



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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1. Editorial

AND THEN THERE WAS NONE

It is sad that some of the prominent and respected human right activists from India who were engaged in Kashmir have passed away. After the break out of the armed conflict in Kashmir, these activists shocked by the magnitude of the uprising in Kashmir and were genuinely concerned about the human rights situation prevailing in the valley. These activists were convinced that Kashmir issues had been resolved. These concerned activists visited the valley on many occasions to interact with the people and find out the causes of the uprising. Amongst them was a senior activist V.M. Tarkunde, considered the father of the civil liberties movement in India. He was associated with the Radical Humanist Association and had edited the magazine *Radical Humanist*. Tarkunde had worked with Jayprakash Narayan and he was quite vocal in condemning the 1984 Sikh Riots. He had also worked in Punjab and the Northeast. Tarkunde was vocal on many national issues of the day, particularly his position on Kashmiri Pandits whom he refused to refer to as victims in 1990 when there was a migration of Pandits from the valley. The remark on Pandits caused controversy and led to his being dubbed as “terrorist defender in chief”.

Tarkunde was a patron of the Peoples’ Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL). Tarkunde was publically supportive of the Kashmir’s independence from India but had confided to the editor of *Informative Missive* during his fact-finding in Kashmir in the early nineties that in case Kashmiris want to accede to Pakistan he would have no sympathy for that.

Rajinder Sachar was another activist-judge from India, who was concerned about plights of Muslims and others in India. Sachar was a retired chief justice of Delhi High Court and a member of the UN Sub Commission on Promotion and Protection of Human Rights. Sachar is known for the groundbreaking Sachar Committee Report, which is a damning report on the socio-economic and educational status of Muslims in India. The report and Sachar’s work on the report had earned him admirations from the minority committee. Sachar was one of the judges that refused to follow the bidding of the emergency establishment from 1975 to 1977 and was transferred by the government - as a form of punishment for his refusal to toe the line. Sachar had also taken a bold position in 1984 anti-Sikh riots and he directed for filing FIR against political leaders named in the affidavits. Sachar was heading PUCL for many years, which is India’s premier human rights organisation and visited Kashmir on many occasions to access the worsening human rights situation here. On a few occasions, he had come with Kuldip Nayar, who happens to be his relative also.

Kuldip Nayar was a prominent journalist and author, who was known for his courage for protesting against the emergency along with RK Goenka at a time, when according to BJP leader L.K Advani ‘the press was told to bend but they crawled’.

Another senior human rights defender from India was K. G. Kannabiran. Kannabiran from Hyderabad was known for his left leanings and had faced physical risks and threats as he was associated with the Andhra Pradesh Civil Liberties Council (APCLC), which the government accused of being a front organisation of the Naxals.

Balraj Puri was another prominent and well regarded human rights activist from J&K. He was a senior activist, colleague and contemporary of Sheikh Abdullah having 68 years of activism with him. Puri

had mediated Sheikh-Indira accord and had worked for communal harmony and was consistently consulted by governments on various aspects of Kashmir. The government conferred him with a Padma Bhushan in 2005. His 1993 book *Kashmir Towards Insurgency* was acknowledged as an authoritative account of Kashmir's insurgency and an important book to understand the intricacy of Kashmir issue.

The editor of the *Informative Missive* had the privilege to work with these people who were independent and had earned credibility because of their careers in activism. Tarkunde was very vocal and an honest activist but during our visit in 2004 to his residence as a token of respect for him, the editor was shocked to know that Tarkunde's position on Kashmir had changed and the old man was more concerned about the Hindutva take over in India and believed that any sort of secession in Kashmir would help the Hindutva forces to take over, which he was strictly against.

Rajinder Sachar was secular to the core but as far as Kashmir is concerned he was against right to self-determination of Kashmiris as he believed that it will further weaken the secularist forces in India and will set into motion the process of balkanization of India. Rajinder Sachar advocated for granting Kashmir its 1953 position and had admitted that India has wronged Kashmiris. But when the editor asked him on how Kashmiris can get the 1953 position, his answer was that they have to struggle within India. Late Sachar was against India's nuclear tests in 1998, which was followed by nuclear tests by Pakistan and he had confided that even if Pakistan didn't have the bomb they would have borrowed it and exploded it. He was very critical of BJP. But Sachar had reservation about the Kashmir getting internationalised. He was against Amnesty International's visit to Kashmir in the nineties, which government of India refused. He was against the UN OHCHR visiting Kashmir and he remained critical of the UN Human Rights Commissioner whom he said belongs to a country where there is no democracy. However, Sachar was very critical of eroding the autonomy of Jammu and Kashmir and had written many critical articles in the national Indian papers on this subject.

Late Kuldip Nayar was very concerned about the situation in Kashmir and his position was that 'some sort of reconciliation' should take place between all parties. He would say that Pakistan has failed thrice to wrest Kashmir from India and it is very unlikely now. He urged Kashmiri militants should realise this. He believed that the militants cannot outgun the state, the state would outrun the militants. And even while travelling to Charar e Sharief, he had confided to the editor that he feels during his lifetime Kashmir issue may not be resolved but maybe it will be resolved during the editors lifetime. His organisation Congress For Democracy (CFD) has prepared reports on Kashmir, which were based on facts as Nayar was quite concerned about the international outcry and the image of India.

Kannabiran was totally different from the pack. He was not only for the RSD (Right to Self Determination) of Kashmir but advocated same for other nationalities within India. As a committed leftist, he believed that Kashmir is an occupation and people of Kashmir cannot be ruled and controlled by gun.

Late Balraj Puri was considered to be a pioneer of the human rights movement in Kashmir. Before 1989, it was late Balraj Puri with whom the editor worked on the human rights situation in Kashmir and held many meetings with the late activist and many lawyers would participate in these meetings. Late Balraj Puri was highly respected in the Jammu and Kashmir but he held a status quo position. Mr. Puri stood for the devolution of the power in J&K and was against the RSD and UN resolutions passed in favour of Kashmir.

These people are no more and a void is left. At least, these respectable souls had some rationale and concern for Kashmir, even though with differences, as they had been witness to the breakup of the Indian subcontinent and knew the causes behind the conflict. But nowadays, we are lacking such variety of people as space has been taken by a jingoist political elite who have no courage to speak the truth about Kashmir and also lack any understanding of the genesis of the Kashmir issue.

2. Chronology of Incidents

Aug 01: An army team conducting area domination practice came under fire from suspected militants at Chek-e-Choland village of Shopian district. The incident took place at about 2:30 PM and created panic in the area. A police officer said that nobody was injured in the attack.

Aug 02: Police claimed to have killed two HM local militants who had snatched the service rifle of a police constable on July 31. Police said that the two militants, both residents of Kupwara district, were killed in a brief gunfight with armed forces that took place beside a road in Khumriyal area of Lolab in Kupwara district. The slain militants were identified as Bilal Ahmad Shah of Shatmuqam Lolab and Zahoor Ahmad Shah of Kalaroos Kupwara. While a middle-aged man was critically injured when forces opened fire on people who were carrying the body of slain militant Bilal Ahmad Shah to his native village Shatmuqam in Kupwara district. The civilian was identified as 55-year-old Mohammad Jamal Tantray. He was hit by two bullets, one in his left arm and one in his abdomen. He was rushed to a nearby hospital for treatment. In Srinagar,

Aug 03: Two militants and an army soldier were killed in Drusoo village of Dangiwacha, Sopore, Baramulla. The slain militants were identified as Riyaz Ahmad, 22, son of Mohammad Akbar of Sopore and Khurshid Ahmad Malik son of Ghulam Nabi of Aarihal, Pulwama. In another encounter in Shopian which continued till evening one militant was killed. While a CRPF man and a policeman were injured in a grenade attack in Anantnag township. In Kupwara, a teenager was hit by a bullet during clashes in Lolab area of Kupwara. The injured was identified as Danish Ahmad, 16.

Aug 04: Four militants were killed in an encounter between militants and armed forces that erupted on August 3 evening in Killora village of Shopian. Clashes near the site left 43 civilians injured as government forces fired bullets, pellets, and teargas shells to keep protestors at bay. One civilian was shot dead and another was critically wounded when army soldiers reportedly opened fire on the funeral procession of one of the slain militants at his native village of Ganowpora in Shopian district. The police identified the slain militants as: Umar Nazir Malik, son of Nazir Ahmad Malik, resident of Malikgund village, affiliated with LeT and active since two years, believed to be the lone senior militant in the district; Arshid Ahmad Khan, son of Abdul Rasheed Khan, resident of Ganowpora, affiliated with LeT; Waqar Aslam, son of Muhammad Aslam Sheikh, resident of Malikgund affiliated with Al-Badr and active since a fortnight; and Aijaz Ahmad Paul, son of Abdul Rasheed Paul, resident of Losedenow village, affiliated with Al-Badr and active since three months; and Arif Ahmad Mir, resident of Yeend village in Pahalgam. The slain civilian was identified as Bilal Ahmad Khan, resident of Kralcheck village in neighbouring Pulwama district. While as many as thirty persons were injured as hundreds of youth had gathered in Pahalgam for funeral prayers of a local militant killed in Shopian. While a man was shot dead when he reportedly rammed his car into the Jammu residence of National Conference president and former chief minister Farooq Abdullah and began ransacking the house, police said. Police said the intruder has been identified as Murtaz, whose father runs a gun factory at Ban-Talab in Jammu. The family was living in Jammu region.

Aug 05: A 28-year-old cattle trader from a local Gujjar community was killed and another injured after army personnel fired on them in Jammu region's Ramban district early Sunday morning, police said. Police have registered an FIR under Sections 302 (murder) and 307 (attempt to murder) against the army personnel involved in the incident. The killed man has been identified as Mohammad Shafi Gujjar and the injured as Shakeel Ahmad. Army personnel opened fire upon them in Kohli village of Dharmgund area of Ramban district, Senior Superintendent of Police Ramban Mohan Lal told media.

Aug 06: At least 10 people were hit by pellets in forces firing in clashes during cordon and search

operation (CASO) at Khurbatpora village of Damhal Hanjipora area of south Kashmir's Kulgam district.

Aug 07: A gun battle that began along the Line of Control (LoC) in Gurez valley left four army men, including a Major-rank officer, and two unidentified militants dead in north Kashmir's Bandipora district. While suspected militants shot at and injured a Special Police Officer (SPO) in Pastuna area of Tral in south Kashmir's Pulwama district. The injured has been identified as 24-year-old Ashiq Hussain Lone, son of Abdul Samad Lone, resident of Pastuna village in Tral area.

Aug 08: Four, police said, foreign militants of LET have been killed and one Para Commando was injured in an on-going encounter that started early morning at Vigi, Rafiabad in north Kashmir's Baramulla district. While two youth, who were abducted by suspected militants, in Kulgam district, were released by the gunmen on late evening in a "moribund condition." One of them Arif Sofi of Khudwani, Kulgam succumbed to his injuries in a Srinagar hospital late in the night. In Pulwama, clashes erupted during CASO.

Aug 09: One more LET militant, police said, was killed in encounter that started on August 8 early morning at Vigi, Rafiabad in north Kashmir's Baramulla district taking the toll to five militant killings.

Aug 10: A youth was critically injured after a bullet fired by armed forces hit him in the abdomen during clashes at Tengwani village in Tukroo area of Shopian district. Several others sustained pellet injuries in the forces' action, health officials and witnesses said. While a security guard was seriously injured when two men stabbed him while trying to snatch his rifle in Pampore area of south Kashmir, police said.

Aug 11: A complete shutdown was observed in Handwara area of Kupwara district over after a local family claimed that one among the five militants killed in an encounter on August 8 in Rafiabad, Baramulla as its son.

Aug 12: One SOG personnel were killed and five others were injured in a brief encounter with militants that took place after the forces launched a CASO in Deyarwani, Batamaloo area of Srinagar. Two militants, who managed to escape, were reported injured. While a youth was killed and two others injured in a mysterious explosion in Tosamaidan, Budgam. The deceased was identified as Wajid Ahmad Ahanger, son of Bashir Ahmad Ahanger, resident of Zoogu area in Arizal. He had suffered multiple injuries in abdomen, legs and arm and the two injured were identified as Mudasir Ahmad Ganie, 20, son of Mohammad Ramzan, and Wasim Ahmad Ganie, 22, son of Abdul Majeed Ganie, both residents of Zoogu Kharian. In south Kashmir, clashes during a search operation by government forces in Sirnoo village of Pulwama district led to pellet injuries to five civilians, among them a 65 year-old-woman, Saja Begum. The woman and one of the injured youths have been referred to SMHS Hospital in Srinagar due to the seriousness of their injuries. In a different incident, an army man was killed in a grenade explosion in Uri sector of north Kashmir's Baramulla district. The Army man of 4 Gadwal identified as Kuldeep Singh Rawat was killed in the grenade explosion near Rustom Post in Hajipeer area of Uri sector.

