**G-20 meeting in Kashmir**

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From May 22 to 24, India would host the third G20 Tourism Working Group meeting at the Sher-i-Kashmir International Conference Centre (SKICC), Srinagar, the capital of Indian-held Kashmir. In 2023, India holds the G20 presidency.

Taking advantage of its position, India wants to air four main messages. First, Kashmir is a tourist spot loyally aligned with India.

This is a new tactic of India to deal with Kashmir. India thinks that the world cannot recognize the way India hoodwinked the Kashmiris. In 1947, India promised the Kashmiris the reward of sovereignty and in October 1949, India got the Instrument of Accession incorporated into the Indian Constitution. However, through Presidential Orders, holes were drilled into the Instrument of Accession to wear out the granted sovereignty. That is, in 1947, India hoodwinked the Kashmiris into believing that the Instrument of Accession embodying sovereignty would be respected, but on August 5, 2019, India went back on its promise and ended even the last scraps of sovereignty. Despite such a malicious act, in 2023, India is about to hoodwink G20 countries into believing that Kashmir is loyally aligned with India.

The second message India is trying to air is that it respects Sher-i-Kashmir, Sheikh Abdullah, a Kashmiri leader, who remained loyal to India. To express this point, India is holding the meeting of the Tourism Working Group of G20 at the Sher-i-Kashmir International Conference Centre. In Srinagar, several institutes and buildings carry the title of Sher-i-Kashmir, such as Sher-i-Kashmir stadium, Sher-i-Kashmir University of Agriculture Sciences and Technology, and Sher-i-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences.

In 1947, India hoodwinked the Kashmiris into believing that the Instrument of Accession embodying sovereignty would be respected.

This is another fraud India is projecting. Sheikh Abdullah earned a post-graduate (MSc Chemistry) degree from the University of Aligarh, India, in April 1930. He came back to Srinagar and got employed as a teacher in the Kashmir administration run by the Dogras. Right after one year, in April 1931, an issue of religious sanctity erupted. Sheikh Abdullah delivered a speech against the administration’s atrocities at the Jamia Masjid Srinagar. In reaction, the Dogra administration dismissed him from service. The daily Inqilab called him Sher-i-Kashmir (Lion of Kashmir), the moniker he carried along for the rest of his life. He turned from a teacher to a political leader to defend the Kashmiri Muslim cause. Nevertheless, there is a lesson to learn from the way India behaved with Sher-i-Kashmir.

In March 1948, Kashmir’s Maharaja Hari Singh appointed Sheikh Abdullah as his Prime Minister (replacing Mehr Chand Mahajan) to establish a Responsible Government in Kashmir. The appointment helped India at the United Nations, where Sheikh Abdullah delivered speeches in favour of India and against Pakistan. In late 1951, from the Constituent Assembly of Kashmir, Sheikh Abdullah got elected as the Prime Minister, representing the National Conference, wielding the slogan of New Kashmir, espousing the refrain of Kashmiriyat, and raising the slogan of Kashmir’s sovereignty. However, through Presidential Orders issued under Article 370, India managed to reduce the status of Prime Minister to Chief Minister in April 1965. This was how the status of equality was reduced to the state of subordination to the Center. Not only sovereignty but also internal autonomy was lost. Sheikh Abdullah, who had been imprisoned at that time, kept on fighting to restore the status of Kashmir in vain. In September 1982, Sheikh Abdullah breathed his last under the allegation that he had sold the cause of Kashmir to India. After August 5, 2019, when Kashmir lost its sovereignty, the progeny of the late Sheikh Abdullah is clueless about what to do.

This is what India did to Sher-i-Kashmir, who remained loyal to India but got deceived and earned the title of being “sold out” before his death. Now, India is out to deceive G20 by using the venue named after Sher-i-Kashmir. What an irony!

The third message India intends to present is that Kashmir is not a disputed territory. Such a presentation would be another lie because it was India that had declared Kashmir a disputed territory, a status, which was acknowledged by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). For instance, on January 20, 1948, the UNSC adopted Resolution 39 to bring about a peaceful resolution of the conflict between Pakistan and India. On January 27, 1948, India submitted a draft proposal suggesting the UNSC hold a plebiscite in Kashmir to determine the wishes of the Kashmiris, whether they wanted Kashmir to accede to Pakistan or India. This was how India admitted that the accession of Kashmir to India was provisional (temporary) and subject to the determination of the wishes of people who would finalize and legalize Kashmir’s final status. Subsequently, the UNSC acted accordingly and passed more resolutions to decide Kashmir’s future. Contrary to its draft proposal, now India is reading for telling lies to G20 that Kashmir is not a disputed territory.

The fourth message India wants to project through the meeting is that Kashmir does not carry the status of a troubled area, which was made troubled by Pakistan. This is another lie.

Through its Election Commission operated from New Delhi, India rigged the 1987 elections held in Kashmir. Did Pakistan ask India to rig the elections? The Kashmiris reacted to this act of injustice. In early 1990, Governor Jag Mohan broke all hell loose upon agitators, engendering the Massacre of 1990, which eventually led to the replacement of Jag Mohan with the new Governor, Girish Chandra Saxena in May 1990.

In July 1990, India declared Kashmir a “disturbed area” to be dealt with with a heavy hand by invoking the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act of 1958. This point led not only to a reaction from the Kashmiris but also to tapering off of growth and development, especially in the area of tourism and trade in Kashmir.

Thousands of young men crossed the Line of Control and entered the part of Kashmir administered by Pakistan. One of them, Yasin Malik, who had denounced militancy in May 1994, is still alive. In May 2022, he was given a life sentence to perish in India’s jail. Ask him about the real story of the revolt, which was indigenous. The rigging of the elections forced the Kashmiri middle and lower classes to stand in revolt against India. The point is simple: India intends to exploit its position in G20 to mask its crimes in Kashmir and to gain G20 favour which would go against the right of self-determination to the Kashmiris. G20 countries must denounce this attempt of India and should not participate in the meeting. With these words, the G20 meeting in Kashmir is condemned.

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