**Long live Kashmir**

**[Najm us Saqib](https://nation.com.pk/Columnist/najm-us-saqib)**

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The third wave of Covid-19 has shaken Prime Minister Modi as the ongoing situation in India is beyond heartbreaking. The ever-menacing Farmers’ Protest has blocked the roads and minds of India

while it is in the process of swallowing the bitter pill of its humiliation at the hands of the Chinese army at Ladakh. India’s imminent marginalisation in Afghanistan soon after foreign troops leave the war- ravaged country pose a different set of problems to its stated aims in the region. India’s pride in policing South Asia, primarily to contain China, and its future role in QUAD has been met with a lukewarm response from the Biden administration on certain matters of bilateral trade thereby creating additional worries for Modi and his team. Visibly perturbed, Modi’s face expressions correspondingly depict his worries at home and abroad. However, has anyone wondered why is it that when it comes to dealing with Pakistan, Modi’s India looks as powerful, adamant and dismissive as it always has been since the birth of both the countries in 1947?

[KTA delegation meets Imran Ismail at Governor House Karachi](https://nation.com.pk/03-May-2021/kta-delegation-meets-imran-ismail-at-governor-house-karachi)

The annexation of the Crimean Peninsula by Russia in 2014 was condemned by the West and the United Nations as a violation of international law and a number of agreements safeguarding the territorial integrity of Ukraine. The UN General Assembly went on to pass a resolution affirming the territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders. On the other hand, the international community quietly witnessed India’s subjugation of Jammu & Kashmir in violation of all norms of international law and the unanimously adopted resolutions by the UN Security Council and UNCIP on the final disposition of the State of Jammu and Kashmir. Why is it that besides defying norms of international law, India completely disregarded its neighbour’s jealously guarded principled stand on Kashmir? India could not have taken the ever alert international community and a nuclear Pakistan that lightly if it was not absolutely sure of the consequences of its illegal actions taken on Aug 5, 2019. How could India take such a big risk if it was not sure of controlling the aftermath?

[Queen marks Northern Ireland's centenary](https://nation.com.pk/03-May-2021/queen-marks-northern-ireland-s-centenary)

The producers had approved the jointly envisioned script a long time ago. Keeping the names of script writers anonymous, various directors with the help of a joint production team have discretely completed their job to the satisfaction of their masters. The audience is watching the carefully selected trailers with great enthusiasm and anxiety. As this movie is not likely to be released ever, the audience will have to collect bits and pieces of the storyline with the help of a few trailers so far released to make deductions through their already stretched to limits’ imagination. This is exactly what we are presently doing. Paradoxically, the not-so-helpful guessing game on the scope of the plot, the nature of interactions between important characters, modus operendi, moral of the story and particularly the ending, continues unabated.

The contours of the understanding reached between India and Pakistan on the final disposition of Kashmir are being revealed through media in an extremely cautious but unyielding manner. A well planned strategy including some safeguards against any untoward reaction seems to be in place to cater for any contingencies. From throwing feelers and changing tactics to commencing a guessing game of sorts for taking appropriate timely actions to baffle political scientists about the real understanding, every bit of strategy seems to be working as planned. Besides being a territorial dispute, a heavy historical baggage, a foreign policy migraine, an economic spoiler alert, a military rigmarole, a nuclear flashpoint and a several decades old Achilles heel of South Asia, Kashmir also entails strong emotional and psychological dimensions for the people of Pakistan and India. Hence, the strategists had a Herculean task before them especially when the aspirations of the Kashmiris were also to be respected and factored in.

[PM announces 'no compromise' over blasphemy law](https://nation.com.pk/03-May-2021/pm-announces-no-compromise-over-blasphemy-law)

The recently released report by Global Trends had warned, “India and Pakistan may stumble into large-scale war neither side wants” and that, “miscalculation by both governments could prompt a breakdown in the deterrence that has restricted conflict to levels each side judges it can manage.” Therefore, it was not surprising to know that war was not even an option. Subsequently, we saw the demand of reversal of Aug 5, 2019 decision changing into a request of only ‘revisiting’ it for demographic purposes. Apparently, one party has achieved its strategic objectives while the other is in favour of having a well defined strategic pause to effectively follow its freshly made checklist.

It seems, if not addressed, the Kashmir dispute has been taken care of. Apparently, the thorny agenda item has efficiently and skillfully been removed from any future bilateral talks. No need to worry about keeping the record or minutes of the meetings held particularly since 1989 in safe custody anymore. Signed in a spirit of goodwill and friendship, the Indus Water Treaty of 1960 stays as such but let us shelve the Security Council’s resolutions, aspirations of the people of Kashmir, the jugular vein, the Simla Agreement and Article 257 of the Constitution of Pakistan. The events of May 1998 and the subsequently acquired ‘balance of power’ in the region may also be overlooked for the time being. However, all other bilateral issues such as Siachen, Sir Creek and bilateral trade would remain alive. Importantly, with the core issue out of the equation, the curse of cross border terrorism has also been shown the door. There will be no cross allegations for at least a decade during which time the respective houses would be put in order. Hopefully, the multi-billion dollar CPEC initiative remains unaffected by the ongoing political developments.

[WHO welcomes Sweden’s 1M jabs donation to COVAX](https://nation.com.pk/03-May-2021/who-welcomes-sweden-s-1m-jabs-donation-to-covax)

All said and done, the fact remains that Jammu & Kashmir hurts us and its absolute subjugation by India hurts us. It is also a fact that Kashmir has suffered much more than Pakistan has. Not that the people of Kashmir had some unwavering confidence in Pakistan’s resolve to protect their interests in real terms till the Day of Judgment. However, their hopes of the continued ‘moral, diplomatic and political support’ from the land of the pure remained alive throughout the past several decades. The reality stricken Kashmiris must be finding it hard to believe that the oatmeal cookies were actually marbles. If nothing else, their legitimate fears need to be allayed before the nightmare ends. Verily, they deserve to be taken into confidence while the chessboard is being rearranged to play the all important game of peace and security in South Asia.