Aug 13: Gulzar Ahmad Bhat, 23, son of Abdul Gani Bhat, was abducted and killed by suspected militants in Murran area of Pulwama district. Gulzar was abducted from his house on August 12 evening. While an army soldiers were killed in separate incidents along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir. A youth was injured during clashes that erupted during CASO in Kissrigam, Pulwama. The injured youth was identified as 21-year-old Saleem Ahmad Sheikh, son of Ghulam Mohammad Sheikh, resident of Qazigund, Kakapora.

Aug 14: The armies of India and Pakistan exchanged heavy fire along LOC in Tangdar in north Kashmir's Kupwara district while a PDP leader Waheed Para escaped unhurt when unidentified gunmen fired upon his vehicle in Budgam. A youth was injured in clashes that erupted during cordon and search operation in Rajpora village of Pulwama. In Lal Chowk Srinagar two non-local men were beaten by the locals for raising Indian national flag.

Aug 15: A complete shutdown was observed across Kashmir. Army claimed one of its soldiers was injured while foiling an infiltration attempt in Noushera sector of Rajouri Jammu.

Aug 16: At least four army men were injured in a gunfight with a group of "infiltrators" in Nowgam sector along the Line of Control (LoC) in police district Handwara. In another incident, Indian and Pakistani troopers exchanged fire along LOC in Tangdar area of Kupwara district. While a search

operation was launched near the Line of Control (LoC) over reported suspicious movement in the Rajouri district of Jammu and Kashmir, police officials told media. CASO was launched in Tujjar Sahrief, Sopore, Baramulla district.

Aug 17: An army soldier was killed in a brief gunfight with militants in Handwara's Qaziabad village. While a 38-year-old woman was shot dead by two gunmen outside her maternal parents' home here in Drubgam area of Pulwama district on Friday afternoon. Police said that the preliminary investigation suggests the gunmen were Hizb militants. The slain woman has been identified as Shameema Akhtar, wife of Ali Muhammad Bhat, resident of Koil area in Pulwama district. In Awantipora a civilian was killed and three others injured, including a man from Bihar, after a grenade hurled at Awantipora police station which missed the target and exploded by the roadside in Awantipora area of Pulwama district. The killed civilian was identified as Abdul Ahad Pinchoo, son of Ali Muhammad, resident of Awantipora. The other three injured have been identified as Muhammad Shoaib, son of Muhammad Ismail, a resident of Bihar; Ghulam Ahmad, son of Ghulam Rasool, resident of Awantipora; and Manzoor Ahmad Sheikh, son of Ali Muhammad, resident of Awantipora.

Aug 18: Three unidentified militants who were trying to enter this side were killed by army along the Line of Control in Tangdhar area of Kupwara.

Aug 19: Army claimed that they foiled an infiltration near Kasturi Naar post in Lachipora village Uri village of Baramulla and killed unidentified militant. While an Army soldier was killed in a landmine explosion near the Line of Control (LoC) in the frontier Kashmir district of Kupwara. The Army jawan was injured in the blast and was immediately taken to a military hospital where he succumbed.

Aug 20: Pakistani forces fired motor shells into Kamalkote area in Uri without any provocation police said. However, there was no report of any loss of life or property.

Aug 21: An encounter started between militants and armed forces in Yaroo, Langate area of Kupwara district. While an army man was injured in an alleged sniper fire along LOC in Tangdar, Kupwara.

Aug 22: In a string of attacks suspected militants killed a police inspector and two constables including a former cop in Shopian and Pulwama in south Kashmir while police recovered bullet ridden body of a BJP worker in Pulwama district of south Kashmir. The deceased was identified as Shabir Ahmad Bhat's body was found in the fields at Rakh-e-Litter area of Pulwama, a police official said. Post Eid prayers protests took place at various places across Kashmir.

Aug 23: Unidentified gunmen shot dead a forest department official in Kunzer area of Tangmarg in north Kashmir's Baramulla district, police said. A police spokesman said that the militants barged inside the residential house of Tariq Ahmad Malik in Zandpal village of Kunzer and fired upon him. He said Malik, aged 38 years, was working in the forest department.

Incorrigible

Aug 24: One JEM militant was killed in an encounter in Kokernag area of Anantnag district. During the encounter a civilian was also injured and two houses were blown up by the armed forces. It is reported that several militants managed to escape from the cordon.

Aug 25: A soldier was killed and two others injured in a landmine explosion near an army post along the Line of Control in Keran area of Kupwara district last night. The soldier, rifleman Neihal Gurung of 3rd JAKLI, was part of an army patrol, an officer said.

Aug 26: No incident of violence reported.

Aug 27: Twenty-two civilians, mostly students, were injured by pellets during clashes in Shopian that erupted over the rumours of hearing on article 35 A. Spontaneous protests were also took place at various places across Kashmir evoking shut down.

Aug 28: Suspected militants shot at and injured a 25-year-old man outside his house in Tral area of Pulwama district. The injured was identified as Amin Malik alias Zatak son of late Ghulam Nabi of Lurgam, Tral. While at least two army soldiers suffered minor injuries after militants targeted the Casspir vehicle they were travelling in in Pulwama district. The militants also fired at the forces, which was retaliated, however, no damage was caused to either sides.

Aug 29: Militants shot dead four policemen in broad daylight at Arhama village on the outskirts of Shopian town. The incident took place at about 3:30pm at Arhama. According to police sources, five cops had come to a mechanic's shop for repairs of their Rakshak vehicle. Eyewitnesses saw four masked militants get out from a car close to the shop and then immediately shooting at the policemen,

repeatedly. The four slain policemen were identified by police as Ct Javid Ahmad Bhat, son of Nazir Ahmad Bhat, resident of Panzrat HMT Srinagar; Ct Muhammad Iqbal Mir, son of Abdul Rehman Mir, resident of Hudur Chaman Baramula; Ct Ishfaq Ahmad Mir, son of Muhammad Malik Mir, resident of Rafiabad Baramula; and SPO Adil Ahmad Bhat, son of Manzoor Ahmad Bhat, resident of Zawoora Shopian. While suspected militants attacked the residence of a Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader's brother in Tral town. The police sentries guarding the residence repulsed the attack, local sources said. The suspected militants opened fire at the policemen guarding the residence of BJP leader Avtaar Singh's brother at Monghama village of Tral, police officials told media. While two HM militants were killed in an encounter with armed forces in Binpora village of Anantnag district. The slain militant was identified as Commander Altaf Dar alias Kachroo and Umar Rashid Wani.

Aug 30: Two Pakistani militants were killed and another injured in a gunfight which began soon after militants fired upon a search party of army and police in Hajin town of Bandipora, police said. According to sources, four militants were first trapped in a residential house at Par Mohalla locality of the town. The gunfire began, and resulted in the death of one militant. Three managed to escape, one of them having sustained bullet injuries. They were trapped again at Hajam Mohalla, where the second militant was killed. The other two militants, among whom one was critically injured, again managed to escape. Senior Superintendent of Police in Bandipora, Sheikh Zulfikar Azad, told media that the militants killed in the gunfight were Pakistanis belonging to Lashkar-e-Taiba outfit. "Two Pakistani Lashkar militants were killed and another was injured in the firefight. His information is being collected," he said. In the gunfire, a civilian from Hajin, Ghulam Mohammad, 28, was also injured. He received a firearm injury to his right shoulder. Block Medical Officer Tariq Ahmad told Kashmir Reader that his condition was stable and the patient was referred to Jehlum Valley Medical College Hospital, Srinagar.

Aug 31: During a four-day Cordon and Search Operation (CASO), two Army men were injured in Chandaji area of north Kashmir's Bandipora district. The CASO was launched jointly by two separate units of Rashtriya Rifles on August 28 morning following some gun shots in Chandaji forest area. Army's 27 and 31 Rashtriya Rifles launched the massive search operation in Chandaji forests after they received inputs about the presence of militants in the area. While complete shutdown was observed across Kashmir and parts of Jammu over the hearing of Article 35 A in Supreme Court.

3. Killings in August 2018

In August 2018, there were at least **53 killings** in different incidents of violence in Jammu and Kashmir, which included **10 civilians, 25 militants, and 18 armed forces**. The day to day break of killings is given below.

Table of Killings

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

Aug 19	1	1	-
Aug 20	-	-	-
Aug 21	-	-	-
Aug 22	3	-	1
Aug 23	-	-	1
Aug 24	-	1	-
Aug 25	1	-	-
Aug 26	-	-	-
Aug 27	-	-	-
Aug 28	-	-	-
Aug 29	4	2	-
Aug 30	-	2	-
Aug 31	-	-	-
Total	18	25	10
Total Killings in August 2018		53 Killings	

4. Human Rights Stories

Youth killed while people foiling forces attempt to take the possession of dead militant's body

A 21 year old baker, Bilal Ahmad Khan, of Pooju, Berthipora, Shopian fell to the armed forces' bullets when the people resisted the forces move to take possession of the body of a slain militant killed in an encounter earlier in the day.

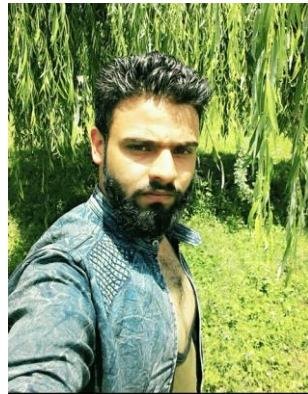
On August 4, an encounter took place in Killora village of Shopian which ended with the killing of four LeT militants. One of the slain militants Arshid Ahmad Khan belonged to Ganawpora village of Shopian district. People brought his corpse to his native village for last rites. As the people were performing the funeral prayers of the slain militant, the armed forces arrived to take possession of the body. People, who were present in large numbers to repel the move of the armed forces, were fired upon by the army personnel. One of the mourners, Bilal was hit by bullets and died on the spot. Two bullets pierced Bilal: one in his chest and the other in his belly.

A researcher of *The Informative Missive* visited Bilal's house to collect the case details. Bilal's father Ali Mohammad volunteered to share info on his son's killing. Ali Mohammad was ailing for years and once he had survived a heart attack.

"On August 4, around 11:30 am my sons Bilal Ahmad and Mohammad Ashraf, a class 11th student, had gone to participate in funeral prayers of a militant killed in Shopian encounter. Ashraf returned back by 1 pm. When we enquired from Ashraf about Bilal he told us he will join us shortly," stated Ali Mohammad.

The absence of Bilal made Ali Mohammad restless and at 1:15 he called up on his phone to enquire about Bilal's wellbeing and the time by which he will be home. Bilal told his father that he will be at home after sometime. The restlessness of Ali Mohammad continued,

as he wanted to see his son. The situation post-encounter remains mostly panicky and tense for the people.



Bilal Ahmad Khan

Every passing minute was deepening Ali's worries. In the meantime, a neighbour who came to his house informed him that a youth was fired in Ganawpora by the forces. This news further disturbed him. Ali immediately dialled Bilal's number but there was no response from the other side. Ali Mohammad repeatedly called his son but in vain.

At 2:30 pm, Bilal's body was brought to his home by the locals from Ganawpora. It was then that Bilal's family received the shock of their life. "I was waiting with the hope that my son will come back soon. He came back dead," stated shocked father.

People who brought Bilal's body home told Ali Mohammad that his son was killed by the forces from Balpora 44 Bn Rashtria Rifles camp. The people further informed him that when they were preparing for the last

"Before he could visit the camp to get back his things, he came to know that all those who went to the camp for getting their things back from the army, they were beaten and harassed. So he decided not to visit the camp"

rites of a local militant, the army raided the spot with the intent to take

possession of the slain militant. The army's action was responded with stiff resistance by the people. To chase away the forces some of the youth pelted stones. This annoyed the forces and they opened fire in which Bilal lost his life. Pertinently, before the army's arrival there was no protest or stone pelting. The army action, as per the Ganawpora villagers, was unwarranted and unprovoked.

While recalling a recent incident, Ali Mohammad said, "In July, Bilal was stopped by the army personnel from Shadimarg camp. They (forces) were checking I-Cards and mobile phones of the youth. Bilal's

I-Card and mobile phone were usurped by the army. He was asked to visit the camp to get his things back. Before he could visit the camp to get back his things, he came to know that all those who went to the camp for getting their things back from the army were beaten and harassed. So he decided not to visit the camp,” stated Ali Mohammad.

There were general allegations against the armed forces about indulging in harassment and checking the mobile phones of the youth. It has become almost a routine in south Kashmir to call youth to the military camp after taking away their I-Cards and mobile phone. Local people see it as a new way of harassment employed by the forces to target the youth. In the camps the boys were asked to share the details of militants and the youth who took part in stone pelting. The forces also check social media accounts and the photo galleries of the youth’s phones. If any boy’s social media account has something that army considers as objectionable, he has to face beating, interrogation and even torture.

At the time of this researcher’s visit, Bilal’s family has not filed any case before any court or approached police for filing of FIR. Ali Mohammad says he has no faith in current judicial system as in thousands of cases of human rights violations not even a single perpetrator was taken to justice.

