



JAMMU KASHMIR COALITION OF CIVIL SOCIETY (JKCCS)

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



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The Informative Missive

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1. Editorial

Forget sanction, Armed Forces are now exempt from FIR

The response of the Attorney General of India in the petition filed by the father of Major Aditya, a decorated army officer named in the FIR by the J&K Police in January in a case of extra-judicial killings of three civilians, before the apex court is most shocking. The response pleads that even before filing an FIR sanction under AFSPA is required. Hitherto the legal position taken by the Supreme Court in GOC v/s CBI commonly known as the Pathribal Encounter case has been that the requirement of sanctions comes at the time of cognizance taken by the court and the time of initiating a criminal action. Normally the petition should have been filed by Major Aditya against whom it is stated that FIR has been filed which state of Jammu and Kashmir stood initially by stating that “army is not above the law and does the army has the license to kill” and on the response of Attorney General that “hundreds of army men are killed protecting us. The state should not make such an argument.” Even the Supreme Court observed that ‘the major Aditya is an army officer and not an ordinary criminal’. The state capitulated and made a U-turn by stating that the major’s name was not mentioned in the FIR. Normally the petition should have been dismissed as Supreme Court has already taken the position in the above-entitled case but the matter is likely to be reopened and it won’t be surprising that Supreme Court will concede the plea of the petitioner. As Supreme Court of India while dealing with high profile Kashmir matters has a history that it has invariably conceded to the public perceptions manufactured by the media and respective governments of the day.

Since the BJP government came to power in 2014 it has been penetrating in the state institutions as BJP is an ideologically driven party committed to Hindutva and is proudly proclaiming that after 800 years Hindus have come to power in India. BJP doesn’t believe in a plural society. It believes in one nation, one culture and it is publicly against secularism and plural society. It believes that only Hindus have the right to stay in India and people who do not subscribe to Hindutva have no place in this country or if they stay they should be given the second class citizenship. BJP is a party, which believes that the Indian Muslims are internal threat number one and the Indian Christians internal threat number two. From the last four years, this right-wing party is rewriting the history by renaming the streets or institutions, resurrecting the right wing politicians and is likely to saffronize the institutions - more particularly the educational institutions. It doesn’t care about the protests lodged by liberals, academicians but instead believes in a brazen use of violence, believing that the presence of tanks in educational institutions will inculcate the patriotism/national pride within students. The liberal sections in India are very disturbed and that is why a few years back the writers, poets and social activists in protest have returned the awards to the government against intolerance. That the present BJP government like all true fascist parties believes that the institutions have to be taken over and therefore the two institutions army and judiciary, which have been perceived to be apolitical so far should be inducted by the right wing people to promote right-wing agenda of the government.

Indian politicians have always idolized the army but the present government, particularly after the Kargil war, has made army above criticism and anybody questioning the army particularly in Kashmir is accused of being anti-national, traitors or treated as supporters of the militants. In this case, the media, which were first to be appropriated by this government are making the army a demi-god, Caesar’s wife who is high above suspicion and in the Kashmir context, questioning the army is the most anti-national act. The media is competing in eulogizing. Indian Army has committed grave human rights violations in Kashmir in the name of fighting ‘cross-border terrorism’ and ‘maintaining the territorial integrity of India’ and no army personnel ever has been punished so far. In this sense the Judiciary, which is part of the state is disturbingly influenced by the policies of the government and accordingly the judiciary from last 3 to 4 years has become more brazen in undermining the laws in favour of policies of the state. Even the four senior-most judges of the Supreme Court in an

unprecedented manner publically said that even in the highest court, things are not in order and that unless the institution is preserved; democracy cannot be protected in this country. The judiciary, otherwise has a history in Kashmir related cases, in remaining lop-sided except in one Supreme Court observation by Justice Aftab Alam, which read “Just for getting gallantry awards innocent people are termed as terrorists and killed in fake encounters in Jammu and Kashmir and the North East. It’s worse than cold-blooded murder.”

Judiciary in a functioning democracy as well as in a totalitarian system has to show grace under pressure for preserving the International Humanitarian Law and the fundamental rights particularly right to life and liberty and seeking accountability from the wrongdoers. Already the judgments made by the apex court in Kashmir related cases i.e, Maqbool Bhat’s case, Afzal Guru’s case, Pathribal Fake Encounter case, Masooda Parveen’s case, Qasim Faktoo’s case and the Masrat Alam’s case have not been up to the mark. The perception in Kashmir has been that the Supreme Court of India has behaved more executive than the executive and has decided the cases on political exigencies.

Long ago, Justice Lord Atkin observed, “amidst the clash of arms, the laws are not silent”. They may be changed, but they speak the same language in war as in peace. It has always been one of the pillars of freedom, one of the principles of liberty for which on recent authority we are now fighting, that the judges are no respecters of persons, and stand between the subject and any attempted encroachments on his liberty by the executive, alert to see that any coercive action is justified in law is relevant to court here.

2. Chronology of Incidents

March 01: A Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) militant was killed in a gunfight with armed forces in Hajin area of Bandipora district. A police official told media that the killed militant was of Pakistani origin and had been active in Hajin area for the past one and a half year. The slain militant was identified as Fahadullah Mir alias Usama.

March 02: No incident of violence reported.

March 03: An army soldier was injured in a landmine explosion near LOC in Poonch, Jammu.

March 04: Three civilians and a LET militant were killed by army in Pahnoo village of Shopian. The slain civilians were identified as Shahid Ahmad Khan, Ist year student, son of Bashir Ahmad Khan of Malik Gund village Shopian, Suhail Ahmad Wagay son of Mohammad Khalil Wagay of Pinjoora, Shopian, labourer Shahnawaz Ahmad Wagay, 22, of Langandora, Shopian and the militant was identified as Amir Ahmad Malik, 24, of Harmain, Shopian.

March 05: With the recoveries of body of LET militant and a civilian the killing toll in Shopian incident reaches to six. The slain militant was identified as Ashiq Hussain Bhat of Rakh Kapran and the civilian was identified as Gowhar Ahmad Lone of Chitragam, Shopian. While army claimed it had killed a militant of JEM in a brief encounter at Hatiwara Letpora, Pulwama. The slain militant was identified as Mufti Waqas, a Pakistani national. Retractions were imposed in parts of Srinagar to choke the imminent protests that could trigger after Shopian mayhem.

March 06: Twenty persons were injured in clashes across Shopian district erupted after people came out on streets to demand the removal of the army camp at Pahnoo, where soldiers of the 44 Rashtriya Rifles stationed at Pahnoo killed two local militants and four civilians on March 4.

March 07: Life in Kashmir Valley came to a standstill in response to the shutdown call given by the joint resistance leadership (JRL) to protest against civilian killings in Shopian and shifting of political prisoners outside the Valley. While cashes rocked Shopian town and areas of Bon Bazar, Meminder, Pinjora, Kannipora and Pahnoo in the district where several youths were reportedly injured by pellets fired by government forces. Cross LOC shelling between Pakistani troops and Indian forces took place in Sunderbani sector along the Line of Control in Rajouri and Jammu districts. While an army man committed suicide by shooting self with his service rifle in Langate area of north Kashmir’s Kupwara district, police said. “Sepoy Birender Sinha (27), of 30 Rashtriya Rifles today morning shoots himself at army headquarters camp in Langate while he was on duty,” a police officer told news GNS, adding that the

soldier suffered serious head injuries in the incident. While a civilian identified as Abdul Aziz Ahanger, 60, of Delina died when he came under police vehicle Rakshak.

May 08: An army soldier posted at the Warnow area in Kupwara committed suicide by shooting himself to death with his service rifle, police said. The deceased soldier was identified as Sepoy Shankar Singh (31), a resident of Prithypura, Rajasthan, was serving in 18RR e-coy at Warnow area of Kupwara.

March 09: A 45-year-old man was shot dead by unknown persons in Kishtwar. Official sources identified the slain as Istiyaq Ahmad Dar son of Master Ghulam Rasool Dar of Semna colony. They said some unknown gunmen fired upon Dar near Haider Sheikh Gate behind Islamia Faridiya School Kishtwar. A Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) soldier from 79 Battalion allegedly killed himself in Sonwar area of Srinagar. The soldier has been identified as Sukhdev and he has killed himself by firing with service rifle in his camp. While nearly after a 2-week lull, India and Pakistan armies exchanged fire in Uri near Line of Control. One Indian soldier was injured in the firing. In Shopian, clashes erupted in the district and engulfed the entire district amidst a shutdown on the fifth consecutive day against killing of four civilians by Army at Pohnoo village. One of the protesters received pellet in his eye. The youth identified was identified as Musavir Ahmad, resident of Pinjora village.

March 10: No incident of violence.

March 11: Three militants were killed in a shootout at Malikpora locality in Hakura village of Anantnag district. The slain militants were identified as Eesa Fazli, a resident of Soura area of Srinagar district, Syed Owais of Guhnoo of Kokernag area Anantnag, and Mohammad Tayfeeq of Hyderabad. A grenade attack was launched on the house of MLA Noorabad, Kulgam by suspected militants. In the attack window panes of the MLA suffered minor damages. Another grenade was hurled at Kralkhud police station at Srinagar. While two youth were injured in clashes with armed forces in Pulwama.

March 12: A civilian was killed in a blast near an Army firing range in Awantipora area of Pulwama district in Jammu and Kashmir, police said. Ashiq Hussain Chopan (25) was grazing his livestock when he came into contact with some object that exploded and injured him severely in Jawbara, near the firing range of the Army's Victor Force, a police official said. He said Chopan was rushed to the nearest sub-district hospital, where he succumbed to injuries. While restrictions were imposed in downtown Srinagar, in view of the Anantnag encounter in which three militants were killed on the night of March 10 and 11, to curb the imminent protests.

March 13: Shutdown was observed in Soura and Kokernag areas of the valley over the killing of militants on March 10 in Anantnag.

March 14: Army soldiers allegedly opened fire in the air after their vehicle came under stone-pelting near Brethipora village in Shopian district. Locals told Kashmir Reader that army soldiers fired several shots in the air and also arrested two boys, whom locals identified as Riyaz Ahmad Bhat and Aijaz Ahmad Wani, both residents of Brethipora. Villagers said that army soldiers fired about seven shots in the air.

March 15: Two militants were killed while a CRPF trooper and a policeman were injured after an attack on a BJP leader Anwar Khan by militants at Balhama area of Khanmoh in outskirts of Srinagar city. The militants, identified as Shabir Ahmad Dar of Aghanjipora in Awantipora and Rasiq Nabi Bhat alias Owais of Nowdal Tral affiliated with Ansaar Gazwatul Hind.

March 16: Clashes erupted in several parts of the district amid a spontaneous shutdown over the killing of two militants on March 15. The major clashes occurred at Pampore, Pulwama town, Tral, and Awantipora. While two militants managed to flee the cordon and search operation launched by armed forces of Friday in Bandipora's Hajin.

March 17: Clashes erupted between locals and government forces in Balhama and Pantha chowk areas of Srinagar district after the body of a third militant was recovered from the site of March 15 encounter. The body is believed to be of a Pakistani militant, identified as Abu Hamas. While Shopian district's Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) and Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP) had a narrow escape after their cavalcade was attacked by militants near Hajipora village.

