

DANGEROUS VACUUM
If mainstream politicians are discredited in J&K, the space will be filled by secessionists

The detention of National Conference leader Farooq Abdullah under the Public Safety Act on Monday marks a new, dangerous low in the overreach of state power to curtail liberty in Kashmir. The 81-year old leader has been thrice Chief Minister, Union Minister and five times Member of Parliament. He is currently MP from Srinagar. His father and National Conference 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. And his son, Omar Abdullah, former Chief Minister and Union Minister, is also under detention since August 5, when the Centre abrogated Article 370 through a controversial process, ended J&K's relative autonomy and is reorganising it into two Union Territories. While the BJP and the Centre have claimed massive public support for these moves, the Kashmir Valley has been in shutdown since then. Despite his declining popularity in the Valley, Farooq Abdullah 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.

The manner in which he was detained smacks of complete disregard for the rule of law and accountability. His detention, for 12 days, was announced hours before the Supreme Court was to consider MDMK chief Vaiko's plea seeking a directive that Mr. Abdullah be produced before it. In Parliament last month, Home Minister Amit Shah 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. The moves to silence and humiliate Kashmir's senior-most politician betrays a dangerous tactic of marginalising the moderate, mainstream politicians. Almost all Kashmir's political leaders are in jail, including former Chief Minister and PDP leader 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 inimical to India, if the government removes politicians from public spaces by wrongly labelling them anti-India.

<u>Words</u>	<u>Kind</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
Mainstream	Adj.	Normal, conventional, orthodox, conformist prevailing, lame stream
Discredit	Verb	Disgrace, dishonour, stigmatize, denigrate, disparage belittle, slander

Secession	Noun	Withdrawal, break, breakaway, apostasy, desertion
Reject	Verb	Blackball, blacklist, rebuff, repudiate, jettison
Partition	Noun	Dividing up, separation, division, segregation, severance
Detention	Noun	Custody, imprisonment, confinement, incarceration interment, quarantine
Controversial	Adj.	Contentious, disputed, contended, at issue
Autonomy	Noun	Sovereignty, self government, self rule, freedom
Massive	Adj.	Huge, gargantuan, cyclopean, titanic, mammoth
Support	Noun	Hold up, bear, carry, bolster up, buttress
Destiny	Noun	Future, fate, fortune, nemesis, providence
Travesty	Noun	Misrepresentation, distortion, perversion poor imitation, poor substitution
Assault	Verb	Attack, fly at, turn on, round on, someone
Detain	Verb	Delay, hold up, retard, hamper, impede
Smacks	Noun	Slap, blow, spank, cuff
Accountability	Noun	Responsibility, liability answerability
Volition	Noun	Accord, choice, desire, discretion, preference determination, option
Stringent	Adj.	Strict, precise, exacting, firm, rigorous
Humiliate	Verb	Embarrass, mortify, humble, discomfit
Betray	Verb	Reveal, disclose, divulge, evince, inform on
Odds	Noun	Advantage, lead, edge, superiority, ascendancy
Hostile	Adj.	Inimical, animosity, forbidding, bad blood
Argument	Noun	Quarrel, disagreement, squabble, wrangle, dissension barney
Shield	Verb	Protect, guard, defence, shade, save
Nepotism	Noun	Favouritism, partiality, unfairness
Disingenuous	Adj.	Dishonest, deceitful, underhand, dissembling, mendacious
Endemic	Adj.	Endemical, autochthonous, indigenous
Inimical	Adj.	Hostile, animosity, forbidding, bad blood
Amoral	Adj.	Barbarous, conscienceless, criminal, dishonest Excessive, exorbitant, extravagant

Claim	Verb	Assert, declare, profess, herald, pronounce, affirm avow, aver, avouch
Liberty	Noun	Independence, freedom, autonomy, sovereignty autarky, home rule

THE TALIBAN PROBLEM

Terrorists will not be keen on talks, but finding a solution to the Afghan crisis must continue