“If you see, people are being continuously killed by the forces from last two decades. People in our area were also killed but not even a single culprit responsible for killing was taken to task. So I feel it’s useless to approach any institution and expecting justice in my son’s killing. It seems nothing will change,” expressed Ali while underlining the failure of institutions in providing justice to the victims of violence.

Ali further said that taking a case against the armed forces is not easy. He said, “It is like adding more trouble to our lives. You cannot take up the matter against the army, as they can harm you on their will. They are not accountable in their actions and they can inflict any harm; for us, the fear of reprisal is there. Even police shows reluctance in filing cases against the armed forces.”

Ali Mohammad now has three sons and two daughters. The elder one has completed his graduation, his second son was working with Bilal as a baker and the third one is younger to Bilal and is studying in class 11th. The elder daughter Aaina Jan, 15, is studying in class 10th but since the death of Bilal she has lost interest in her education. After Bilal’s killing, she often visits his grave and spends time there. For some days after Bilal’s death, she completely stopped talking to his family. To fade the memories of her brother she was sent to her cousin’s place but returned on very next day.

Ali Mohammad is a farmer but cannot work much due to his falling health. He has back problem since 2004 which got aggravated in 2010. He is not in a position to work any longer. It was his sons Bilal and his elder brother, a school dropout, who were earning for the family. Both were working as bakers. In 2017, Ali Mohammad luckily survived a heart attack.

Only a *Patwari* (revenue official) has visited the house to record Ali’s statement. The area falls under the jurisdiction of police station Kellar. The family has no information if the case for SRO 43 relief has been forwarded or not.

65-year-old labourer died in grenade explosion

A sixty-five-year-old man died in a grenade explosion aimed at a police station in south Kashmir by unknown persons, believed to be militants. The grenade failed to hit the intended target and exploded on the roadside and left Abdul Ahad Penchoo seriously injured. Ahad later died in the hospital.

A researcher of *The Informative Missive* visited Ahad’s house in Jawbiara, Awantipora in south Kashmir to collect the details of the incident. Ahad’s son Mehraj-ud-Din talked about the incident and shared all that he knew about the incident.

He stated, “On August 17, at 1: 20 pm, my father returned after offering Friday prayers in a Masjid at main market Awantipora. Thereafter, he left for Power Development Department (PDD) office to collect the electricity bill. When he reached near police station Awantipora, a grenade was hurled towards it by some persons. The grenade hurled

hit the tall wall of the police station and exploded outside it. It was then that my father got fatally injured.”

Mehraj-ud-Din further stated, “The people walking on the road took him to nearby Sub District hospital Awantipora. Since his condition was critical, he was referred to SMHS hospital in Srinagar. In the meantime, I was informed about the incident.”

On reaching the hospital Mehraj spotted his father on ventilator. He saw splinter marks all over his father’s body; there was also had a serious head injury. While his family was praying for his recovery, he succumbed to his injuries just after few hours on a hospital bed surrounded by his relatives.

Police took the custody of the corpse in the hospital, and took it to the Awantipora police station. After completing the formalities there, the body was handed over to his family.

After a couple of weeks, Mehraj-ud-din visited police



Penchoo’s photo shared by his family

“When he reached near police station Awantipora, a grenade was hurled towards it by some persons. The grenade hurled hit the tall wall of the police station and exploded outside it. It was then that my father got fatally injured”

station Awantipora and got the copy of the FIR and death certificate. The case for compensation has also been filed in the District Commissioner's office, Pulwama. Besides talking about the incident in which his father was killed, Mehraj stated that the situation in his area was grim and terrifying from last many years. He blamed the forces for creating an atmosphere of fear, as they (the forces) ask for I-cards, poke into mobile phones of the youth and harass them on one pretext or the other. The foot prints of the forces in the area are so dense that they

terrify everyone. Forces often confiscate the mobile phones of the boys and ask them to take the things back from their respective camps. This troopers' exercise has induced deep fear in the young population of the area. Mehraj stated that the people even fear for the school going kids due to the endless uncertainty prevailing in the valley. Mehraj also talked about the problems the locals face while moving after 10 pm in case of any emergency, as they have to face series of questioning from the forces.

Verinag family blames a local politician for keeping its son in jail from last 14 years

There seems to be no end to the harassment of a south Kashmir family who has seen unimaginable persecution for last many years at the hands of police. The family believes there is political pressure on police to persecute

local political continues to influence the police to make up cases against Ashraf. "The main accused in the FIR Sayed Murtaza was bailed out after two years. His father is affiliated with a political party and he managed the bail

"A concocted case has been made against my brother. We were unable to understand as to why my brother was targeted for the grenade explosion. Instead of arresting the real persons behind the grenade attack, they went after my brother."

Firdous sees his personal persecution as a result of highlighting his brother's case before media and human rights groups. Firdous holds grave apprehensions that he may either be killed or booked again to prevent him from perusing his brother's case, as there is a strong political influence over his brother's case.

the family for the wrong it has never done. The family's persecution connects with an incident of grenade attack on government-sponsored health Mela at Kapran Verinag, in which Chief Engineer R&B died, including two civilians and some policemen also lost their life. Dr Asghar Samoon, the then deputy commissioner Anantnag was also critically injured in this incident including then Congress MLA for Noorabad constituency, Abdul Majeed Paddar. Peerzada Mohammad Ashraf son of Ghulam Nabi of Batagund, Verinag Tehsil Dooru, Anantnag was arrested by the police along with another youth Syed Murtaza. Both were accused of hurling the grenade. An FIR No 67/ 2004 P/S Dooru U/S 302, 307, 323, 325, 326, 120 B- RPC and 7/27 Arms Act was filed against him. Murtaza was released on bail two years after the incident, however, Ashraf continues to languish in jail. Ashraf's family, although not unhappy with Murtaza's release, sees political influence in Murtaza's release, as Murtaza's father is close to a political party. So far, thirteen PSAs were quashed by the court but Ashraf continues to be in jail. Every time a PSA was quashed, the police come up with new order only to prolong his incarceration.

Ashraf's younger brother Peerzada Firdous, 30, who took up the legal case for his brother's release was also persecuted. Firdous was arrested many times and tortured by the police for agitating his brother's matter in the court and before the media. Ashraf is currently lodged in Kot Bhalwal jail Jammu under a new PSA.

Firdous, while talking to *The Informative Missive* stated, "A concocted case has been made against my brother. We were unable to understand as to why my brother was targeted for the grenade explosion. Instead of arresting the real persons behind the grenade attack, they went after my brother."

Firdous, while looking for the reason for his brother's unwarranted prolonged detention claimed that a

of his son while my brother is continuing to be incarcerated as a local politician is pressurizing the police not to release. When we met the politician he told us he [Ashraf] had not yet mend his way," stated Firdous while underscoring the role of a local politician in prolonging his brother's detention.

Firdous said he could easily identify the politician but he chose not to do that as doing so can invite more wrath from this politician.

Firdous sees his personal persecution as a result of highlighting his brother's case before the media and human rights groups. Firdous holds grave apprehensions that he may be either killed or booked again to prevent him from perusing his brother's case, as there is a strong political influence over his brother's case. To mount pressure for the release of his brother, on Eid-ul-Azha – in August 2018, Firdous organized a three days hunger strike. While roaming around or travelling to any place, Firdous has to remain aware as he fears serious threat to his life. The tone in which he talks about his persecution is shocking; he speaks about it as if it were a normal thing to talk about. It appears that he has overcome all the fears one could have in the situation he is in.

At the time of his arrest, Ashraf was a student of the 3rd year in UG course at Boys Degree College Khanabal and had memorised 16 chapters of Quran also. Besides this, he used to work as a daily wager in the R&B department. "The continuous detention of my brother has ruined his life and the chances of his release look very bleak not because of the police but because of strong political interference," stated Firdous.

The witnesses—including Dr Asghar Samoon (deputy commissioner in 2004), Abdul Majeed Paddar (Congress MLA from Noorabad in 2004) deposed that a grenade explosion had occurred after which they were taken in a helicopter for treatment to Srinagar. They could not recognize Ashraf as the one involved in this attack and

they did not depose anything against the accused. Several other eyewitnesses, which mostly included the government officials of that time, also did not give their statement against Ashraf following which he was instantly granted bail by the judge on 11-05-2011 as the police had failed to prove the claims. Around 20 witnesses gave their statement in front of the judge that day, all in his favour.

Police, later on, slapped 13 PSAs on Ashraf, which were quashed by the High court Srinagar one after another. Ashraf was also charged for pelting stones despite him being lodged in jail for more than a decade since 2004.

“My brother was never released and 13 PSAs were imposed on him on false charges. All these PSAs were quashed by the Hon’ble High Court in Srinagar which also ordered for his subsequent release. Whenever we went to the police with the bail orders, they would come up with new false charges every time,” said Firdous.

Ashraf was charged under FIR no. 305 2011, PS Anantnag, under sections 144, 1407, 148, 336, 120 B RPC, on charges of stone pelting in which he was provided bail on 21-09-2011.

Before this, two other cases were charged on him under FIR no. 144 2008 PS Ang, 7/25 arms act, and the bail, in this case, was also granted on 30-12-2011.

In another FIR no. 114 / 2008 PS Ang, 7/25 Arms Act, Ashraf was bailed out by the court on 23-05-2011.

After the police wouldn’t let Ashraf free, the family approached the state Home department where principal secretary R K Goyal and Shahnaza Dilshad as Secretary revoked the PSAs and directed the police to release Ashraf on 18-08-2011 under order no. Home pb-V/1809/2011. Since these 14 years, Firdous’s job has been to fight the case of his brother.

The family had to sell its ancestral land to bear expenses around Ashraf’s case and so far have spent lakhs of rupees. Ashraf’s late father, who was an *Imam* (person who lead prayers) at a local Halqa Jamia Masjid, Batagund Verinag, fell ill due to the long detention of his innocent son. Doctors hopelessly treated him saying that only his son’s return could revive him. He died a few months after falling ill, in 2017, and he had lost a considerable amount of vision. Ashraf was not even allowed to see the face of his father or be part of his funeral prayers.

In 2010, Firdous was arrested in a false case and released in 2015. He was slapped with two PSAs with charges 120-B, 212 RPC 7/25 under ULA act with an FIR no. 42 2010. He was charged in another two cases under FIR no. 57 2011 on 13 02 ULA act 18/19 ULA (D) 7/25 arms act and FIR no. 116 2010 13 (2) 7/25. In all these cases he was granted bail.

Firdous accepts that his another, elder brother, Peerzada Abdul Rouf, was associated with the Hizbul Mujahideen outfit but he was martyred in 2000. Neither he nor his brother Ashraf has any sort of affiliation with any militant or political outfit.

The family approached several top political leaders to seek the release of Ashraf, but all in vain.

The family had met late Mufti Mohammad Syed, Mehbooba Mufti, and local MLAs including M.Y. Tarigami and even BJP leaders, but no one helped. As per Firdous, “The BJP leader and MLC Sofi Yousuf said only Rajnath Singh or Ram Madhav can intervene and get our brother released. He personally wrote a letter to Rajnath Singh regarding this issue on 20-07-2018”.

The family’s only concern is Ashraf’s release who has already been granted bail by the court..

Ghulam Hassan living a pathetic life

Seventy-year-old Ghulam Hassan Sheikh of Chitru, Dangerpora, Budgam in central Kashmir has to bank on local support to run his family comprised of two widows and their three children. Ghulam Hassan’s son Fayaz Ahmad and his son-in-law Shams-ud-Din, both militants of Hizbul Mujahideen (HM), were killed in two separate encounters in Budgam district some eight years ago. His house was burnt down by the armed forces who raided his house to find arms, which were not there.

Once a hardworking labourer, Ghulam Hassan was earning enough to lead a decent life. Now, for some years, it has become a routine for him to wander place to place only to collect money to run his family. He believes the circumstances had coerced him into begging, which he has never thought of.

While talking to *The Informative Missive* Ghulam Hassan said, “I have to beg people to make both ends meet. At times I have no money to buy medicines for my kids when they fall ill. Neither does my body support me to do the labour work anymore.”

Ghulam Hassan has a son and daughter whom he married happily with the hope that he will be relieved from his responsibilities. However, little did he know that fate would burden him with life-long and back breaking responsibilities.

Ghulam Hassan was doing well when his son Fayaz Ahmad was working as a carpet weaver and he himself was working as a labourer. His suffering started when his son and son-in-law turned to militancy and got killed within one year. The wives of both the slain

militants are since then living with him along with their small children.

Ghulam Hassan was not quite sure in which year his son and son-in-law were killed. He was incoherent when asked about the dates of the killing of his relatives. Initially, he said some 5-6 years ago then some over eight years ago.