March 18: In cross LOC shelling five members of a family including three minor brothers, were killed and seven persons including five army men were injured in village in cross LOC shelling at Devta Sargloon, Poonch. The deceased were Mohammad Ramzan, his wife Malika bi (32), their sons Abdul Rehman (14), Mohammad Rizwan (12) and Razaq Ramzan (seven).

March 19: CASO was launched in Pampore area after alleged suspected movement of militants in the area.

March 20: Army claimed four unidentified militants, believed to be foreigners, were killed in a gunfight with government forces in forest area near Halmatpora village in Kupwara district. While two army soldiers committed suicide by shooting themselves dead with their service rifles in Kulgam and Samba army camps. The slain soldiers were identified as Sepoy Kulvinder Singh of 10 Sikh Regiment and Naresh Yadav.

March 21: One more militant, three army soldiers and two SOG personnel were killed in an encounter that started on March 20 in forest area near Halmatpora village in Kupwara district. While cross LOC shelling took place in Balakote, Poonch.

March 22: Omais Rashid Bhat, of Qimoh, Kulgam, who was allegedly roughed up and tortured by militants on March 8, succumbed to injuries at SKIMS. While two persons were injured in pellet firing after a cordon and search operation (CASO) in Turkwangam village of Shopian district was conducted by the armed forces.

March 23: Search operation continues in in forest area near Halmatpora village in Kupwara district where a massive encounter between militants and armed forces ended on March 22.

March 24: Two Pakistani militants of Jaish-e-Mohammad were killed in an overnight encounter with forces at Shahstargam area of Dooru in south Kashmir's Anantnag district.

March 25: Lashkar-e-Toiba militant Shafat Hussain Wani of Wagoora Baramulla was killed in a gunfight with government forces during which a local woman sustained a bullet injury in Arizal area of Budgam. The woman, identified as Humaira, was shifted to the Bone and Joint Hospital in Barzulla, Srinagar.

March 26: Suspected militants attacked an army vehicle in Kachdoora area of Shopian district, however, no damage was caused. While panic gripped in Pulwama after CRPF opened aerial fire as they, reportedly, notice some suspected movement.

March 27: In a pre-dawn cordon and search operation (CASO) at Brath village on Sopore outskirts, government detained two local youths. The detained duo was identified as Khurshid Ahmed Mir, son of Abdul Rashid Mir, and Mehraj Ahmed, both residents of Brath Kalan, Sopore. During the CASO, reports of a few gunshots led to panic among the villagers, but it was not known who had fired the shots as the entire village was cordoned off, locals of the area said. While armed forces conduct a search operation in the border village Sunderbani of Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri district after receiving reports about suspicious movement the police officials said.

March 28: Four militants were killed in a day-long encounter with forces in Sunderbani area in Rajouri district. Police suspected the slain militants were foreigners. While at least four youth, including three with pellets, were injured during clashes which erupted after a CASO was launched by armed forces in Palpora area of Pulwama district. In Budgam, a shutdown was observed to mark the first anniversary of the three boys killed last year by the forces personnel.

March 29: A SPO was shot dead and his wife was seriously injured in a militant attack at his residential house in Kathsoo village of Bijbehara Anantnag. The slain was identified as Mushtaq Ahmad Sheikh. In another incident, militant attacked an army patrol party in Ahgam area of Shopian. The armed forces retaliated the fire and a brief encounter took place but there was no damage from either side. While Pakistani and Indian forces exchanged fire on the LOC in Laam area of Nowshera sector of Rajouri. An Indian soldier suffered injured.

March 30: Four persons were detained by the armed forces in Malwan village of Barmulla during CASO. While clashes between protesters and forces personnel took place in Hyderpora area of Srinagar post-Friday prayers.

March 31: An SPO was killed by suspected militants at Dalipora area of Pulwama district. The slain SPO was identified as Mohammad Ashraf Mir of Pulwama. While another SPO was shot at in Anantnag district. The clashes between forces and youth took place in Souraarea of Srinagar over the students arrest.

3. Killings in March 2018

In March 2018, **47** killings took place in different incidents of violence in Jammu and Kashmir **47** killings, which included **13 Civilians, 22 Militants and 12 Armed Forces**. The day to day break of killings is given in the table below.

Table of Killings

DATE	ARMED FORCES	MILITANTS	CIVILIANS
March 01	-	1	-
March 02	-	-	-
March 03	-	-	-
March 04	-	1	3
March 05	-	2	1
March 06	-	-	-
March 07	1	-	1
March 08	1	-	-
March 09	1	-	1
March 10	-	-	-
March 11	-	3	-
March 12	-	-	1
March 13	-	-	-
March 14	-	-	-
March 15	-	2	-
March 16	-	-	-
March 17	-	1	-
March 18	-	-	5
March 19	-	-	-
March 20	2	4	-
March 21	5	1	-
March 22	-	-	1
March 23	-	-	-
March 24	-	2	-
March 25	-	1	-
March 26	-	-	-
March 27	-	-	-
March 28	-	4	-
March 29	1	-	-
March 30	-	-	-
March 31	1	-	-
Total	12	22	13
Total Killings in March 2018		47 Killings	

4. Human Rights Stories

Terming killed civilians as OGW angered the families of the victims

OGW term used to mislead: Families

March 4: Four civilians were killed by army in Pahnoo village of Shopian during an encounter in which a LET militant was gunned down. The slain civilians were identified as Shahid Ahmad Khan, Ist year student, son of Bashir Ahmad Khan of Malik Gund village Shopian, Suhail Ahmad Wagay son of Mohammad Khalil Wagay of Pinjoora, Shopian, labourer Shahnawaz Ahmad Wagay, 22, of Langandora, Shopian, Gowhar Ahmad Lone of Chitragam, Shopian and the militant was



Clockwise from top: Suhail Wagay, Gowhar Ahmad, Shahnawaz and Shahid Ahmad Khan

identified as Amir Ahmad Malik, 24, of Harmain, Shopian. One of the killed civilian has severe torture marks on his body. The Army said the militant's accomplices, whom the spokesman described as "over-ground workers", were also "found dead" in the car apparently used by the militant. The killings have led to anger as the families of the slain civilians contested the

army's allegation that they were accomplices.

The circumstances in which the bodies of the deceased civilians were recovered only indicate they were killed in cold-blood. Their families blamed the armed forces for killing their sons.

"It is unfortunate how they [the army] have termed them as OGW without an inquiry", the families of the victims stated. The incident has eyewitnesses who ripped apart the army claim stating to the locals of the area that they saw army dragged two of the killed unarmed civilians Suhail and Khalil from a car and killed them on the road.

Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti took to social media to express her sympathy with the families of the slain civilians. She also contradicted the army's claim that they were accomplices to militants. "Deeply distressed by more deaths of civilians caught in the crossfire in Shopian," she tweeted.

A researcher of *The Informative Missive* visited family of Suhail Ahmad Wagay to collect the incident details. Mohammad Kalil, Suhail father made a detailed statement about the incident in which his son and a family worker were killed.

Eleventh class student, Suhail Ahmad Wagay, 23, son of Mohammad Khalil of Pinjora, Shopian and his worker were allegedly killed after being dragged out of the car, they were on board, by the armed forces. Suhail's family has eyewitnesses to base their claim that the duo was killed by the armed forces. The eyewitnesses account put a big question mark on the police claim of killing of the youth in cross firing.

On March 4, 2018, at around 2 pm, Suhail in his family's car went to drop his mother at his sister's house at Pahlipora, Shopian. After dropping his mother he returned back to his home. Suhail's father and his two elder brothers were in Delhi in connecting with their business. So the family responsibilities shifted to Suhail's and his another brother's shoulders. The family has sizeable orchids to take care off.

Besides these two brothers there was a boy Shahnawaz Ahmad Wagay of Langandora, Shopian, who used to work in Wagay family orchids. Wagay family is well-off dealing successfully in apple business, considered to be a lucrative one.

At around 7 pm, Suhail took the worker Shahnawaz along to get his mother back home. On the way to his sister's home, there falls an army camp at Pahnoo which is around 300 meters away from the main road. Army has erected a Mobile Vehicle Check Point (MBVP) there for conducting checking of passing vehicles. While Suhail was passing through the area, suddenly a militant appeared and launched an attack on the army men. The forces deployed there returned the fire and killed the attacker, a local militant.

In the gunfight three civilians received bullet injuries who later succumbed to their injuries. The civilians were identified as Suhail Khalil Wagay of Pinjora, Shahnawaz Ahmad Wagay of Langandora and Shahid Ahmad Khan of Malikgund Shopian.

When Suhail did not reach home till 10 pm, his family got worried. Soon the news of killings went viral on social media. On seeing the news on facebook, Suhail's uncle Manzoor Ahmad Wagay and brother Maqsood Ahmad Wagay rushed to the hospital presuming that the dead bodies would have been taken to the District Hospital Shopian.

However, the uncle and brother were not sure whether Suhail is one among them, as the dead bodies had not been identified then. At the hospital they came across a local news reporter who informed them the killing of Suhail and Shahnawaz and also told them that the dead bodies have been taken to Police Lines Shopian. Both the uncle and the brother rushed to the police lines where the dead body of Suhail was handed over to them.

Suhail had multiple bullets injuries on both of his legs and one of the bullets had pierced his lower abdomen. The car he was driving has many bullet holes from all the four sides. The dead body of Shahnawaz was taken by his own family so the family of Suhail has no information about the bullet injuries received by Shahnawaz.

The people who took the dead bodies of Suhail and Shahnawaz said that their dead bodies were lying on the road side and there was no blood stain inside the car. Also there were Gujjars (nomads) who had set up their temporary tents on the road side at the same spot where the incident took place. They (Gujjars) have told the locals of that area that they had seen the two boys were taken out of their vehicle and were shot on the road side. Both the boys were seen begging before the troopers pleading that "*we are not militants, we are civilians*". The Gujjars said the army did not pay any heed to their pleas and killed them. Another civilian, Shahid Ahmad Khan was also killed at the same spot but nobody knows how he got killed.

The dead body of Suhail was brought home at around 12 am. But he was not buried in the same night, as his father and two brothers were outside Kashmir. He was buried on next day in his ancestral graveyard only after his father and two brothers came home. The family has not filed any case neither they were called by police to receive the FIR copy. The family has managed to release the bullet pumped car from the police station

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Shopian after fulfilling all the formalities. The mobile phone of Suhail has not yet been given back to his family, as the police have said that they need to keep it for some more days to do some investigations. By the end of this month the family has no idea about the progress of police investigation.

Gowhar

Ahmad Lone a postgraduate in physical education, Lone studied in Nagpur for five years before returning to set up a business selling pesticides. Gowhar's father says that his son was tortured before being shot dead by the forces. He said his son was killed in a planned manner and to mislead the people his body was placed in his car some distance away from the scene of the incident.

While talking to a researcher *The Informative Missive*, Gowhar's dejected father Abdul Rasheed Lone made the following statement: Gowhar was dealing in fertilizers and pesticides and was having a shop in the main market of Dangerpora. On March 4, at 1:30 pm, he went to main market Shopian to buy pesticides. He was in his Wagon R car. Gowhar didn't return till evening so his sister called on him at 7:30 pm to check when he is coming back home. Gowhar picked up the call and told his sister that he will be at home within 15 minutes.