When the U.S.-Taliban talks collapsed last week, the insurgent group threatened to step up attacks in Afghanistan. It made good on its pledge on Tuesday using two suicide bombers who killed at least 48 people by targeting a rally being addressed by Afghan President Ashraf Ghani north of Kabul, and also the capital. These attacks are yet another warning of the security challenges Afghanistan faces, especially when it is gearing up to the September 28 presidential poll. Both the 2014 presidential election and last year's parliamentary poll were violently disturbed by the Taliban. This time, the group has asked civilians to stay away from political gatherings, making all those who participate in the political process potential targets. Rising attacks against Afghan civilians make the Taliban's claim that it is fighting on behalf of them against the foreign invaders hollow. The Taliban did not suspend its terror campaign even while holding talks with the U.S. in Qatar. In July, when the talks were under way, Amrullah Saleh, Mr. Ghani's running mate and the former intelligence chief, escaped a serious assassination attempt. Now that the talks have collapsed, a vengeful Taliban is unleashing itself on the Afghans.

The Afghan government seems determined to go ahead with the election. It has deployed some 70,000 troops to protect over 5,000 polling stations. But the threat from the Taliban is so grave that the President is largely addressing campaign rallies through Skype. Even if the elections are over without further attacks, the Taliban problem will remain. Afghanistan needs a solution to this crisis and regional and international players should help the new government. The fundamental problem with the U.S.-Taliban peace process was that it excluded the Kabul government at the insistence of the insurgents, which itself was a major compromise by the U.S. On the other side, the Taliban was not even ready to cease hostilities. A peace agreement dictated by the Taliban won't sustain. The Taliban can't be allowed to have a free terror run either. A permanently unstable Afghanistan and an insurgent group growing further in strength is not good news for any nation, including Afghanistan's neighbours. Afghanistan needs a comprehensive peace push in which all stakeholders, including the government, the U.S., the Taliban and regional players will have a say. The U.S. should continue to back the Kabul government, put pressure on Pakistan to crack down on the Afghan Taliban, double down its counter-insurgency operations in Afghanistan and invite regional players such as Pakistan, Iran, Russia, India

and China to take part in the diplomatic efforts. In other words, the Taliban should be forced to return to talks. The U.S.-Taliban peace talks may have collapsed. But it need not be the end of the road for finding a settlement for the Afghan crisis.

<u>Words</u>	<u>Kind</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
Crisis	Noun	Catastrophe, calamity, dilemma, quandary travail, ado, predicament, plight
Collapse	Verb	Faint, pass out, black out, flake out, keel over
Insurgent	Adj.	Rebel, revolutionary, mutineer, subversive insurrectionist
Threaten	Verb	Menace, intimidate, browbeat, bully, scare
Pledge	Noun	Promise, undertaking, vow, commitment, covenant
Violent	Adj.	Brutal, vicious, savage, bullying, frenzied, berserk intemperate, maniacal
Assassination	Noun	Murder, killing, slaughter, butchery, liquidation
Unleash	Verb	Let loose, release, free, unbridle, untether
Determined	Adj.	Tenacious, pertinacious, benton, dogged
Deploy	Verb	Position, station, post, install, establish, garrison
Protect	Verb	Secure, shield, safeguard, shelter, preserve
Grave	Verb	Serious, important, profound, momentous, acute
Insistence	Noun	Demand, bidding, command, dictate, instruction, entreaty
Hostilities	Noun	Antagonism, unfriendliness, bitterness, male volence malice, rancour, wrath
Dictate	Verb	Demand, require, mandate, percept, rule
Sustain	Verb	Comfort, help, abet, assist, encourage, succour Support
Comprehensive	Adj.	Exhaustive, all inclusive, compendious, synopsis
Crack down	Verb	Take severe measures against
Proclaim	Verb	Declare, aver, avow, herald, pronounce, assert, announce
Espionage	Noun	The act of spying, eavesdropping
Abet	Verb	Assist, help, support, endorse
Forswear	Verb	Renounce, relinquish, reject, forgo, disavow, abandon deny, repudiate
Privation	Noun	Poverty, impecuniousness, impoverishness