

**TIME TO UNLOCK:****ON A YEAR AFTER THE REMOVAL OF J&K'S STATEHOOD****J&K can return to normalcy only with full Statehood and release of political prisoners**

At least two dozen politicians in Jammu and Kashmir remain in detention, some unnotified, a year after it was deprived of its Statehood and special constitutional status on August 5, 2019. Last week, Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) president and former Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti's detention was formally extended by another three months under the J&K Public Safety Act, but several others remain restrained within their homes in Kashmir, which is now a Union Territory under the rule of Delhi. Last week again, the administration flat out denied before the Supreme Court that former Union Minister and Congress leader Saifuddin Soz was under detention, though he has been restrained from moving and speaking freely. He was allowed to visit his ailing sister but denied a meeting with his daughter by the police on Friday. Neither the J&K government nor the Centre has released a list or number of leaders who were detained last year. At least 16 National Conference and eight PDP leaders are under house arrest, according to these parties. Former IAS officer and chief of the J&K People's Movement Shah Faesal and Awami Ittehad Party leader Engineer Rashid are in detention too. Peoples Conference (PC) chief Sajad Lone was released after 360 days in detention, last week. Two former Chief Ministers, Farooq Abdullah and Omar Abdullah were released in March.

The 2019 move of the Bharatiya Janata Party government at the Centre went beyond the strident Hindutva position against the special status of J&K by reorganising it as two Union Territories. The wisdom of the decisions remains an open question, though they refurbished the BJP's claims of muscular nationalism. The dubious legislative route that the Centre took and the communication restrictions on the population that followed cast a shadow on India's standing as a constitutional democracy. The judiciary — the J&K High Court and the Supreme Court — has not shown any alacrity to settle the constitutional and legal questions raised before it and in fact, appeared to privilege the Executive's position in the last one year. Some scholars have linked the continuing Chinese aggression in Ladakh to the change in J&K's status. The spirit of Indian federalism has been weakened. Mainstream politics in J&K has become impossible with leaders in detention and those released reportedly undertaking to stay away from any public discussion on J&K's future. This is not a sustainable situation if India wants to protect its global reputation and uphold the faith of its own citizens. There are two steps the Centre can take to start a conversation with the people of J&K — release all political prisoners and restore its Statehood. These will be wise steps towards healing and progress in J&K.

**DEFINITIONS:**

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| ❖ <b>unlock</b> (verb) – free (from restrictions); undo.                 | ❖ <b>detention</b> (noun) – custody, house arrest, restraint; imprisonment, confinement, incarceration. |
| ❖ <b>statehood</b> (noun) – the condition of being an independent state. | ❖ <b>deprive of</b> (verb) – dispossess, strip of, deny, prevent from having.                           |
| ❖ <b>normalcy</b> (noun) – a normal condition; normality, regularity.    | ❖ <b>flat out</b> (phrase) – without hesitation, as hard as possible, vigorously.                       |
| ❖ <b>restrain</b> (verb) – control, restrict, limit.                     |   |
| ❖ <b>in fact</b> (phrase) – actually, really, in truth.                  |   |