Just after 5 minutes i.e. at 7:35 pm the family of Gowhar heard gunshots as the place where incident had occurred is just 3 kms away from his house. Militants had attacked the army check point at Pahnoo village.

As Gowhar was not returning as the time he had told his family will take in reaching him home exceeds, his family presumed he might have gone to some of his friend's house owing to the tense situation erupted after the militant attack.

On the same night, at 9:00 pm, a news was making round on the social media that three persons were injured in Shopian firing incident. However, the name of Gowhar wasn't mentioned in the injured persons. Gowhar's family again called him on his mobile number but there was no response whatsoever.

Next day morning, some locals had seen Gowhar's body lying in his car. His head was resting on the steering wheel of the car. His car was spotted at least 1 km away from the shootout site. The spot falls in between his house and shootout site. Gowhar had a bullet injury on his chest, close to his heart, but there was no blood found inside the car. Everything of the car was intact. It seems that he was shot outside of his car and then his body was placed inside the vehicle to camouflage his killing.

Gowhar's family came to know about his killing only when his body was brought home by the villagers. The body has visible torture marks and his right shoulder was found to be dislocated.

The family questions if he was shot near the shootout site that too in his chest then how come he

would be able to drive his car to 1 km. The locals had told the family that they had brought the dead bodies of two civilians injured during the shootout through the same route and they had found only the car with its head lights open. But no person was seen inside the car. The families presumed that he might have tortured first and then killed by the army.

Police has filed the FIR no. 54/2018 but there is no mention of Gowhar killing in the FIR.

Shahid Ahmad Khan, one among the deceased civilians who would have turned 18, was a student of class 12th.

"On March 4 morning his elder brother told him to submit his documents with a company where he had applied for a job in Shopian town. He left his native village, Malik Gund in Imamsahib area, at around 11:30 a.m. and returned home in the afternoon at around 4 p.m. He had handed over the documents to his sister and left to play cricket. However, from 7 p.m onwards I found his phone switched off. At around 9 p.m we got information that someone from our village too has been killed. At midnight I was handed over the body of my son," said Bashir Ahmad Khan, 70, as he stood besides the coffin of his son.

Khan said that his son had bullet marks in abdomen and neck and blood was oozing through the wounds. "We don't know what exactly happened, but it seems that my son was shot from point blank range," Khan said.

His mother Fareeda Begum with moist eyes was seen kissing his son and paying him adieu while his friends were wailing. "Oh Shahid please come back. Who will play cricket with us now," his friends Sheikh Adil and Obaid screamed.

Shahid is survived by two elder brothers and a sister. His elder brother is an MBA pass out.

"Gowhar had a bullet injury on his chest, close to his heart, but there was no blood found inside the car. Everything of the car was intact. It seems that he was shot outside of his car and then his body was placed inside the vehicle to camouflage his killing."

Father dies while saving his son from arrest

A sexagenarian, Abdul Aziz Ahanger of Rather Mohalla, Delina, Baramulla was hit by a police vehicle while trying to save his son from being arrested by police. Aziz was injured badly and later succumbed to his injuries in a hospital. Aziz had no external visible injuries, but his death was the result of fatal internal injuries.

To collect the statement of Aziz's family, a researcher of *The Informative Missive* visited Rather Mohalla. The family, in the beginning, showed complete reluctance to share the details of the case citing perpetrators retribution but after persuasion they agreed to relate the incident. Aziz's son Tawseef Ahmad, an eyewitness to the incident, was out somewhere. Aziz's nephew Ghulam Mohammad, a labourer, living nearby was called to share the case details.

Ghulam Mohammad said, on March 7, at around 8:30 pm, a team of five to six police men from Delina police post entered into Delina village in an armored vehicle. At around 6:30 pm, few boys pelted stones on shopkeepers, who had opened their shops, at Delina on Baramulla-Srinagar, as there was a strike call given by Hurriyat against March 4 Shopian killings. The patrolling police party spotted Sameer Ahmad Lone and Tawseef Ahmad. Tawseef was standing just outside his house when police approached to arrest him. As the police were taken him to the vehicle, he raised cry calling his father Abdul Aziz. Aziz ran towards the police vehicle to free his son.

"When police tried to push Tawseef in their vehicle, Aziz tried to free his son. However, police



managed to bundle him in the vehicle while Aziz was holding the window of it. When policemen speed-up the vehicle, Aziz loses the grip and fell down. He immediately slipped into unconscious state,” stated Ghulam Mohammad while revealing the circumstances of the incident in which Aziz was fatally injured.

Some of the locals took him to District Hospital Baramulla. Only after half-an-hour, he died on the hospital bed. “There were no visible external injury marks but he might had internal injuries, which caused his death,” stated his nephew.

Tawseef was not part of any protest. Against him there was no police record. The police patrol just arrested him and the other boy randomly, without verifying their involvement in the stone pelting.

Militant tortured youth succumbs, later tender apology Family seeks public apology

On March 8, Omais Rasheed Bhat, a 12th class student in Compound Arts Subject, was kidnapped and subjected to heinous form of torture by the militants on the allegations of being armed forces informer and bootlegging. Omais could not bear the torture injuries and he died in the hospital on March 22.

A researcher of *The Informative Missive* visited Omais residence where he talked to the brother of



Omais

Omais who shared the following details.

Omais used to go for tuitions in Islamabad town of Anantnag district regularly at 7 in the morning.

On March 8, the tuition centre was off, so he was at his home only. At around 2 pm, he went out of his house to the market, perhaps, to meet his friends. At 5 pm, on the same day, Omais’s father Abdul Rasheed Bhat received a call informing him that his son has been taken to District Hospital Kulgam for treatment.

The father and the mother rushed to the hospital and were shocked to see their son with injuries all over his body. He was in critical condition and at around 8 pm he was shifted to S.M.H.S Hospital at Srinagar. He was admitted in the emergency ward and on next day was shifted to Ward number 15. For next four days he was kept in the same ward but his health conditions were deteriorating with every passing minute. He used to throw up blood during the cough. Thereafter slipped into Coma and was referred to Intensive Care Unit (ICU). On March 22, he breathen his last.

While in the hospital, he once told his elder brother Irshad Ahmad that when he went from home on March 8, at 2 pm, two boys identified as Zubair Ahmad Mir from Qaimoh and Suhail Ahmad from Banderpora, Qaimoh told him to accompany them. Omais knew both

“If police had verified Tawseef’s involvement before arresting him, his father would not have met with this fate. Tawseef was released after couple of days, as there was nothing adverse against him,” laments Ghulam Mohammad.

The killing of Abdul Aziz triggered protests in the area. On next day, at the time of his funeral clashes took place between protestors and forces.

Police has filed FIR and has forwarded the case to District Magistrate’s office Baramulla for compensation. Family has received FIR copy, which they had submitted to Tehsildar’s office for obtaining *ex gratia* relief.

of them, as they were friendly with each other. They had taken him to Bhan village of Kulgam district in an Alto car belonged to Zubair. There they took him into the fields and beat him severely. The boys had made an allegation against Omais that he sells alcohol and is an army informer. From there they had taken him to the Batpora area of Shopian district in the same car and there

**“They had chopped off his left ear and his
finger nails were removed as well”**

too he was tortured severely. **They had chopped off his left ear and his finger nails were removed as well.** Besides that he was beaten harshly due to which he was oozing blood from multiple injuries on his body. Thereafter, he was sent to the hospital in an auto.

A day after he was tortured, a letter on Himbul Mujahideen letter pad was sent to the Jamia Masjid of the area. In the letter it was mentioned that Omais was working as source for army and selling alcohol he was receiving from army. The letter also warns other people directing them to refrain from working with for the army.

Omais’s family didn’t file case against the boys, as they have strong apprehensions that in doing so they may face consequences. As the militants have claimed the responsibility, so filing a case by the family can result into social hostility within the village. The father has been called by the SHO Kulgam police station to share the names of the perpetrators, however, he refused to do so.

Police had started an investigation and had arrested one boy resident of Matalhama, Kulgam. The boy was said to be involved but was released after few days. A relative of the victim’s family living in Matalhama told that the arrested boy’s family bribed the police and managed to get him released and sent him outside Kashmir.

After some days of Omais’s death, the militants had sent some people to Omais’s parents to tender their apology. They had come to know that Omais was not involved in any activity he was accused of by them. But the family demanded that they (militants) should apologize publicly, as the baseless allegations against Omais have damaged their image in the area.

Case for SRO-43 has been filed but the family is not aware about the status of the case.

5 of family killed in Pak shelling in Poonch: Officials

March 18: Pakistani troops targeted border villages in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district with mortar bombs, killing five members of a family including three minor brothers, officials said.

The "unprovoked and indiscriminate" shelling of civilian areas almost three-four kilometres from the Line of Control (LoC) by the Pakistani troops, in violation of a ceasefire agreement, lasted nearly four hours Sunday morning, they said.

Two sisters were critically injured in the shelling and were airlifted to Jammu for treatment.

Chief minister Mehbooba Mufti expressed anguish over the loss of lives and stressed the need for peace if we want to save the people of the state.

Director General of Police S P Vaid in a tweet said, "Due to shelling from across (LoC) in Balakote sector of Poonch, 5 civilians of a family died & 2 are injured who are being shifted to hospital."

The civilian casualties occurred in forward village of Devta Sargloon when a shell hit the mud house

of Choudhary Mohammad Ramzan (35), a police official said.

The deceased were Ramzan, his wife Malika Bi (32), their sons Abdul Rehman (14), Mohammad Rizwan (12) and Razaq Ramzan (seven).

"Ramzan's two daughters — Nasreen Kouser (11) and Mahreen Kouser (five) — were critically injured in the incident and were airlifted to Jammu for specialised treatment," the police official said.

Naureen (12) and Mehreen (6) were airlifted to GMCH Jammu for treatment after their entire family including parents and three brothers were killed as a shell hit their house in the forward area of Balakote in district Poonch on Sunday.

The minister asked the doctors at GMCH Jammu to ensure best possible treatment to the girls. He said the government is taking all the administrative measures to reach out to the affected population in the area.

Body of 25-year old man found in Pulwama district

March 11: The body of a 25-year-old man, who appeared to have been tortured, was found in south Kashmir's Pulwama district, police said.

The body of Mohammad Shafi Sofi, resident of Somboora, was found on the Ratnipora road this morning, a police spokesperson said.

Sofi was working as salesman at an electronics shop here, the official said.

The body was taken to the sub-district hospital at Pampore for autopsy and initial reports suggested that Sofi was tortured, he added.

There were multiple deep cut wounds on his legs and other body parts, the spokesperson said adding there was a rope around his neck which indicates the possibility of strangulation besides torture.

No bullet injury was found on body, he said. A case has been registered and investigation taken up, the spokesman said.

Civilian killed near army firing range in Awantipora

March 12: A civilian was killed Monday in a blast near an Army firing range in Awantipora area of Pulwama district in Jammu and Kashmir, police said.

Ashiq Hussain Chopan (25) was grazing his livestock when he came into contact with some object

that exploded and injured him severely in Jawbara, near the firing range of the Army's Victor Force, a police official said.

He said Chopan was rushed to the nearest sub-district hospital, where he succumbed to injuries.

