla locality of Hajin on December 5 evening. However, the police claimed there was no law and order situation in the locality.

Family members of Hajira Begum (60), wife of Nazir Ahmad Dar claimed that she died due to suffocation caused by tear smoke after forced allegedly fired tear gas shells to disperse

stone pelting youth in the area. While at least two army soldiers were injured in cross-border firing at Line of Control (LoC) in Uri sector of Baramulla district.

**Dec 06:** An army soldier was killed in cross-border firing in Machil sector of frontier Kupwara district. Official sources said that Pakistani forces violated the ceasefire and targeted several Indian army posts in Uri and Machil sectors of north Kashmir. A residential house was also damaged in Uri sector. In another incident, a BSF man was killed and another injured in sniper fire from across the Line of Control (LoC) in the Sunderbani sector of Jammu and Kashmir, officials said.

**Dec 07:** No incident of violence reported.

**Dec 08:** An encounter between militants and armed forces started at Gaat Mohalla in Mujgund area in Srinagar district. As per reports, a forces personnel was injured in the on-going encounter.

**Dec 09:** Three LET militants including two teenaged militants were killed and five armed forces personnel were injured in an encounter between militants and armed forces at Gaat Mohalla in Mujgund area in Srinagar district. Five residential houses were also damaged in the encounter. The slain militants were identified as Saqib Bilal son of Bilal Ahmad Sheikh of Hajin, Mudasir Rashid, 14, son of Abdul Rashid Parray of Mir Mohalla, Hajin and Ali, a Pakistani militant.

**Dec 10:** Valley wide shut-down was observed on International Human Rights Day to protest the unabated human rights violations in Kashmir.

**Dec 11:** Four policemen were killed in an attacked owned by JeM militant outfit at Zainpora village in Shopian in south Kashmir. The policemen were on duty to protect the Kashmiri Pandit community. The militant decamp with the service rifles of the slain policemen. The policemen were identified as Anees Ahmad, constable (480/Spn), resident of Kulgam town; Abdul Majid, senior grade constable (193/SPN), resident of Ganderbal; Merajuddin, constable (477/SPN), resident of Hajin in Bandipora. The fourth cop who was critically injured and succumbed on way to hospital was identified as Constable Hamidullah (860/SPN), resident of Anantnag. While the body of abducted civilian in October was recovered in an apple orchard in Ahtoo village of Anantnag. The slain 45-year-old Sheeraz Ahmad Bhat was abducted by unidentified gunmen from outside his house. The abduction was carried out days after a gunfight had taken place inside Sheeraz's house on October 21.

**Dec 12:** An encounter broke out between militants and armed forces in Brath Kalan village in Sopore area of Baramulla district.

**Dec 13:** A night-long gunfight in Brath village, a few kilometres from Sopore town, ended with the killing of two local militants by a joint team of army's 22RR, police SOG, and paramilitary CRPF. The slain militants were later identified as Owais Ahmad Bhat, son of Gulam Ahmad Bhat, resident of SadporaSopore, and Tahir Ahmad Dar, resident of Gund Mohalla, Brath, Sopore. Police said Tahir had recently joined the Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT). The authorities, meanwhile, suspended class work in all schools and colleges in Sopore town and surrounding areas to avoid any student protests. While Indian and Pakistani troopers exchanged fired along LOC in Poonch district of Jammu.

**Dec 14:** The armies of India and Pakistan traded fire along the Line of Control (LoC) in Kerni area of Poonch.

**Dec 15:** Three HM militants (identified as Hizb commander and army deserter Zahoor Ahmad Thoker; Adnan alias Tahir Hizbi from Karimabad; and Bilal alias Hashim from Rajpora Pulwama. Zahoor was one of the most wanted militants in Pulwama and had a large bounty on his head.) and an army soldier were killed in an encounter in an orchard in Pulwama's Sirnoo village. While forces killed seven civilians among them four school students post encounter. The deceased civilians were identified as 1. Abid Hussain Lone 2.

Amir Ahmad Palla, 18, 3. Liyaqat Majeed Dar 4. Tawseef Ahmad Mir, 26, 5. Owais Ahmad Najjar, Class 12 student 6. Rehan Rashid Dar- 16 and 7. Aqib Bashir Bhat.

**Dec 16:** A complete shutdown was observed across Kashmir valley and parts of Jammu to protest the civilian killings at the hands of forces in Pulwama on December 15.

**Dec 17:** Police had sealed all roads leading to the army's 15 Corps at Batwara Srinagar to prevent people from marching towards the army headquarter on the call of JRL to protest the killing of seven civilians at the hands of forces on December 15 in Pulwama.

**Dec 18:** The armies of India and Pakistan exchanged fire along the Line of Control in Poonch district, reports said. While tension and shutdown continued in Pulwama district for the fourth day since the Monghama Sirnoo encounter and the subsequent firing on civilians by army and other government forces. The government authorities, however, lifted restrictions on public assembly under Section 144 on December 18.

**Dec 19:** A 49-year-old Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI) of the Border Security Force (BSF) allegedly committed suicide by shooting himself with his service rifle in Poonch district, officials said. The officer of the border guarding force, Satpal Jaswal, was found in a pool of blood after his colleagues pursued the sound of a gunshot at his post in forward area in Mendhar Bekt of the district on Dec 19 morning, they said. While Pakistani troops violated ceasefire along the Line of Control (LoC) in Poonch district of Jammu and Kashmir by resorting to unprovoked firing on forward posts, media reported quoting officials. The firing by Pakistani troops from across the LoC attracted strong and effective retaliation by the Indian Army; they said adding that there was no immediate report of any casualty.

**Dec 20:** Shut down continues in Pulwama district for the sixth consecutive day over the killing of seven civilians on Dec 15.

**Dec 21:** Two army officers were killed by gunshots fired from a sniper rifle by Pakistani army across the Line of Control (LoC) in north Kashmir's Kupwara district. Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Kupwara AS Dinkar confirmed to media that a soldier and a junior commissioned officer were killed in a sniper attack by Pakistani army along the LoC in Kupwara sector.

**Dec 22:** Six militants including the deputy chief were killed in a brief gunfight with armed forces Ananatnag, Tral area of south Kashmir. The slain militants have been identified as the AGH's deputy chief Soliha Muhammad Akhoo alias Rehan Khan of Aampora, Awantipora; Rasik Ahmad Mir of Dadsara, Tral; Rauf Ahmad Mir of Dadsara Tral; Umar Ramzan Mir of Dadsara; Nadeem Ahmad Sofi of Dadsara; and Faisal Javaid Khanday of Amlar, Awantipora. While six CRPF men were injured in a grenade explosion hurled by militants in Bijbehara during CASO.

**Dec 23:** No incident of violence reported.

**Dec 24:** CASO was launched in Lolab valley in north Kashmir's Kupwara district. However, after hours search nothing was found.

**Dec 25:** No incident of violence reported.

**Dec 26:** A civilian was killed in the firing along the Line of Control (LoC) in Nowshera sector of Rajouri district. Defence spokesman Lt Col Devender Anand said Pakistan Army resorted to unprovoked firing on army positions and civilian areas in Nowshera sector at around noon today. He said a civilian identified as Bodhraj, 55, resident of Deeing, Nowshera sustained critical injuries. Anand said Army evacuated the injured civilian to hospital, where he succumbed to injuries. While an Army man shot dead his colleague following a spat with him in an Army camp in Doda district. "Havialdar Rajesh Dakua was fired upon by his colleague at an army camp in Bhaderwah last night. He was brought to the hospital, where he died after ten minutes", a police officer said. The official said Dakua, 40, was posted at 4, Rastriya Rifles headquarters at Bhaderwah. "The army man, who opened fire on his

colleague, is yet to be arrested as police have asked for his custody from the Army,” he said. The official said the exact reason behind the killing is not known.

**Dec 27:** The armed forces claimed they have recovered an IED weighing approximately 20 kg on the Bandipora-Srinagar road.

**Dec 28:** An MBA-pass out-turned militant of Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) was killed in a brief encounter with forces at Banderpora village in south Kashmir's Pulwama district. The deceased militant was identified as Ishfaq Yusuf Wani son of late Mohammad Yusuf Wani of Koil village of Pulwama. While militants attacked a CISF post guarding power grid at Wagoora in Pulwama district. However, no damage was caused.

**Dec 29:** Four Jaish-e-Muhammad (JeM) militants including three locals were killed on Saturday in a 10-hour gunfight with the government forces in Hajin village of south Kashmir's Pulwama district. The slain militants were identified as Waseem Ahmad Wani from Tikuna village, Muzamil Nazir Bhat from Prichoo village, Muzamil Nabi Dar from Rahmoo village of district Pulwama and a foreigner, Haris. Off the three killed militants, Muzamil Nabi Dar of Rahmoo was pursuing BCA before joining militant ranks. While boy who was critically injured in a mysterious blast at Gadoora area of south Kashmir's Pulwama district on December 28 succumbed to injuries at Srinagar's SMHS hospital. The body was identified as Arif Ahmad Dar, son of Abdul Ghani Dar, a resident of Larrow, Pulwama. While a low-intensity explosion rocked the general bus stand Jammu was apparently lobbed at police station building. No damage was caused.

**Dec 30:** Suspected militants looted as many as 4 weapons of policemen guarding the official residence of Congress MLC Mohammad Muzaffar Parray in posh Jawhar Nagar, Srinagar. While militants attacked joint patrol party of police and CRPF in Pulwama. Indian and Pakistani forces exchanged fire along LOC in Poonch district.

**Dec 31:** Indian army claimed it has foiled a BAT attack from Pakistani forces in Nowgam sector in Kupwara district.

### 3. Killings in December 2018

In the month of December 2018, at least **43 killings** took place which included **11 civilians, 19 militants and 13 armed forces**. The day to day break up of killings is given in the table below.

**Table of Killings**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Armed Forces</b>	<b>Militants</b>	<b>Civilians</b>
<b>Dec 01</b>	2	-	-
<b>Dec 02</b>	-	-	-
<b>Dec 03</b>	-	-	-
<b>Dec 04</b>	-	-	-
<b>Dec 05</b>	-	-	1
<b>Dec 06</b>	2	-	-
<b>Dec 07</b>	-	-	-
<b>Dec 08</b>	-	-	-
<b>Dec 09</b>	-	3	-
<b>Dec 10</b>	-	-	-
<b>Dec 11</b>	4	-	1
<b>Dec 12</b>	-	-	-
<b>Dec 13</b>	-	2	-
<b>Dec 14</b>	-	-	-
<b>Dec 15</b>	1	3	7
<b>Dec 16</b>	-	-	-
<b>Dec 17</b>	-	-	-



<b>Dec 18</b>	-	-	-
<b>Dec 19</b>	1	-	-
<b>Dec 20</b>	-	-	-
<b>Dec 21</b>	2	-	-
<b>Dec 22</b>	-	6	-
<b>Dec 23</b>	-	-	-
<b>Dec 24</b>	-	-	-
<b>Dec 25</b>	-	-	-
<b>Dec 26</b>	1	-	1
<b>Dec 27</b>			
<b>Dec 28</b>	-	1	-
<b>Dec 29</b>	-	4	1
<b>Dec 30</b>	-	-	-
<b>Dec 31</b>	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>43 killings</b>	

## 4. Human Rights Stories

### **Blood drenches Pulwama again, seven civilians massacred**

**December 15:** Seven civilians were killed, one after another, by the armed forces after finishing an encounter in which they killed three HM militants in Sirnoo village of Pulwama. In the encounter one army soldier also got killed. The actual number of people injured in forces firing couldn't be established fully, however, some media outlets put the injured figure around seventy persons.

The claim often made by the army and police that civilians get killed for obstructing the armed forces operation against militants fall flat. All the seven civilian were killed right after the encounter was over.

The reports of civilian used as human shield also surfaced. One of the top English newspaper The Economic Times reported that at least three residents of Kharpora were dragged out of their homes and used as human shields. The Army then took them to the orchard, where the forces had already laid multilevel cordon.

The civilian killings immediately attracted the attention. Condemnations were started to pour in not only locally but international organizations also expressed their grief over the loss of lives of non-combatants. The

the army issued a detailed statement asking people not to follow the resistance leadership call.

As the news of civilian killings spread the Kashmiri population, well before the JRL call for strike, suspended their business activities and protested against killing spree.

These killing have further vitiated the already fragile situation of Kashmir. By the end of this month, as many as 160 civilians were killed this year due to on-going bloody conflict. At many instances there were calls for political intervention from various top army officials indicating the gravity of the situation.

**The deceased civilians were identified as 1. Abid Hussain Lone 2. Amir Ahmad Palla, 18, 3. Liyaqat Majeed Dar 4. Tawseef Ahmad Mir, 26, 5. Owais Ahmad Najar, Class 12 student 6. Rehan Rashid Dar- 16 and 7. Aqib Bashir Bhat**

To look into the details of how the incident in which seven civilians were killed unfolded, a researcher of *The Informative Missive* visited families of the slain civilians. Collecting details wasn't easy from south



**Abid**

**Amir**

**Liyakat**

**Owais**

**Aqib**

**Rehan**

**Tawseef**

Joint Resistance Leadership (JRL), an amalgamation of Kashmir top pro-freedom organizations, called for three day strike and a peoples' protest march to army's 15 Corpse at Batwara Srinagar to offer themselves *en mass* to army for killing. In view of the JRL protest march call,

Kashmir, as the situation there remains very tense and tentative. The uncertainty dominates and moving around wasn't easy. When this researcher was on his way to meet the victim families, the public transport vehicle in which he was travelling came under stone pelting at Newa village of Pulwama, as on that day another

encounter was just finished in Pulwama. The angry youths, aged 15 to 30, in groups were standing at various locations to enforce traffic to stop. Youth were also seen pelting stones at army installation at Newa.

