

Kashmir Issue

Why Kashmir is volatile?

\n\n

\n

- Jammu & Kashmir, then ruled by a king, acceded to India in 1947 through Article 370 of the Constitution of India.

\n

- Over the years, that Article has been breached many times.

\n

- Kashmir Valley, home to seven million people, is the centre of the conflict.

\n

- The people of the Valley have reacted aggressively to the denial of the autonomy that was promised when J&K acceded to India.

\n

- A small number wants the Valley to become part of Pakistan.

\n

- An overwhelming majority demands azadi.

\n

- Every government in J&K and at the Centre has responded to the challenge with more warnings, more troops and more laws.

\n

\n\n

What is the reason for recent conflicts?

\n\n

\n

- The people of the Kashmir Valley have alternated between hope and despair.

\n

- The current slide to chaos began in July 2016 with the killing of Burhan Wani.

\n

- The state government has remained passive and helpless while the armed forces have implemented a muscular policy to quell dissent and disturbance.

\n

- Since July 2016 and up to January 20, 2017, the violence in J&K claimed 75 lives.

\n

- Besides, 12,000 people were injured, 1,000 lost vision in one eye due to pellet injuries and five were blinded.

\n

\n\n

What is the present situation?

\n\n

\n

- There were two by-elections — in Srinagar and Anantnag constituencies. Srinagar constituency, spread over three districts, went to the polls on April 9.
- The voter turnout was 7.14%, the lowest in 28 years. There was widespread stone-pelting.
- Re-polling in 38 booths took place and no voter turned up in 20 of those 38 booths, and the voting percentage in the re-poll was 2.02%.
- Meanwhile, polling in Anantnag constituency was postponed to May 25.
- The non-vote is actually a vote of no confidence against the state government and the Central government.
- The situation cannot be retrieved through a ‘muscular’ policy — tough talk by ministers, dire warnings from the Army Chief, deploying more troops or killing more protesters.

\n

\n\n

What should be done?

\n\n

\n

- The core issue is not holding territory, it is giving people confidence in the Indian project.
- The border with Pakistan should be defended by all means, taking deterrent action against infiltrators but ‘counter-terrorist operations’ in the Valley should be put on hold.
- The presence of the army and paramilitary forces should be reduced and the responsibility of maintaining law and order in the Kashmir Valley should be

handed over to the J&K police.

\n

- Interlocutors should be appointed to pave the way for talks.

\n

- The Central government should begin a dialogue with all the stakeholders including civil society groups, student leaders and eventually the separatists.

\n

\n\n

\n\n

Source: The Indian Express

\n