Hassan’s recalls that some days after his son’s killing in an encounter, an army contingent, from Sambre camp, Budgam raided his three-storey-house. They (forces) conducted rigorous search of his house. Every room, every corner of the house was thoroughly searched. “After failing to find anything incriminating, the forces, in anger, set the house on fire. I saw my house go up in flames for hours. Only the half burnt walls of the ground floor remained intact,” stated Hassan while talking about the burning of his house by the forces.

Now, he has two widows and their children to take care for with no shelter available. “I had no idea what to do or where to take my family. Then I put tin sheets on the half burnt walls of my house to make it liveable. I was also supported by some people to make it a place for living again,” stated Hassan.

Hassan owns two kanals of land where he grows vegetables. “I grow vegetables on my land but at times I have no money to buy rice. I also have to ensure that the orphan daughters of my son get education. As of now, I have managed their education but I am worried about their future as I see no improvement in my

economic conditions. It would be criminal on my part if I would not strive to educate the kids.”

At the time of Hassan’s visit to the office of *The Informative Missive*, he said, his daughter is under treatment in a hospital where she has been operated upon for appendicitis and he has no money to buy medicines

for her. “I am really frustrated how to manage the money for my daughter’s medicines. It is always painful to approach people for help. How long must I rely on peoples support?” lamented Hassan as his eyes started becoming soggy.

Forest department official shot dead in Kunzer

Aug 23: Suspected militants shot dead a forest department official in Kunzer area of Tangmarg in north Kashmir’s Baramulla district, police said.

A police spokesman said that the militants barged inside the residential house of Tariq Ahmad Malik in Zandpal village of Kunzer and fired upon him.

He said Malik, aged 38 years, was working in the forest department.

“In this incident, Tariq Ahmad sustained critical gunshot wounds and succumbed to his injuries,” said the spokesman.

Police has registered a case in this regard under relevant sections of law.

“Initial investigation in the instant matter establishes the complicity of LeT militant Yousuf Dar alias Kantroo resident of Kawoosa Budgam in this incident,” he said.

Woman shot dead outside maternal home in Pulwama

Aug 17: A 38-year-old woman Shameema Akhtar was shot dead by two gunmen outside her maternal parents’ home in Drubgam area of Pulwama district. Police said that the preliminary investigation suggests the gunmen were Hizb militants.

When a researcher of *The Informative Missive* visited the family to collect the incident details, the family vehemently refused to talk. It appears that the reason for not to talk to the researcher was due to the mystery around the perpetrators responsible for killing her. Therefore, to record the case whatever is reported in the media has been incorporated herein.

The slain woman has been identified as Shameema Akhtar, wife of Ali Muhammad Bhat, resident of Koil area in Pulwama district.

Pulwama Superintendent of Police Chandan Kohli confirmed the killing and said that the woman was shot at by two unidentified gunmen at about 1:00 PM.

“She was married in Koil and was visiting her parents’ house in Drubgam when the incident took place,” Kohli said, adding that two gunmen reportedly appeared in the area and shot her just outside her parents’ house.

He said that Shameema died on the spot, though she was taken to a nearby hospital where the doctors confirmed her death.

The police officer said that a case had been lodged and investigation taken up in the matter.

“Preliminary investigation suggests that the gunmen belonged to Hizbul Mujahideen. The case is being investigated thoroughly,” he said.

Local sources told media that Shameema is survived by her teenage children — a daughter and a son — and her husband Wali Muhammad Bhat.

Her body was handed over to her family after completion of medico-legal formalities.

Boys injured in Meminder blast face tough road to recovery

Impoverished families unable to bear treatment expenses

Aug 16: Two boys injured in a mysterious blast in Memindar area of the district last month are struggling to recover despite couple of surgeries, while their families have fallen into financial distress, and are unable to bear the cost of treatment or medicines.

One child was killed and five others injured in a mysterious blast in Memindar on July 11, a day after two militants were killed in a seven-hour long gunfight at Kundalan village, some five kilometers from the spot. While the families claim the explosive material was hurled by someone from hillside, police said the children had collected it from the gunfight site at Kundalan.

Khursheed Ahmad Sheikh’s 11-year-old son, Sahil, and nine-year-old daughter, Raziya, were injured in the blast along with their cousins.

“My son underwent three surgeries and the daughter one in abdomen. Doctors removed splinters from my son’s body and he has major damage in hand which according to doctors need plastic surgery and they told us that it will take him time to recover,” Khurseed said adding that his daughter was discharged from SMHS after a surgery.

Khursheed’s nephew, Arsalan Aslam, received eye injuries in the blast and the family says he has lost sight in both eyes.

Arsalan’s father Aslam said that the condition of his son has not improved in the month since.

“They operated upon him twice but he has not regained eyesight yet, doctors told me that they may have to conduct more surgeries on him. I hope he will get well soon by the mercy of Allah,” he said.

The blast had taken place in the family’s courtyard where the children were playing.

The two brothers say they have exhausted all their savings, and the daily medicines of the two children cost around Rs 2000 per day. They said they would not be able to continue, unless people help them out.

“If anybody wants to help, they are welcome,” the family said, adding the children are following treatment at SMHS Srinagar, SSH Sheerin Bagh and Bone and Joints, Barzulla.

Youth killed in explosion at Tosamaidan

Aug 12: A youth died and two others were injured in a mysterious blast at the picturesque meadow of Tosamaidan in Budgam district.

The deceased was identified as Wajid Ahmad Ahanger, son of Bashir Ahmad Ahanger, resident of Zoogu area in

Arizal. He had suffered multiple injuries in abdomen, legs and arm.

Eyewitnesses told media that at about 1:30pm they heard a loud bang from the forested area at Tosamaidan. "For a moment everything shook. People who were enjoying nature's beauty were terrified," they said.

Mir Manzoor, a local who was present there, said, "We were taking lunch when we heard an explosion, half a kilometre away from where we were. We left the lunch midway and ran towards the spot. I saw three bodies lying on the ground, in a pool of blood. Two were completely motionless while one was trying his level best to shout for help. I somehow managed to carry one among them on my shoulder. After that, many people came and took all of them on shoulders to the main road of Tosamaidan."

Mir said that the injured lost a lot of blood in the time they were taken to a health centre. "Writhing in pain,

they could hardly breathe. Finally we boarded them in a car and took them to PHC (Primary Health Centre) Khag," Mir said.

Mir Mushtaq, another local, said that while the injured were being carried to hospital, someone called him and others to inform about the incident. "We rushed there. We saw three persons injured seriously. The rest of the injured were safe and had been left behind in the meadow," Mushtaq said.

The two injured youths were identified as Mudasar Ahmad Ganie, 20, son of Mohammad Ramzan, and Wasim Ahmad Ganie, 22, son of Abdul Majeed Ganie, both residents of Zoogu Kharian.

All were shifted from Khag PHC to SKIMS JVC, from where Ahanger was shifted to SKIMS Soura but he breathed his last there.

His body was sent back home for last rites. He was buried at the local graveyard at Zoogu.

Youth abducted, shot dead at night in Pulwama

Aug 13: Another youth in Kashmir was abducted and killed by suspected militants, this time in Murran area of Pulwama district. Gulzar Ahmad Bhat, 23, son of Abdul Gani Bhat, was abducted from outside his home in Murran late August 12 evening by some unidentified gunmen. His bullet-riddled body was found in an apple orchard early Monday morning, a little distance from his home.

A senior police officer of the area told media that Gulzar was called out of his house by militants on some pretext and was shot dead some time during the night.

Gulzar had multiple bullet wounds on his body, which was handed over to his family by police after completion of medico-legal formalities.

Police have registered a case begun an investigation into the killing.

As per local sources, Gulzar worked as a salesman at an eye-clinic in Bijbehara area of Anantnag district.

"He, apparently, had no political affiliations," a local source told media.

Kulgam youth dies of torture injuries after being 'released' by militants

Aug 09: One of the two youths who were released after being tortured by suspected militants, succumbed to his injuries Wednesday night at a Srinagar hospital. Arif Ahmad Sofi, son of Fayaz Ahmad Sofi, resident of Khodweni area in Kulgam district, worked as a salesman at a local mobile phone shop. He was abducted by suspected militants from his home on Tuesday evening. Another youth, Mehranj Ahmad Dar, son of Ghulam Muhammad Dar, was also abducted at around the same time from his home in neighbouring Havoora village. Both of them were released in a wounded state, their bodies showing marks of torture.

"Both had been tortured. Dar's injuries were not of serious nature but Sofi was grievously injured and had to be shifted to a Srinagar hospital for specialised treatment," a senior police officer told Kashmir Reader. He said that Sofi battled death for a few hours before breathing his last.

Families of the two youths have still not approached the police regarding abduction of their sons.

"We had tried hard to contact them and register a case but they did not come forward for reasons better known to them," the police officer said.

Now that Sofi has died, police have taken cognizance of the matter and an investigation has been started, the officer said.

This is the second such incident in Khodweni area of a civilian being abducted and tortured by militants so badly that he died.

In March this year, a Class 12 student, Omais Rashid Bhat, resident of nearby Qaimoh area, was abducted and tortured by suspected militants. He was dumped by a roadside with grievous injuries and succumbed later at a Srinagar hospital.

Man shot dead after ramming car into Farooq Abdullah's Jammu home

Aug 04: A man was shot dead when he rammed his car into the Jammu residence of National Conference president and former chief minister Farooq Abdullah and began ransacking the house, police said.

The incident took place at Bhatindi this morning when the man, hailing from Mendhar in Poonch district, drove at a high speed and banged his car against the main gate, they said.

He later got down from the vehicle and started ransacking the house before being shot dead, they said.

Police said the intruder has been identified as Murtaz, whose father runs a gun factory at Ban-Talab in Jammu. The family was living in Jammu region.

Abdullah, a sitting Lok Sabha member from the Srinagar constituency, is away in New Delhi for the ongoing Parliament session.

The incident is being seen as a major breach in the security of Abdullah, a Z-plus category protectee.

The intruder, after ramming the car against the main gate, stopped at the garden and entered the house ransacking everything that came his way, police said.

He was shot dead near the stairs that led to the bedrooms of the house, they added.

Magisterial inquiry ordered

On August 05, a magisterial inquiry was ordered into the killing of a man by the security guards posted at the

residence of former Jammu and Kashmir chief ministers Farooq Abdullah and his son Omar Abdullah here Sundaya senior government official said.

District Development Commissioner (Jammu) Ramesh Kumar ordered the probe following massive protests by relatives of the slain man, Syeed Murfad Shah, who would have turned 26 next month.

“Sub-Divisional Magistrate, Jammu North, will conduct the probe and submit his report within four weeks,” Kumar told PTI.

Meanwhile, the National Conference (NC) sought a high level probe into the incident by the National Investigation Agency (NIA).

NC provincial spokesperson Madan Mantoo issued a statement here, saying, “As Abdullah is a central government categorised protectee, the government of India should carry out its independent and impartial inquiry by a team deputed by the Ministry of Home Affairs.”

Expressing grave concern over the incident, the spokesperson said the probe must cover all aspects, including how a car was able to gain entry into the supposedly highly secured residence with minimum cosmetic damage, considering the strength of the main gate.

“The security lapse is needed to be probed expeditiously so that the truth comes to the fore,” he added.

Following noisy protests by the relatives of the deceased, the Jammu and Kashmir unit of BJP also demanded that an impartial and prompt investigation be conducted into the incident and CCTV footage released.

“BJP demands an impartial and prompt enquiry into the matter of fake encounter. To set at rest the apprehensions

of the members of the family of deceased, the CCTV footage should be released to the media by police immediately,” BJP state spokesperson Anil Gupta said in a statement here.

He said the “cold-blooded” murder in a VIP residence raises many questions.

“The family of the deceased is calling the incident a fake encounter and insists that their son was called by somebody to the residence of the former chief minister,” he said.

Gupta said, quoting friends of the deceased, that the youth was not a drug addict, as was being alleged by some.

In a major security breach this morning, the man rammed his car into the front gate of the residence of Farooq Abdullah and Omar Abdullah here, and vandalised the house before being shot dead by the CRPF personnel guarding the premises, police said.

Both Farooq and Omar Abdullah are Z-plus protectees.

No Aug 09, taking *suo moto* cognizance of the killing of a youth at the Jammu residence of NC president Dr Farooq Abdullah, State Human Rights Commission (SHRC) has directed the police to submit report into the matter.

Syeed Murfad Shah (25) of Chinore, Jammu, was killed when he allegedly drove his vehicle into the heavily fortified residence of the former CM at Bhatindi.

SHRC officials said the commission has issued notices to the DGP J&K, and IGP, Jammu zone, directing them to submit their reports by the next date (September 10) in the matter.

Bakerwal activist Talib's story so far

Hussain is a key witness in the case of the horrific rape and murder of an 8-year-old Bakerwal child that evoked global outrage.

On August 6, some family members of Talib Hussain had gone to meet the later at police station Samba where they complained the activist was ruthlessly beaten up by the police inside the lock-up.

