

WARM UP TO THE VALLEY
The Centre must lift the lockdown and release political prisoners to restore normalcy

That the Jammu and Kashmir government has withdrawn an advisory it issued on August 2 forcing tourists to leave the Valley is to be welcomed, but it would be naive to expect any significant inflow of visitors immediately. Jammu and Kashmir was emptied of its tourists and the Amarnath pilgrims at the peak of the season on the pretext of terror threats but the real reason, it turned out, was the Centre's move to rescind the special constitutional status of the State on August 5. Tourism, a key driver of the State's economy, was severely hit by restrictions on movement and communication. With no word from authorities still on restoration of mobile telephony and the Internet, few tourists are likely to consider the Valley for a winter adventure. Due to lack of communication facilities and as a mark of protest businesses remain shut and life in the Valley remains far from normal. The partial relief announced now, meagre as it is, could mark a new beginning. The government has now initiated a process to release prisoners who were detained around the August 5 measures, in phases. These can only be the first steps in what will have to be a quick journey towards complete normalcy and peace in Jammu and Kashmir.

By politically eliminating the middle space between separatists and hyper-nationalists, the Centre has made electoral politics difficult in Jammu and Kashmir for mainstream representative regional parties. The notion that there is vast, unexpressed support for the watering down of Article 370 is misplaced as most independent reporting from the ground has borne out over the last two months. The failure to involve the stakeholders in the Valley in any search for a political solution in Kashmir is disconcerting. While the only concern for the government appears to be preventing street violence, the BJP is raising Kashmir as a key campaign issue in poll-bound Maharashtra and Haryana. The government's plans to raise a new class of local leaders through Block Development Council elections in Jammu and Kashmir on October 24 is very impressive, at least in theory. Assuming that it turns out as is being hoped and projected, disparate local leaders are no substitute for organised political parties. With pro-India politicians detained and discredited, the room for negotiations which was never expansive in the Valley has shrunk further since August 5. Some seriously proactive measures by the Centre are required to restore normalcy and win popular support for the changes in Kashmir. Perhaps, returning Jammu and Kashmir its status as a State could be one such measure.

<u>Words</u>	<u>Kind</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
Release	Verb	Free, set free, let go, let out, liberate
Naive	Adj.	Innocent, unsophisticated, artless, ingenuous
Summarily	Adj.	Immediately, instantly, forth with
Peak	Noun	Summit, top, crest, pinnacle, apex, vertex

Pilgrim	Noun	Worshipper, devotee, believer, crusader
Pretext	Noun	False excuse, guise, ploy, pretence, masquerade
Threat	Noun	Menace, warning, ultimatum, commination
Rescind	Verb	Revoke, repeal, cancel, abrogate, reverse
Restriction	Noun	Limitation, constraint, limit, control, regulation provision, condition
Facilities	Noun	Provision, space, means, solution, advantage
Partial	Adj.	Incomplete, limited, biased, prejudiced
Announce	Verb	Pronounce, proclaim, aver, avow, profess, herald
Meagre	Noun	Dearth, scarcity, lacuna, paucity
Detained	Adj.	Delay, hold up, retard, make late
Eliminate	Verb	Remove, get rid of, abolish, abrogate, do away with
Hypernationalist	Noun	Allegiance, chauvinism, loyalty, faithfulness
Notion	Noun	Idea, belief, concept, conviction, hypothesis
Mainstream	Adj.	Conventional, orthodox, conformist
Water down	Verb	Dilute, restrict, cut, thin, weaken, make less potent
Solution	Noun	Mixture, mix, blend, compound, tincture
Disconcerting	Adj.	Unsettling, unnerving, perturbing, troubling
Prevent	Verb	Stop, avert, turn aside, proscribe
Violence	Noun	Brutality, roughness, ferocity, savagery
Impressive	Adj.	Magnificent, majestic, imposing, splendid, spectacular grand, august
Substitute	Noun	Replacement, deputy, relief, proxy, reserve, surrogate cover
Disparate	Verb	Contrasting, different, differing
Discredit	Verb	Disgrace, dishonour, stigmatize, demean denigrate belittle
Negotiations	Noun	Parley, discussion, talks, conference
Expansive	Adj.	Talkative, forth coming, forthright, communicative
Shrink	Verb	Contract, get smaller, lessen, reduce
Proactive	Adj.	Enterprising, take charge, energetic, dynamic

ENDING MALICE

What India needs is a closure to malicious prosecutions based on manufactured outrage