- ❖ **ailing** (adjective) – ill, unwell, not well, sick, in bad/poor health.
- ❖ **detain** (verb) – restrain, (house) arrest, confine.
- ❖ **move** (noun) – action, activity, measure.
- ❖ **strident** (adjective) – in an excessively forceful way; high-pitched, loud & harsh.
- ❖ **wisdom** (noun) – understanding, common sense, insight/foresight, judgement/discernment.
- ❖ **refurbish** (verb) – modernize, improve, recondition, revamp.
- ❖ **muscular** (adjective) – strong, powerful, potent.
- ❖ **nationalism** (noun) – it refers to a system (with narrow set of ideas) created by a group of people who believe their nation is superior to all others. It is also a perception of national superiority and an orientation toward national dominance- called as chauvinism (excessive nationalism).
- ❖ **dubious** (noun) – suspicious, questionable, doubtful.
- ❖ **legislative** (adjective) – governmental, parliamentary, law-making, policy-making.
- ❖ **cast a shadow on** (phrase) – spoil, diminish, let down.
- ❖ **standing** (noun) – position, good reputation, status.
- ❖ **constitutional democracy** (noun) – a system of government based on popular sovereignty in which the structures, powers, and limits of government are set forth in a constitution.
- ❖ **judiciary** (noun) – a branch of government in which judicial power is vested.
- ❖ **alacrity** (noun) – readiness, eagerness, willingness.
- ❖ **privilege** (verb) – give a special advantage.
- ❖ **the executive** (noun) – a branch of government which enforces the law as written by the legislature and interpreted by the judiciary; government.
- ❖ **scholar** (noun) – academic, intellectual, expert/pundit, learned person.
- ❖ **aggression** (noun) – hostility, belligerence, combativeness, warmongering, hawkishness.
- ❖ **spirit** (noun) – ethos/ethics, beliefs, principles, standards.
- ❖ **federalism/federal framework/ system** (noun) – a system of government in which establishments such as states or provinces share power with a national government.
- ❖ **mainstream** (adjective) – accepted, established, recognized (as normal or conventional).
- ❖ **reportedly** (adverb) – supposedly, seemingly, apparently, allegedly.
- ❖ **undertake** (verb) – give an assurance, commit oneself, bind oneself, guarantee.
- ❖ **stay away from** (phrasal verb) – avoid, skip, to not get involved in.
- ❖ **sustainable** (adjective) – acceptable, reasonable, sensible, legitimate, well founded.
- ❖ **uphold** (verb) – support, confirm, justify; maintain, nurture, strengthen.
- ❖ **wise** (adjective) – sensible, prudent, rational/logical, well advised, well thought out.
- ❖ **healing** (noun) – mitigation, alleviation, comfort.

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## TOXIC BREW:

### ON THE INCREASE OF LIQUOR TRAGEDIES

**Liquor tragedies can be prevented if States close the gap for hooch, ensure accountability**

Once again, the scourge of illicit liquor has struck, this time in Punjab, killing more than 100 people and leaving many crippled. The victims, in Amritsar, Tarn Taran and Gurdaspur districts, were sold hooch that apparently had a large amount of denatured alcohol. The State government, which is

responsible for both excise and law and order, has sanctioned financial relief for the affected families, and suspended some policemen and officials in charge of excise enforcement. Wiser after the fact, the police claim that there was an inter-district racket in operation and made several arrests; on the other hand, the kith and kin of those who died say the illicit brew was peddled virtually in the open by small-time vendors, some of whom have now been arrested. There are echoes in the tragedy of last year's two major incidents involving Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand, and Assam, both witnessing large-scale loss of life. Moreover, there have been fatal outcomes during the COVID-19 pandemic, as people desperate for alcohol consumed hand sanitiser as a substitute, most recently in Andhra Pradesh. Almost every year, India's moonshine market inflicts tremendous destruction in the form of blindness, tissue damage and death, as commercial alcohol becomes expensive for the less affluent, and corrupt bureaucracies allow that void to be filled by illicit liquor vendors who almost invariably use toxic methanol instead of ethanol.

Policies that fail to contain illicit alcohol produce long-term health impacts, as people tend to consume brews that have higher concentrations of alcohol, or toxic substances such as methanol. This should be particularly alarming for Punjab, which continues to simultaneously battle significant levels of narcotic drug use. From a medical viewpoint, the availability of licit spirits that contain lower alcohol levels, combined with a sustained public health campaign to wean people away from the drinking habit and to warn them about the effects of contaminants are key interventions. Health communication about harm from alcohol is particularly relevant during the pandemic, since there is evidence of reduced immunity to viruses among those who are chronic alcohol consumers. As the World Health Organization points out, governments should regulate the quality of legal alcoholic drinks, while actively tracing and tracking illicit alcohol. This can be achieved only through cooperation from the community, particularly from women's groups. Tragically, several States give low priority to revamping the excise administration and policing, paving the way for episodic death and misery. They must show determination to end the flow of toxic brews that kill scores almost every year. The capability of the health system in every district needs to be raised, to reduce the damage from methanol through immediate, simple detoxification therapies.