Man shot dead in Kishtwar

March 9: A 45-year-old man was shot dead by unknown persons in Kishtwar on Friday evening.

Official sources identified the slain as Istiyaq Ahmad Dar son of Master Ghulam Rasool Dar of Semna colony. They said some unknown gunmen fired upon Dar near Haider Sheikh Gate behind Islamia Faridiya School Kishtwar.

Dar received bullet wounds in his head and was immediately shifted to the district hospital where doctors declared him brought dead, they said.

Meanwhile, the police constituted SIT to investigate the case.

Inspector General of Police, SD Singh Jamwal when contacted told GNS that Dar was fired upon from point blank range with a pistol.

"Dar is a hotel owner and we have registered a case for the murder to identify the persons behind the killing," Jamwal said.

Terrorized: Impact of Violence on the Children of Jammu and Kashmir

In 15 years since 2003, 318 children (in the age group of 1 and 17) have been killed and no one among the perpetrators of these heinous crimes has been brought to justice till date.

March 30: Jammu Kashmir Coalition of Civil Society (JKCCS) released a report on the impact of violence on the children of Jammu and Kashmir titled Terrorized: Impact of Violence on the Children of Jammu and Kashmir (2018). The report is the assessment of the violence against children in Jammu and Kashmir in the last fifteen years i.e. (2003 to 2017) and gives data on killings, arrests, mass violence, sexual violence perpetrated against children.

Children in Jammu and Kashmir are living in the most militarized zone of the world, with the presence of 7,00,000 troopers, which exposes them to the risk of all grave six violations against children as laid out in United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The report by Jammu Kashmir Coalition of Civil Society examines the situation of children in the ongoing conflict in Jammu and Kashmir during the last fifteen years – i.e. 2003 to 2017. The report provides statistics, graphs, figures, and the analysis of killings of children in the last fifteen years (2003 to 2017) in various incidents of violence in Jammu and Kashmir. With providing examples of targeted state violence against children, the report demonstrates that children have not been viewed differently by armed forces and have been targeted and victimized as part of the state's offensive against the general population.

The fifteen-year period from 2003 to 2017, witnessed not less than 318 killings of children (in the age group of 1 to 17) in various incidents of violence in Jammu and Kashmir. The killing of 318 children constitutes 6.95% of the civilian killings in last fifteen

years, as 4571 civilians have been killed in Jammu and Kashmir in the same period (2003 – 2017). In the same period, i.e. from 2003 to 2017, at least 16,436 killings were recorded in Jammu and Kashmir, and the majority of them included alleged militants numbering at least 8537 killings. The numbers indicate that in the last fifteen years Jammu and Kashmir in an average year has witnessed at least 1,095 killings, which belies the government's claims of 'return to normalcy'.

The pattern of killings of children in the fifteen-year period suggests that children were direct targets of state violence, as part of its stated offensive to curb uprising and militancy. At least 144 children were killed by Indian armed forces and state police in Jammu and Kashmir, which alone accounts for nearly half, i.e. 44.02 percent, of the total children killed. Most of the children, at least 110 of them,

killed in state violence were shot dead in different incidents of violence, and not less than 8 children died due to injuries inflicted from pellet shot-guns fired by government forces. Twenty-seven children died to drowning either caused due to the negligence of armed forces in Wular lake tragedy or being chased by government forces during a protest, where victims find no way of escape from the armed forces and forced to jump into water bodies, resulting in their death.

The report lays bare that there are no legal and normative processes or practices protecting children's rights in Jammu and Kashmir as hundreds of minors have been booked under the repressive Public Safety Act (PSA), with total disregard to the fact of their being children.



SHOPIAN KILLINGS: EMBOLDENED 44 RR RELENTLESS IN THEIR KILLING SPREE

March 05: In last two years, South Kashmir has witnessed an increased number of extrajudicial executions at the hands of armed forces. The district Shopian, where 44 Rashtriya Rifles of Indian Army is camped, has been accused of various killings of civilians. On 23 February 2017, 44 RR was involved in the killing of a civilian lady Jana Begum during an encounter in Chittargam in Shopian. On 24 January 2018, 44 RR killed one minor boy Shakir Ahmad Mir and one lady Saima Wani near an encounter site at Chaigund village of Shopian. Again on 27 January 2018, army personnel from 44 RR shot dead 3 civilians in Ganowpora area of Shopian. The police filed an FIR against Major Aditya of 44 RR (Garhwal Rifles). Yesterday, it was the same unit of 44 RR who have been accused of killing of 4 civilians and 2 militants allegedly in an encounter in Pahnoo area of Shopian. The locals have refuted the Army version and have said that the Army has killed the four civilians in a cold-blooded manner. In a span of one year, 44 RR stationed in Shopian is involved in the killing of at least 9 civilians in the district.

It is pertinent to note that following the killing of three civilians in Gonowpora on 27 January 2018, government next day said they have filed an FIR against the accused Major Aditya of 44 RR. However, the government in their status report filed before the Supreme Court said that they have not named Major Aditya in the FIR, following which the Supreme Court today stayed the investigation till 24 April.

The killing of four civilians by Indian Army's 44 RR in Pahnoo area of Shopian district on 4 March is yet another instance of brutal and unbridled force used on civilians. These killings should be understood in the context of impunity enjoyed by the army generally and the specific emboldening which this particular army unit received in the form of moral and juridical impunity, when the Supreme Court stayed the FIR and there was a widespread support by Indian political parties and media for the accused.

While the Chief Minister has contradicted the Army by claiming that the four killed were civilians, as opposed to the Army version that they were Over Ground Workers (OGW's), therefore it is expected that the

government on their own will file an FIR and begin the investigations. But given the recent past context and the weak response of the Jammu and Kashmir government vis-a-vis crimes perpetrated by armed forces, it is difficult to imagine that anything leading to justice will be undertaken by the present dispensation.

The repetition of these unabated human rights abuses is directly a consequence of legal, political and

moral impunity enjoyed by the armed forces in India and also the lack of will of the Jammu and Kashmir government to protect the life and liberties of people of Jammu and Kashmir. Unless the J&K government and government of India give up on the various forms of impunity provided to armed forces, these killings are expected to not stop.

Kathua Rape & Murder Case

Chronological updates of Kathua rape and murder case, as appeared in media:

➤ **Kathua rape-murder case: Victim family's lawyer fears political pressure**

March 04: Lawyers who are assisting the family of the 8-year-old girl raped and murdered in Kathua have said that political intervention and communal speeches are hampering the investigation in the case.

The counsel for the victim's family, Deepika Singh Rajawat, told media that ministers of the BJP have appeared at many public events and provoked people to challenge the police probe.

"Lal Singh, who is a cabinet minister, recently appeared at Parashu Ram Mandir in Hiranagar and asked people to not care about the law. He even promised them that no one will be arrested in the case, come what may," Deepika said.

Deepika has filed a petition in the High Court on behalf of the family. The petition has sought the court's supervision of the police investigation.

The lawyer said that pressure is being mounted on the investigating officers through political campaigns and communal speeches. "The Crime Branch officers are doing the investigation wonderfully, but provocations and political pressure definitely hinder the investigation," Deepika said.

Referring to the BJP ministers's speeches at the Hiranagar rally, she said, "They were asking people to strengthen the agitation against the arrest of the accused, which amounts to intimidation of the victim and of the investigating officers," she said.

Earlier, addressing a seminar here by telephone, Deepika highlighted different aspects of the case. "There is a vested interest working here which must be defeated through a fair probe by the Crime Branch," she said.

Another lawyer, Talib Hussain, who is providing legal assistance to the family, said the family was being harassed.

"Such crimes have happened in the past as well," he said of the girl's rape and murder. "These crimes are aimed at terrorising the minority community," he said, addressing the seminar.

According to him, BJP and Congress have joined hands to form the communal Hindu Ekta Manch.

"The organising of HEM is meant to incite violence and polarise voters," Hussain said.

The seminar was organised by a solidarity group and was attended by members of civil society, media, doctors, and students.

"Let's not hang our heads in collective shame by not standing up for the victim. We will ensure the safety of the victim's family and that the criminals who mercilessly raped and murdered an innocent child are punished," said Dr Khawar, one of the organisers.

➤ **Kathua rape and murder: Police foil Hindu Manch march in Kathua, use canes, teargas**

March 08: Srinagar: Police on Thursday foiled a proposed march called by Hindu Ekta Manch (HEM) in Hiranagar area of Kathua district. According to local sources, "aggressive" HEM members led by the outfit's president Vijay Sharma shouted slogans against Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti as they tried to take out their march. Police swung into action and detained several persons on charges of defying restrictions under Section 144 CrPC imposed in the area.

Sources said that after police foiled the march, scores of people from the Hindu community of the area appeared on the road near Pathkot and tried to block the highway. Police cane-charged these people and used tear smoke shells to disperse them, injuring many in the process.

➤ **Motive of the heinous crime was to spread fear among the nomadic**

March 09: The ongoing probe into the rape and murder of an 8-year-old girl from the nomad community in Kathua district has found that the 'juvenile' arrested in the case is actually an adult.

A local news agency on Saturday quoted a source as saying that the police's special investigation team (SIT) has also found that the motive of the heinous crime was to spread fear among the nomadic Bakerwal community who move to the plains in winters along with their livestock, so as to drive them out from Rasana village.

The minor girl, who belonged to the Gujjar community, was kidnapped when she was shepherding her horses at Rasnaa village in Kathua district on January 10. Her disfigured body was found seven days later. Police investigations established that she was raped before she was murdered. Initially, the government had claimed that a 15-year-old boy arrested in the case had confessed to the crime.

The High Court directed the Crime Branch's special team investigating the case to ascertain the age of the accused juvenile, and subsequently a medical board was constituted by the Government Medical College Jammu.

"On the basis of physical, dental and radiological examination, the approximate age of the individual is above nineteen years," the board said in its report.

The SIT, sources said, has submitted these details before the High Court in a status report and has stated that it seems that the police Head Constable in the area had tried to save the accused. The Head Constable was arrested on March 7.

"The role of other officials who remained associated with the initial investigation, in the destruction of material evidence, is being looked into," the local news agency quoted anonymous sources as saying.

It said the SIT, based on witnesses conversant with the facts and circumstances of the case, has concluded that the entire game plan of the gruesome rape and murder was premeditated and the mastermind has been identified and would be arrested soon. "The mastermind behind the entire game was bent upon to dislodge the Bakerwal community and in order to execute the nefarious design, he hatched conspiracy with (others)," the sources told the news agency.

Meanwhile, protests were held in Baderwah after Friday prayers for trying to communalise the case. People assembled outside the Jamia Masjid and held protest against the government.

➤ **Asifa's medical report reveals death due to strangulation**

March 16: The medical report of eight-year old slain Gujjar girl Asifa has confirmed that she died due to strangulation.

Missing Kashmiri student kidnapped, claims Maoist poster

March 07: With mystery still shrouding the disappearance of Kashmiri MBBS student Suhail Aijaz, the recovery of a suspected Maoist poster in Bhubaneswar claiming that Kashmiri youth has been abducted created panic on Monday, media reports said.

The suspected Maoist poster was put up near Baramunda bus stand in Bhubaneswar claiming that Suhail has been kidnapped by the rebels.

