

President Approves Imposition of Governor's Rule In J&K With Immediate Effect

Agency
New Delhi, June 20,

In a massive political news break, President Ram Nath Kovind who is currently on a foreign visit in Suriname has approved the imposition of Governor's rule in Jammu and Kashmir with immediate effect.

Hours after the BJP Pulled Out from an Alliance with PDP, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) had submitted a report to the President after receiving a detailed report from J&K Governor NN Vohra. Moments after receiving an approval from the president, the MHA has confirmed the imposition of Governor's rule in the valley.

This came after Mehbooba Mufti resigned as Jammu and Kashmir's Chief Minister following BJP's exit.

This will be the seventh time that a Governor's rule has been imposed in Jammu and Kashmir.

It was last imposed in July 2008, following the resignation of the then chief minister Ghulam Nabi Azad in the wake of the PDP pulling out of the coalition government with the Congress.

The state was under the Governor's rule in December 2014, following the hung verdict in the assembly elections that year.

Governor's rule was again imposed in the state in January 2016 following the death of

the then chief minister Mufti Mohammed Sayeed, after his daughter, Mehbooba Mufti was not sure about continuing the alliance with the BJP.

Just before news of the alliance breaking was announced, the J&K Deputy CM had hit out at CM Mehbooba Mufti over her alleged wish for the Ramzan ceasefire to be extended. And a few months before that, a major flashpoint was witnessed between the BJP and PDP as the former's ministers in the J&K government tendered their resignations over the fallout from the horrific Kathua rape and murder's chargesheet being filed.

India rejects 'selective' UNHRC report on J&K, slams council for legitimising terrorists

Agency
New Delhi, June 20,

India strongly rejected the United Nations Human Rights Council for its 'motivated report' on Jammu and Kashmir which legitimises terror in Kashmir and slammed the council for referring to terror organisations as 'armed groups' and terrorists as 'leaders'.

In an oral reply delivered by India's Permanent Representative Rajiv K Chander at the UNHRC, India unequivocally condemned the report calling it a 'selective compilation of largely unverified information, aimed at forming a false narrative which distorts the truth'.

India called it a matter of deep concern for the council that such a report determines its consensus on terror, pointing out that the council was legitimising terrorism which remains the pernicious violator of fundamental rights. India also pointed out that governments in the state are elected through free and fair elections who are sworn to protect the Constitution, that is the bedrock of all freedoms.



It further pointed out that the last week's gruesome assassination of journalist Shujaat Bukhari and the kidnap and killing of Indian Army soldier Aungzeb were the chilling reminders of the cross-border terrorism that the UN sought to endorse.

India firmly rejected all efforts to legitimise terrorism and undermine the credibility of this august Council and unequivocally condemn terrorism and its perpetrators. Earlier, India

rejected the United Nations human rights report on Jammu and Kashmir as "malicious fallacious, tendentious and motivated", which violates India's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Both ruling BJP and Congress castigated the report.

Echoing the government, senior Congress leader Ahmed Patel described the UNHRC report as misleading and extended support to the government in rejecting any interference in the internal

affairs of country. Earlier, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) categorically rejected the report and stated, "We question the intent in bringing out such a report. It is a selective compilation of largely unverified information. It is overtly prejudiced and seeks to build a false narrative. The report violates India's sovereignty and territorial integrity. The entire state of Jammu and Kashmir is an integral part of India", said an official spokesperson.

BJP Withdrawal Could Herald 'Muscular Policy'

Courtesy Kashmir observer
SRINAGAR, June 20

Direct rule by the government of India would give the BJP a free hand to control the state ahead of a general election that must be called within a year.

Outgoing Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti, told reporters: "A muscular policy will not work here." More than 130 people have died in escalating violence in Kashmir this year. This month, New Delhi ordered a suspension of operations against militants during the holy month of Ramadan.

But militant attacks continued, weakening her hand and the truce was lifted soon after the fasting month ended.

"Basically, keeping in mind the larger national interest of India's integrity and security, in order to bring control over the situation prevailing in the state, we have decided that it is time the reins of power be handed over to the state governor," Madhav said.

Describing as "very unfortunate" the end of the alliance between BJP and PDP, AIMIM president Asaduddin Owaisi also said it would lead to imposition of Governor's rule and it is a prelude to "more

repression".