The police in Muzaffarpur district in Bihar have done well to order the closure of a sedition case against 49 eminent personalities for addressing an open letter to the Prime Minister on the need to stop hate crimes and lynching. The decision could have come much earlier rather than weeks after the Chief Judicial Magistrate ordered the registration of an FIR based on a lawyer's complaint. The complaint has now been closed as false, an opinion that both the magistrate and the station-house officer could have arrived at on a mere glance at the complaint. Sudhir Kumar Ojha, the lawyer who approached the magistrate, had produced no supporting documents, not even a copy of the letter signed by the writers, filmmakers and artists. Further, it would have been quite obvious that there was nothing in the appeal that promoted disaffection against the government or brought it into hatred and contempt. The complaint had further absurdities. It included penal provisions related to making imputations against national integration, public nuisance, affray and even trespassing into a burial ground! Mr. Ojha has the habit of arraying celebrities and prominent leaders as accused in private complaints and obtaining orders under Section 156(3) of the Cr.P.C. for a police investigation. It is quite certain that both the magistracy and the police are aware of his predilection for serial litigation. A simple search of his name in the website of the CJM's court reveals that he has filed complaints against Arvind Kejriwal, Imran Khan, Digvijaya Singh, Priyanka Vadra and Chandrababu Naidu in 2019 alone.

The decision to prosecute the advocate for filing false complaints is an encouraging sign that his run may not last. Section 182 of the IPC makes giving false information to a public servant with a view to causing injury or annoyance to another an offence punishable with a six-month jail term or a fine of ₹ 1,000. And under Section 211, making a false charge of an offence, knowing that there is no lawful ground for doing so, attracts a two-year prison term; and, if a more serious offence is alleged, the accuser may be jailed for even seven years. It is quite obvious that these provisions have not deterred malicious complaints. In cases involving celebrities, it is to be expected that a public outcry would stymie a malicious prosecution, but not everyone can be as lucky. In times when outrage, feigned or real, is used to accuse people of defamation, obscenity, cyber-insults and injuring religious sentiments, it would be wise to recall the Supreme Court's caution in *Khushboo vs. Kanniammal* (2010) in which the court quashed multiple private complaints against actor Khushboo for remarks on pre-marital sex with the observations, "It is not the task of the criminal law to punish individuals merely for expressing unpopular views" and that courts should not allow a criminal trial "triggered by false and frivolous complaints, amounting to harassment and humiliation to the accused."

<u>Words</u>	<u>Kind</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
Malice	Noun	Spiteful, spite, malevolence, animosity
Malicious	Adj.	Hostile, venomous, evil, rancorous, malign, malignant
Sedition	Noun	Provocation, agitation, rebellion, rioting, muting
Eminent	Adj.	Illustrious, distinguished, renowned, esteemed
Lynch	Verb	Kill, hang, execute, mow down, make away with

Glance	Noun	Ricochet, rebound, bounce, clip, resile
Obvious	Adj.	Clear, plain, evident, apparent, patent
Disaffection	Noun	Dissatisfaction, disgruntlement, frustration
Hatred	Noun	Loathing, hate, detestation, abhorrence
Contempt	Noun	Scorn, disdain, disrespect, denigration
Absurdity	Noun	Preposterousness, ridiculousness, folly, farcicality insanity, idiocy
Imputation	Noun	Aspersions, libel, slander, smear
Integration	Noun	Combination, amalgamation, unification
Nuisance	Noun	Annoyance, inconvenience, irritant, trouble
Affray	Noun	Fight, brawl, battle, encounter, melee
Trespass	Verb	Intrude on, encroach, invade, infringe
Array	Verb	Arrange, assemble, draw up, group, order, range, set forth
Prominent	Adj.	Important, well known, leading, pre-eminent
Predilection	Noun	Liking, fondness, preference, partiality
Litigation	Noun	Legal action, law suit, case, suit, indictment
Prosecute	Verb	Conduct, legal, proceeding, against, a person, organization
Exhort	Verb	Encourage, prod, enkindle, persuade
Annoyance	Noun	Irritation, vexation, disgruntlement
Alleged	Adj.	Supposed, so called, claimed, purported, ostensible reputed
Deter	Verb	Discourage, put off, disable, dishearten, frighten, demoralize, daunt, unnerve
Outcry	Noun	Protest, fulminate, shout
Stymie	Verb	Impede, interfere with, hamper, inhibit, hinder, obstruct, constrain, restrain
Feign	Verb	Pretend, dissemble, put on, let on
Defamation	Noun	Criticism, calumny, obloquy, opprobrium
Obscenity	Noun	Indecency, immorality, impropriety
Numinous	Adj.	Religious, pious, sacred, holy
Quash	Verb	Cancel, reverse, rescind, repeal, revoke
Frivolous	Adj.	Flippant, glib, waggish, jokey
Trigger	Verb	Activate, set off, set going, trip
Humiliation	Noun	Embarrassment, mortification, ignominy