In the poster, the Maoists have threatened to kill Suhail if their leader Sabyasachi Panda, who is

The viscera report has confirmed that she had both the "internal and external" injuries on her private parts.

"The viscera report has been submitted and it has confirmed that Asifa was murdered 72 hours prior to the recovery of her body," said the reliable sources.

They told media that the report has confirmed that she was murdered between January 12 and 13 while her body was recovered from the forests on January 17 in Rasana area of Hiranagar in Kathua district.

"She died of strangulation," discloses the report which was submitted to the concerned health authorities in Kathua.

Sanji Ram – an ex-revenue official – has gone underground after Crime Branch summoned him for his questioning regarding his role in Asifa's case. However none of the officials was willing to be quoted over the findings of the viscera report.

currently lodged in jail, is not released within seven days, reports quoting the poster said.

Suhail Aijaz, a resident of Kupwara district in north Kashmir and pursuing MBBS at AIIMS Bhubaneswar is missing from February 9. The matter came to light after the AIIMS authorities had lodged a complaint in this connection on February 17.

Following the incident, police of three States including Odisha, Jammu and Kashmir and West Bengal are on the job to trace him.

SC halts probe against Major Aditya

JK Govt can't lodge FIR against army men: GoI

March 5: The Supreme Court halted further investigation in January 27 civilians' killings in Shopian involving a senior army officer, accused of leading an army convoy, even as the Centre and Jammu and Kashmir government were at loggerheads over lodging of FIR.

Observing that Major Aditya "is an army officer and not an ordinary criminal", the top court directed the state government that no further investigation shall take place in the case till April 24, when the final hearing in the matter would take place.

The Government of India (GoI) contended that the state government cannot lodge an FIR against army personnel under section 7 of the Jammu and Kashmir AFSPA for the job done in discharge of their duty, as no prior sanction was taken from the Union of India.

The state government, on other hand, argued that the army officials do not respond to the communications sent by investigating officer and think that "they are above law".

It said that army men do not have "any license to kill" and the state government has the "right to investigate any cognizable offence and deaths of its own people".

A bench comprising Chief Justice Dipak Misra and Justices A M Khanwilkar and D Y Chandrachud said "let the matter be listed for final disposal on April 24. In the meantime, there shall be no further investigation on the basis of FIR till then."

Three civilians were killed when Army personnel fired at a stone-pelting youth in Ganowpora

village of Shopian on January 27 this year, prompting the chief minister to order an inquiry into the incident.

During the hearing, Attorney General K K Venugopal, appearing for GoI, said that under provisions of Armed Force Special Powers Act (AFSPA), no FIR can be lodged against army personnel for their work done on duty and initiation of criminal action can only be done with the prior sanction of the central government.

Section 7 of Jammu and Kashmir AFSPA says "No prosecution, suit or other legal proceeding shall be instituted, except with the previous sanction of the GoI, against any person in respect of anything done or purported to be done in exercise of the powers conferred by this Act".

Senior advocate Shekhar Naphade and advocate Shoeb Alam, appearing for Jammu and Kashmir government, cited various verdicts of the top court and said that requirement of sanction comes at the time of cognisance taken by the court and not at the time of initiating of a criminal action or filing of FIR.

Naphade said that Major Aditya does not even figure among the names of the accused in the FIR lodged on the allegation that army personnel open fired in retaliation in which three persons were killed.

"He (Major Aditya) has not been named as accused in the FIR. The column of accused in the FIR is left blank. His name also does not feature in the case diary as of now. He is just been named on the basis of allegation that he led the convoy which had opened fired on retaliation. There is no specific allegation against him," the senior advocate said, adding that the petition is infructuous.

To this, the court asked whether Major Aditya was the only person from the Army whose name features in the narrative of FIR and does the statement of Naphade means that he will not be named as an accused in future.

Naphade replied that the possibility of inclusion of Major Aditya's name among the names of accused depends on further investigation in the case.

"Then we will say that no action will be taken against him till the matter is disposed of here (apex court)," the bench said.

The senior advocate said the court had already ordered that no coercive action be taken against him (Aditya).

The bench said, "he is an Army officer not an ordinary criminal. You have to see the matter in a holistic way".

To this, Naphade said "Army officers have no licence to kill and the state has the statutory right to investigate a cognisable offence and the deaths of its own people".

Reacting immediately, Venugopal retorted: "Licence to kill? Many of our troops are being killed there."

SHRC slams Ganderbal police for 15-year failure to complete custodial killing case

March 04: The State Human Rights Commission (SHRC) came down heavily on the state police for failing for the last 15 years to complete investigations into the custodial killing of detenu Abdul Hamid Gani.

The commission directed the Superintendent of Police, Ganderbal, to remain present before it on 2 April, 2018. Direction was also passed to Deputy Commissioner, Ganderbal, to consider granting of ex-gratia under SRO-43 to the victim's family.

Assistant Superintendent of Police, Ganderbal, who was present before the commission couldn't explain the report filed by Senior Superintendent of Police, Ganderbal.

The commission's Chairman, Justice (rtd.) Bilal Nazki, remarked that it is very unfortunate that the police has failed to complete the investigation for the last 15 years and justice has eluded the victim and his family all this time.

"This commission is therefore directing SP Ganderbal to be present on next hearing and also victim's family is directed to move an application before deputy commissioner Ganderbal for consideration of granting ex-gratia relief under SRO-43," the commission ruled.

The SHRC in its previous order had directed SP Ganderbal to remain present before it to explain a report filed by him on 31 January 2017, which stated that "custodial killing of Abdul Hamid Gani has been established after verification of the case".

The report states that the death of the deceased took place when he was in the custody of Special Operations Group (SOG) personnel. It also states that the circumstances of death are doubtful as the doctor who had conducted the post-mortem had stated that "he was incompetent to carry the medical investigation but he was forced by around 36 security men to write the report".

The SHRC was hearing a petition filed by rights activist Ahsan Untoo which alleges that the Ganderbal SOG had apprehended Abdul Hamid Gani of Preng Kangan on 11 September 2003 and had subjected him to physical torture by giving him electric shocks and

The apex court thereafter listed the matter for final hearing on April 24.

The top court had on February 12 restrained the Jammu and Kashmir police from taking any "coercive steps" against Army officers, including Major Aditya Kumar, who was earlier reportedly named as accused in the case.

The FIR was registered against personnel of 10 Garhwal Rifles under sections 302 (murder) and 307 (attempt to murder) of the Ranbir Penal Code (the penal code applicable in Jammu and Kashmir).

The apex court was hearing the plea of Lieutenant Colonel Karamveer Singh, the father of Major Aditya Kumar, seeking to quash the FIR against his son.

Singh had said in his petition that his son, a major in 10 Garhwal Rifles, was "wrongly and arbitrarily" named in the FIR as the incident relates to an Army convoy that was on bona fide military duty in an area under AFSPA and was isolated by an "unruly and deranged" mob pelting stones, causing damage to military vehicles.

picking flesh from his body. The victim died in custody, after which a false encounter was shown to cover up the case. After the petition was filed, the SHRC directed the police to reopen the case and investigate it properly.

The police report submitted before the commission said that a case FIR no.143/2003 stands registered in Police Station Ganderbal after receiving a written complaint from SI Ashok Kumar of police component Ganderbal to the effect that the said police station, along with 65 Bn CRPF, apprehended one suspect, Abdul Hamid Gani of Preng Kangan, who during interrogation admitted his involvement in subversive activities and his affiliation with the Hizbul Mujahideen (HM) militant outfit and also admitted that he was a close aide of HM divisional commander Sajad Khan of Gutlibagh.

On his confession, two hand grenades and four UBGLs were recovered from a hideout in Gutlibagh. The police party with him went to the said place, whereupon militants opened fire, which was retaliated and 5RR was also called.

A heavy gunfight took place in which Gani was killed. An FIR was registered, and the case was closed. "After the case was closed, Abdul Rashid Gani, brother of the deceased, lodged a complaint in PS Kangan alleging that his brother was kidnapped by STF personnel and killed in a fake encounter.

"Subsequently an FIR no.132/2003 was registered in PS Kangan which was later cancelled and clubbed with FIR no.143/2003 of PS Ganderbal. Executive Magistrate Kangan ordered for fresh investigation in the case. Upon verification, custodial killing of the deceased was established."

The case now continues under investigation and new witnesses have been recorded. "Also correspondence has been made with 5RR and 65 Bn CRPF to ensure presence of eye witnesses. In reply 5 RR has stated that after carrying detailed check of all records, no details of the subject case are available with the unit. However 65 Bn response is awaited," the report states.

Disappeared Kupwara man's family says officer 'assured army will find him'

March 08: The family of a man who disappeared after his detention by army at a camp in Lolab area of Kupwara last year said on Thursday that an army officer assured them that army would search for him.

Ghulam Qadir Khan, Manzoor's father said, "A month ago major Nishant Kumar of the Trehmukh camp, where they had detained Manzoor, said he will hand over my son to me come what may. His assurance gives me hope that my son is alive and would return any day."

Nazir Ahmad Mir, a relative of Manzoor, said, "We asked army whether he is alive or dead. They replied by saying 'we will not leave any stone unturned to find him.'"

The army also said, "We 'mistook him for some other Manzoor but after our doubts were cleared we let him go'. They said that they had no idea of where he went afterwards. They said 'it may be that he crossed the border but we will find him,' " said Nazir.

However, the army has told a Special Investigation Team of the army that they had nothing to do with Manzoor's disappearance.

In fact, the army did not submit to the SIT the register in which the soldiers keep record of the people entering or leaving the camp.

The State Human Rights Commission on March 8 also asked the SSP Kupwara to submit a detailed compliance report about the present status of the investigation carried out by the SIT.

Forced labour in Kulgam: DC seeks report from police

March 02: Taking cognisance of the media report of forced labour news item, the district administration has initiated an inquiry into the matter and sought a report from the police.

"We have taken suo moto cognisance of the news story and sought a report from the Kulgam superintendent of police," Kulgam deputy commissioner Talat Parvez Rohella told media.

He said the commanding officer of the 9 Rashtriya Rifles battalion, which has been accused of forcing the youths into labour in Ashmuji village of Kulgam, has also been informed about the investigation.

The tehsildar concerned has been recording the statements of the youths who have accused the army of forced labour, the DC said.

It was learnt that the tehsildar has recorded statements of four youths so far. Local residents have demanded that the camp should be shifted from the area.

During the past week, the local residents had told media, army called youths to the camp, beat some of them up and forced them into hauling construction material and oil barrels, cutting grass and breaking stones.

The army called the allegations as baseless.

The practice of forced labour by the army was common throughout the nineties in the Valley, especially in Kupwara district.

Incumbent legislator from Langate assembly segment of Kupwara Engineer Rashid has said that he too was taken as a "bonded labourer".

"The people in north Kashmir areas of Handwara and Langate used to be quite frequently taken for bonded labour and forced to clear the road for the army right from 1989 to 2004. We fought against it despite facing wrath of the army," Rashid said.

He said: "That time the army had termed it as propaganda to malign their image. Now when similar incidents have come to the fore in southern Kashmir this validates the truth of our ordeal."

Rashid recalls how the killing of a man triggered mass movement after which there was an agreement between locals and army ending the practice then.

"The people of south Kashmir need to start a similar movement before this thing becomes normal," Rashid said.

