J&K Leader Farooq Abdullah Detained

Why in News?

On 16th September, 2019, the National Conference (NC) leader Farooq Abdullah was detained under the Public Safety Act.

What does this detention mean?

- Farooq Abdullah's detention marks a new, dangerous low in the overreach of state power to curtail liberty in Kashmir.
- He has been thrice Chief Minister (CM) and 5 times Member of Parliament (MP). He is currently an MP from Srinagar.
- His father and NC founder, Sheikh Abdullah led Kashmir's Muslim population in rejecting the two-nation theory that led to Partition and the formation of Pakistan in 1947.
- His son, Omar Abdullah, former CM is also under detention since August 5, 2019 when the Centre abrogated Article 370, it ended J&K's relative autonomy and reorganised J&K into 2 Union Territories.
- The Centre has claimed massive public support for these moves but the Kashmir Valley has been in shutdown since then.
- Despite his declining popularity in the Valley, Farooq continued to argue that Kashmir's destiny was with secular, pluralist India.
- To treat him as a threat to public safety is a travesty of justice and an assault on democratic principles.

How was Farooq Abdullah detained?

- The manner in which he was detained smacks of complete disregard for the rule of law and accountability.
- His detention was announced hours before the Supreme Court was to consider MDMK chief's plea seeking a directive that Mr. Abdullah be produced before it.
- In Parliament (August 2019), Home Minister had said the NC leader was not in detention but was staying at home on his own volition.
- The detention has now been legalised under a stringent law that allows limited remedies and could be extended to as long as two years.

How the political vacuum is created and why is it dangerous?

- The moves to silence and humiliate Kashmir's senior-most politician betray a dangerous tactic of marginalising the mainstream politicians.
- Almost all Kashmir's political leaders are in jail, including former CM Mehbooba Mufti and the IAS officer-turned-politician Shah Faesal.
- They have kept the political process alive in Kashmir against all odds and despite threats even as some sections of the population remained aloof or hostile to India.
- The argument that Kashmiri politicians used the State's special status to shield their corruption and nepotism is disingenuous, as these problems are endemic to Indian politics.
- The amorality of the government's treatment of pro-India forces is certainly dispiriting, but dangerous is the vacuum this is creating.
- The void will be filled only by forces contrary to India, if the government removes politicians from public spaces by wrongly labelling them anti-India.

Source: The Hindu

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