According to some media reports quoting family members of Hussain, the Bakerwal activist was beaten up so badly inside the police lock-up that his head was bleeding. Some other reports claimed Hussain's skull was broken in the custodial attack.

One of the family members also claimed that initially Samba police didn't allow him to meet with the activist but when he was later allowed Hussain looked anxious, pale and unhealthy.

He also said that Hussain told him the police were harassing him for raising his voice in the Kathua case and that he could be killed in custody.

Gulzar Begum, Hussain's maternal aunt says she had gone to the police station to meet with him. She was accompanied by her son Wasid.

“I was allowed to meet him (Hussain) for five minutes but not allowed to give him food and juice I was carrying for him. As we left, two people in civvies walked in and started beating him (Hussain) up,” Gulzar begum said.

“Then police gave him some injection and took him to hospital. We were not allowed to go with him.”

Hussain is a key witness in the case of the horrific rape and murder of an 8-year-old Bakerwal child that evoked global outrage.

Taking note of the alleged attack on the Bakerwal activist, Supreme Court lawyer Indira Jaising took to Twitter on August 6 with an “Action Alert”.

“Talib Hussain - who was arrested last week - has been tortured in Samba police station while on police remand, skull broken, rushed to hospital in Samba, he is a key witness in the Kathua gang rape-murder case,” Jaising said on the microblogging website

“This is unacceptable in a democracy.”

Later the renowned SC lawyer posted an update:

Talib has been sent back to the same police station in Samba where he was assaulted. Samba hospital did not allow Talib's relatives to meet him there. Relatives saw him at the police station. Head was bandaged, bleeding. No further info as of now.”

Police version:

Contradicting the allegations by Hussain and his relatives, the Jammu and Kashmir police claimed the Bakerwal activist hit himself against the walls of the police lock-up and that he sustained only minor injuries.

“Hussain hit himself on the head ‘out of frustration’ and had only sustained scratches. He was taken back to the Samba Police Station from the hospital,” SP Vaid, director general of police was quoted saying in reports.

Samba police, however told Greater Kashmir that Hussain tried to end his life by hitting his head against the walls of the lock-up and that he was booked in case FIR number 215/2018 under section 309 of the RPC.

Talib Hussain Choudhary is the man who vociferously raised the Kathua gang-rape and murder case of a Bakerwal child from the day the crime was reported. He was booked on August 1 on the complaint of a woman, his relative, alleging attempt to rape by the activist in the forest area of Mansar in Samba district. In the complaint, the woman alleged Hussain tried to rape her about a month and half earlier in the forest of Chidawa in Mansar area of Samba district where she was grazing cattle.

Kashmiri Government school headmaster beaten up inside Indian army camp

Aug 27: Government school headmaster was allegedly ruthlessly beaten up by army soldiers – after summoning him to their camp and accusing him and other teachers of propagating “pro-freedom (Azadi)” teachings at the school, here in Shopian district of south Kashmir.

The headmaster has been identified as Mushtaq Ahmad Mir, son of Abdul Rehman Mir, resident of Mughalpora village in Pulwama district. Mir is the headmaster at Government Upper Primary School in Daramdora village of Shopian.

Mir told Media that he received a call on August 25 from army men summoning him to the 44 RR camp in nearby Hawl village. “Army officials have been dropping by at our school and have been respectful earlier, even promising some stuff for the school,” Mir said.

On August 25, however, he said he was made to wait at the camp gate for half an hour before being taken to an interrogation centre inside the camp. “They kept beating me, accusing me of propagating pro-freedom and anti-national teachings at the school,” Mir said, adding that the army men, in presence of the officials, kept beating him ruthlessly for almost three hours.

Clashes in Harnag after Sumo driver beaten up

Aug 01: Violent clashes followed the thrashing of a Sumo cab driver by government forces, here in Harnag area of Anantnag district which falls under the police jurisdiction of Kulgam district.

According to reports, government forces beat up a Sumo cab driver in the afternoon, which triggered protests from locals. People, as per sources, hit the road and challenged

The complainant also said Hussain was armed with a knife when he intercepted her and that he also touched her private parts inappropriately and later beat her.

Hussain was booked in case FIR under Section 376 and 4/25 Arms Act of the RPC at Samba police station on Tuesday.

His relatives however claimed the police framed Hussain in a false case for highlighting the Kathua gang-rape and murder of a child from his community.

Mir was asked to give names of teachers with pro-freedom ideology and was also accused of making students write anti-India slogans on school walls. He said that he pleaded with the officials saying he was diabetic, but they paid no heed.

“They kept beating me ruthlessly. I was let go of after about three hours of torture, following which I called one of my teachers who took me to hospital,” Mir said.

Mir has not been able to sit properly since the beating, even for a photograph of his to be clicked for the newspapers. “I am in absolute pain,” he said, adding that his condition did not allow him to go file a complaint before the police.

The said army camp in Hawl, of the 44 RR, was recently in news after residents of Arbal Nikas village protested the highhandedness of army officials and personnel of the camp. The protesting residents had demanded immediate removal of the camp from the area.

Indian army spokesperson Colonel Rajesh Kalia refuted the allegations. “The said person was not detained by our men, so the question of torturing him does not arise. The allegations are completely baseless,” Kalia said.

the government forces, at which police used tear smoke shells to disperse them, only to escalate the protests.

“Following the tear smoke shelling, people resorted to stone-pelting, bringing traffic on the highway to a halt, briefly,” a local source said.

The clashes continued for over an hour before normalcy returned to the area.

Get shrouds along with election forms: Hizb warns Panchayat elections contesters

Aug 28: Hizbul-ul-Mujahideen commander, Riyaz Naikoo, warned those planning to contest upcoming Panchayat elections, saying that “they should bring shrouds along with election forms and be ready for the acid attacks.”

“Respected brothers, you must be seeing that Indian forces ransack houses and vehicles which is nothing but their frustration. India plans to hold Panchayat elections in Valley and wants to prepare road for it and as such people are being beaten up and houses are ransacked without any justification so as to bring people into submission,” he says.

“Those people who are thinking of participating in the elections, they should also bring shroud along with the election forms for themselves. They should also remember that we have also brought the sulfuric acid and hydrochloric acid and be prepared for it.”

Naikoo said that the “forces frustration or movement has nothing to do with what we ought to do.” “Shamima Banoo of Quil Pulwama, who informed forces about Sameer Tiger (Hizb commander who was killed earlier

this year), was killed despite the fact that forces would lay ambush outside her house so that militants should not kill her,” he is heard saying in the audio, adding, “how long they could keep with the ambush. Forces will try assuring you that they are with you but how can these forces help you when they themselves need security. The Indian forces have the highest percentage of suicides across the world and how can the forces personnel who commit suicide safeguard you? We kill those who we have to kill and we do it anytime, anyplace.”

He said that the continuous harassment of militant families by government forces was a sign of “frustration but it is not going to deter us from carrying on our mission.”

In an 11-minute audio, released on social media, Naikoo also asked media persons to do justice with their profession “lest we know how to teach and how justice is done.”

He accused media of giving less space or completely eschewing the news related to the “sufferings of the people and ones related to freedom struggle”.

“The news involving killing of traitor or informer by militants or those favoring government of India is given prominent space on the front pages and ones relating to sufferings of people, ransacking of our houses, thrashing of our families without any justification, is either shunned or given space inside the inner pages where nobody sees them,” Naikoo said.

“We want to tell all the news agencies that your role is to bring the truth before the world and do justice to your profession. We know most of you are corrupt and we also know what every agency is doing,” he said, adding, “All news agencies should do justice with their profession otherwise we know how to teach and how justice is done”.

The Hizb commander also appealed the shoppers to remove the CCTVs focused towards streets.

5. APDP/JKCCS Statements

➤ ARBITRARY DETENTION AS STATE VIOLENCE

Aug1: The JK State Advisory Council has reportedly approved the bill entitled “The Jammu and Kashmir Public Safety (Amendment) Bill, 2018”, and Governor's assent has been received. One of the amendments is the deletion of a proviso to Section 10 of the Public Safety Act, 1978 (PSA) that barred the detention of permanent residents of JK in jails outside JK. The proviso to Section 10 was introduced through an amendment in 2002.

This amendment – passed in apparent secrecy – is both unlawful under the domestic and international law, and “political” to the extent that its purpose is clearly to deter otherwise lawful conduct with the threat of detention outside JK. But, this amendment must be understood within the larger context of state violence, of which arbitrary detention constitutes an important tool.

PSA forms a part of the on-going state violence against the people of JK. Along with other forms of arbitrary and illegal detention, PSA operates in absolute disregard for the rule of law. By some estimates, up to 20,000 persons have been detained under PSA since 1990. Further, as per the JK government itself, around 8587 persons were arrested from July 2016 – January 2017, of which 522 were detained under PSA. All political parties have used PSA to curb freedoms and dissent (including the National Conference that is today critical of this amendment). Termed a “lawless law” by Amnesty International in 2011, PSA violates international human rights law and standards, specifically relevant articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights and UN General Assembly Body of Principles for the protection of all persons under any form of detention or imprisonment. The UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention has in the past held specific detentions under PSA as illegal, and recently, on 14 June, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, in the first-ever report on JK, observed that PSA had been reportedly widely used by authorities in JK to stifle dissent, and recommended its amendment in line with international human rights law.

Rampant use of PSA has not been effectively checked by the judiciary. Thousands of habeas corpus petitions have resulted in the quashing of PSA orders but the delay in judicial proceedings and the re-detention in fresh (and equally illegal) PSA orders have resulted in

“The CCTVs focused towards streets create a lot of problems for us especially our OGWs (over ground workers). We request with politeness all our shopkeeper brothers not to fix the CCTV cameras in a manner they record outside activities so that police doesn't get any evidence after we carry out any activity,” he said.

The Hizbul Mujahidin commander also urged people not to give any money to any person who are asking for it in the name of the outfit. “If any of our members requires money, he will collect it himself,” he added.

He said that India on inside uses pellets, PSA and other actions to ruin the careers of “our youth on the other side, some of our brothers and sisters are lured into sports activities.”

continued painful incarcerations of a majority of detainees. Rule 8 of the JK High Court Case Flow Management Rules, 2010 mandate that cases of habeas corpus are to be decided in 15 days. PSA cases take months before final decisions. The High Court, therefore, does not comply with its own rules.

A part of the punishment has been lodgement in jails at a considerable distance from the ordinary residence of the detainee. Prior to the 2002 amendment, JK detainees were regularly shifted to jails outside JK. Their experiences and hardships have been documented and they mirror the experiences of Kashmiri under-trials and those facing trials in different States in India. Following the 2002 amendment, the practice continued to the extent that detainees were transferred to jails within JK but far away from their ordinary residences. For example, detainees from Kashmir are mainly lodged in Jammu jails. This practice is contrary to Supreme Court rulings and yet JK High Court has rarely enforced such rulings and directed for lodgment close to the residence of the detainee.

The latest PSA amendment, therefore, forms a part of the larger violence of the State.

➤ SAILAN MASSACRE OF 3 / 4 AUGUST 1998

Families approach UN Special Procedure

August 03: Today marks the 20th anniversary of the Sailan massacre in which local police and Indian army personnel stands accused of a massacre that – to date – has not been investigated fairly. The families of the victims today commemorated the massacre attended by different sections of civil society in Surankote, Poonch.

On the night of 3/4 August 1998, 19 civilians (13 female/6 male including 11 children) were shot to death at point blank range in their homes in Sailan village by 4 Special Police Officers (SPOs) and personnel of the 9 Para commando battalion (under the control of Major Gaurav Rishi), an elite commando unit of the Indian Army. Jammu and Kashmir police officers, including then Superintendent of Police (Poonch), J.P Singh, are also implicated in the crime and cover up. Following inaction by the police, the families approached the J&K High Court in 2011 and on 21 November 2012 the CBI was directed to re-investigate the case. On 27 August 2015 the CBI filed a closure report before the CBI court and on 25 August 2017, CBI court accepted the CBI investigations and closed the case. This decision was

challenged before the J&K High Court and remains pending since 17 November 2017. Next date of hearing before the court is 9 August.

The families of the victim have submitted before the High Court that the CBI court ignored material evidence and its decision is arbitrary and findings perverse. The CBI court accepted the conclusions of the CBI and failed to appreciate the detailed submissions made by the family members of the victims that clearly indict the State forces for the crime and emphasise the need for further investigations that would lead to a chargesheet and a successful prosecution. Three eye-witnesses, all family members of the victims, accuse 4 SPO's, and Major Gaurav Rishi, for their involvement in the massacre. Further, the CBI court was made aware of 12 witnesses who have vital evidence that support the case but the CBI court in its order does not even refer to this point.

Since 1998, the families of the victims have waged a struggle for justice before the J&K State Human Rights Commission, J&K High Court, CBI court and now back before the High Court. On 16 July 2018, the families submitted a detailed complaint on this case to the Special Rapporteur on extra-judicial executions of the UN Human Rights Council. This forms another important step in the struggle for justice especially in light of the recent UN report on Jammu and Kashmir.