The legislator has approached the State Human Rights Commission seeking compensation for the "bonded labour" he claims to have been forced to do in the past.

KP, Muslim families accuse Army of assaulting them in Tahab

March 27: A number of Kashmiri Pandit (KP) and Muslim families in Tahab village alleged that late last night Army went on a rampage in South Kashmir area and assaulted them during an operation which was launched to trace militants.

On March 25 evening some gun shots were heard in Tahab village near a CRPF camp. Later police said that a "sentry" who was on duty noticed some suspicious movement after which he fired few shots in the air.

Subsequently a cordon and search operation was launched to ferret out the suspected militants and during the operation residents alleged they were thrashed. Some private property was also damaged.

Anil Kaul, a KP resident of Tahab, informed media that at 8:30 pm on Monday they heard some gun shots and "immediately after that we locked main gate of our house."

"Some army men barged into our courtyard at around 2:30 am after breaking the gate and forced all of us out of the house," Kaul said, adding that "once we came out of our house, we were physically assaulted by the army men."

"They (Army men) manhandled us and assaulted our guests as well," he said, adding that that they pleaded before the Army men to spare them but they didn't listen to them.

"I told them that we belong to minority community and have nothing to do with this incident but they didn't bother," he said.

The KP families of Tahab requested the state government to look into the "issue and take a strong note of it." They also demanded relocation of Army unit from Tahab.

Another resident, Aijaz Ahmad Sheikh, said that army barged into their house at around 3:00 am. They damaged "all house hold items including utensils

and also the cupboards.” “When I objected their highhandedness they roughed me up,” he said, while showing bruises on his face and legs. He said that around five army men assaulted him.

He said two army men beat him with gun butts on his back and others resorted to kicks and blows.

Aijaz further said that they had received guests who were also assaulted. “My brother in law who resides in Anantnag was ruthlessly beaten,” he said, adding that 10 other residents were also thrashed “without any provocation.”

The residents further said that some women too were harassed by the army men even as they neither raised any slogan nor pelted stones.

Shopkeeper allegedly beaten, tied with rope and dragged around village in Tral

March 28: The shopkeeper allegedly beaten by army soldiers in a Tral village on March 26 evening is at risk of hearing loss due to injuries in his left ear, the doctor treating him at SMHS Hospital said.

Bashir Ahmad Hajam, 40, was admitted to SMHS Hospital on Tuesday where he was diagnosed with multiple trauma. Doctors said that Hajam has been put on multiple drug therapy, including painkillers, anti-inflammatory drugs and antibiotics, and that he is unable to move properly.

“He is presently in psychological trauma due to the severe beating. His condition was very bad when we received him. There were bruises all over his body, especially on his face. We are closely monitoring him. He is complaining of hearing loss in his left ear,” said the doctor treating him at SMHS.

“His condition can be life-threatening if proper care is not taken. His ribs have also been wounded and there are chances that he has sustained internal injuries in chest and abdomen area,” the doctor added.

Hajam is currently admitted to the Surgery Ward of SMHS. A resident of Pastuna locality of Tral, he told media that he was returning from some villages where he had gone to meet customers when army men stopped him near his house and started beating him.

In protest to the army raid early March 27 morning a large number of people staged a sit-in and denounced army’s highhandedness and sought relocation of army camp. Following the protests, deputy commissioner Pulwama, Ghulam Mohammad Dar, rushed to the village to pacify the agitating residents. He assured them that “he would discuss relocation of army camp with police authorities.”

Talking to media, DC said that he assured the local people that a probe will be carried out.

“If anybody is found guilty for beating civilians they will be taken to task,” he said. Dar also said that he has issued directions for relocation of the army unit and the decision about the shifting of the CRPF camp will be taken “after some time.”

He said that five to six army men beat him with sticks, logs, gun butts and blows with their hands and legs. They were accusing him of assisting militants in the area, which he kept denying, he said.

“I pleaded before them that I had not helped any militant ever since I was released from jail in 1994. But they didn’t listen and continued beating me,” he said.

Hajam said he was knocked down on the ground and beaten till he became unconscious.

“They pushed me down and started beating me with sticks, gun butts, and rods. They also kicked me on my face, chest and legs,” he said.

“The army men were asking me the whereabouts of militants, which I was unaware of. When I replied in the negative, they started beating me more. They even abused me and said they will kill me as ‘I was a burden on the earth’,” he said.

Medical Superintendent of SMHS Hospital, Dr Saleem Tak, said the victim had been put under close observation after he was diagnosed with multiple trauma.

“His condition is stable but we have to conduct different tests to negate any chances of severe internal injury. It will take us some more days to discharge him,” he said.

Khrew Lecturer’s custodial death:

Police seek sanction to prosecute 23 Army soldiers

March 10: Jammu and Kashmir Police probe into the death of a 30-year-old college lecturer, allegedly beaten in Army custody in August 2016, has held 23 Army personnel responsible and have sought sanction for their prosecution, a media reports said on Saturday.

“The Army cooperated in the probe and allowed investigators to record statements of the Army personnel. Special Investigation Team, led by a DySP, completed the probe two weeks ago,” the Indian Express reported quoted Awantipora SSP Mohammad Zahid as saying.

“We haven’t filed a chargesheet yet. We will require sanction for prosecution under AFSPA for that,” he said. “I won’t be able to talk about the outcome of our investigation.”

On the night of August 17, 2016, Shabir Ahmad Mango, a 30-year-old college lecturer, was beaten to death, allegedly by Army personnel in Seershali village of Khrew in south Kashmir’s Pulwama district.

Watergam youth beaten ruthlessly at police station

March 19: A youth from Behrampur Sopore was reportedly called to a police station and beaten up ruthlessly.

According to sources, Gayas Din Mir son of Mohd Maqbool Mir of Behrampur village of Sopore was called by Station House Officer Watergam for questioning, but beaten up when he showed up. Sources said, he was saved by other policemen and rushed to local hospital.

Family members of the victim told media that Mir is a driver for a gas company vehicle.

“He was called by in charge officer Watergam for questioning where he has been told that he is doing illegal work and then beaten ruthlessly,” family members said.

The Station House Officer termed the allegation baseless

“This is a normal issue. We will sort it out,” he

said.

Kashmiri army trooper arrested for beating neighbourhood boy

March 19: In Uri area of Baramulla district, police arrested Syed Gulzar, a trooper in the army’s 4 JAKLI regiment, on charges of beating a teenage boy from his neighbourhood so badly that he had to be taken to hospital. The teenage boy, identified as Syed Danish, 14, as well as the army trooper Syed Gulzar are residents of Cholan village in Uri and happen to be relatives. Syed Gulzar beat up the boy reportedly over some issue that came up during a cricket match. Danish had to be taken to a nearby hospital for treatment.

At the complaint of the parents of Danish, police in Uri registered a case under FIR number 21/18 under Sections 341, 323, 506 RPC against the army trooper and arrested him.

Sub Divisional Police Officer (SDPO) Uri, Javid Ahmad, told media, “Yes, we registered a case and have also arrested the army trooper. Further investigation is on.”

He added that the accused trooper is the next-door neighbour and relative of the teenage boy.

5. Militarization

Army encroached, fenced our land: NHPC to district authorities We Started Work After NHPC Authorities Provided NOC, Says Army

March 28: The authorities of National Hydroelectric Power Corporation (NHPC) Uri have sought the intervention of district authorities over alleged encroachment by army on a land situated at Chehala Boniyar, which according to NHPC authorities is mutated in their favour.

As per NHPC officials, the land in question is a big chunk of land situated at Chehala near army checkpoint Boniyar and stands mutated in favour of NHPC department.

Accusing the army of encroachment of the land by fencing it with barbed wire, the NHPC officials have sought immediate intervention of the district authorities.

“We never issued any No Objection Certificate (NOC) for development of any kind of establishment on this land in favour of any agency,” reads a communication by the NHPC officials addressed to the district authorities.

The NHPC officials had shot a letter to the district authorities and sought their intervention. “It has come to our notice that this land is being fenced with barbed wire by an army unit for unknown purposes. Therefore it is requested to your good self to issue necessary instructions to stop the encroachment of NHPC land by the army at Chehala Boniyar,” reads a letter shot to district authorities by the NHPC officials (vide no NH/UPS/GM/2018/2593, dated 27-3-2018).

Talking to media, the General Manager (GM) NHPC Uri one said that they will not allow any encroachment on this land which has been mutated in favour of the department long ago. “We have communicated to the district authorities over the issue

and we are optimistic that no such encroachment will be allowed on this land,” said Manoj Kumar, General Manager NHPC Uri one.

While seeking the intervention of district authorities, the NHPC department officials claim that they have “never issued NOC for development of any kind of establishment on this land in favour of any agency.”

Following the development, the deputy commissioner Baramulla visited the spot on March 28 and ordered an immediate halt of construction work. “After the communication from NHPC officials, I visited the spot and ordered immediate halt of any construction work over the land in question. We will be discussing the matter with both the parties and try to solve the issue,” said Deputy Commissioner Baramulla, Dr Nasir Naqash.

PRO defence Rajesh Kalia said the piece of land is proposed to be used for sports activity in the area and added that “no permanent structure is coming up at the site.”

Kalia claimed that before starting work on the ground, the local army unit received NOC from the NHPC officials. “It was last year that the local army authorities discussed the matter with the NHPC officials and clarified that the ground will be used for the promotion of sports activities in the area. Agreeing with the army’s proposal, the NHPC authorities did provide NOC and thereafter we started leveling the ground,” said Kalia, adding that if NHPC officials had some issue, “they should have informed the same army unit before approaching the civil administration.”

NIA could not produce ‘single photo’ or ‘video’ showing Karman’s involvement in stone throwing

March 14: Not a “single photo” or “video” could be produced by National Investigation Agency (NIA) showing Kamran Yousuf as being involved in stone-pelting, said a Delhi court while granting bail to arrested photojournalist.

The NIA arrested Kamran on September 5, 2017, from his hometown in southern Kashmir’s Pulwama on charges of “stone throwing”. The agency alleged that his work as a photojournalist was merely a front to “cover up his subversive activities”.

Six months after he was imprisoned in Delhi’s highly secured Tihar Jail, Kamran was granted bail by

additional sessions judge Tarun Sherawat on two sureties of Rs 50,000 each on March 13.

“NIA has not placed on record any single photo/video showing that the applicant/accused was indulging in stone pelting activities at any site,” said the 27-page order.

“...Mere presence of the accused at the site of incident is not sufficient to implicate such accused, who is a journalist, for the offences allegedly occurred during that period at that site,” it noted.

The 23-year-old photojournalist was a regular contributor to Kashmir’s largest circulated daily apart from other

March 11: Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Mehbooba Mufti requested Union home minister Rajnath Singh to look into the case of Kamran Yousuf -- a Kashmiri photojournalist -- who is in the NIA custody.

"Spoke to Home Minister @rajnathsingh ji to look into Kamran Yousuf's case. I've requested him to intervene so that the life of a young budding journalist does not get ruined," Mehbooba said on Twitter.

media organisations. He lived in Pulwama's Tahab village and was raised by his mother after she got divorced when Kamran was two.