Somehow the researcher reached the family of one of the slain civilians Liyakat Majeed Dar's house. An eleventh standard student. Even though some days have passed since his killing but the atmosphere of mourning was such that it appeared he had just died. Everybody in the house was silently sitting with moist eyes. To his family Liyakat was there (near encounter site) but was not pelting stones. He might have gone there to see the situation.

On the intervening night of December 14 and 15, army's 55 RR, CRPF and SOG laid a cordon around Sirmoo village of Pulwama. At around 8 in the morning, an exchange of fired was heard by the villagers. The encounter had taken place in an orchard where militants were hiding. The encounter finished in short time with the killing of all the three militants.

Post encounter people swiftly swell around the encounter site to have glimpse of the slain militants and to take them for last rites. Enraged over the people's assembly the forces engaged in the encounter to keep people away from the site used teargas canisters, fired live ammunition and pellets over the civilians, who were also protesting against killing of militants. Locals said, in response to the forces action youth pelted stones. According to the locals, youth pelted stones at forces only when forces used force to chase away the youth.

The another version of the incident was that forces opened fire at civilians when their vehicle plunged into a trench. Pertinently, the civilians were killed at

a bullet in his head near encounter site. We rushed to the district hospital where Liyakat was taken only to found him dead," stated Arshed Majeed, Liyakat's elder brother.

Arshed blamed forces for killing his brother with intent. "See the target of forces bullet right on Liyakat's head. Was the bullet fired to chase him away even if he was pelting stone," questioned Arshed.

Showing no interest in any investigation Liyakat's family has not approached concerned police station to file FIR. "It looks highly unlikely that police will file a case against armed forces. If, in case, they will do so, there will be surely no prosecution against the accused. FIR against forces in Kashmir is mere an ineffectual document. We are seeing this for many years now," stated Arshed.

Abdid Hussain of Kareemabad, Pulwama was another boy killed by the forces. Abid along with his cousin was busy working in his orchard, some 2 km away from the encounter site, located adjacent to Kareemabad-Pulwama road. He was not part of any protest. Abid had returned from Indonesia to see family. To do his contribution to his family business he had visited the family orchard to do some tree branch cutting. While he was busy doing his work some youth chased by the forces entered the orchard. The armed forces vehicle halted just outside Abid's orchard. Some of the soldiers opened fire in air and later directly towards the youth in orchard. A bullet fired hit Abid in his head and he was seriously injured.

Abid was immediately taken to District Hospital through Barpora village, as the main road to Pulwama was blocked by the army. He was declared

"When I got close to the boy holding mobile phone showing photography of a dead civilian, I was shocked to see it was of my son. Then I rushed to his body. I saw a bullet wound on his head and his right eye had a pellet injury."

"The moment he came out of his aunt's house, the forces deployed there fired at him targeting his head. There was not stone pelting or protest there. The encounter was going on in an orchard not less than 1 km from my house."

"Even some journalists were prevented and beaten up by the forces to get closer to the encounter site. The gunfight last for only 20 minutes with the killing of three militants."

different locations not all near the encounter site.

In the forces action scores of people were injured some of them critically. Liyakat was one of the seriously wounded among the injured people who later succumbed.

Usually, Liyakat used to help his father Abdul Majeed, a milkman, every morning to collect milk from different houses in his locality which Majeed would sell on his shop. On December 15, after coming back home at around 8 am Liyakat while taking his breakfast was told by his father to get some document attested at Block Office Pulwama. Liyakat told his father he would not be able to go there that day due to encounter. Immediately, after having his breakfast he left his house without telling his family anything.

"At around 11 am, we received a disturbing phone call from a local informing us Liyakat was hit with

brought dead at the hospital.

Abid was married to an Indonesian girl and has a three month old child.

Three more boys of Abid's village had received bullet injuries at different places during the clashes. Among the injured was Gulzar Ahmad Sheikh, who received a bullet on his back side at Barpora village during clashes.

According to Shahnawaz Ahmad Lone, Abid's cousin, "the forces cordon the encounter site in four layers, the fourth layer was deployed around 1 km away from the encounter site. It is the fourth layer of cordon which usually consist CRPF and Police, which deals with the protestors. When the forces kill some protestors near the encounter site it doesn't mean he was killed where the gunfight is happening in fact he gets killed at a

sizeable distance from encounter site by the fourth layer of the forces cordon”.

There are four army camps close to the area where encounter took place, One is Newa, second in Zadoora, third in Below and the Head Quarter in Bonoora. In all these camps there is army of 55 Battalion, Rashtriya Rifles, presumably the army from all these camps were involved in the operation.

Shahnawaz saw his cousin felling to forces bullet.

No FIR or case has been filed by the family.

Amir Palla was another boy who fell to the forced bullet that day. Amir has left home to Shalimar Pollution Checking Centre at Prichoo village, where he was working as a part-timer. Amir's father Mohammad Yousuf insisted his son not to go to his work that day due to the encounter in the district. However, Amir told him that he has to go, as he has some unavoidable work to do. The way to Prichoo village is through Monghama village, which is around 1 km away from the encounter site.

“When Amir reached his shop, some SOG personnel were hiding in a school building shot at him on his chest. Some locals of Prichoo village saw SOG men firing at my son. The locals took the injured youth to the district hospital, where he breathed his last,” stated Mohammad Yousuf.

According to Yousuf, Amir was the first civilian killed by the forces that day. He was killed at around 8:45 am and the encounter was on going at that time.

“They killed the civilians and brand them as stone pelted to justify the murders. But in my son's case he was shot when he was in his shop not pelting stones or chanting slogans,” stated Yousuf while accusing the forces of killing his son without any justification.

Yousuf said the SOG party, which targeted his son, was led by a Dy SP Farooq. Dy SP Farooq has earned notoriety due to his conduct and was known for slinging two assault rifles. The officer was also accused by the locals of picking up and torturing the youth on will.

Like in other cases, Yousuf also chose not to approach the police to file FIR, as he believes police will not entertain his complaint.

Aqib Bashir Bhat, 14, a 9th class student of Prichoo village of Pulwama was one among the seven killed youth. As the news of militant killings spread in the district, Aqib went for offering funeral prayers of slain militants. Aqib house was located just only 1 km away from encounter site so the exchange of fire between forces and militants was quite audible there. As the gun roaring stopped Aqib leaves his house at 9:00 am to reach the encounter site. Aqib's father Bashir Ahmad was not allowing his son to move out due to encounter but ones the encounter ended, he allowed him to go out.

As over an hour passed the gunshot were again heard by Aqib's family and this time Aqib was out. It was chaos all around. People were seen running helter-skelter. In the meantime Aqib's worried mother went out to ascertain whether the encounter was completely ended or not. She was told by the people the forces while leaving the encounter site has started firing at people assembled there.

“The gunshots were so intense giving the feeling of resumption of encounter. But that wasn't the case. When I asked the people, who were running back to

their homes soon the sound of bullets reverberate the area, what was happening, they told me the forces had started firing at people. I was restless fearing for my son's safety, as I knew he had gone to the encounter site,” stated Aqib's mother.

Since the district hospital is located just a stone through distance from Aqib's family where some of the injured were taken, so his father, unknown of his son's fate, along with few villagers went to the hospital to offer help to the injured.

Bashir Ahmad saw dozens of injured were brought to the hospital. At around 11:30 am, an announcement was made in the hospital seeking peoples' help in identifying dead body of a youth. A boy was making rounds of the hospital with his mobile phone in hand showing the photograph of the killed boy.

“When I got close to the boy holding mobile phone showing photography of a dead civilian, I was shocked to see it was of my son. Then I rushed to his body. I saw a bullet wound on his head and his right eye had a pellet injury,” stated Bashir Ahmad while talking about how he got the news of his son's death.

Aqib was known for his bright cricketing skills and has earned a name for himself. In cricket he represents his school and also played at village level. “Just five days before of his killing, he was selected to play at state level.”

According to Bashir Ahmad out of seven civilian killings most were targeted on their heads and others were shot on chest which makes it clear that they shoot to kill.

Bashir Ahmad showed no interest in filing a case in police station or before any court as he believe justice will not be done by the organs of the same state which killed his son.

“If filing of case could prevent the forces from killing the people then I am ready, but I know it is not going to happen. In past, there were cases filed against the forces but nothing changes. There is no accountability rather the forces, who do these killings are rewarded and promoted,” laments the father.

Rehan Rashid Dar, 16, 10<sup>th</sup> standard student.

Rehan was shot while he was carrying new books of class 10 to which he was promoted recently with good percentage. Rehan, as per his family, was not a stone pelted or part of any protest. He was shot when he was coming out of his aunt's house at Sirnoo village, where from the encounter was not less than 1 km away.

On December 15, at 9:00 am, Rehan with lot of excitement visited Pulwama market to purchase new books of 10<sup>th</sup> class. After buying the books, he went to his aunt Naseema's house at Simoo village to show her the books. After staying for a while in his aunt house, he was told by his aunt to return back his home as the situation was not conducive.

“The moment he came out of his aunt's house, the forces deployed there fired at him targeting his head. There was not stone pelting or protest there. The encounter was going on in an orchard not less than 1 km from my house,” stated Naseema.

She further stated, “When Rehan came to my house, I asked him that he shouldn't have come on that day, as there was encounter in the orchards. I offered him tea and after some time told him to return back. At around 10:30 am, he left. I accompanied him to the main door. As I return back to my kitchen, I heard some gunshots followed by sloganeering and the cries of the

people. After a short while, some locals entered into my house, handed over to me his books and informed me that Rehan was shot by forces right outside the door, by the forces returning from the encounter site.”

He was taken to District Hospital Pulwama by the locals where he was declared brought dead by the doctors.

Rehan’s family claimed they have enough eyewitnesses to testify that he was killed without any provocation.

Owais Yousuf of Monghama village another victim of the day got killed while offering water to an injured boy.

While gathering details of Owais’s killing, another slain of the day, a case of human shield surfaced of a local boy Omar, Owais’s neighbour.

On the intervening night of December 14 and 15, at around 2 am, the armed forces entered into the house of Omar and took him along. Omar’s house was not searched. The army along with Omar entered into another house in vicinity, where they (forces) suspect militants might be hiding. Omar was asked to be on front to provide shield to the forces while entering the house.

The forces thoroughly searched the house but no militant was detected. Then the house was ransacked and the two inmates, two young brothers Shabir Ahmad and Bilal Ahmad were callously beaten. The boys were asked to share details of the militants about whom they had no idea. Finally, the forces left the house.

No other house in the village was searched but the cordon was laid around the village throughout night.

According to Owais’s father Yousuf Najar at around 7: 40 am, the forces left the village. In a short while the forces in numbers boarding trucks and gypsies returned to the village and headed towards orchards.

The forces vehicles were parked in Monghama village and the armed forces moved towards orchards by foot, as there is no road constructed to ply vehicles. The Yousf Najar’s house was among the few houses located closed to vast orchards.

“Soon the forces wade through orchards a gunfight broke out. Hearing gun shots people mostly youth started gathering around the encounter site. However, no one was allowed by forces to get close to the site. Even some journalists were prevented and beaten up by the forces to get closer to the encounter site. The gunfight last for only 20 minutes with the killing of three militants,” stated Yousuf Najar.

At around 10:30 am, the forces started leaving the site. The only way leading to the orchards was through the Monghama village so all the vehicles were kept in the village. While leaving, the army trucks left first followed by the gypsies of Special Operation Group of Police and Central Reserve Police Force.

“The last gypsy of the convoy turned turtle as it got plunged into a ditch. The forces came out of the turned vehicle and started firing upon the people gathered there. Dozens received bullet injuries. One of the civilians a resident of Bellow village of Pulwama was shot right outside my house,” stated Yousuf .

Some locals called Owais to get a glass of water for the injured boy.

“Owais hurriedly got the glass of water and while it to the injured boy he too was shot on his head. Owais was taken to Sub District Hospital Pulwama along with other injured. At the hospital he was declared brought dead. Over 20 people had received bullet injuries

and many received pellets and tear smoke canister injuries,” stated Yousuf Najar while detailing his son’s killing.

Tawseef, 29, son of Mohammad Ahsan Mir of Urichersoo, Pulwama was the seven victim of the day. Tawseef was working in Electricity Department. Tawseef’s has no idea how its son was killed. Tawseef was fathering two minor children and now lost the fathering shadow. There was a frustration in the family what will happen to his children.

On that fateful day, at around 8 am, Tawseef went to the local market to fetch milk. At around 11 am, his family got the news that he was injured near encounter site. Some people had taken injured Tawseef to District Hospital Pulwama. Since his conditions were serious, he was referred to S.M.H.S Hospital at Srinagar. He had died on way well before reaching the hospital.