➤ **APDP seeks SHRC intervention before High Court in unmarked and mass graves case**

August 08: APDP today moved an application before the JK State Human Rights Commission (SHRC) on the issue of unmarked and mass graves in Jammu and Kashmir, and prayed that the SHRC approach the JK High Court to seek implementation of its 2011 and 2017 judgments. SHRC issued notice and sought responses from the JK police and Government of JK and will hear the case next on 17 September.

Jammu and Kashmir has seen an estimated 70,000 killed, 8000 disappeared, and countless tortured and victims of sexual violence. Unmarked and mass graves are directly connected to these widespread and systematic human rights violations as a part of the ongoing armed conflict. State forces (army, paramilitary, police and informal groups) have been the major perpetrators of this violence and have for decades failed to follow any protocol following the killing of civilians and/or militants whether in "legitimate encounters" or in cases of fake encounters, custodial killing, torture killings and other such crimes. In addition to not filing first information reports and carrying out fair and independent investigations, including on the bodies themselves, the State forces buried the bodies of the persons killed in unmarked graves, including on occasion in mass graves [a grave that consists of more than one body]. Unmarked graves are sites of crime and their investigation would unearth the nature and extent of State violence. Crucially, families of the disappeared have a right to know the whereabouts of their loved ones and the investigation of unmarked graves may provide some answers in this respect.

APDP first highlighted this issue in a 2008 report titled Facts Underground (followed up by a 2009 report titled Buried Evidence). Subsequently, in two separate judgments (2011 and 2017) SHRC also confirmed the phenomenon and issued a series of recommendations for investigations and reparations for 4810 unmarked graves across five districts. On 19 October 2011, SHRC through its own investigations confirmed the presence of 2730 unidentified bodies in unmarked graves in districts Baramulla, Bandipora and Kupwara (of which 574 bodies were identified as being locals) and issued six recommendations including for identification of the unidentified bodies through DNA testing and forensic examinations, and for prosecution and reparations. Government was directed to file an action taken report, which was filed by communication dated 13 August 2012 wherein the Home Department of Government of JK refused to implement the recommendations of the SHRC. Specifically, on the important recommendation of investigations of the graves it was stated that due to lack of capacity and resources, and the time period already lapsed, investigation would not be possible except in limited cases where a family member is able to identify the exact location of the grave of their loved one (which is impossible in virtually all cases). On 26 October 2017 on a separate application by APDP on unmarked graves in districts Poonch and Rajouri, SHRC – based on government records – confirmed presence of 2080 unmarked graves and reiterated the same six recommendations. These directions were to be complied within six months but to date the government has not done so and neither has any action taken report, as mandated, been filed.

International bodies have also called for investigations into unmarked and mass graves in Jammu and Kashmir, such as the European Parliament through a resolution in 2008 where financial assistance was also offered, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in June 2018, and international NGO's Amnesty international and Human Rights Watch.

The categorical refusal of the State to comply with SHRC recommendations is a part of the consistent practice of the State to ensure impunity and protect perpetrators of violence. But, it also calls into question the very credibility of the SHRC that has been constituted – as per its statute - to protect human rights of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. The refusal of the State to investigate unmarked graves mirrors the past refusal to even acknowledge the crime of enforced disappearance (Government of India has signed but not ratified the Convention on enforced disappearance). Therefore APDP has approached the SHRC to ensure compliance of its own judgments by approaching the High Court, a measure that is within the power of the SHRC and has been exercised in other cases.

Today's application by APDP forms the next step in its decades old struggle for justice on the issue of enforced disappearance. APDP will ensure that the memory of the disappeared remains alive until justice is done and the truth is made public.

6. Vandalism, Harassment, Abductions, Threats and Arson: a new norm in the Valley

Vandalism of property has become a new norm in Kashmir in last few years. Every month reports of vandalism pour in from various parts of valley mostly from south Kashmir. Herein, we are incorporating the reported incidents of vandalism, harassment, threats and arson in chronological order. Not only the armed forces but militants were also found involved in incidents of vandalism of the houses and threats to the police officials and suspected armed forces informers. This month in reaction to the vandalism and burning of militant houses by the armed forces, militants abducted and later release the relatives of the police officials in south Kashmir to mount pressure on the forces to dissuade them from targeting their families.

➤ **Khudwani locals accuse forces of vandalism**

Aug 02: The locals of Khudwani area of South Kashmir's Kulgam district alleged that forces unleashed a "reign of terror" and damaged property worth lakhs in the area.

The locals told news agency CNS that forces not only vandalized their houses but also damaged parked vehicles and thrashed people who came in their way.

"Whenever there is a protest during day hours, the forces target locals in late hours. Damage property has become a routine for forces personnel. It seems they seek pleasure in it," said an angry local wishing not to be named.

The locals said that they know no action will be initiated against these forces personnel but yet they register their protest.

"There are live videos and scores of them are on internet showing how unbridled forces personnel damage property and ransack houses, but till date no action was taken against them," said the locals.

Pertinently, shutdown was observed in the area on Wednesday to protest the detention of seven students during clashes with the forces.

Clashes had erupted in Khudwani following a bank heist in nearby Qaimoh area. (CNS)

➤ **Pulwama village fumes at 'harassment' by forces**

Aug 16: Scores of villagers in Nikas Aarbal in Pulwama came out of their homes to protest alleged harassment by the government forces. The people accused forces belonging to the nearby Hall camp of harassing the youth of the village.

On August 14 afternoon an elderly woman passed out at her home after forces carried out a raid in the village. The woman later slipped into a coma and is battling for life at SMHS, Srinagar, the residents said.

The woman has been identified as Jana, 60, wife of Mohammad Ahsan Malik.

"We rushed her to a district hospital Pulwama from where she was referred to SMHS, Srinagar for the advanced treatment" said a female family member who does not wish to be named.

A middle aged man who didn't want to be named said that forces snatch identity cards and mobile phones of

their sons and summon them to the army camps where they torture them.

A miffed youth of the area alleged that the brutal ways of forces were forcing them to pick the arms. The residents were demanding the shifting of the camp from the area.

Defence spokesperson Rajesh Kalia, however, denied the allegations of harassment by army men.

"Army personnel are not involved in any such kind of incident. We don't barge into the houses of people or harass youth" Kalia said.

➤ **'Hizb posters' ask SPOs to quit**

Aug 16: Hizbul Mujahideen posters were seen pasted on several walls in south Kashmir warning Special Police Officers (SPOs) to quit their jobs or face consequences.

"We Inform all those SPOs who have sold their soul to the devil and are working for Indian agencies to quit their jobs and lead a dignified life otherwise they know the consequences...." read the posters printed in Urdu.

The posters, bearing the stamp of HM district commander for Pulwama appeared in Karimabad area days after more than a dozen SPOs publically announced their resignations during Friday congregational prayers in Tral.

District police chief, Chandan Kohli, however, said that the matter has not come to his notice.

The posters have also carried a warning for people in general for participating in August 15 functions, and expressed the disgust over the "growing waywardness and tipping in the society", warning those who are involved in such activities.

"We have reports that some people promote (alcohol) drinking and we warn them a last time to desist from such activities before we take action," the posters say.

According to official figures 499 SPOs have been killed across Kashmir in different incidents so far.

The SPOs have been engaged on paltry emoluments since 1995. Their primary role, according to official guidelines, include traffic regulation, disaster management or meeting any emerging requirement in tourism sector.

However, the SPOs have often been deployed during anti-militancy operations as well.

➤ **Search operation held at Tral school Students 'paraded'**

Aug 24: Forces allegedly paraded students of a school in Tral in south Kashmir during cordon and search operation.

Locals alleged that on Friday morning, forces barged into the premises of Hamdard Grammar School in southern Tral and conducted searches.

According to police sources, around 10:30 am forces led by army's 42 Rashtriya Rifles and Jammu and Kashmir police cordoned off Hamdard Grammar School in Hamdardabad area of Tral township. "Forces asked the school management for CCTV footage. The operation which continued for three hours ended at 2:30 pm," they said.

During the operation, a source said that 850 students were paraded in the school ground and their classrooms were thoroughly checked. The situation forced the school administration to drive the students to their homes.

As per school authorities, both the students and staff had to undergo frisking. "The face of few female kindergarten students turned pale when they saw the movement of forces inside the school," a local said.

The staff member however remained inside the school until the operation was over. The school is managed by almost 60 teachers half of them female.

"We had no other option but to send the students to their homes. It was an unprecedented situation but fortunately the operation ended peacefully, said school principal," Riyaz Ahmad Shah. He said all the students were paraded before they boarded their buses.

The parents were worried when learnt about the CASO in the school. "We rushed to the school," said a parent.

A top army official of 42 RR said that the searches were launched following a tip-off about the presence of militants inside the school.

Director General of police, S.P Vaid said he has no information about the CASO in the school. "I do not know anything about it but the operations can take place anywhere if the militancy has to be eliminated from Jammu and Kashmir," he said.

Army version:

Army has clarified that no student was paraded during cordon and search operation (CASO) at a school in Tral on 24th August.

The Army carries out its task in a professional manner. Based on specific intelligence, regarding presence of three militants in Hamdard Grammar School in Tral, a joint team of Army and JKP launched an operation.

The area was cordoned but Army refused to go inside the school considering the sensitivities involved and pressed upon that, all children to first vacate the school premises," Col Rajesh Kalia, PRO (Defence) Srinagar said in a statement reacting to a report published in this paper on 25th August.

"SDPO Tral spoke to the school administration and all children were brought out of the school. Army waited till closure of the school at 1230h. Thereafter, the search commenced at 1310h in a truly professional manner causing no damage, misuse of school property and by 1500 h the search was over," the statement said.

➤ Militant families in South Kashmir accuse forces of resorting to 'vandalism'

Aug 28:Family of a local militant, Burhan Ahmed Ganaie, a native of S-K Colony at main town in south Kashmir's district Anantnag has accused government forces of harassment and vandalizing their households.

According to the family, joint teams of SOG and army night barged inside their house and woke up the inmates. The forces personnel searched the house till late night while the father of Burhan was abused verbally and the household items were ransacked. Burhan, a physiotherapy graduate had joined militant ranks on 25th June this year. In another such incident, which happened on Monday night, the Government forces allegedly vandalized residential house of a youth, Parvez Ahmed Bhat in Quimoh, who is believed to have joined the militant ranks after disappearing from his home some days back. According to family the forces personnel after barging inside the house damaged the household items and verbally abused the inmates also.

A family member of Parvez said, "We have no information about him joining the rebel ranks. Despite no formal announcement by any militant outfit about the activation of our son as a militant, the forces have started

harassing us. We are living in total fear as the government forces may anytime arrive again and harm us".

Families of several active militants have accused forces of vandalizing the properties and harrasing the families in Kulgam areas, since last week.

According to locals, the forces barged into the residential house of Azad Malik alias Dada Malik, at Arwani near Bijbehara during night last week and started searches in it. The forces harassed the family and damaged property also before leaving the spot. Azad Malik, one of the top commanders in south Kashmir region, is affiliated with LeT militant outfit.

However, the Defense spokesperson denied that any army personnel had barged inside any house.

"No army personnel has entered or barged inside any house and no one among our forces is involved in the ransacking anywhere in Anantnag or Kulgam", said Defense PRO, Rajesh Kalia.

➤ In Shopian, Army set afire houses of two militants: Locals

Aug 30:Two residential houses belonging to the families of two active militants from south Kashmir's Shopian district were set ablaze allegedly by the Army Wednesday night who also damaged many residential houses in Pulwama during the night and thrashed youth during the night-long Cordon and Search Operation (CASO).

The family members of Shah Jahan Mir, a Jaish-e-Muhammad (JeM) militant from Amshipora village said the Army set their house afire Wednesday night.

A family member said they were asleep when the Army entered into their house at around midnight.

"They asked all of us to come out and threw some powder into the house which caused fire," he said. "The government forces soon left after which they raised a hue and cry which attracted villagers, who doused the fire."

The family members said the fire caused significant damage to their house.

"All household items including quilts, mattresses, matting, food items and clothes were destroyed in the fire," the family member said.

At Nazneenpora village of Shopian, the house of a policeman-turned-HM militant, Syed Naveed was also set ablaze.

Talking to media persons, the grandfather of Naveed said at around 1:15 am on Thursday, the government forces banged on the door of their house and asked the family members to come out.

"They went upstairs in the second storey and cut off the electric supply to the house and left," he said. "When I entered into the house, I noticed fire."

However, the fire was doused by the villagers.

However, Naveed's grandfather said the fire caused significant damage to the upper storey of the house and destroyed some household items.

Meanwhile, residents of Murran village in south Kashmir's Pulwama district accused the government forces of thrashing some youth and causing damage to residential house during a CASO.

The locals from Murran, a village around 5 km from Pulwama district headquarters, said the government forces entered the village at around 10 pm on Wednesday and left at Thursday 7:45 am.