The NIA's argument in its chargesheet, which had drawn condemnation from journalist bodies, was that Kamran was not a "real journalist" because he had not covered "any developmental activity of any government department or any inauguration of hospital, school building, road, bridge, statement of political party in power or any other social/developmental activity by state government or government of India."

In the detailed bail order, the court said that Kamran was working as a photojournalist and was covering, "social, cultural, political, economical (sic), and other activities in the Valley".

"As such, in my considered view, his presence on the sites of stone pelting incident etc is intrinsic notwithstanding the fact/contention that he was not a permanent employee of any media organization," the judge said.

The court also dismissed the NIA claim that Kamran had "close nexus with terrorist organisations" saying the investigating officer (IO) could not show any chat conversation of Kamran with other accused chargesheeted in the case.

The young photojournalist's counsel had sought time for verifying the phone numbers, which the

NIA had accused Kamran of being in touch with. The numbers turned out to be of SSP JK Police and of other journalists or photojournalists. "But none of them is the co-accused in the case," the court observed.

"In the circumstances, I may observe that applicant or accused has never been in touch with the other accused persons of this case and even if as per the prosecution case, he was in touch/contact with other suspects i.e. B Party, in that case, it is not explained as to why the prosecution did not make them as accused in this case.

"...Or why did they not investigate on their involvement or participation in the alleged offences notwithstanding the fact that the present application is pending or disposal for last more than four months even after filing of the charge-sheet about 50 days back. It is surprising to note that the IO is not able to provide details of these persons till date," the court said.

"Prima facie", it noted, NIA has also not leveled specific allegations against Kamran that he is a member of any particular banned organisation as the first schedule annexed to Unlawful Activities Act. "Even otherwise, mere membership of a banned organization will not make a person criminally liable unless he resorts to violence or incites people to violence," it added.

6. Armed Forces Suicides

➤ **Army soldier shoots himself to death in north Kashmir**

March 07: An army man committed suicide by shooting self with his service rifle in Langate area of north Kashmir's Kupwara district today wee hours, police said.

"Sepoy Birender Sinha (27), of 30 Rashtriya Rifles today morning shoots himself at army headquarters camp in Langate while he was on duty," a police officer told news GNS, adding that the soldier suffered serious head injuries in the incident.

Following the gunshot, the colleagues rushed towards the soldier and found him in a pool of blood, he said, adding that the soldier was immediately taken to military hospital Drugmulla where doctors declared him brought dead.

➤ **Army soldier shoots himself dead in Kupwara**

March 08: In yet another incident an army soldier posted at the Warnow area in Kupwara committed suicide by shooting himself to death with his service rifle, police said.

Sepoy Shankar Singh (31), a resident of Prithvapura, Rajasthan, was serving in 18RR e-coy at Warnow area of Kupwara.

After hearing the gunshot, the soldier's colleagues rushed to the spot and found him lying in a pool of blood, police said.

A case has been registered at the police station Khurram and an investigation is being taken up.

It is pertinent to mention that it was the second such suicide incident in this north Kashmir's border district in two days.

➤ **CRPF man commits suicide**

March 09: A Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) soldier from 79 Battalion allegedly killed himself in Sonwar area of Srinagar.

The soldier has been identified as Sukhdev and he has killed himself by firing with service rifle in his camp.

➤ **Army man commits suicide**

March 20: An Army jawan allegedly committed suicide by shooting himself with his service rifle in Jammu and Kashmir's Kulgam district, police said.

Sepoy Kulvinder Singh of 10 Sikh Regiment allegedly shot himself with his service rifle inside an Army camp at Mughal Gund in the Qazigund area of Kulgam, a police official said.

He said the jawan was taken to a military hospital, but succumbed to his injuries.

➤ **Soldier commits suicide**

March 20: An Army jawan allegedly committed suicide by shooting himself with his service pistol in Jammu and Kashmir's Samba district.

One Jawan Naresh Yadav was found dead with bullet injuries in the Maheswar area, Senior Superintendent of Police Samba Anil Magotra told PTI.

The body has been recovered and sent to post mortem, he said, adding that initial investigation points towards suicide by him with his service pistol and an investigation is on.

Of 87 civilian killings in 2016, probe completed in only 7 cases: Govt

March 31: The government has revealed that 87 civilian killings took place during 2016 unrest triggered by killing of Hizb commander Burhan Wani and inquiry has been completed in only seven cases so far.

According to the report submitted by the government in State Human Rights Commission (SHRC), 87 people were killed during 2016 unrest in the Valley.

The Valley witnessed over five month long unrest and street protests following killing of Burhan in an encounter with forces in south Kashmir on July 8, 2016.

The government informed the SHRC that inquiry into 42 civilian killings was ordered and so far investigation has been completed in seven cases only.

Central Kashmir

According to the government report, 12 civilian killings took place in Srinagar during the unrest.

It revealed that magisterial inquiry was ordered in only one case.

“Magisterial inquiry was ordered in killing of Shabir Ahmad Mir S/o Abdul Rehman Mir R/o Tengpora Srinagar. The inquiry report has been submitted to the Home department,” the government disclosed.

The government has also admitted that 45 people were injured in Budgam district and no inquiry has been ordered in these incidents.

The government report did not mention any death or injury during unrest in Ganderbal.

South Kashmir

The government has informed the SHRC that 9 persons were killed during unrest in Shopian district.

However, inquiry was not ordered in any of the killings.

The government disclosed that 21 people were killed during the 2016 unrest in Anantnag district.

The Commission was informed that District Magistrate Anantnag has appointed Assistant Commissioner (Rev) Anantnag/ SDM Dooru Kokernag and Pahalgam as inquiry officers to probe the civilian killings.

In Pulwama district, 12 persons were killed during the unrest, the government disclosed.

It stated that 11 magisterial inquiries were ordered and the investigation is under process.

The government informed that 17 people were killed in Kulgam district.

Three magisterial inquiries were ordered and all three inquiries are pending as District Superintendent of Police has requested to provide a copy of FIR registered along with a detailed report which is still awaited, it stated.

North Kashmir

The government has stated that 10 civilian killings took place in Kupwara in 2016.

It disclosed that inquiries into the killings were ordered and six inquiries have been completed and reports submitted to the home department’.

As per the government, five civilian killings took place in Baramulla.

However, it disclosed that no inquiry was ordered into the killings.

The Bandipora district also witnessed one civilian death and no enquiry was ordered in the case, the government informed the SHRC.

The Commission said as per the government report, inquires in some cases is yet to begin as magistrates have not received the police reports.

“Such inquires shall be conducted expeditiously,” it stated.

7. Official Statements

➤ 17 security men among 25 killed in Pak firing in Poonch in 13 months

March 2: At least 25 people including 17 security men were killed in cross-LoC firing and shelling along the frontiers in Poonch district in last 13 months.

Official source said in last 13 month, 25 persons including 17 security men were killed in ceasefire violations by Pakistan troops in Balakote, Mendhar, Mankote, Gulpur, Khari Karmara and Mandi areas along the LoC in Poonch district.

They said 67 persons including 34 security men were also injured in the Pakistani troops firing and mortar shelling from January 2017 to Feb 2018.

Sources said due to cross border firing in Poonch, a civilian was killed and five others injured in 2014, 8 civilians were killed and 3 injured in 2015 and 7 security men were killed and 12 injured in 2016.

Meanwhile, an army official said Pakistani army once again violated the border ceasefire along the LoC during night in Balakote and Mankote sectors of Poonch district.

The firing started at about 12:25 am in Balakote, Sandote, Sohala, Bosani and other areas of Balakote sector in Poonch.

“The Pakistan army targeted army positions and civilian areas with mortar shells,” the official said.

He said the army men also effectively returned the fire.

In the cross-LoC shelling, house of one Mohammad Faiz son of Bagh Hussain was damaged in Sandote area of Balakote.

➤ 90 houses partially damaged in five Uri villages in cross-border shelling last month

March 05: 90 houses were partially damaged in cross-border firing/shelling in five villages of border town Uri in the past month.

Official reports said that over the past few days, when guns from both sides have been silent in the Hajipeer sector, teams of Revenue department officials visited the five affected villages – Churanda, Tilawari, Silikote, Balkote and Hathlanga – and collected the details of damaged houses.

Uri Tehsildar Mohammad Aslam said that one house belonging to Fayaz Ahmad Awan of Silikote village was completely gutted while the other 90 houses were damaged partially. “We collected data from the five affected villages where we found that 90 houses in these villages were partially damaged while the house of one Fayaz Ahmad Awan of Silikote was completely gutted and damaged in the cross-border firing and shelling,” the Tehsildar said. He said that the revenue department team

was going to forward the details to the Deputy Commissioner, Baramulla, for further action.

Local people whose houses were damaged in the shelling said that some among them who had had their roof tops damaged are now using polythene sheets to stop the rain water while others whose dwellings had smashed windows or broken walls had fixed tin sheets to cover the damage.

"Guns from both sides are silent, but people are still living in threat. We can't move freely in our villages because we know that the forces of both sides can target each other at any time," a local of Silikote village said.

He said, "We saw people on the other side of the Line of Control (LoC) too reached their homes and every day teams of officials are visiting the areas to collect details of loss of property on the other side of the LoC" he added.

The people said that from the past two weeks, forces of both India and Pakistan are moving in civil uniform to monitor the situation, but as of now, there is peace from the last two weeks on both sides of the Line of Control.

➤ **351 ceasefire violations by Pakistan since January 1: GOI**

March 05: Pakistan has violated the ceasefire agreement along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir as many as 351 times since January 1 this year, the government of India said.

Of these, 209 cases occurred in January while 142 instances were noted since February 21, Minister of State for Defence Subhash Bhamre told the Rajya Sabha in a written reply.

"Appropriate response to these ceasefire violations has been carried out wherever necessary. During ceasefire violations, the inhabitants of border villages, which are vulnerable to shelling and firing, are shifted to safer locations to prevent any loss of life. All arrangements are made to shift them to safer locations," the Minister said in his reply.

He added that the defences along the border are "periodically fortified" and made "more robust and resilient" through continuous improvements to withstand the attacks.

In 2017, a total of 860 instances of ceasefire violations by Pakistan occurred in which 15 Army personnel lost their lives while 58 were injured. Also, four Border Security Force (BSF) personnel were killed and 14 were injured, according to the information provided by the government to the upper House.

In these cross-border firings, 12 civilians also lost their lives while 79 got injured.

Besides, 33 infiltration bids were foiled by the army while 131 terrorist-related incidents happened last year.

In these cases, 14 Armymen, two BSF men, 40 civilians and 31 Jammu and Kashmir Police personnel lost their lives while 46 Army personnel, two BSF men, 99 civilians and 85 state police personnel were injured.

In a separate reply, Bhamre said that the defence forces have taken various measures to check terrorist attacks on army camps such as intensifying intelligence gathering and deployment of drones for surveillance.

➤ **17 JK protesters died of pellet gun injuries in 2016-17: Govt**

March 07: Seventeen protesters died of pellet gun injuries in Jammu and Kashmir in the past two years, the Rajya Sabha was informed.

GoI's Minister of State for Home Hansraj Gangaram Ahir also said that two security persons were killed by protesters in the Valley in 2016.

As many as 13 protesters were killed in 2016 when security forces used pellet guns to thwart the agitators while four other protesters were killed in 2017, he said.