Mohammad Ahsan said, “Tawseef was living with his wife and two little children in a separate house but in same village. I was working in the fields when I received a call from my family that Tawseef had got injured near encounter site at Sirmoo village.”

Mohammad Ahsan was running out of idea where to go home or to the encounter site.

Tawseef has dropped the vessel at the milkman’s shop and went to the encounter site. His father said, “I had no idea how he reached the encounter site and how was he killed. I only news I have that he was killed when forces leaving the encounter site opened fire at people,” stated the father who seems inconsolable after the killing of his son.

He further stated, “Our children are not safe in Kashmir. Almost everyday someone get killed or arrested. There are many families in our area who sent out their children to different states only to keep them secure. Some families whose children had been harassed by the forces had themselves handed over their children to the police, because of the fear that forces might pick them and kill them in custody or label them as militants and kill them in fake encounter.”

#### **What police said:**

The Jammu and Kashmir late Saturday afternoon issued a statement into the Pulwama encounter and the following civilian killings.

In the interest of our readers, the police statement is reproduced verbatim:

“A search operation was launched jointly by the security forces based on a credible input about the presence of militants in Monghama area of village Sirmoo in District Pulwama today morning. During the search operation, which was an open field with hideout made by the militants, hiding militants fired indiscriminately leading to an encounter.

Consequently Army personnel got injured and one Army jawan succumbed to his injury while others are being treated at a hospital.

While the operation was going on, a crowd who came dangerously close from different parts to the encounter site got injured.

The injured were evacuated to hospital where unfortunately seven persons succumbed to their injuries. Others who were admitted in the hospital are stated to be stable.

The loss of civilians is deeply grieved. Police once again appeals the citizens to remain away from encounter site as it is a prohibited zone which involves

significant danger to life because of nature of the encounter.

In this encounter three terrorists were killed. Bodies were handed over to the legal heirs after completion of medico-legal formalities.

One of the killed militants has been identified as Zahoor Ahmad Thoker son of Abdul Majid Thoker resident of Sirmoo Pulwama. Pertinently, Zahoor had deserted from Army last year and joined HM militant outfit. He was a known militant commander and was wanted by law for his complicity in a series of militant crimes including attacks on security establishments and civilian atrocities. Several militant cases were registered against him and the prominent among them are case FIR No. 37/2018 U/S 307 RPC 7/27 I.A. Act P/S Rajpora, Case FIR No. 105/2018 U/S ¼ Exp Sub Act, 427 RPC, 3 P.P.T Act P/S Pulwama, Case FIR No. 124/2018 U/S 7/27 I.A. Act, 148,336,149,307 RPC P/S Pulwama, Case FIR No. 128/2018 U/S ¼ Exp Sub Act 307 RPC P/S Pulwama, Case FIR No. 139/2018 U/S 307 RPC 7/25 ULA of P/S Pulwama pertaining to the killing of policemen Aqib Ahmad Wagay of Puchal Pulwama.

Police has registered a case in the matter. Incriminating materials including arms and ammunition recovered from the site of encounter have been taken in case records for further investigation and probe their complicity in other militancy cases.”

#### **Protest call and condemnations:**

The killing of the youth invited large scale condemnations. The JRL called for three days strike and a protest march to army’s headquarters in Srinagar.

7 dead. There is no explanation for this excessive use of force, none whatsoever. This is a massacre & that’s the only way to describe it. (Former CM Omar Abdulla tweeted)

### **Minor boy injured in Pulwama blast succumbs**

**Dec 29:** A 10-year-old-boy who was critically injured in a mysterious blast at Gadoora area of south Kashmir’s Pulwama district on December 28 succumbed to injuries at Srinagar’s SMHS hospital.

Arif Ahmad Dar, son of Abdul Ghani Dar, a resident of Larrow, Pulwama succumbed due to grave injuries, a doctor who operated upon the minor said.

### **Kulgam man abducted in October found dead**

**Dec 11:** A man abducted on October 27, hailing from Laroo village of Kulgam district, was found dead and was buried early Tuesday morning in an apple orchard in Ahtoo village of the district.

The slain 45-year-old Sheeraz Ahmad Bhat was abducted by unidentified gunmen from outside his house. The abduction was carried out days after a gunfight had taken place inside Sheeraz’s house on October 21.

The gunfight had concluded after the killing of three Jaish-e-Muhammad militants. An hour after the gunfight, as people swarmed to the debris of Sheeraz’s house, a blast at the site claimed the lives of seven civilians.

A senior police official from Kulgam confirmed the retrieval of Sheeraz’s body. .

He said that the police were investigating the case since Sheeraz was abducted on October 27.

No probe enough to bring back the dead innocent civilians. South Kashmir has been reeling under fear for the last 6 months. Is this what was expected from Gov rule? The admin has failed in securing civilian lives. Deepest condolences to the bereaved. (Former CM Mehbooba Mufti tweeted)

Other Kashmir based political parties in unison condemned the killing.

On December 7, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) has condemned the civilian killings in south Kashmir’s Pulwama district and asked New Delhi to allow the organisation and its human rights wing to send a fact finding mission to the valley.

In a series of tweets, OIC General Secretariat condemned the civilian killings in Kulgam.

“OIC General Secretariat expressed strong condemnation of the killing of innocent Kashmiris by Indian forces in Kashmir, where direct shooting at demonstrators in Pulwama region claimed the lives of a number of innocent citizens,” reads one of the tweet.

International human rights watch dog Amnesty International urged for impartial probe into the killings. "Authorities must conduct a full and independent investigation into the incident, and those responsible must be prosecuted in a civilian court of law," said Asmita Basu, the Programmes Director of Amnesty India.

On December 18, State Human Rights Commission (SHRC) directed the government and police to file the factual detailed report about civilian killings in Pulwama.

#### **Probe ordered:**

**Dec 15:** Jammu and Kashmir Governor Satya Pal Malik ordered a probe into the deaths of the civilians directing divisional commissioner, Kashmir, to inquire into civilian killings.

A local news agency GNS quoted SSP Pulwama Chandan Kohli as saying that the boy was injured after he was fiddling with some explosive material in an orchard at Gadoora.

While fiddling with the object, the device went off resulting in his serious injuries, the SSP said. Sources said the incident took place while Arif was grazing cattle in the field.

“Some people were recently arrested in connection with the case, and it was their disclosures that led us to the site where Sheeraz was buried,” the official said.

He said that the body bore serious torture marks.

“It looks like it has been a while since he had been killed and buried by the militants,” the official said.

The body of Sheeraz was handed over to his family following a post mortem and completion of medico-legal formalities.

The slain is survived by his wife and three kids, including two daughters and a toddler son. His parents are also alive but live separately, a little distance from where Sheeraz lived.

Nusrat, Sheeraz’s wife, has been making emotional appeals for his release ever since he was abducted. She had been asserting that her husband, a driver with a local gas agency, was an innocent man.

### SHRC seeks report on alleged torture of Pulwama civilian

**Dec 07:** The State Human Rights Commission (SHRC) on Friday issued notice to the J&K Government through Commissioner Secretary, Home Department, Director General of Police (DGP), and Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Pulwama to file a detailed report with respect to allegations of severe torture of a civilian, Tariq Ahmed Sheikh of Pulwama, by armed forces on December 4. Commission member Dilshada Shaheen issued the notices in response to a petition filed by rights activist Muhammad Ahsan Untoo (case number SHRC/416/Pul/2018).

She called for response within one week from the officers concerned. As per the petition, the victim, Tariq Ahmed Sheikh of Othora, Pulwama, was severely beaten on the intervening night of December 3 and 4,

when army men knocked on his door. "All the family members were detained and kept in one separate room and thereafter the victim was ruthlessly beaten by the forces with iron rod... (the forces) tried to burn him alive by opening the knob of gas pipe. The victim has suffered grave injuries due to the severe torture inflicted on him," the petitioner said.

The victim, according to the petitioner, was asked to admit that he was a militant and was forced to hold a gun in his hands. "The victim was threatened and told that he will be killed and later labelled as a militant," the petitioner said. The petitioner urged the SHRC to ask the government, DGP, and SSP Pulwama to lodge an FIR against the army unit involved in the act and conduct a thorough probe.

### Pellet-hit 18-month-old Hiba undergoes 2nd surgery

**Dec12:** The family of 18-month-old pellet victim, Hiba Nisar, is desperately waiting for the moment when their daughter would regain sight in her right eye as she underwent a second surgery at SMHS hospital at Srinagar.

Hiba's family is still grief-struck, moist-eyed and shocked as their daughter, the youngest pellet victim in Kashmir, is unable to tell them whether she is able to see with the pellet-hit eye or not.

Her father Nisar Ahmad Bhat was waiting outside the ophthalmology operation theatre at SMHS hospital and eager for the moment Hiba would regain sight in the damaged right eye.

"I break down when I see her face. We are yet to come to the terms as the fateful day still hunts us but we are hopeful she will recover fully and we pray for it. I want to send her to school so that she studies like other children," Bhat said.

An ophthalmologist at SMHS hospital who operated upon Hiba said the youngest pellet victim was operated second time and that they had removed the pellet from her eye.

"She needs to remain under observation. Right now we can't say anything about her vision," the doctor said.

Medical Superintendent, SMHS, Dr Saleem Tak told media that Hiba needed to be put under medical observation.

"After medical observation, we can talk about the damage caused by the pellet. Basically, her eye had

suffered injury due to which the liquid inside was leaked and that was treated in the first surgery," he said.

She underwent first surgery on November 25, the day she was hit by a pellet.

Hailing from Kaprin village, Hiba was at home on the day six militants and a civilian were killed at Batagundnear Kaprin.

Intense clashes between youth and government forces followed the gunfight.

Recounting the incident, Hiba's mother Marsala Bano said they were sitting inside their home and never thought they would face such a tragedy.

Aggrieved Bano said Hiba was hit by the pellets fired by the government forces through the front door.

Bano too was hit by pellets on her left hand.

Pellet Victims Welfare Trust President Muhammad Ashraf Wani said they had registered 1253 pellet victims as its members from 2016.

"This year, we registered 200 pellet victims with us. In the last week of November this year, around 30 pellet victims were added to the list," said Wani, who was hit by pellets in October 2016, months after the killing of Hizbul Mujahideen commander Burhan Muzaffar Wani.

In 2010, a lethal weapon pellet-gun was introduced in Kashmir to help control protestors but proved devastating.

Since then it has snatched the vision of many and ruined their lives.

## 5. Harassment of Kashmiris Living in India

*The repeated assurances from different governments that the Kashmiris would be protected from harassment in Indian states failed to stand the grounds, as this month also disturbing incidents of assaults on Kashmiris continue to pour in. The Governor Satya Pal Malik's statement on December 12 that "Kashmiris are being demonized at national level" is an admission to the fact. There appears no concrete policy in place to prevent Kashmiris from attacks, which are rising with every passing day. There were well-established apprehensions that there could be more incidents of such attacks on Kashmiris where were not reported,*

*and what is reported was enough to state the approach towards Kashmiri populations spread across India.*

### ➤ Three goons arrested for thrashing Kashmiri students in Ambala

**Dec 06:** Police in Haryana arrested three goons for thrashing Kashmiri students while a hunt has been launched to nab others, Media reports said.

According to the reports Kashmiri students of two Ambala Colleges including SRM Group of Colleges and E-Max Engineering College were on way to their respective colleges from their rented accommodation at

Nahooni when goons intercepted their vehicle at Kamroli and attacked them.

They said that goons without any provocation thrashed three Kashmiri students and damaged their private vehicle. "The goons thrashed us for being Kashmiri. They used bottles and iron rods. We suffered multiple injuries," said a student Sheikh Babar Jazeib

Pertinently, one of the victim students is the son of a top police officer from Kashmir who informed his father about the incident. Accordingly the matter was raised with police station Mulana who in a swift action registered an FIR vide number 269/2018 under section 323, 34, 341, 427, 506 IPC.

A police official from Mulana Police Station while confirming the incident said that so far three accused have been arrested while the hunt has been launched to nab others. He identified some of the injured Kashmiri students as Muhammad Yasir Dar from Pingleish Tral and Sheikh Babar of Kokarnag.

➤ **Two Kashmir youth arrested in Gujarat over 'stone throwing' charges**

**Bhuj(Guj) Dec 06:** Two residents of Jammu and Kashmir including a minor, allegedly involved in pelting stones at government forces, have been detained in Kutch district of Gujarat, police said.

Altaf Najar (23) and a 16-year-old boy were allegedly involved in attacking security forces, and three FIRs have been registered against them in J&K, said a senior Gujarat police official.

Following a tip-off, the two were detained from a guest-house in Bhuj town of the district a few days ago and have been kept under preventive detention till the J&K police take their custody, said the official.

One of them is also facing a charge of attempt to murder, the official said, without giving more details. PTI

➤ **Real Kashmir allege ill-treatment by Gokulam Kerala, seek police protection**

**Dec 14:** Real Kashmir FC alleged they were hurled abuses and manhandled by officials of Gokulam Kerala, who "deprived" the visitors of training facilities ahead of their I-League game in Kozhikode.

Lying third after a sensational start to their maiden season in top-flight, Real Kashmir are scheduled to face seventh-placed Gokulam Kerala at the EMS Corporation Stadium on Saturday. Real Kashmir even threatened to pull out of the game if they are not provided police protection.