"This is a very unfortunate step which will lead to imposition of Governor's rule. I am of the opinion that this is a prelude to more greater repression," he told reporters here.

PDP and BJP had an agenda of alliance but no step was taken to implement it, the Hyderabad MP charged.

"BJP, as a partner in government, made no serious attempt for a dialogue either by indicating a bare outline of their agenda. Though they had an agenda of alliance which both the parties agreed to, not a single step was taken to fulfil what was promised in their agenda of alliance," he said.

Owaisi said he felt sorry for the people of Kashmir and not for PDP which "brought upon this great political disaster for itself".

"The PDP said and the BJP also agreed that this is an alliance between north pole and south pole. The people of the nation wants to know what happened to this so-called meeting of north pole and south pole," he said.

Coming down heavily on the BJP, he said it cannot run away from 'failure' to provide governance and stopping cross-border terrorism and attacks on army camps.

Owaisi said he felt BJP took the decision to pull out of the coalition as the party knew it was losing ground in Jammu. Replying to a query on ceasefire, he said BJP would have to explain to the people why it was announced in a hurry and called off.

Asked whether he stood with the government on the issue of ceasefire and whether it should be extended, the MP said he was with the people of the country and Kashmir.

He also said BJP cannot blame the PDP for alleged non-performance.

"His (BJP general secretary Ram Madhav) own party ministers and deputy CM were there. BJP cannot hide behind or cannot put forward this cowardly defence that our partner was not listening to us..." he said.

On Madhav's reported comments that his party was forced to pull out of the coalition because internal security was being compromised, Owaisi claimed the "BJP is running away" as all operations were conducted with the consent of the Centre.

Describing the recent killing of journalist Shujaat Bukhari as a "monumental tragedy", he said it was being "exploited to fulfil a policy which was started two years ago".

UN Human Rights Report on Jammu and Kashmir

The report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights emphasis on situation of human rights in "Indian-Administered Jammu and Kashmir from June 2016 to April 2018, and general human rights concerns in Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Baltistan". The UNHRC accuses Indian armed forces of "unlawful killings by using brute force, sexual violence against female-folk, use of one of the most dangerous weapons pellet-firing shotguns against civilian population."

The report favours a meaningful dialogue and emphasises that "such a resolution can only be brought about by meaningful dialogue that includes the people of Kashmir."

In its executive summary, the UN report dated 14 June 2018 says that after Hizb commander Burhan Wani's killing in July 2016 in south Kashmir, "Indian security

forces responded to protests with force, which led to casualties and a wide range of alleged related human rights violations throughout the summer of 2016 and into 2018."

The UN report acknowledges that "in responding to demonstrations that started in July 2016, Indian security forces used excessive force that led to unlawful killings and a very high number of injuries. Civil society estimates are that 130 to 145 civilians were killed by security forces between mid-July 2016 and end of March 2018, and 16 to 20 civilians were killed by armed groups in the same period..."

Besides, the UN report on Kashmir describes pellet-firing shotgun as "one of the most dangerous weapons" used against civilian protesters in Kashmir.

"One of the most dangerous weapons used against protesters during the unrest in 2016 was the pellet-firing

shotgun, which is a 12-gauge pump-action shotgun that fires metal pellets," the report says.

The report acknowledges that the current round of civilian protests appears to involve more people than the past.

"While Indian-Administered Kashmir has experienced waves of protests in the past—in the late 1980s to early 1990s, 2008 and 2010—this current round of protests appears to involve people than the past, and the profile of protesters has also shifted to include more young, middle-class Kashmiris, including females who do not appear to have been participating in the past..." the UN Human Rights report on Kashmir says in its executive summary.

The UN Human Rights report "covers both the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir (consisting of the Kashmir Valley, the Jammu and Ladakh regions) and Pakistan-Administered Kashmir (Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan)", but "the focus of the report is on the situation of human rights in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir from July 2016 to April 2018 over which period allegations of widespread and serious human rights violations were received, notably excessive use of force by Indian security forces that led to numerous civilian casualties."

The UN report further says that "over 1,000 people were detained under the PSA (Public Safety Act) between March 2016 and August 2017. Human rights groups had warned Jammu and Kashmir authorities that minors were being arrested under the PSA in 2016 and 2017."

The report accused Indian armed forces of obstructing medical services that had a severe impact on the injured and general civilian population in Kashmir.