Abdul Rashid Ahangar, a middle-aged resident of Murran said the Army banged at their main gate at

around 4 am on Thursday and then entered into the courtyard asking all family members to come out of the house.

“As soon as my son, Nayeem Ahmad came out, Army men caught hold of him and started thrashing him,” Rashid said. “When my wife rushed to Nayeem’s rescue, she too was flogged.”

He said the Army men then climbed upstairs into a room in the second storey of the house and damaged cupboards, lights and utensils.

“Afterwards, the Army men entered into another room on the first floor where they caused damage to our TV, refrigerator and to other electronic equipment,” Ahangar said and accused the Army of stealing some jewellery from his house.

The family members appealed the civil and police administration to look into matter and use their influence to stop such incidents.

Another middle aged woman from Murran accused the Army men of breaking their house door and dragging them out from the house.

“They beat our kids and hit m+e with gun-butts as well,” she said and appealed the authorities to ask Army for showing restraint while dealing with unarmed civilians.

The villagers from Murran said that around seven houses had been severely damaged by the Army men, who, they said, smashed their windowpanes.

The villagers said windshields of some vehicles were also smashed while around 10 youth were detained by government forces during the night.

Police and Army did not comment about these incidents with Senior Superintendent of Police, Shopian, Sandeep Chaudhary and Army spokesperson Rajesh Kalia not responding to repeated phone calls.

➤ **Militants release all abducted kin**

Aug 31: Militants set free all the abducted people, most of who were the family members of policemen and a few were serving policemen.

A Police official said militants, who had abducted more nine people relatives of policemen and some policemen, have released them.

He said the three abducted kin of policemen, two from Kulgam and one from Pulwama, were set free Friday afternoon while a policeman was set free Thursday night soon after his abduction from Pulwama.

Police said Gowhar Ahmad Malik, brother of DSP, Aijaz Ahmad Malik of Kathpora, Kulgam was released.

Sedition case filed against unidentified persons for raising pro-freedom slogans in Poonch

Aug 08: A sedition case has been filed against unidentified persons in Jammu and Kashmir’s Poonch district for raising pro-freedom slogans during a demonstration in support of Article 35A of the Constitution, the police said on Wednesday.

“An FIR was registered yesterday under various sections of the Ranbir Penal Code (RPC) including 124-A (sedition) and 120B (criminal conspiracy) at Gursai police station,” a police officer said.

Cops thrash police officer’s father in south Kashmir’s Tral

Aug 30: A police officer’s father was allegedly beaten up by cops today in Tral town of south Kashmir’s Pulwama district.

They said Muhammad Shafi Mir, son of Abdul Salam Mir of Naman village of Pulwama and Sumar Ahmad Rather, son of Abdul Salam Rather from Yamrath Kulgam too have been set free.

Mir, who is a driver by profession, has a brother working in J&K Police while Rather is the son of a policeman.

Militants abducted the trio from their respective villages on August 30 night.

A senior Police official said more than nine abductions were reported from different areas of south Kashmir including Anantnag, Kulgam, Shopian, and Pulwama on August 30 night.

An abducted policeman Shabir Ahmad Zargar of Kangan was released soon after his abduction after getting a thrashing.

Sources said Shabir, who was recruited as an SPO and later promoted as a constable, was posted in Chadoora area of central Kashmir’s Budgam district.

A police official from Shopian informed that two kin of policemen, Yasir Ahmad Bhat, son of ASI Bashir Ahmad Bhat of Wathoo and Adnan Ashraf Shah, the nephew of DSP Muhammad Syed Shah of Tharuna, who were abducted from two different villages of Shopian, were also set free.

Another police official said the two kin of policemen abducted from Arwani area of Anantnag and two kin of policemen abducted from Midoora and Pinglish, Tral too have been released.

On August 31 evening militants released videos of some abducted policemen and their kin on various social media.

In the videos some of the abducted policemen and their kin were heard making an appeal to higher authorities of Police to not cause any damage to the houses of militants.

“We are locals, if their houses are damaged, there will be reprisals which will make us vulnerable and then we either have to resign or seek protection,” the policemen are heard saying in the videos.

The abductions came after Police detained the kin of three militants, Riyaz Ahmad Naikoo, Lateef Ahmad Dar and Adil Bashir Mir.

Police on August 31 released the father of Naikoo, two brothers and father of Dar, and father and uncle of Mir.

The abductions are seen as a reprisal of detaining kin of militants by Police and setting two houses of militant families afire in Shopian allegedly by Army.

The case was filed in connection with “pro-freedom” slogans raised by a group of people during a rally which was a part of the general strike, he said.

The strike was observed in Poonch along with Rajouri and Chenab valley districts of Ramban, Kishtawar and Doda in Jammu region in response to a call given by various social and religious organisations against a Supreme Court hearing of petitions challenging the validity of the Article 35A.

Rallies were taken out at different places in the districts demanding dismissal of the petitions.

Bashir Ahmad Bhat was on way to his home on his two-wheeler when a posse of cops intercepted him near

Hayuna village of Tral around 2:00 pm on August 30, his son Tahir Ahmad told media.

Ahmad is a sub-inspector in Jammu & Kashmir police and is currently posted in the neighbouring Anantnag district.

The cops at the checkpoint, Ahmad said asked his father to produce documents of his two-wheeler. He said his father provided cops every documents except the driving license which he had left home.

“The cop abused my father for riding two-wheeler without a license. When my father told him that his son too is a police officer, the cops got further infuriated. They thrashed him and abused me too,” Ahmad said.

He said a senior police officer was watching the events as his subordinates thrashed his father.

“Due to severe beating, my father suffered fracture in right arm. If this is how a police officer’s father is treated, what must be the common masses going through,” he said.

Ahmad said that he went to the police station Tral to file a complaint but the cops there did not pay any heed to his pleas.

“They wasted my time instead of acting against the erring cops. I will bring this issue into the notice of senior officers,” he said.

SP Awantipora, Mohammad Zahid did not attend repeated calls by media.

When contacted, DIG south Kashmir Amit Kumar told this newspaper that he was busy and he cannot talk at the moment.

Police begin fresh household profiling in Sgr, Budgam areas

Aug 26: The Jammu and Kashmir Police have begun a fresh profiling of households in some areas of Srinagar and Budgam districts. Senior police officials claimed that this was part of a routine exercise to help the department keep an eye on criminals and miscreants.

According to residents of such areas, sleuths of the police department have started visiting houses in Natipora, Nowgam, BK Pora, Chanapora, Lasjan and Pantha Chowk areas to collect details of residents.

“They are seeking details about the age and occupation of family members, apart from the number of persons living in a particular dwelling,” said a resident of BK Pora in Budgam.

Residents of Lasjan told media that similar door-to-door profiling was going on in their area. They expressed apprehensions that the police may use the information to harass youth who take part in street protests.

A resident of the area at Nowgam Bypass said that a policeman in civvies came to his house and introduced himself as an official of the Census Department. He said that the area’s residents came to know later that the man was from the police, when a youth asked for his identity card.

“If the profiling is part of routine policing, then why policemen are not introducing themselves?” the resident asked.

“The way the sleuths of police are concealing their identity, it will create a rift between police and public. People won’t cooperate in such circumstances,” said a management student who lives in Nowgam.

As per sources, the exercise has been undertaken particularly in areas which have seen an increase in crime rate and are considered as notorious for street protests.

“Efforts are being made to keep a check on tenants living in rented homes to ensure that outside elements are unable to establish a base in the city,” they said.

An official in the police department told media that the data will help the department in finding out the status of unemployment among youth living in these areas, so that police recruitment drives can be better focused.

“There were complaints in the past that some areas benefited more from the police’s on-spot recruitment drives. The door-to-door data collection will help us have a clear idea about an area and its employment graph,” he said.

Kashmir Range Inspector General of Police SP Pani said on the issue, “It is part of routine policing and community-driven exercise to maintain the Beat Book of a particular area. It helps police to ensure peace and security of citizens.”

He said the exercise was part of the police manual, meant to ensure better police-public cooperation and check the crime rate.

“Such exercise is part of policing in New Delhi and New York also. We are doing nothing wrong. But in the past some people called it a ‘Census’, which is not right. Census department has different work and we do a different kind of work,” he said.

The IGP said that the door-to-door information collection had helped the department in controlling different kinds of crime in many areas.

“We ensure that there are no criminal elements living in the residential areas in the disguise of tenants and guests,” he said.

Army Court of Inquiry indicts Major Gogoi in Srinagar hotel case

Aug 27: An Army Court of Inquiry has indicted Major Leetul Gogoi for “fraternising” with a local woman in a Srinagar hotel and being away from his place of duty, paving the way for disciplinary action, army sources said today.

Gogoi was detained by police in May following an altercation when he was allegedly trying to enter a Srinagar hotel with an 18-year-old woman.

The officer, who was at the centre of the human shield row after his decision to tie a civilian to the bonnet of his vehicle in Kashmir last year, will now face summary of evidence before court martial proceedings are initiated against him, the sources said.

The CoI has held him accountable for “fraternising” with a local in spite of instructions to the contrary and “being away from the place of duty while in operational area”, they said.

The CoI had submitted its findings to the convening authority earlier this month following which further proceedings have been initiated, the sources said.

The Army had ordered the CoI following the May 23 incident. Army chief Gen Bipin Rawat had said in Pahalgam that exemplary punishment would be given to Gogoi if he was found guilty of “any offence”.

Gogoi had hit the headlines last year after he tied a man to a jeep in Kashmir as a shield against stone pelting

during polling in the Srinagar Lok Sabha by-election on April 9. Rawat had supported the young officer's action and honoured him with the Army chief's 'Commendation

Card' for his 'sustained efforts' in counter-insurgency operations.

Journalists not safe in Valley: NHRC

Aug 28: The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has observed that media persons in Kashmir including those provided police protection by the State government are not safe in the valley.

While taking a suo-moto cognizance of news report titled 'SAMDEN appeals to NHRC, the commission sought swift probe into killing of senior journalist and Rising Kashmir chief editor Shujaat Bukharin and directed the J&K Chief Secretary and Director General of Police (DGP) to file a detailed report in the matter.

The State government was also directed to provide details of the attacks made on media during last two years and the number of casualties/injuries and status of relief/ rehabilitation provided to the victims and their families.

The Commission said the way, Shujaat Bukhari was killed indicates that the media persons including those

who have been provided police protection by the State Government are not safe in the valley.

The commission said it would like to know as what special measures have been taken by the J&K Government to stop such incidents (attacks on journalists) in the State.

Terming the assassination of Bukhari as a violation of a right to life, NHRC said, "This is a case of violation of Right to Life of the victim and the incident is causing serious threat to free speech and freedom of the press in the State."

It said in view of special provisions laid down U/S 1(2) of the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993 in connection with the State of Jammu and Kashmir, the Commission generally does not intervene into the matters relatable to entries enumerated in the List II (State List) mentioned under Seventh Schedule to the Constitution of India.

Police admit to SHRC slain Lolab youth was not a militant

Aug 17: Police have admitted to the State Human Rights Commission that a youth killed by soldiers along with three other suspected militants in the Phalilohar Pati Devar forests way back in 1998 was not a militant.

Mohammad Iqbal Shah, 22, a resident of Devar Lolab was killed in July 1998 and his body was handed over to police by the army's 15 RR unit camped at Trumikh, Watlab in Sopore along with the bodies of other three "unidentified terrorists".

On July 8, 1988 police said parents and relatives of Shah came to know that his body was handed over by the soldiers following which a case FIR No. 217/1988 regarding the incident was registered in the Sopore Police Station.

It was later found that the slain youth had gone to Phalilohar Pati Devar forest for grazing animals on July 7, 1998 but did not return.

Soldiers of the army's 55 RR unit had claimed they sustained injuries during an armed encounter that took place in the forest area of Trumikh between militants and them, and that arms and ammunition was recovered from the four slain unidentified militants.

However, a police investigation found that one among the killed persons was a civilian.

The revelations came about in the course of hearing of a petition filed in this regard in SHRC by rights activist and chairman of International Forum for Human Rights and Justice, Ahsan Untoo.

The Police Investigation Wing has told SHRC that concerned police have said the record reveals that Shah was a civilian and not involved in any subversive or criminal activity until his killing.

"During the course of an independent investigation, the statements of such witnesses who live in the vicinity of residence of the deceased were recorded, and in their individual statements they stated that deceased was a youth and besides this, he was doing his domestic labor and was a thorough gentleman. On 07-07-1998, the deceased left home for grazing his animals in the upper forest reaches of Trimukh Bahak and not returned home," the PIW report states.

"They (witnesses) further stated that they could not say whether he was killed by the Army or got killed in the cross-firing. The discreet evidence collected in the incident also established the same facts."

7. Militarization

Govt. school in main Shopian town occupied by CRPF

Aug 15: A government primary school in Batpora area of main Shopian town has been occupied by paramilitary forces since 2002, its students forced to take their classes under open sky in a nearby high school.