On their part, Gokulam Kerala FC issued a clarification and alleged poor and irresponsible behaviour by Real Kashmir FC.

The visiting Real Kashmir too issued a statement, giving the sequence of events.

"An unfortunate incident happened today morning in Kozhikode in Kerala when the coach and other members of RKFC were abused and heckled by officials of Gokulam Kerala FC," the Kashmir club said in a statement.

"As per protocol, the home team is supposed to provide a ground two days ahead of the main game for practice. However, RKFC was deprived of that. This morning no transport was provided to ferry the team from hotel to the ground and when they managed to reach themselves, the home team officials prevented

physically from entering the ground," it added in the statement.

Real Kashmir go into the match after a thumping 6-1 win against Shillong Lajong at home. They further said, "Abuses were hurled at the team members including their coach and finally the RKFC members were asked to leave the ground and stay indoors till the match tomorrow with Gokulam Kerala FC."

"There was no team bus, no proper training ground was provided by the host Gokulam Kerala FC, which is a mandatory requirement as per the guidelines of the I-League."

This is Real Kashmir's first season in the I-League after winning the second division last year while this is the second season when Gokulam are playing in the competition.

"We condemn the treatment that has been met by our team members who have been asked to stay inside the hotel till tomorrow's game."

"Our coach and staff was abused by the officials of Gokulam Kerala FC. We need police protection and assurance that none of our players or staff members will be harmed."

"If we feel threatened, we may not play the game tomorrow. The matter has been taken up with appropriate authorities of law enforcement agencies as well as football federation," said media.

Gokulam also took to Twitter to issue a clarification. Gokulam said that they had arranged for a bus for the club officials to the Medical College training ground — a bus they "never took" for training at Medical College.

Gokulam said that Real Kashmir invaded the EMS stadium where training a day before the match is not allowed. Gokulam also alleged that Real Kashmir officials manhandled the groundsman and used foul language.

"Today is 'Harthal' (Strike) organised by a political party. After a long previous night of arrangements to get the transport for both the teams, we managed to send the bus for RKFC. Medical college ground was booked for RKFCs training," Gokulam wrote on their twitter handle.

"Before the bus arrived, RKFCs officials who are staying in a nearby hotel invaded the EMS Stadium, where training a day before the match is not allowed by any MC. To keep this in track, we refused to let them train in the EMS."

"RKFC officials stormed the FOP and manhandled the groundsman and threw his phone away when he tried to capture what Mr. Robertson and his club members tried to do. Note, Mr. Robertson called our CEO a 'a fu\*\*\*\* ba\*\*\*\*' for doing the things he had to do."

➤ **Bandipora student missing from Noida college since Dec 13**

**Dec 26:** Syed Basit Hassan, 22, son of Syed Naseer ul Hassan, is reported missing since December 13 from a Noida college where he was studying a BBA course.

A resident of Quil Muqam village in north Kashmir's Bandipora, Basit was studying at the Asian School of Business in Noida since more than two years ago, his father said.

Naseer said his son went missing from college on December 13 after appearing in three exam papers. He said he received this information from college

authorities when he himself went to Noida to look for his son, as he had stopped calling home and his phone was switched off.

“We called him on December 15 but his phone was switched off. We waited for a call back but got no response. His phone remained switched off. On

December 18 I went to his college where I learnt that he has gone missing,” Naseer said.

Naseer said he had lodged a missing person’s report at Noida police station and also at police post Aloosa in Bandipora.

## **6. Surveillance**

### **An assistant professor, a journalist, a lawyer, all booked for posts on social media**

**Dec 01:** An assistant professor who posted a video about a school shutting down because of a government forces’ camp coming up nearby, a journalist who posted in a Whatsapp group – of which journalists and police officers are members – news of a woman’s death due to government forces firing teargas on people, and a lawyer who posted something critical of the government on Facebook, have all been booked by police in Kulgam for “separatist” activities, “rumour mongering”, and “sharing anti-government posts on Facebook”, respectively.

The assistant professor, Dr Abdul Bari Naik, a doctorate from Aligarh Muslim University (AMU), teaches at Government Degree College Kulgam. He told Kashmir Reader that he was being punished for the social work he does.

“I have been vocal about several social issues and, inadvertently during the course of doing so, a target of the ire of powerful people as well,” said Bari, who unsuccessfully contested 2014 assembly elections from Homeshalibug constituency.

He said he recently posted a video about the closure of a school in the vicinity of a newly established forces’ camp in Redweni area of Kulgam district.

“The school had remained closed for over a month because people in the area were protesting against the establishment of the camp. In the video I suggested that either the camp be removed or the school,” Bari said.

The district administration Kulgam sent a letter to the Principal of GDC Kulgam seeking a report on Bari. The letter asked the principal to find out whether Bari was violating the Civil Service Rules (CSR).

The principal, in his reply to the Deputy Commissioner, instead suggested that Bari was an exceptional teacher and very popular among the students.

“The said Assistant Professor (AP) has never been found involved in any activity that would prove detrimental to the college discipline or lead to violation of service norms under CSR of JK government,” the letter from the college principal said.

Despite getting a clean chit from the college authorities, Bari said, he was booked under a flimsy FIR by the police – on the behest of some influential people.

“I am an RTI activist as well, and the issues I sought information on do not go well with some influential people for reasons that can be understood by everyone. Hence, the FIR,” Bari said.

A senior police officer confirmed that an FIR has been lodged against Bari for “separatist” activities.

“He has been booked for inciting the general public and seeking removal of a forces’ camp. This amounts to intervening in the working of the government machinery,” the police officer said, requesting not to be named.

Journalist Abdul Hameed, who works for a local news channel, has also been booked by the Kulgam police, after he posted a news item in a Whatsapp group about the death of a local woman.

The said group, named “Team Kulgam”, is supposed to be a medium of communication between the police and the media fraternity of Kulgam district.

“It was after the Laroo blast, where many civilians were killed last month. In the group, some police officials posted that the woman died after falling during Shab (night-time) prayer at a local shrine,” Hameed said, adding that he posted in the group that the woman was injured during the funeral of 13-year-old Uzair, who was killed in the Laroo encounter.

Hameed said he had written in the group that police had used tear smoke shells to keep the funeral procession of Uzair away from the main market Kulgam, and in the ensuing melee the woman was injured and later succumbed to her injuries.

“It is a group to seek confirmation from police officials. As the police officials had suggested something (a version of events), I also put there a piece of information, which is properly backed by a video byte from the family of the woman. I can’t understand why I should be booked for that,” Hameed told media.

Hameed said he does not want a confrontation with the police and will apply for bail for himself.

The police officer media talked to said that Hameed had been booked for “rumour mongering.”

“He had posted news about the death of a woman. She died a natural death but he suggested that she was injured in the Laroo blast,” the officer said.

The officer also confirmed that a lawyer named Muzammil Butt has been booked for “sharing anti-government posts on Facebook.”

Despite repeated attempts by this reporter, the lawyer could not be contacted.

He, as per sources, has got a stay order from the High Court. The lecturer and the journalist face arrest, though.

### **UN Special Rapporteur writes to Twitter CEO about blocking of Kashmir related content and twitter handles**

**Dec 21:** The United Nations Special Rapporteur David Kaye has written a letter to Twitter CEO about blocking of Twitter handles of Kashmiris and blocking twitter users for sharing or posting Kashmir related content.

Kaye has asked twitter to provide complete details of request made by Indian government authorities

about the withholding of Kashmir content and blockage of Kashmir twitter handles.

<https://mobile.twitter.com/davidakaye/status/1076018548378497024>

Twitter handles of dozens of individuals in Kashmir and some journalists have been blocked over the past two years in Kashmir for posting Kashmir



related content including about the situation in Jammu and Kashmir. Besides, the twitter has also been censoring tweets containing content related to Kashmir.

The letter is produced below, verbatim:

“Mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression

I have the honour to address you in my capacity as Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 34/18.

I am writing in connection with information I have received regarding account actions against Twitter users for posting or sharing Kashmir-related content. According to the information received, Twitter has withheld users’ tweets and accounts when they have participated in discussions concerning Kashmir on the platform. Affected users receive notifications that either inform them that their “account [or tweet] has been withheld in India in response to a legal demand,” or that their “account [or tweet] has been withheld ... based on local law(s).” According to Twitter Rules and policies, users receive the former notification if “Twitter was compelled to withhold the original tweet [or account] in response to a valid legal demand, such as a court order.” Users received the latter notification if Twitter withholds a tweet or account based on local law “in response to a report filed through specific support intake channels.” Affected users include Kashmiri journalists and activists.

According to Twitter’s Removal Requests report, India has made 144 removal requests, of which 800 accounts were specified, from July 2017 to December 2017. The report states that of the 144 removal requests, Twitter withheld seventeen accounts and thirty-two tweets in the same period. From January 2017 to June 2017, India made 104 removal requests, but Twitter did not withhold any accounts or tweets during that period. From July to December 2016, India made 96 removal requests, and Twitter again did not withhold any accounts or tweets. Thus, from the information I have received, it seems that Twitter may have begun to accede to government demands for content and account removals since July 2017. The reasons for this shift are unclear.

I am mindful of the challenges that Twitter and other technology and media companies face in providing platforms that facilitate and expand communication and access to information. In recent years, India has expanded the scope of its censorship tools and efforts, at the expense of individual rights to freedom of expression, access to information, freedom of association and other fundamental human rights. Indian restrictions put you in the position – likely reluctantly – of having to mediate between your users, Indian citizens and Indian law. Indeed, at the top of the Removal Requests report Twitter states, “With hundreds of millions of Tweets posted every day around the world, our goal is to respect user expression, while also taking into consideration applicable local laws.”

At the same time, Twitter has a responsibility to respect the human rights of its users. Indeed, in an interview with WIRED, you have stated that, “[W]e believe our purpose is to serve the public conversation. And that does take a stance around freedom of expression as a fundamental human right.” According to international standards and best practices, the

responsibility to respect freedom of expression should, at a minimum, include a duty to “engage in prevention and mitigation strategies that respect principles of internationally recognized human rights to the greatest extent possible when faced with conflicting local law requirements.”<sup>1</sup> In particular, legal demands should be interpreted and implemented as narrowly as possible, to ensure the least possible restriction on expression.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, when Twitter receives problematic requests, it should “seek clarification or modification; solicit the assistance of civil society, peer companies, relevant government authorities, international and regional bodies and other stakeholders; and explore all legal options for challenge.”<sup>3</sup>

Given these standards, and in keeping with my mandate to investigate key freedom of expression challenges worldwide, I have the following questions about Kashmir-related removal requests and decisions:

Since July 2017, how many court orders that the government of India has issued concern the removal of Kashmir-related tweets or accounts that have posted Kashmir-related content? How many of these requests were complied with?

Since July 2017, how many removal requests issued by law enforcement and other government agencies concern the removal of Kashmir-related tweets or accounts that have posted Kashmir-related content? How many of these requests were complied with?

Since July 2017, what legal, policy or other analysis led Twitter to withhold tweets or accounts in response to government removal requests, particularly those requests pertaining to Kashmir-related content? How has this analysis changed from its decision to not withhold any tweets or accounts pursuant to government removal requests before July 2017?

What strategies has Twitter adopted to prevent or mitigate content or account removal requests that are inconsistent with international human rights standards, particularly for requests pertaining to Kashmir-related content? In particular, did Twitter object to, raise concerns or otherwise resist the application of Indian law, whether in individual removal cases or in the development of applicable laws or regulations?

In assessing whether to withhold Kashmir-related tweets or accounts that have posted Kashmir-related content, how did Twitter take into account India’s obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and its own responsibilities under international instruments such as the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights?

Did Twitter consider options other than withholding tweets and accounts to protect the rights of Twitter users in and outside of Kashmir? For example, did Twitter seek to reduce the number or types tweets and accounts that were withheld?

Has Twitter attempted “to notify affected users of any third-party requests to withhold their content via the email address associated with the affected Twitter account(s) and/or through a notification within the Twitter app” as Twitter aims to do in every case of withholding tweets or accounts?

How does Twitter make such decisions about whether to withhold content in the face of government requests? Apart from your General Counsel and her team, which other divisions participate in such decision-making?

Thank you very much for your engagement on this critical issue. I address these questions not as a judge of Twitter's choices in this situation but as part of my effort to understand, and thereafter report to UN bodies, the state of freedom of expression worldwide. I stand ready to provide you and your team with further information about my mandate and would be pleased to have further discussion about these issues at your convenience.

I would like to inform that, in due course, and in keeping with my own commitment to transparency in the work of my mandate, a copy of this letter will be made available publicly and posted on the website page for the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the right to freedom of expression: (<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/FreedomOpinion/Pages>

#### **Snooping powers to investigative agencies**

**Dec 21:** The government of India has authorised 10 police and intelligence agencies to "intercept, monitor and decrypt" all information on any computer device in the country. A Gazette of India notification to this effect was issued on December 20. The Gazette of India is a legal document that carries information about changes to law or new laws and orders.

The ten agencies that have been authorised to intercept, monitor and decrypt "any information generated, transmitted, received or stored in any computer resource" include the two intelligence agencies -- internal spy body Intelligence Bureau and external intelligence agency Research and Analysis Wing.