The minister in a written reply also said the government has constituted an expert committee on July 26, 2016 to explore other possible alternatives to pellet guns as non-lethal weapons.

"The recommendations of the committee have been taken into account by the government for appropriate implementation.

"Accordingly, various measures such as using PAVA-Chilli (Shells and Grenades), STUN-LAC (Shells and Grenades) and Tear Smoke Shells are used to disperse the unlawful violent protesters before the use of pellet guns," he said.

➤ **4,799 incidents of stone pelting in JK in 2015-17: GoI**

March 07: There were 4,799 stone-pelting incidents and 872 militancy related incidents in Jammu and Kashmir in past three years, the government informed the Rajya Sabha.

GoI's Minister of State for Home Hansraj Gangaram Ahir said 730 incidents of stone pelting were reported in 2015. In 2016, he said, 2,808 such incidents were reported, and in 2017, the incidents numbered 1,261.

In a written reply to a question, he said there were 208 incidents of terrorist violence in Jammu and Kashmir in 2015, 322 in 2016 and 342 such incidents in 2017.

The total number of militants killed in past three years in the state were 471, the total number of security force personnel killed were 201, and 72 civilians were also killed during the period, he told the Rajya Sabha.

"Jammu and Kashmir has been affected by militant violence that is sponsored and supported from across the border. The levels of militancy related violence in the hinterland of Jammu and Kashmir are linked to the infiltration from across the border," he said.

➤ **29 Army personnel killed since 2015 in attacks on camps, def stations in JK**

March 7: Twenty-nine Army personnel lost their lives in nine militant attacks on defence stations and Army camps in Jammu and Kashmir since 2015, the government informed the Lok Sabha on Wednesday.

Twenty militants were killed and two civilians lost their lives in the attacks, Minister of State for Defence Subhash Bhamre said in a written response to a question in the Lower House.

The highest casualty was in 2016, when a group of militants stormed an Army camp in Uri, resulting in the death of 26 personnel.

This year, one militant attack was reported on an Army camp in Jammu, claiming the lives of six Army personnel.

"The Army carries out in-depth analysis of the militants incidents and security breaches that are identified with various incidents. Perimeter security

projects of all the armed forces have been sanctioned by the government," Bhamre said.

➤ **1261 stone pelting incidents in JK in 2017**

March 9: Jammu and Kashmir witnessed 1,261 incidents of stone-pelting last year, with the native town of slain Hizbul Mujahideen commander Burhan Wani-- Pulwama recording the maximum number of cases against stone pelters followed by Hurriyat leader Syed Geelani's bastion of Sopore.

A total of 91 cases were registered against stone pelters in Pulwama in 2017, while 71 such cases were registered in Sopore, a document accessed by the state home department said.

In 2016, Sopore had recorded nearly 500 incidents of stone pelting, the highest during the Kashmir unrest following the killing of Burhan Wani that year.

Giving further details, the home department said 1,261 incidents of stone-pelting took place in the state in 2017 as compared to 2,808 such incidents in 2016 and 730 incidents in 2015.

The district-wise number of stone pelting incidents in the state in 2017 include the highest (230 incidents) in Srinagar followed by 131 incidents in Pulwama district, 129 in Baramulla, 98 in Budgam, 67 in Shopian, 63 in Anantnag, 50 in Kulgam, 47 in Kupwara, 36 in Ganderbal and 34 in Bandipora district, it said.

Of the total 855 cases registered against stone-pelting incidents in Jammu and Kashmir last year, Central Kashmir accounted for the highest i.e. 364 cases in 40 police station areas followed by 311 cases in South Kashmir in 23 police station areas and 210 cases in North Kashmir in 28 police stations areas, it said.

Burhan's neighbouring Shopian district registered 40 cases in stone-pelting incidents in 2017 followed by 39 in Safa Kafdal police station area (Srinagar), 30 in Budgam, 27 in Parimpora (Srinagar) and 26 in MR Gunj (Srinagar), it said.

In these cases, 2,720 people were arrested against 8,570 people in 2016, the department said.

"As many as 11,566 security personnel were injured in 4,736 stone-pelting incidents in the Kashmir valley during the last three years from 2015 to 2017," the department added.

➤ **Mehbooba seeks Rajnath Singh's intervention in photojournalist Kamran Yousuf's case**

March 11: Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Mehbooba Mufti requested Union home minister Rajnath Singh to look into the case of Kamran Yousuf -- a Kashmiri photojournalist -- who is in the NIA custody.

"Spoke to Home Minister @rajnathsingh ji to look into Kamran Yousuf's case. I've requested him to intervene so that the life of a young budding journalist does not get ruined," Mehbooba said on Twitter.

Yousuf, a freelance photojournalist, was arrested by the NIA on September 5 last year for his alleged involvement in "stone-pelting incidents".

The NIA has alleged he was acting as a conduit for those involved in terror funding.

➤ **15 armed forces, 17 militants killed in 60 violent incidents in JK in 2018: GoI**

March 13: As many as 60 incidents of militant violence have taken place in Jammu and Kashmir this year in

which 15 security personnel and 17 militants were killed, the Lok Sabha was informed.

Union Minister of State (MoS) for home Hansraj Gangaram Ahir said the 60 incidents had taken place till March 4 this year, as against 39 such incidents during the same period last year.

Replying to a written question, he said 15 security personnel, 17 militants and two civilians had been killed till March 4 this year.

"During the same period last year, 10 security men, 26 militants and four civilians were killed," he said.

Ahir said J&K has been affected by militant violence that is sponsored and supported from across the border. "The levels of militant violence in the hinterland of J&K are linked to the infiltration from across the border".

He claimed that there were 16 attempts by militant to enter Jammu and Kashmir in January this year.

"Four infiltrating militants were killed while infiltrators managed to cross into the state on five occasions," he added.

Meanwhile, Ahir said Pakistan violated the ceasefire along the LoC and the International Border in Jammu and Kashmir 633 times in the first two months of this year in which 10 security personnel and 12 civilians were killed.

He said 432 incidents of ceasefire violation have taken place along the LoC in Jammu and Kashmir and 201 such incidents along the International Border till February this year.

"There were 860 incidents of ceasefire violation along the LoC and 111 incidents of ceasefire violation along the IB in Jammu and Kashmir in 2017," the minister said.

Ahir said 12 civilians were killed and 59 others were injured in such incidents this year.

"Six army personnel were killed and 18 other injured in these incidents. Four BSF personnel were killed and 22 others injured in these incidents ceasefire violations," he added.

➤ **Govt. to build 14,460 bunkers for JK border dwellers**

March 14: As many as 14,460 bunkers will be constructed along the Line of Control (LoC) and the International Border (IB) in Jammu and Kashmir to mitigate the hardships faced by border dwellers, the Rajya Sabha was informed today.

Minister of State for Home Hansraj Gangaram Ahir said the Ministry of Home Affairs had approved a pilot project for construction of 60 bunkers at a cost of Rs 3 crore during the year 2016-17, which has since been completed.

Following the recent visit of Home Minister Rajnath Singh to the state, the Centre had approved construction of another 14,460 bunkers at a cost of Rs 415.73 crore, he said in reply to a written question.

Ahir added that the steps have been taken to mitigate the hardships faced by people living on the International Border and Line of Control due to cross border firing.

➤ No plans to withdraw or amend AFSPA: GoI

March 20: The Government of India (GoI) has no plans to withdraw or amend the Armed Forces (J&K) Special Powers Act (AFSPA), 1990", which gives the forces immunity and special rights in carrying out operations in

disturbed areas, Union minister Hansraj Gangaram Ahir said.

Ahir, however, said in the Lok Sabha that a proposal is under consideration to make the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958 more operationally effective and humane.

"There is no proposal to amend the Armed Forces (Jammu and Kashmir) Special Powers Act, 1990. There is no proposal under consideration of Government of India to withdraw the Armed Forces (Jammu and Kashmir) Special Powers Act, 1990 from Jammu and Kashmir," he said replying a written question.

Ahir further said less lethal plastic bullets would be used to tackle law and order situations in Jammu and Kashmir.

"The government has decided to introduce less lethal plastic bullets also to be used in tackling law and order situations in Jammu and Kashmir," he said in reply to a written question.

Ahir also said the government has no plans for enhanced use of bunkers to protect forces from stone throwers after the annual shift of the capital from Jammu to Srinagar in the next few days.

➤ **700 troopers committed suicide in six years: MHA**

March 22: Nearly 700 personnel of Central Armed Police Forces committed suicide in last six years, more than those killed in action, the Union Home Ministry has told a parliamentary panel.

The reasons include lack of stability, loneliness and domestic strife, senior officials of the ministry, led by the Union home secretary, told the Parliament's Committee on Estimates, headed by senior BJP leader Murli Manohar Joshi.

"During the last six years, approximately 700 personnel of the Central Armed Police Forces have committed suicide and the rate of voluntary retirement is approximately 9,000 personnel per year," the ministry said.

This was in response to the committee's concerns on the large number of paramilitary personnel committing suicide or taking voluntary retirement.

Elaborating on its findings, the home ministry did not give figures for an exact six-year period but cited varying years -- 2001 for the BSF, 2012 for the CRPF, 2006 for the ITBP, 2013 for the CISF and SSB and 2014 for the Assam Rifles.

According to the home ministry, 189 Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel committed suicide since 2012, while 175 were killed in action in the same period.

In BSF, there were 529 suicides since 2001 while the force lost 491 troopers in action.

The ministry also said that 62 Indo Tibetan Border Police personnel committed suicide since 2006 while just 16 were killed in action during the same period.

In the Central Industrial Security Force, 63 personnel ended their lives since 2013 and just one personal of the force died in action.

The number of suicides in the Sashastra Seema Bal since 2013 is 32 with the number of those killed in action is four.

In the case of the Assam Rifles, 27 personnel committed suicide since 2014 and 33 personnel were killed in action.

The suicides and killed in action ratio is highest in SSB (1:8), followed by CISF (1:63) and ITBP (1:4), the ministry said.

The home secretary told the committee: "We have discussed the matter of suicides which you mentioned internally within the Ministry of Home Affairs. As per our feedback, it is mainly due to lack of stability, loneliness and domestic strife. People stay away from their homes from 10-11 months which obviously leads to marital discord and there will be suspicions and counter-suspicions and allegations. That also leads to suicide."

The forces under the home ministry are heavily overloaded with the work and personnel don't get leave, the ministry told the committee. Forces like the CRPF and even the BSF and ITBP are instructed to move from Assam to Kerala and Kerala to Kashmir.

"Thus they could not stay at one location and they do not stay at one location and do not have any headquarters at a fixed location. Perhaps, this disturbance is also a contributing factor in incidents of suicides," the home secretary told the committee.

➤ Rs 5 lakh to victims of cross border firing in Poonch: Govt

March 23: Authorities today said that Rs 5 lakh each will be provided to the victims of Pakistan shelling in Poonch district.

The decision was taken in a meeting chaired by Poonch Deputy Commissioner Tariq Ahmed Zargar with officers concerned to decide about providing the financial relief under central assistance scheme to LoC shelling victims, an official spokesman said here.

In July 2016, the central government had decided that civilian victims of cross border firing along the Indo-Pak border would be given a compensation of Rs 5 lakh similar to those who die due to Maoist violence.