About 61 students and four teachers of the primary school conduct all school activities in an open space of a government high school situated some 500 meters away.

In 2002, the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) established a camp near the school. A lady teacher thought it risky to operate the school in such circumstances and went to higher officials to have the camp removed. After several pleas, the officials told her to operate from a nearby high school where one room was provided for the purpose.

With the primary school building lying vacant, the CRPF occupied it and laid concertina wires around it. This continues to this day and no one in the government has bothered to get the camp removed.

School authorities said that they several times went to the CRPF camp and asked them to vacate the school building. "They didn't listen to us and said that they had two battalions staying in the school building. One officer said that they can't move 'an inch' till orders from the high command," a teacher deputed at the primary school said.

Another teacher said that the primary school's records were still lying there and the CRPF was not allowing them to take those official records.

The classes for the primary students are being conducted under the open sky in the high school premises. In times of inclement weather, no classes are held.

Officials in the education department told media that the Shopian district administration has provided a list to the government saying that no school in the district is under occupation of government forces.

Chief Education Officer Shopian, Mohammad Sadiq Chichi, told media that nobody had brought this issue to his notice. "Today I talked to the staff of this school and came to know that the CRPF have used our school building as ammunition stores. I will take up this issue

with the District Commissioner Shopian and the forces will be vacated from the buildings," he said.

He added, however, that the CRPF had not occupied the school buildings but only constructed a separate building on a path leading to the school.

Deputy Commissioner Shopian Owais Ahmad said he will look into the matter. "It was not in my notice. I will look into this and the issue will be solved very soon," he said.

Srinagar-based spokesman of CRPF, Rajesh Yadav, told media that he has no information about this school. "Contact the local commander, I have no information about this," he said.

Al Jazeera To Go Off-air In India After Documentary About Militancy In Kashmir

Aug 25: The security clearance of English TV news channel Al Jazeera has been withdrawn by the Indian government. Without the clearance, the channel will need to stop broadcasting in the country.

While the government has provided no explanation, media reports suggest that the decision was taken after the broadcast of a documentary about the militancy in Kashmir.

According to official documents, the security clearance was given by the home ministry on December 3, 2010 and withdrawn on May 29, 2018. Al Jazeera English is run by AJI International Pvt Ltd Al Jazeera English executives declined to comment. There was no response from the home ministry to the queries as well. The channel told the government in its representation that "the documentary on the militant networks in Kashmir devoted a substantial 10 minutes to the central government's efforts and the views of its officials."

Pertinently the Al Jazeera channel was banned earlier as well. In 2015, the channel was suspended for five days

for incorrectly showing the map of India with respect to Jammu and Kashmir. At that time, the channel put out a blank screen for five days with the following message: "As instructed by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, this channel will not be available from 00.01 hours on April 22 till 00.01 hours on April 27, 2015."

In July 2018, when the top Hizb commander Burhan Wani was killed, the Central government had written to foreign journalists stationed in India advising them to obtain prior permission for visiting Jammu and Kashmir.

"The government is keen to call out and prevent any adverse reporting on Kashmir for foreign media outlets," reads a report. In May, the external publicity division of ministry of external affairs (MEA) sent letters to foreign journalists reminding them that they require prior permission to travel to certain areas under the Foreigners (Protected Areas) Order, 1958. These include Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim and parts of Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir and Rajasthan.

8. Official Statements

➤ 133 infiltration attempts till June this year: GoI

Aug 1: The Government of India (GoI) informed the Rajya Sabha that only 133 infiltration attempts have been made through Indo-Pakistan border in Jammu and Kashmir up to June this year, as against 406 in 2017.

Minister of State for Home Hansraj Gangaram Ahir said till June this year, as many as 14 militants have been killed on the Pakistan border and only one security personnel has been killed and two injured during such infiltrations.

➤ No presence of ISIS in JK: GoI

Aug 1: No militant of the ISJK, an outfit influenced by ISIS ideology, is active in Jammu and Kashmir and the extent of ISIS presence in the state was till recently limited to waving flags of the global militant group and Pakistan, Union minister Hansraj Gangaram Ahir said Wednesday.

Appropriate action under law has been taken against those who were involved in cases of waving ISIS and Pakistani flags in Jammu and Kashmir, the minister said. There were eight such cases in 2015, 31 cases in 2016 and five cases in 2017.

"Till recently the extent of ISIS presence in Jammu and Kashmir was limited to waving of ISIS and Pakistani flags by some miscreants. However, on June 22, 2018,

four militants belonging to the ISJK, an outfit influenced by ISIS ideology, were killed in Anantnag district. At present no militant of ISJK is reportedly active in the state," Ahir said in response to a written question.

Since the imposition of Governor's rule in Jammu and Kashmir on June 20, 176 people have been arrested for pelting stones, Ahir said in reply to another question.

Besides, there were 39 incidents of militant violence in which eight security forces personnel and three civilians lost their lives, he added.

Fourteen militants were also killed in these incidents.

The minister further said 213 militants, including 86 local militants, were killed in Jammu and Kashmir in 2017.

In 2016, 150 militants, including 33 local militants, were killed in the state.

➤ 69 militants infiltrated into JK this year

Aug 07: Sixty-nine militants have infiltrated into Jammu and Kashmir from across the border till June this year, Lok Sabha was informed on Tuesday.

There were 133 attempts of infiltration by militants from across the border and there were 69 net infiltrations, GoI's Minister of State for Home Hansraj Gangaram Ahir said in written reply to a question.

Ahir said till June this year, 14 militants were killed while 50 others were returned from border.

A total of 123 militants could enter Jammu and Kashmir following 406 infiltration attempts from across the border in 2017.

“As per reports, some locals have been found supporting militant activities in Jammu and Kashmir. Appropriate action under law is taken against such persons. Security forces have been tackling militancy successfully and as a result 694 militants have been neutralised and 368 militants or suspects have also been apprehended since 2014 to July, 2018,” he said.

The minister said there were 308 incidents of violence in Jammu and Kashmir till July this year in which 113 militants were killed in 90 encounters. Altogether 49 security personnel were also killed this year so far.

In 2017, till July, there were 191 incidents of violence in which 112 militants were killed in 69 encounters. As many as 39 security personnel were also killed.

Ahir also said there were 73 incidents of violence during the period of suspension of operation in the month of Ramzan in comparison to 34 such incidents during the previous month.

A total of 23 militants, eight security personnel and three civilians were killed during the Ramzan ceasefire, while 14 militants, five security personnel and eight civilians were killed in the previous month.

Replying to another question, the minister said the government was aware about the use of social media by the militants in Jammu and Kashmir and the law enforcement agencies monitor the web and social media and take appropriate action as per the law.

➤ **BJP MLA supports Article 35A, threatens people would take to arms**

Aug 11: GaganBhagat, the BJP MLA from RS Pura, Jammu, has come out in support of Article 35-A, telling his followers that Kashmiris by defending it were in a way “fighting our battle.” In the same breath, he threatened that the people of Jammu would take to arms should the article be rescinded.

Speaking to his supporters at a public rally in Jammu, Bhagat took a jibe at the BJP central leadership saying that the issue was being raked up with an eye on Lok Sabha polls. A video of the speech has since gone viral on social media as people expressed their support and opposition to it.

“If the Article 35-A is revoked, people of Kashmir won’t suffer as much as Jammuites. There will be no jobs in Jammu. All the people sitting here will be left jobless. Land prices will skyrocket dramatically and you wouldn’t be able to buy land anymore because people living in Gujarat, Haryana are very rich,” he said.

While praising the people of Kashmir for “fighting our battle”, he said that the Kashmir Valley wouldn’t suffer much as people from outside won’t settle there because of militancy. “Kashmiris are fighting our battle while the people of Jammu are calling for the abrogation of Article-35A. We all must raise our voice so that it reaches the court,” he said.

Bhagat said that the people of Jammu would take up arms and “pelt stones” if the Article-35A is annulled. “People in Kashmir didn’t take up gun in one day. If one doesn’t have a job or he can’t own a shop, if one is summoned regularly to police stations, picked up by army, then what option does he have?,” he asked, before quickly adding: “The only option left for him is to pick up arms. This is the cause of militancy in Kashmir”.

➤ **Modi repeats ‘goli and gaali’ phrase on Kashmir in I-Day speech**

Aug 15: Prime Minister Narendra Modi said in his Independence Day speech that his government will move forward in Jammu and Kashmir with the attitude of “embracing” Kashmiris and not by “goli and gaali” (bullet and abuse), the same phrases he spoke in his last year’s I-Day speech from the ramparts of Delhi’s Red Fort.

What was different from last year’s words was an invocation of former prime minister Atal Behari Vajpayee. Modi borrowed Vajpayee’s phrase of “Insaaniyat, Kashmiriyat and Jamhuriyat” as the way forward on Kashmir.

“In Jammu and Kashmir, Atal Behari Vajpayee ji has shown us the path and that path is right. We want to move forward on that same path. Vajpayee ji had said we have to move forward to ensure Kashmir’s development on three basic issues of Insaaniyat, Kashmiriyat and Jamhuriyat,” Modi said.

He said his government wants to ensure balanced development of various regions and communities in Jammu and Kashmir, be it Ladakh, Jammu or “Srinagar valley”.

➤ **142 militants killed this year, 250 active: CRPF**

450 paramilitary camps across Kashmir valley

Aug 24: At least 250 militants were active across the state in August, while 142 were killed in various counterinsurgency operations this year so far, director general of paramilitary Central Reserve Police Force said Friday.

Rajiv Rai Bhatnagar, DG CRPF said besides armed militancy, maintaining law and order, stone pelting and strikes were the major challenges the paramilitary force was dealing with in Kashmir valley.

“But CRPF and other paramilitary forces have an edge over militants. In the current year (till date) alone we’ve neutralised 142 militants,” Bhatnagar told reporters.

“Different agencies have different figures, but as per me, there are around 250 militants active across the border and in the hinterland.”

Bhatnagar, however, counted the controversial pellet guns among the non-lethal weapons that have caused deaths and blinded many people.

On whether CRPF was going to stop construction activities around their camps, Bhatnagar said, “We’ve 450 camps in Kashmir Valley, some in public places. We cannot ask people to vacate their houses. We’ve to look at all the aspects. Wherever possible, we will do this.”

The CRPF chief said the force’s helpline “Madadgar” received 2.5 lakh calls in 2017 out of which 2500 were of urgent nature related to medical, educational, security and infrastructure.

➤ **Locals joining militancy in Kashmir highest since 2010**

Aug 26: Dangerous trends have started surfacing on the militancy front in Jammu Kashmir with nearly 130 youth joining various militant outfits this year, the highest since 2010, and a majority of them affiliating themselves with groups ideologically aligned with the Al-Qaeda, officials said.

According to data compiled till July 31, around 131 youths have joined various militant outfits with south

Kashmir's Shopian district contributing the maximum of 35 so far.

The number of local recruits last year was 126.

The officials say that many youngsters are joining the Ansar Ghazwat-ul-Hind, a group which claims support of Al-Qaeda and is headed by Zaqir Rashid Bhat alias Zaqir Musa, who hails from a village in Tral area of Pulwama district. PTI

➤ **34 policemen killed this year, casualties surpass 2017 figures**

Aug 29:The number of policemen killed in militancy-related incidents this year so far has crossed last year's mark with 34 dead already this year.

In 2017, when the government forces upped the anti-militancy operations in the Valley, 31 policemen were killed in various militancy-related incidents across the Valley.

A total of 65 government personnel including the 34 policemen have been killed in the hinterland and along the Line of Control in Kashmir this year.

While Police suffered highest, 34 casualties, Army suffered 25 fatalities and paramilitary CRPF also lost its six personnel in different militancy-related incidents in the Valley.

A police officer told media this year till 130 militants had been killed in various anti-militancy operations while over 128 local youth had picked up gun.

➤ **Governor is our man: State BJP chief**

Aug 30:Bringing a political storm in Jammu and Kashmir, a video of Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP) state president Ravinder Raina has gone viral in which he termed newly appointed Governor of J&K Satya Pal Malik as "Hamara Banda."

The video has gone viral on social media which has attracted criticism.

In this video, Raina, who is also the legislator of the rightwing party from Nowshera is heard telling a group of people that the Governor is "Hamara Banda" (our man).

"Tell me what we had discussed four days back with each other. New Governor has come to Jammu and Kashmir. We did not want former Governor N N Vohra in State. Vohra used to do things on his own. Now, Governor Satya Pal Malik has come and he is our man," Raina said.

As the political storm erupted, Raina came on the defensive mode and sought to clarify, "I only said he is people's Governor. He is our Governor. He is the Governor of all the poor people, irrespective of any discrimination for Jammu or for Kashmir."

Raina said the new Governor had a long political career and had been in Janta Dal, Congress and then finally joined BJP.

"He was the leader of farmers and Dalits. He fought for the poor sections of the society," he said.