The other agencies include: the Narcotics Control Board (which polices illegal drug trade), Enforcement Directorate (which looks after economic crimes), the Central Board of Direct Taxes (which is responsible for income tax), the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (an anti-smuggling agency) and the Central Bureau of Investigation (which is tasked with investigating high-level corruption and other crimes).

## **7. Desecration of Religious Places**

*This month two incidents of Masjid desecrations by unknown persons were recorded hurting the sentiments of Muslims across Kashmir. The incidents occurred in north Kashmir and Srinagar district, therefore, generating the resentment from people across board. People demands the assailants must be identified and punished accordingly.*

### **➤ Unknown assailants damage mosque in Baramulla by night; protests follow**

**Dec 14:** In a shocking incident, unknown men attacked a Jamia Masjid in Watergam area of Rafiabad in North Kashmir's Baramulla district and damaged property.

Sources said that people of Marizigund Mohalla of Watergam in Rafiabad area staged a protest on Friday morning and blocked the Watergam-Sopore road after they saw that unknown persons on Thursday night had attacked their Jamia Masjid and damaged its windows and other property.

The protesters said that when a group of people reached their local Jamia Masjid for Fajar (morning) prayers on Friday morning, they were shocked to see that

/LegislationAndPolicy.aspx). This communication, as well as any response received, will also subsequently be made available in the communications reporting website and the usual report to be presented to the Human Rights Council.

A copy of this letter will be sent to the Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations Office at Geneva and other international organizations in Switzerland, in line with our interest in transparency in businesses operating in Member States.

Please accept, Mr. Dorsey, the assurances of my highest consideration.

David Kaye

Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression"

The National Investigation Agency, which is responsible for probing terrorism-related incidents, the Delhi Police and the Directorate of Signal Intelligence (an intelligence agency) have also been given the powers to intercept, monitor and decrypt any and all information on computer devices in the country.

The gazette notification that gives the 10 agencies powers to snoop on all information on all computer devices has been issued under sub-section 1 of section 69 of the Information Technology Act, which became a law in 2000.

Now, this sub-section says that the government can direct an agency to "intercept or monitor or decrypt any information generated, transmitted, received or stored in any computer resource".

So, if read plainly, the December 20 gazette notification is not handing out new powers but is merely listing out the agencies that have the powers to snoop.

Opposition slams government's 'Orwellian' move

somebody had damaged at least ten of the mosque's windows during the previous night.

After informing the local police, the people of the area staged a protest and blocked the Watergam-Sopore road for hours. Shouting slogans decrying the damage, the protesters demanded strict action against the culprits.

A team of local police later reached the spot and registered a case under the relevant Act. An investigation has been started.

Dismissing the possibility that this could be an attempted burglary, the locals said that nothing was found missing from the mosque.

### **➤ Jamia Auqaf condemns mosque 'desecration**

**Dec 29:** Anjuman Auqaf Jama Masjid strongly condemned the incident that took place in Jama Masjid on Friday late in the afternoon .

Right after Mirwaiz Umar Farooq offered prayers in Jamia Masjid – the grand mosque of Srinagar, youth inspired by ideology of Islamic State (IS) entered the mosque and raised pro-ISIS slogans while carrying IS flags.

A video that has gone viral on social media shows youth who are five to ten in number raise slogans in favour of the Islamic state. They also wave flags of the IS.

One of the youth stood on the pulpit of the mosque and raised pro-IS slogans. It is the same pulpit from where Mirwaiz delivers his Friday sermons.

In a statement issued here the mosque Anjuman termed the incident as deliberate and planned.

“It has naturally led to shock outrage and deep resentment among people and deeply hurt their sentiments associated with the mosque.” The statement read.

Adding the attempt to desecrate Jama mosque by this ‘lumpen group of hooligans’ whose identity is not known as yet as they hide it behind masks, nor the

## **8. Militarization**

➤ **ITI in Kulgam closed since two months as CRPF men occupy building**

**Dec 14:** Paramilitary CRPF troops have occupied the Industrial Training Institute (ITI) here in Kulgam, which has forced the closure of the institute for more than two months now.

Students enrolled at the institute have not been allowed into the campus by the troops ever since they moved into the building ahead of the first phase of municipal elections, conducted on October 8.

The ITI administration as well as students have been trying their best to get the campus vacated, but to no avail.

“We held protests outside our institute and have been running from pillar to post, but the forces refuse to budge,” a student enrolled at the ITI said.

Sources in the administration told Kashmir Reader that the CRPF men have occupied 17 of the 23 rooms the institute has.

“Even the staff is being allowed into the campus very reluctantly by the forces, and altercations take place every morning,” officials in the administration said.

Principal of the ITI, Muzaffar Ahmad Shah, said he has time and again intimated the authorities about this problem. “I hope the forces vacate soon. Our students have been suffering as the institute has remained closed all this while,” Shah said.

Kulgam Deputy Commissioner (DC) Shamim Ahmad said that the building will be vacated soon.

“It’s good that you reminded me. I will call the SP straightaway. I had been told the building will be vacated by December 11. I think it is time the building is vacated,” Ahmad told Kashmir Reader.

➤ CRPF battalion brought in 2016 continues to camp, miserably, at Sopore stadium

### **Internet blockade costs Kashmir estimated Rs 2000 cr loss**

**Dec 13:** Kashmir economy continues to suffer due to internet blockade with estimated Rs 2000 cr loss due to suspension by authorities in 2017.

International Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER) in its report said Kashmir suffered Rs 1776 crore losses last year.

identity of those is known on whose behest they are indulging in these shameful acts, is strongly condemnable.

“It shows utter disregard of this group of miscreants for Islamic institutions, values and Islamic teachings. Such elements not only malign the name of Islam but also abuse it.” The statement further read.

The Anjuman has taken strong note of this incident and has warned those behind the incident, “People and Auqaf will not tolerate or allow anyone to violate the sanctity of the mosque and the pulpit at any cost.”

Jama Masjid is the spiritual religious and political centre of the people of Kashmir and representative of our collective cultural heritage and any attempt to harm it will be dealt with firmly.

**Dec 23:** Hundreds of paramilitary troops of CRPF Battalion 177 that were brought to J&K to control the 2016 public uprising continue to camp at Sopore’s only sports stadium.

The Kaushal Sports Stadium in TulBal area of Sopore is located near the district police lines and the railway station of Sopore in Baramulla district. It was given to the CRPF battalion by the state government on temporary basis more than two years ago. Residents as well as civil society members of Sopore have tried their best to have the stadium vacated, but the troops continue to occupy – though not willingly – the pavilion meant for sportspersons.

Kashmir Reader reported that it has learnt through reliable sources that the CRPF troops are living under harsh conditions and are themselves eager to vacate the newly-constructed pavilion.

The construction of the pavilion was not even complete when the CRPF troops were brought there. The winter chill and shortage of water is making life difficult for the troops. Instead of calling them back, the central government has forgotten them, the sources said.

Sportspersons expressed concern and disappointment at the presence of the troops. Sajad Ahmad, a football player of Sopore, said that the presence of the troops in the stadium has affected sports activities for the past two years.

Additional District Commissioner Sopore, Ashiq Hussain, expressed ignorance about this matter and said he was not the right person to comment on it.

“If they were brought to maintain law and order situation two years back, I don’t know what is keeping them to stay there still. I will talk to the authorities concerned and see what can be done,” Hussain told media.

However, business community says sharp increase in suspension of internet services this year has incurred Rs. 2000 crore plus losses to local economy.

Sheikh Ashiq, president, Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industry told media that internet shutdowns have hit trade, travel and tourism, handicrafts and other sectors “compounding problems of the

economy which is already suffering due to other domestic and external pressures”.

“When we were just looking at recovering from downturn caused by 2014 floods and 2016 unrest, frequent internet shutdowns this year proved to be a dampener. As the internet shutdowns have doubled, losses suffered by our trade and economy has easily crossed Rs. 2000 crore,” says Ashiq adding that telecom companies alone suffer. “Internet has become need of the day and the authorities should not relate it to law and order,” Ashiq said.

The Delhi-based think-tank conducted the survey, “The anatomy of an Internet blackout: Measuring the economic impact of internet shutdowns in India” which revealed that losses due to Internet shutdowns were amounting to Rs 4000 crore between 2012 and 2017.

The frequent internet shutdowns have also hit several digitization programmes of the government.

The much-awaited radio taxi project of the transport department has witnessed a poor response from cab companies who are fearing that internet shutdowns will be a dampener for their operations here.

Frequent internet shutdowns have also proved to be a hurdle for government’s e-PDS schemes in Kashmir. Digitizing foodgrain distribution records is often hit by suspension of internet, official said. Implemented with much fanfare between February and April this year in Kashmir, Electronic Public Distribution System (e-PDS) of the state government has been witnessing several hurdles due to the frequent internet shutdowns witnessed in the Valley.

“Point of Sale (PoS) devices used in the e-pds for maintaining digital records of food grain distribution at ration depots and fair price shops of Food Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs (FCSCA) Department is completely Internet based. The frequent suspension of internet services has been making it difficult to operate the system,” said an official.

### 25-years old rape case comes to haunt authorities again

**Dec 03:** Twenty five years after a speech and hearing impaired woman was allegedly raped by soldiers in Kupwara, the state human rights commission on Monday issued a stern warning and summons to the deputy commissioner of the district hearing a complaint about the case.

The victim died in 2011.

Her brother says in his complaint to SHRC that she was “raped and tortured ruthlessly by the army” soldiers in 1993 for which a case of rape (FIR No. 118/26/5/1993) established through medical examination was also registered in police station Kupwara.

On December 3, the SHRC took a strong note of the district authorities repeatedly ignoring earlier summons to appear before it while hearing a complaint received from the victim’s brother, a resident of Malpora in Kupwara, in 2014.

The Commission finally issued a warrant against deputy commissioner of Kupwara, directing police to ensure his presence on the next date of hearing on Dec 12.

“In view of the order passed by the hon’ble chairperson in the instant case, you are commanded to

There have been regular demands from both business community and common people that authorities should atleast allow access of necessary web portals such as banking websites and travel portals during net shutdowns. Initiated almost two years ago, the idea to continue providing web access of digital banking to customers even in times of internet shutdowns has also seen no headway. “Jammu and Kashmir government has failed to show interest in this proposal mooted by the J&K State Level Bankers Committee after the 2016 unrest,” said a banking official.

Rajan Matthews, director general of New-Delhi based Cellular Operators Association of India, an amalgam of telecom players told media that operators are “hard-pressed” to shutdown services whenever asked by authorities to do so. Matthews said COAI has written to DoT several times intimating the telecom regulator about internet shutdowns being “counterproductive”.

“Department of Telecommunications (DoT) based at New Delhi has already sent an advisory to several states, including Jammu and Kashmir that internet shutdowns should be avoided as much as possible. District magistrates have been told that internet shutdown should not be the first line of action,” Matthews said.

Pertinently, in order to regulate the internet shutdowns, Central government in September, 2017 came up with rules to legislate the authority required and procedures to be followed to “temporarily suspend telecom services” in case of “public emergency or public safety”. Issued by the Ministry of Communications under the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885, these rules were codified as the Temporary Suspension of Telecom Services (Public Emergency or Public Safety) Rules, 2017. These rules confer the status of competent authority to order internet shutdown on the Union home secretary when the order is issued by the government of India.

arrest Dy Commissioner district Kupwara and ensure his presence on 12.12.2018,” the SHRC order reads.

“However, in case he furnishes his personnel bond with one surety to the tune of Rs 2000/- he be released, but bound him to appear before the commission on the mentioned date.”

Earlier, in April the commission lamented that investigation in the case was not completed and that the report submitted in November 2017 by an assistant superintendent of police for Kupwara “makes pathetic reading”.

In its order then, the SHRC said, “It is expected that response from home secretary will be received by next date, as the commission wants to know response of the govt. before it passes any final order.”

SHRC had also stated that in spite of its order, “if no response is received, the matter will be decided in the light of the reports filed by the police.”

The victim’s brother has also requested the commission to recommend compensation under SRO-43 in his favour.

### Gurez residents seek whereabouts of missing man, stage protest

**Dec 04:** Scores of residents from Gurez area of Bandipora district staged a protest here at Press Enclave demanding whereabouts of a local boy who is missing since November 14.

The protestors said Feroz Ahmad Lone son of Abdul Rahim Lone resident of Achoora village of Gurez, went missing from his office located at Dawar and did not return.

Mohammad Hamza Lone, a relative of Feroz said he (Feroz) left for his office which is just 5 kilometers away from his village in the morning and did not come back. He was working as a VLW (Village Level Worker) in the Rural Development Department.

"We were waiting for his return but he did not come back and his phone was switched off," Hamza said adding that they visited their relatives to seek his whereabouts but to no avail.

He said although his family has lodged an FIR report in Police Station Gurez and they have detained some suspects but there has been no headway so far.

Another relative, Shahnaz Ahmad alleged that the police was not taking the case seriously. "If anything happens to him, we will be compelled to hit the roads," he said.

"He has a family of 10 members to feed," he said.

The protestors appealed Governor Satya Pal Malik, Inspector General of Police and Deputy Commissioner Bandipora to look into the matter so that the family gets relief from distress.

By the end of this month there was no case updates available. *The Informative Missive* is keeping close track of the developments of the case.