In its executive summary, the

UN Human Rights report on Kashmir also says that "widespread protests, long periods of curfew and frequent strikes in 2016 and 2017 had a cumulative impact on students and their right to education."

In point number 13, the report accuses Indian authorities of its failure to "independently investigate and prosecute allegations of sexual violence by security forces personnel."

The UN Report on human rights violations in Jammu and Kashmir says "there remains an urgent need to address past and ongoing human rights violations and to deliver justice for all people in Kashmir who have been suffering seven decades of conflict. Any resolution to the political situation in Kashmir should entail a commitment to ending the cycles of violence and accountability for past and current human rights violations and abuses committed by all parties and redress for victims. Such a resolution can only be brought about by meaningful dialogue that includes the people of Kashmir."

The Srinagar-based leading human rights defender Khuram Parvez described the UN report on Kashmir as "a path breaking report on human rights situation in Jammu & Kashmir."

"United Nations Human Rights has released a path breaking report on human rights situation in Jammu & Kashmir. This report is historical & symbolically a huge step leading to an acknowledgement of Indian government's role in massive human rights abuses. After UN resolutions on Kashmir, this report is an important addition. The report calls for UNHRC to appoint an International Commission on Inquiry on Jammu and Kashmir," Parvez said.

PDP-BJP Break-up Staged Drama to Skip Accountability: Shehla Rashid

Courtesy Kashmir observer
Srinagar, June 20,

"The break-up is nothing but a staged drama by the alliance partners to rid themselves of any accountability. They are fleeing, in order to erase their sins and escape questions from the public".

This was stated by activist Shehla Rashid in a statement today. Shehla, who is former Vice-President, JNU Students' Union, alleged that "for the last three years, PDP and BJP - two reactionary, populist parties - have been fooling people in the name of 'agenda of alliance' and 'people's mandate', etc., shamelessly holding on to power despite the failures on political, social and economic fronts."

After having failed on every single front, she said, now a

drama is being staged in order to preempt any questions and to foreclose the possibility of having any mechanism of fixing accountability. The BJP and PDP are now engaging in blame game and accusing one another of being responsible for the failure of the alliance. However, the alliance itself was a massive failure that has polarised the state on religious lines, she said. "Beginning with the political failures, the nature of the alliance itself betrayed the mandate of the people. The state has been pushed to a political crisis comparable to that during the 90s. Militant ranks have swollen and popular support for armed insurgency has increased. Countless civilians have been killed in the name of sham operations such as 'Operation All Out'. We have seen an unfortunate politicization and

communalisation of the Army. When civilians were being killed and blinded with pellets, PDP let the people down by holding on to this unholy alliance, silencing human rights activists and berating critics who asked questions."

Shehla also blasted PDP for diluting the Article 370 by facilitating GOI to implement central laws in the state. "The ratification of GST by the State Assembly has not only undermined Article 370 and pushed the state toward lesser autonomy; it has also destroyed businesses in the entire state. While Modi gov't's disastrous policies such as demonetization and GST were being criticized throughout India, the PDP-BJP gov't in the state unnecessarily extended GST to J&K", she said.

"Human rights violations have peaked under the present

regime. The gov't has completely failed to reach out to civilians and establish peace and order. It is shameful that Ms. Mehbooba Mufti now talks about humane policy as opposed to muscular policy. It was under her watch that Farooq Dar, an innocent civilian, was tied to a jeep and paraded. She failed to stand up for her people then. Now, she has no right to talk about humane policy. The government has even failed to nab the murderers of veteran journalist Shujaat Bukhari". "On the social front, the state gov't has failed to stand up for victims and survivors of sexual violence. The Kathua rape case and the Kulgam sex trafficking scandal involved the government's own Ministers and MLAs respectively. But no proactive measures against them were

taken by the CM who herself is a woman. PDP should have broken the alliance over human rights violations or over the Kathua case. Now, they are only fleeing to escape public accountability," Shehla said. "Corruption and nepotism has peaked under this government and that is responsible for pushing the youth further away from the mainstream. With what authority can a govt ask young people to come to mainstream when the mainstream is filled with family members and caste brethren? It's a shame that the South Kashmir Parliamentary seat does not have an elected representative, because the government wanted someone from the first family to rule the constituency. The break up of the alliance is a means for PDP and BJP to wash their hands off all these sins", she said.