#### **Civilians demand underground bunkers**

**Dec 06:** While armies of India and Pakistan traded heavy fire in Kamalkot sector of Uri and Machil sector of Kupwara, residents living along the Line of Control (LoC) in both these sectors demanded underground bunkers for safety of their lives.

Dr Shabir Ahmad, a resident of Uri, said that the residents have raised the demand for bunkers time and again and the Government of India has already provided bunkers to residents living along the LoC in Jammu region.

"They are not paying any attention towards residents of Uri and Kupwara, who have been affected badly in the past due to cross-border shelling," he said.

Haji Musadiq Hussain, a resident of Kamalkot, said that panic gripped people in Kamalkot on Wednesday when both the armies fired mortar shells and machine guns. "Children and women are under depression. I saw a house partially damaged on December 6 due to a mortar shell from across the border. Fortunately, the family living in the house had escaped safely," he said.

Khan Mohammad, a resident of Machil, said that there are so many villages very close to the LoC in Machil, Keran and Tangdar sectors that are directly in the firing range. "But government is not taking steps for the safety of people," he said.

#### **Pulitzer-winning journalist denied India entry for travelling to Kashmir**

**Dec 28:** All foreigners have to respect Indian law and those found in violation are liable to be punished but that does not mean they are blacklisted forever, a Home Ministry official said on Friday after a Reuters journalist was denied entry into India for allegedly violating visa rules.

The action against Cathal McNaughton, chief photographer at the news agency's Delhi office who was recently sent back from the airport here after his arrival from an overseas trip, is not permanent and can be reviewed after six months or a year, the official told PTI.

"Everybody has to follow law. For violation, the consequence is the same for everybody. Foreigners should respect Indian law. If any Indian visits abroad and violates the law of that country, he or she is also liable to be punished," the official said.

McNaughton, an Irish national who won the Pulitzer Prize in May 2018, allegedly travelled to restricted and protected areas in Jammu and Kashmir without permission. He also reported from the state without valid permission.

"He may be a winner of some awards, but that does not give him the licence to violate Indian laws. The Ministry of External Affairs regularly informs foreign journalists about Indian rules and regulations. And in certain places, a foreigner is required to take permission. If you violate these rules and regulations, we are bound to take action," the official warned.

"If somebody is denied entry, it does not mean that he is blacklisted forever. It may be reviewed after six months or one year," he said.

Another official said foreign correspondents also require prior home ministry approval to film in restricted and protected areas such as border districts, defence installations and other places of strategic importance, national parks and wildlife sanctuaries.

According to visa rules for foreign journalists, "A foreign journalist, TV cameraperson etc, including a foreign journalist already based in India, who desires to visit a restricted or protected area or Jammu and Kashmir or the North Eastern States, should apply for a special permit through the Ministry of External Affairs (External Publicity Division)".

Under normal circumstances, India grants foreign journalists visas for up to three months. In rare cases, a six-month journalist visa, with a single or double entry, can be issued.

The MHA and the MEA have also held discussions to review protocols on foreign journalists. In May this year, the MEA reminded foreign journalists based in India that they require permission to travel to areas protected under the Foreigners (Protected Areas) Order, 1958.

The areas are -- all of Arunachal Pradesh, parts of Himachal Pradesh, parts of Jammu and Kashmir, parts of Rajasthan, all of Sikkim and parts of Uttarakhand.

#### **J&K police to get new 'non-lethal' pepper-ball launching systems**

**Dec 28:** The police is set to get non-lethal pepper-ball launching systems and anti-riot gas masks to deal with law and order situations in the state, officials said Friday.

The department has floated tenders for seeking technical bid from manufacturers and dealers of these two products, they said.

A pepper-ball launching system, also called a pepper-spray ball projectile, is a frangible projectile containing a powdered chemical that irritates the eyes and nose, like the pepper spray.

These non-lethal projectiles are fired from specially designed 'forced compliance weapons' or modified paintball guns.

## **9. Political Statements**

➤ **Indian Army made way for government to resolve Kashmir, but politics failed, says former GoC HS Panag**

**Dec 06:** The current situation in Jammu and Kashmir, particularly in the Valley, is a classic example of our dithering political strategy, former GoC Northern and Central command Lt Gen HS Panag has said.

Gen Panag in a column for The Print wrote that the Indian Army had created an enabling environment for politics to take centre stage (in Kashmir) and resolve the problem. "Politics did come to the fore, but instead of a solution we saw the revival of the insurgency."

In 2011, the general writes that the violence in Jammu and Kashmir was on the decline, the number of active militants had been reduced to double figures. There was little or no fresh recruitment of local militants. The Army had strengthened the counter-infiltration grid and infiltration was down to a trickle. People were tired and wanted to lead a normal life.

"This phase continued until 2015. Politically, a great opportunity was lost and despite having elected governments no headway was made. The previous central government relied on talks with Pakistan to find a solution and did not focus adequately to engage the stakeholders in the state."

Gen Panag believes that the current government in New Delhi made a promising beginning.

"There was expectation in the air. Even sceptics were optimistic, but politics failed to deliver and insurgency saw a revival in Jammu and Kashmir. The unpopular coalition government could not provide the healing touch. There was no worthwhile political engagement. The coalition partners worked at cross purposes to pursue own ideological agendas. Special status of the state was questioned. A 25-year-old insurgency was now looked at as a law and order problem."

People got frustrated, which manifested into violent mass agitations, which were handled with crude use of force. Resurgent nationalism clamoured for a crackdown. Stage was set for the revival of the insurgency after the summer of unrest in 2016."

The general writes that a great opportunity was lost, but it has come knocking again after two-and-a-half years. The security forces through a concerted campaign have brought the situation under control. The military battle is once again on the threshold of being won.

"It is my assessment that by summer of 2019 the stage would be set for politics to once again take centre stage. Hopefully by then, both the Centre and the state will have new governments. I hope the politicians, media and the public rise to the occasion and we collectively do not fail our nation, and the people of Jammu and Kashmir," he writes.

➤ **In 23 months, 128 civilians killed near gunfight sites in Kashmir**

The anti-riot gas mask is used to protect the user from inhaling airborne pollutants, toxic gases and pepper spray during riots and other law and order situations.

The mask forms a sealed cover over the nose and the mouth, but may also cover the eyes and other vulnerable soft tissues on the face.

**Dec 06:** At least 128 civilians have been killed near gunfight sites in across troubled Kashmir since January 2017.

In eleven months of this year, 50 civilian casualties were reported during clashes with forces near gunfight sites in Valley.

Most of the casualties took place in south Kashmir comprising four districts of Anantnag, Pulwama, Shopian and Kulgam.

Last year, 78 civilian casualties were reported near gunfight sites.

A youth boy Noman Ashraf Bhat of Boulso, Kulgam was the recent civilian casualty near the encounter site.

Noman was killed in forces firing on protestors near gunfight site at Batagund Shopain, where six militants and an Army man were also killed in the gunfight.

In November, of total eight civilian casualties reported in Kashmir, two were killed near gunfight sites, while remaining were killed in different circumstances.

Security officials say attempts by protestors to gather near gunfights and intense stone pelting on forces during anti-militancy operations to help militants escape from forces dragnet, is major reason for civilian killings at encounter sites.

Last year, they said, forces devised a strategy to strengthen the outer and middle layer cordons by deploying extra force personnel to keep the protestors away from gunfight sites.

The force personnel deployed at outer and middle layer cordons, they said, are mainly entrusted to maintain law and order while, the primary cordon laid by troops deals with the militants trapped in the besieged area.

However, despite warning by forces, civilians continue to come closer to gunfight sites to pave way for militants to escape.

At a recent gunfight at Kuthpora area of central Kashmir's Budgam district where two militants including top Lashkar-e-Toiba commander Naveed Jhatt were killed, civilians helped another militant escape from the cordon. A video clip of the incident has been shared widely on social media.

IG CRPF (Operations), Zulfikar Hassan said main "intention" of all forces operating in the Valley was to avoid civilian casualty during anti-militancy operations.

"That is why we adopt new strategies to minimise civilian casualties. The public support to militants has reduced and the trend of people coming near gunfights sites has also come down," Hassan told Rising Kashmir.

He said the more important is the "strategy and synergy" between police, Army and CRPF to launch anti-militancy operations and finish it quickly.

“It helps in containing civilian casualties to large extent,” IG CRPF said.

To avoid confrontation with civilians near gunfight sites and prevent civilian killings, the forces have also been prioritising the pre-dawn anti militancy operations.

The tactical change of launching Cordon and Search Operation (CASO) at pre-dawn hours and efforts to conclude the anti-militancy operations before the first light of the day was adopted by troops last year.

“If the operation concludes in early hours, it helps a lot as chances of people flocking near gunfight sites remain less,” IG CRPF added.

➤ 19 militants killed in Awantipora police district this year

**Dec 07:** As many as 19 militants, some of them top commanders, were killed by government forces in the areas falling under Awantipora police district and reckoned as militancy hotbeds, officials said.

The police district Awantipora includes Tral, Awantipora, Khrew and Pampore areas, home to popular deceased commanders like Burhan Wani, Sabzar Bhat and Noor Muhammad Tantray.

“During this year most of the militant commanders were killed, especially in Tral. Five militants were also apprehended during the year,” superintendent of police Awantipora Mohammad Zahid Malik told Greater Kashmir.

In 2017, 15 militants were killed in the district.

The majority of militants killed this year, 16, were associated with Jaish-e-Muhammad outfit, two with Hizb and one with Ansar Ghazwat-ul-Hind (Zakir Musa) group.

Most of the gunfights in which these militants were killed occurred in Tral, Khrew and Aripal areas of the police district.

The first gunfight of the year was recorded on 1 January 2018 at Lethpora, Awantipora, and the last on November 29 in Shaar Shaali area of Khrew.

➤ More than 225 militants killed in J&K this year: Army

**Dec 09:** More than 225 militants have been killed in Jammu and Kashmir so far this year, Northern Army Commander Lt Gen Ranbir Singh said.

He said initiatives taken by the government and security forces had resulted in a drop in the number of local youths being radicalised and taking to militancy over the last few months.

We have been able to neutralise a large number of militants. As on date, we have been neutralised more than 225 militants. However, couple of days of this year are still balanced (left), Singh told reporters here on the sidelines of his visit to Sainik School, his alma mater.

He said locals were sharing information about militants’ movements with the Army, which is a positive sign.

“That is a very positive sign, which shows a decline of militancy. It shows frustration on the part of Pakistan to push more and more militants into J&K. But our resolve is clear that as long as militants are moving around they shall not be provided space to carry out activities at their will. They will be acted against and neutralised,” he said.

“We will ensure that peace and stability are maintained in J&K,” he added.

➤ 86 forces’ personnel killed in 2018, highest in over a decade

**Dec 09:** The forces involved in counter-militancy operations in troubled Kashmir have suffered at least 86 casualties in eleven months of this year, highest in over a decade.

Army, Special Operations Group (SOG) of J&K police and paramilitary CRPF are jointly carrying out anti-militancy operations in Kashmir while Army and Border Security Force (BSF) are guarding the International Border and Line of Control (LoC).

From January to November this year, 86 force personnel have died in militancy violence in the Valley.

Of them, 50 were police and CRPF men while 36 army men. The police and CRPF men were killed in the Valley while army also suffered casualties at the Line of Control (LoC) while foiling infiltration bid of militants.

The casualties suffered by forces this year are highest since 2008 and the number excludes those killed in ceasefire violations along the LoC and IB.

August witnessed highest 15 casualties among forces -- seven Army men and eight police/CRPF men. In June 11 casualties took places including three Army men and eight police/CRPF men, February also recorded 11 casualties—six Army men and five police/CRPF men, October 10 casualties — five Army and 5 police/CRPF men, July eight casualties—an Army man and seven police/CRPF men, March seven casualties —three Army men and four police/CRPF men, September seven casualties —three Army men and four police/CRPF men, April five casualties —four Army men and one policeman, May four casualties —one Army and three police/CRPF personnel, November four casualties — three Army men and a CRPF man and January four casualties, all policemen.

According to sources, Army men were largely killed in anti-militancy operations while police suffered casualties both during active participation in anti-militancy operations while some were also kidnapped by militants and later killed in south Kashmir, the hotbed of militants.

The 86 casualties suffered by forces this year are highest in eleven years (from 2008 to 2017)

According to Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) data, 595 forces personnel were killed in militancy-related incidents in the state during this period.

As per the MHA data, 75 forces personnel were killed in 2008 when 708 militancy-related incidents were recorded across the state.

In 2009 although the number of incidents decreased to 499, the casualties of forces rose to 79.

In 2010, when Kashmir witnessed summer unrest, the number of militancy-related incidents came down to 488 and the forces casualties also declined to 69.

From 2011 to 2015, the data indicates improvement in the overall situation in the state as the number of forces casualties and over all militancy-related incidents remained low compared to previous years.

In 2011, as per the MHA data, the number of militancy related incidents was 340 and forces casualties decreased to 33. While, 38 casualties of forces were recorded in 2012 when militancy-related incidents decreased to 220 from 340 in 2011.

In 2013, although the overall number of militancy-related incidents decreased to 170, the casualties of forces again rose to 53.

The number of casualties among forces, however, came down to 47 in 2014 when overall number

of militancy-related incidents increased to 222 while 39 forces casualties were witnessed in 2015 when number of militancy-related decreased to 208.

In 2016, the forces casualties rose to 82 while the number of number of militancy-related incidents also rose to 322.

2016 is known for marking change in militancy spectrum in Kashmir especially in south Kashmir where the new-age militancy gained foothold. On July 8, 2016 Hizbul Mujahideen commander and poster boy of new-phase of militancy Burhan Wani was killed in a gunfight with forces in south Kashmir.

In 2017, when forces launched "Operation All Out" against militants, the number of militancy-related incidents increased to 342 and 80 forces personnel were killed across the state.

**Forces killing:** 2018 (till Nov) 86, 2017 80, 2016 82, 2015 39, 2014 47, 2013 53, 2012 38, 2011 33, 2010 69, 2009 79, 2008 75

➤ **Without respect for human rights, there can be no lasting peace: Dr Farooq Abdullah**

**Dec 09:** National Conference President Dr Farooq Abdullah on Sunday said that there can be no lasting peace or sustainable development without respect for human rights and the rule of law.

In his message on the world human rights day Dr Farooq said that basic human rights of a man include right to education, right to assembly, right to profess any religion and above all right to live a dignified life. "We in National Conference took it upon ourselves to ensure the people of our state all these basic rights. The Naya Kashmir progressive ideology abounds in all the rights and our leadership has been striving hard to ensure people all the rights," he said.

Dr Farooq said that our hopes for a more just, safe and peaceful world can only be achieved when there is universal respect for the inherent dignity and equal rights of all members of the human beings. "It was National Conference that made a common peasant master of his land. The revolutionary steps like single line administration, up gradation of medical facilities and granting gender neutral voting rights to all have gone a long way in elevating the living standards of the people of our state," he said.

**41 cops killed in 2018, highest in 15 years**

➤ **Militants also snatched 28 rifles**

**Dec 11:** In 2018 so far, 41 policemen were killed by militants, which is the highest in the past 15 years. Militants also looted 28 weapons from the police, official figures say.

Nine of the deceased were special police officers and the rest regular policemen. The figures show that last year the force lost 31 men to militant attacks.

The highest number of 23 policemen was killed in the first half of 2018. Even during the Ramadhan ceasefire, when forces followed didn't launch any operation against militants from May 16 to June 17, five policemen were killed.

The month of September saw a spike in the kidnapping of special police officers (SPOs), triggering panic among policemen. The abductions prompted the police force to ask its men to avoid visiting their homes in southern Kashmir without first informing the respective police stations.

Also, weapon snatching by militants kept the police top brass on toes. Figures reveal militants made 25 attempts to snatch weapons this year, and succeeded in decamping with 28 service rifles from policemen.

The majority of weapon snatching incidents took place in restive southern districts. In Srinagar, militants made two major bids, including the one that took place at the official residence of former PDP legislator Aijaz Mir at Jawhar Nagar, where his SPO decamped with seven rifles and the lawmaker's licensed pistol.

Police figures reveal that since 2016, 70 weapons were looted by militants that include 17 AK-47 rifles and over 7000 rounds of ammunition. The looted weapons also include 27 SLR rifles, 14 INSAS rifles, six pistols, a .303 rifle, a carbine, three UBGL throwers and a Taser gun.

The gun snatching forced the police to set a new standard operating procedure, which included banning the use of mobile phones while on duty and using chains to tie the weapons with the waist of the policemen.

➤ **Militancy incidents rising in J&K, minister reports to Rajya Sabha**

**Dec 12:** The government's efforts to put an end to armed rebellion in Kashmir have not yielded desired results, as the number of militancy incidents have gone up to 587 in 2018 (till October) as compared to 208 in the year 2014.

According to figures placed before the Rajya Sabha by Minister of State (MoS) for Home Affairs Hansraj Gangaram Ahir, the number of militancy related incidents in Jammu and Kashmir was 342 in the year 2017, 322 in 2015, and 208 in 2014.

Also, infiltration attempts through Line of Control (LoC) have risen to 128 this year from 65 in 2014. In 2015, the number was 33, which rose sharply in 2016, when there was a mass uprising triggered by the killing of militant commander Burhan Wani, to 119. Last year, the number was 136.

The minister revealed this information in a written reply to a question asked in the Rajya Sabha on Wednesday.

Another indicator of the quantum of rebellion is the graph of casualties suffered due to incidents of militancy. This year, till December 2, 86 government forces' personnel were killed by militants. This excludes Tuesday's killing of four JK Police personnel. In the same period, 37 civilians were killed, as against 15 in 2016. This number excludes those killed by government forces during protests, a number that is close to 100, according to an organisation that has compiled a list.

The minister also stated that 238 militants were killed this year as compared to 150 in 2016.

The minister told the upper house of Parliament that the government has pursued policies to encourage youth in Kashmir to join the mainstream, including providing employment opportunities.

"Various sports tournaments and cultural programmes are organised at district as well as state level to win the confidence of the people of the state, especially the younger generation. Youth clubs have also been opened to keep the youth engaged. Rs 80,068 crore has been announced under the PM Development Package 2015," reads the minister's reply.

Besides the following schemes, according to the minister, Special Industry Initiative (SII) Udaan to



enhance skill and employability of graduates and three-year engineering diploma holders and offer of jobs in the private sector have also been in action.

Skill Empowerment & Employment Scheme (Himayat) to provide options and opportunities to school/college dropouts for salaried jobs in the private sector or self-employment was another initiative of the government, the minister's reply said.

The latest initiative is the Special Scholarship Scheme (SSS) to provide financial assistance to students who have passed Class 12 or equivalent exam to study in colleges and institutions outside J&K.

➤ **J&K being 'demonised' at national level: Governor Malik**

**Dec 12:** There is no mention at the national-level about "good things" happening in Jammu and Kashmir, governor Satya Pal Malik said, and asserted that the state is being "demonised at the national-level".

Addressing a press conference here, Malik said: "The Jammu and Kashmir state has been demonised at the national level. Even a small incident (in the state) is blown out of proportions and not projected as it should be. The state is shown as a bad place".

"I have been the governor of Bihar and I was born and brought up in Uttar Pradesh. I have observed and seen that Jammu and Kashmir is a much better place than these places in a lot of ways. That is why it is our responsibility to spread truth," he said.

About youth picking up arms in Kashmir, like the 14-year-old Muddasir Ahmad from Hajin area in Bandipora, who was killed in a gunfight on Srinagar outskirts recently, the governor said: "I am saddened by the death of a young boy, but there are a lot of things related to the issue. It is not a small one, but a vast political issue. I cannot answer it right now".

On the issue of revocation of armed forces special powers Act (AFSPA) from Jammu and Kashmir, the governor said: "Only the central government can decide on it. We cannot."

➤ **Attempts being made to revive 'Ikhwan' culture in Chenab Valley: PDP**

**Dec 14:** Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) MLC Firdous Tak accused a political party of allegedly indulging in the revival of 'Ikhwan-ul-Muslmeen' (Government sponsored gunmen) in Chenab Valley to vitiate peaceful atmosphere ahead of Assembly and Parliamentary polls.

"We know who had gone to Union Home Ministry in New Delhi and pledged before them about the revival of *Ikhwan* culture in Chenab Valley, Pir Panjal and Kashmir Valley," said PDP MLC Firdous Tak in Jammu, while speaking before the media persons.

Tak was accompanied by the PDP District President Kishtwar Sheikh Nasir when rightwing people assembled outside and attempted to hackle him for "opposing bunkers in Kishtwar and speaking out some objectionable words" However, police escorted him safely inside the Press Club Jammu.

"We know about a leader of an organization (hinting at BJP) - whom I will not name - about his past, from where they have grown up as a political leader (hinting that they grew up as a leader from anti-militancy operation) in Kishtwar," Tak said.

"History is witness to the fake militancy which was created when militancy died down," he said.

"Around 150 people were rounded up for their questioning by the Kishtwar Police when National Investigation Agency joined in the investigation on the request of J&K Police to probe the sensational killing of two brothers," said Tak.

Condemning the killing of Parihar brothers, Tak alleged that it seems that administration has allegedly misled the Governor Satya Paul Malik with the claim that killers have been identified.

"If the killers have been identified, why they are not being exposed or why they are being hidden by the administration or police? The atmosphere of terror has been created by the police in Kishtwar on the behest of the police investigation," he alleged.

Citing an example, he said, this was not the first such mysterious killing in Kishtwar where security agencies have to declare Chenab Region as militancy free fifteen years back. At least ten people have been killed by such unidentified gunmen under suspicious circumstances. They first killed Satish Bandari, then Tanveer Ahmed Mir, Ghulam Nabi Lone, Ghulam Rasool Hajam, Jamil Kanth, Mohan Bandhari and others. However, none of the killers was identified or arrested.

Similarly, Parihar brother's killing happened when there was zero percent militancy, except one surviving militant who is around 65-year-old now.

"Our concern is that on the name of investigation, one community is being targeted, cornered by the police and allegedly attempts are being made to revive the dead militancy in Chenab valley by adopting harsh steps by alienating the youth," he claimed.

The construction of bunkers in Kishtwar town is also seen with suspicion by the people to create terror among the people of one community and it would lead to communal tension, he added, while opposing any attempt to revive Special Operation Group (SOG).

"If a youth is dragged in front of his parents and detained by the police, tell me what he would do. Every attempt is being made to alienate youth and PDP will not allow this to happen. We will oppose it," he said.

He said that people of Chenab Valley are aware of the intention to hurt the communal peace in the region so that political purpose is served.

Recently, he claimed, youth were kept in the lock-up and later, all were set free without charges. Similarly, around 25 girls were detained and later released without any charge.

➤ **Stones Lethal As Weapons, Stone-Pelters Terrorists: Rawat**  
**Dec 15:** Reiterating his stand that stone is as lethal as gun in Kashmir Indian army chief General Bipin Rawat on Saturday again equated stone-pelters in Kashmir with militants.

He also discredited the sense of alienation and resentment among Kashmiris for the Indian army as a false impression created by the media.

In an exclusive interview with CNN-News18 Saturday night, General Bipin Rawat said the "terrorists are feeding a wrong impression" of India to the Kashmiris and that the people in the valley live under the "fear of terrorists".

Speaking on the issue of stone-pelting, Rawat said "The forces lose their calm only when there is a question of an appropriate reaction to the stone-pelters."

"The question is - how should the army react? We avoid using guns in cases of stone pelting, because we are answerable in the court of law. But in today's time, a stone is as lethal as a rifle," he asserted.

"When my men face dilemma as how would they respond to stone pelting, I tell them you can't pelt stones in return, use arms", Rawat said adding that the army cannot be disrupted in its attempts to bring law and order.

General Rawat's comments come on a day when seven civilians lost their lives when troops opened fire on protesters near an encounter site in south Kashmir's Pulwama district.

➤ **In 2018, JK records highest violence in over a decade**

**Dec 19:** Jammu and Kashmir has witnessed the highest violence this year in last 10 years and the militancy incidents have been witnessing an upward trend since last three years.

According to Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) report, the State has recorded 587 incidents of violence this year, highest in last 10 years.

"587 militancy related incidents have taken place in the State till December this year. In these incidents, 238 militants, 86 forces personnel and 37 civilians were killed," reveals the report.

The number of militancy incidents this year (587) is the highest in last ten years.

The data reveals that there has been a constant decrease in incidents of militancy violence in the State from 2009 upto 2015. However, in last three years (from 2016 to 2018), there has been an increase in militancy incidents.

As per the data, the number of violent incidents in 2009 was 499 and it decreased to 208 in 2015, indicating improvement in the overall situation.

But, in 2016, the militancy incidents increased to 322. And these incidents have been rising every year since then.

In 2009, 499 incidents of violence were recorded in which 239 militants, 71 civilians and 79 forces personnel were killed.

In 2010, when the state was under National Conference-Congress rule, the number of militancy-related incidents came down to 488 and 232 militants, 69 forces personnel and 47 civilians were killed.

In 2011, the number of militancy related incidents further came down to 340 and killings also witnessed a drop. About 100 militants, 33 forces personnel and 31 civilians were killed in the year.

In 2012, militancy-related incidents decreased to 220. About 50 militants, 38 forces personnel and 11 civilians were killed in the year.

In 2013, although the overall number of militancy-related incidents decreased to 170, the casualties, however, again increased with 67 militants, 53 forces personnel and 15 civilians among the dead.

In 2014, 222 militancy incidents were reported in which 110 militants, 28 civilians and 47 force personnel were killed.

In 2015, the number of militancy-related incidents decreased to 208 in which 108 militants, 39 forces personnel and 17 civilians were killed.

However, in 2016, the number of militancy-incidents increased to 322 and 150 militants, 82 forces personnel and 15 civilians were killed.

2016 is known for marking change in militancy spectrum in Kashmir especially in south Kashmir, where the new age militancy gained foothold after top Hizbul Mujahideen commander Burhan Wani.

Since 2016, Valley continues to be on edge.

In 2017, when forces launched "Operation All Out" against militants, the number of militancy-incidents increased to 342 in which 213 militants, 80 forces personnel and 40 civilians were killed.

The year also had witnessed *fidayeen* strikes by Jaish-e-Mohammad militants.

➤ **No provision in Constitution to deal with stone-pelters: MHA**

**Dec 20:** There is no provision in the constitution of India to deal with people pelting stones at armed forces or raising slogans against the country, the union ministry of home affairs has told the Rajya Sabha.

"The Constitution does not have any provision to deal with anti-nationalist elements raising slogans against India, pelting stones on the army and paramilitary forces," minister of state for Home, Hansraj Ahir, has said, while replying to questions raised by Bharatiya Janata Party member Shamsher Singh Manhas.

➤ Proud of J&K Police: Modi

**Dec 23:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi lauded the "valour of police forces of the country, especially from Jammu and Kashmir, for their role in countering militants".

The PM's praise came on the day when six Kashmiri militants were killed by a joint team of the army, Central Reserve Police Force and men from special operations group of the state police.

Addressing the valedictory ceremony at the conference of directors general and inspectors general of police at Kevadiya in Gujarat, Modi said he was "proud of the police force in Jammu and Kashmir" for their role in "countering militants, and successfully engaging them".

➤ **238 militants, 86 forces personnel killed in J&K this year: MHA**

**In 2016, 15 civilians and 82 forces personnel died in the state in 322 incidents of militancy, while 150 rebels were killed during the year, the report reads.**

**Dec 24:** At least 238 militants, 86 forces personnel and 37 civilians were killed in militancy-related incidents in Jammu and Kashmir this year (as on December 2), according to a report of the union ministry of home affairs.

The MHA's annual report says in the preceding year (2017), 213 militants were killed in the state, while 80 forces personnel and 40 civilians also lost their lives in 342 militancy-related incidents.

In 2016, 15 civilians and 82 forces personnel died in the state in 322 incidents of militancy, while 150 rebels were killed during the year, the report reads.

Asserting that it took a "major conciliatory initiative" this year by declaring suspension of anti-militancy operations in Jammu and Kashmir in view of the holy month of Ramadan, the report says that the "ceasefire plan wasn't, however, extended beyond the Ramadan period, following which the forces launched concerted anti-militancy operations which resulted in significant gains".

The MHA said that in June, it conveyed its approval for raising two women battalions for the Jammu and Kashmir police while the union home minister Rajnath Singh announced sanction of grant-in-aid amounting to Rs 14.30 crore for block-level sports

activities in the state under the 'Khelo India' scheme of the union sports ministry.

The MHA has listed as "most significant" the "peaceful conduct of historic local body elections" in the state.

"Ahead of the landmark local body elections in the state, the union home minister again visited Srinagar on October 23 and reviewed the security situation. The local body elections helped to re-establish the long-overdue grassroots level democracy in J&K. The urban local body elections were held after 2005 and panchayat elections after 2011," the report reads, adding that the ULB elections have paved the way for making available nearly Rs 4335 crore of the 14th Finance Commission central grants to the duly-constituted local bodies.

"Central government provided all possible support to the state government for smooth conduct of these elections including deployment of central forces in sufficient numbers," it said.

For border management, the MHA has mentioned in its report that on September 17, the union home minister inaugurated two pilot projects of smart fencing along the India-Pakistan international border in Jammu.

The Leh and Kargil autonomous hill development councils, the report reads, have also been strengthened and "empowered to become the most autonomous councils in the country to address various issues being faced by people living in the remote areas of Ladakh region".

#### **'HONORARIUM OF SPOS ENHANCED'**

"Considering the crucial role being played by the special police officers in anti-militancy operations in J&K, their honorarium was enhanced from Rs 6000 per-month to 9000 per-month on completion of five years and Rs 12000 per-month on completion of 15 years," the report says, adding that the MHA also approved a scheme of Rs 5.5 lakh financial assistance to nearly 5,764 West Pakistan Refugees settled in J&K.

#### **➤ US withdrawal from Afghan will have implications in Kashmir: Ex JK DGP**

**Says militant outfits will feel emboldened, urgent need for 'clear-cut roadmap'**

**Dec 25:** Asserting that India should adopt a "clear-cut roadmap" to tackle the Kashmir issue, former DGP of Jammu & Kashmir K Rajendra Kumar has said the US pulling out troops from Afghanistan will have implications in the Valley and militant outfits may feel emboldened.

Kumar was delivering the Lalitaditya Memorial Lecture in Pune, organised by Sarhad organisation. During his speech, he also said that there is a need to send a stern message to Pakistan for its support to militancy.

"A stern message needs to be sent to Pakistan in terms of retaliation. We need to make it more costly for Pakistan because today Pakistan is not feeling the pinch it should feel," said Kumar.

He said India should deal strongly with Pakistan as far as training camps and militant launchpads are concerned.

"Now USA is existing Afghanistan. It has its implications in Kashmir. It is a matter of time that we will be feeling its implications in the Valley. After the US withdrawal, the terrorists organisations would feel pumped up, emboldened," he said.

Seeing America's withdrawal as a "sign of victory", militant outfits can feel that New Delhi can also be defeated, so there is an urgent need for India to adopt a "clear-cut roadmap" to deal with militancy in Kashmir, he asserted.

The US is planning to withdraw 7,000 troops from Afghanistan. The American troops contribute to training and advising local forces fighting the Taliban and the Islamic State group.

Underling Pakistan's active role in spreading militancy in the Valley, the former IPS officer said Pakistan is not only sponsoring militancy but also sending its nationals to Kashmir in the garb of fighting jihad.

"No matter which government is in power, Pakistan continues to sponsor terrorism in the Valley," he said.

He said militancy in Kashmir started with local militant organisations but now it is tilting towards Islamic extremism.

"The Valley has a rich history of Sufism but over the years it has moved towards Wahabism," he said, adding that efforts should be made to take Kashmir back to Sufism.

Suggesting measures, he said the state needs stringent laws to deal with anti-national forces, a concrete policy to encourage youths to give up militancy.

The surrender policy must ensure that youth who give up militancy are gainfully employed and discouraged from returning to the menace, he said. He also called for political outreach and empowerment of the civil society.

He said social media has played a destructive role in inciting sentiments of the youth.

#### **➤ 26% of CRPF personnel stationed in J&K The total strength of the CRPF—the largest paramilitary force in the world—is 235 battalions.**

**Dec 25:** Twenty six per cent of the total strength of the Central Reserve Police Force, a paramilitary police force, has been deployed in Jammu and Kashmir for maintenance of law and order and fighting militancy, a report Greater Kashmir claimed it has accessed says.

According to the report presented by the department-related parliamentary standing committee on Home Affairs in the Lok Sabha, 61 battalions of the force are deployed in J&K.

The total strength of the CRPF—the largest paramilitary force in the world—is 235 battalions.

Apart from massive concentration of the CRPF, other paramilitary forces such as Border Security Force, Indo Tibetan Border Police, Sashastra Seema Bal and Central Industrial Security Force have significant presence in the state.

During the 2010 and 2016 massive public agitations lasting months, thousands of additional paramilitary forces were rushed to the state to contain street protests.

Post 2009, the paramilitary forces are seeking deployment charges from the cash-starved J&K for their services.

In May this year, Greater Kashmir had reported that paramilitary forces were seeking Rs 2600 crore on account of their deployment in the state.

The CRPF alone has Rs 2543 crore bill for its services in the state since 2009, a year after the 2008

Amarnath land row that was marked by the return of street protests in a big way.

Struggling with financial crunch, the J&K government had repeatedly requested the central government to waive off deployment charges, but in vain.

➤ **Don't demoralize police, says Governor on allegation of harassing militant's sister**

**Dec 31:** Governor Satya Pal Malik has denied the alleged harassment of a family, including sister of a militant, hailing from Patlipora Pulwama by police.

In an apparent reference to former chief minister Mehbooba Mufti, who had raised the issue after meeting the woman in question, the Governor has asked all political parties to desist from demoralizing police through "motivated statements".

In a statement issued in Jammu, the Governor while denying the allegations of harassment of the family by police asked "all political parties to understand the fragile security situation in parts of Jammu and Kashmir and not to upset this through motivated statements and false allegations. This will only demoralize a hard-working police force."

The statement said that the family hailing from Patlipora Pulwama were questioned in Jammu district "based on very specific intelligence inputs".

"There are standing general and specific instructions issued to all police officers and staff on not harassing families of militants. This is being followed meticulously in most circumstances. However, there could be a situation where a few relatives of a militant are questioned by police under due process of law so as to obtain details of a militant's whereabouts. This is done very rarely and only on the basis of specific information."

About the specific case, the Governor's statement said, "I have been informed that there has been no tearing up of a lady's clothes or her being harassed by the police. I once again reiterate that all police officers and staff will be directed not to harass ladies who happen to be relatives of militants or treat them in any unbecoming manner. Any questioning should be done as per normal practice only in the presence of a lady constable."

However, the Governor added that he would direct IG Police, Kashmir to look into this incident "to see whether the lady has been harassed or her clothes have been torn as is being alleged. If necessary, action will be taken against any police staff found acting wrongly."

➤ **257 militants, 91 forces personnel including 45 cops killed in 2018: DGP**

- 260-300 militants still active in Kashmir
- Will investigate harassment of militant families

**Dec 31:** The Director General of Police (DGP) Dilbagh Singh Monday said 257 militants and 91 forces personnel including 45 policemen were killed in militant violence in 2018, which is highest in last decade.

"Forty five JKP men and 46 other force personnel were killed in Kashmir during militancy violence in 2018," Singh told reporters at PHQ Jammu.

He said at least 257 militants were also killed by forces across the Valley in the outgoing year. The militant violence and casualties in 2018 was higher in last eight to ten years.

Singh said these figures show successful anti-militancy operations. "However, it is not a good indicator with regard to loss of lives, though the operations were major success."

He said in last thirty years, the State is facing militancy in which not only police and other forces personnel have been killed. "Besides, civilians have also lost lives in the violence. It is a cause of concern for us."

The DGP accused Pakistan of sponsoring militancy in the State by training militants and pushing them across the Line of Control (LoC). "They run the militant activities in Kashmir by misleading local youth and motivating them to join militant ranks".

He said all militant outfits including Lashkar-e-Toiba, Jaish-e-Mohammad and Hizbul Mujahideen suffered severe jolts this year with killing of their commanders and large number of militants.

"In a fit of rage, militants tried to harass police men and their families," he said adding, "Militants also killed innocent civilians in the name of informers".

He hailed civil society for raising their voice against killing of civilians and police personnel.

The DGP said the infiltration from across the LoC in 2018 was sizeable.

"Pakistan pushes militants from across the LoC after the killing of militants in Kashmir to ensure their number does not go down," he said.

Singh disclosed that 260-300 militants were still active in Kashmir.

"We are tightening border grid and intensifying anti-militancy operations across the State to end militancy in the State," he said.

In response to a question about harassment of militant's family, DGP said, "We will look into it. If the family has been unnecessarily harassed, we will take action."

On coordination between militants of different outfits, he said if militants are working in coordination, it is their strategy. "But, we are also working in coordination with other security agencies, and will strengthen our anti-militancy strategy."

The DGP appealed Kashmiri youth to focus on their career instead of falling prey to Pakistan sponsored propaganda and focus on their studies.

On looting of weapons from residence of Congress legislator in Srinagar, he said, "This incident cannot be ignored. Every incident is significant for police. In these incidents, we also find our weakness and accordingly, take corrective measures to avoid repeat of such incidents."

Singh disclosed that police was likely to install more CCTV cameras in Jammu city.

"We are preparing our plan to put more cameras in the Jammu city. Besides, we will be upgrading already installed CCTV cameras in the city," he said.

Of 42 CCTV cameras installed in Jammu city, only three are functional.

In Kashmir, 70 CCTV cameras have been installed but they don't have night vision.

➤ **"Insurgencies like these are difficult to defeat: defence expert**

**Dec 31:** "Insurgencies like these are difficult to defeat. We saw it in Vietnam, we see it in Afghanistan," Pravin Sawhney, a New Delhi-based defence expert and editor

of FORCE magazine that focuses on Indian national security and defence, told TRT World.

"Insurgents not only have safe havens in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir [Pakistan-administered

Kashmir], local residents too are openly supporting them. Once fence-sitters in this conflict, civilians are racing to gun battle spots to help insurgents."

## **10. Suicides and Fratricides by Armed Forces**

### ➤ **BSF trooper suicides**

**Dec 19:** A 49-year-old Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI) of the Border Security Force (BSF) allegedly committed suicide by shooting himself with his service rifle in Poonch district, officials said.

The officer of the border guarding force, Satpal Jaswal, was found in a pool of blood after his colleagues pursued the sound of a gunshot at his post in forward area in Mendhar Bekt of the district on December 19, morning, they said.

Jaswal was admitted to hospital where doctors declared him brought dead, the officials said, adding that a case was registered in this connection.

### ➤ **Army man kills colleague in Doda**

**Dec 25:** An Army man shot dead his colleague following a spat with him in an Army camp in Doda district.

"Havialdar Rajesh Dakua was fired upon by his colleague at an army camp in Bhaderwah last night. He was brought to the hospital, where he died after ten minutes", a police officer said.

The official said Dakua, 40, was posted at 4, Rastriya Rifles headquarters at Bhaderwah.

"The army man, who opened fire on his colleague is yet to be arrested as police have asked for his custody from the Army," he said.

The official said the exact reason behind the killing is not known.

An army official said a verbal spat over some issue is the reason behind Havadar's rage.

"The accused will soon be handed over to the police," he said.

The official said a Court of inquiry has been ordered into the incident.