#### DEFINITIONS:

- ❖ **toxic** (adjective) – fatal, deadly; poisonous, harmful, dangerous.
- ❖ **cripple** (verb) – debilitate, damage, impair, disable, paralyse.
- ❖ **brew** (noun) – a drink/beverage brewed (fermented).
- ❖ **apparently** (adverb) – seemingly, evidently, it appears that.
- ❖ **hooch** (noun) – illicit alcohol.
- ❖ **denatured** alcohol (noun) – ethanol, ethyl alcohol, grain alcohol; it contains additional chemicals called denaturants that make it unfit for human consumption.
- ❖ **accountability** (noun) – responsibility, liability, answerability.
- ❖ **sanction** (verb) – approve, authorize, support, endorse.
- ❖ **scourge** (noun) – affliction, misfortune, burden.
- ❖ **enforcement** (noun) – administration, imposition, implementation, execution.
- ❖ **illicit** (adjective) – illegal, banned, prohibited (something forbidden by society).
- ❖ **racket** (noun) – criminal activity, illegal scheme, fraud.
- ❖ **strike** (verb) – (of unpleasant occurrence) affect, afflict, come upon.
- ❖ **inter-** (prefix) – between.

- ❖ **wiser after that fact** (phrase) – It is easy to understand how something bad could have been stopped after it has already happened.
- ❖ **kith and kin** (phrase) – family, relatives, relations.
- ❖ **peddle** (verb) – sell (an illegal things like drug & etc) door to door.
- ❖ **virtually** (adverb) – practically, more or less, effectively.
- ❖ **in the open** (phrase) – in public, publicly.
- ❖ **small-time** (adjective) – small-scale, small.
- ❖ **echo** (noun) – repetition, exact likeness, mirror image, parallel.
- ❖ **pandemic** (noun) – the worldwide spread of a new disease; The illness spreads around the world and typically affects a large number of people across a wide area.
- ❖ **desperate** (adjective) – urgently requiring, craving, in want of, crying out, desirous.
- ❖ **moonshine** (noun) – (illicit) liquor, intoxicating liquor, alcoholic drink, spirits.
- ❖ **inflict** (verb) – cause, impose, administer, deal out, mete out.
- ❖ **affluent** (adjective) – wealthy, rich, well-to-do, well off.
- ❖ **bureaucracy** (noun) – officials (in the administration, government, the establishment) as a group.
- ❖ **void** (noun) – gap, empty space, lacuna.
- ❖ **invariably** (adverb) – always, every time/each time; habitually/inevitably.
- ❖ **methanol** (noun) – methanol is also known as methyl alcohol with one carbon atom chemical structure; It is a poisonous chemical derived through synthetic processes.
- ❖ **ethanol** (noun) – ethanol is also known as ethyl alcohol with two carbon atoms chemical structure. It is mostly produced by factory fermentation of food crops.
- ❖ **alarming** (adjective) – worrying, disturbing, shocking/distressing.
- ❖ **narcotic** (adjective) – relating to illegal drugs.
- ❖ **licit** (adjective) – lawful, legitimate, permissible.
- ❖ **spirits** (noun) – strong liquor, alcoholic drink.
- ❖ **sustained** (adjective) – continuous, constant, prolonged, steady.
- ❖ **public health** (noun) – the branch of medicine handling public health; public health is also the science of protecting and improving the health of people and their communities through education, policy making and research for disease and injury prevention.
- ❖ **campaign** (noun) – a set of organized actions to achieve an ambition; drive/effort, movement.
- ❖ **wean away from** (phrasal verb) – to detach, disconnect, separate someone from depending on something.
- ❖ **contaminant** (noun) – poisonous/harmful substance.
- ❖ **intervention** (noun) – action taken to improve a medical disorder.
- ❖ **chronic** (adjective) – habitual, compulsive, hardened.
- ❖ **point out** (phrasal verb) – identify, mention, indicate, draw attention to.
- ❖ **revamp** (verb) – improve, upgrade, reorganize, overhaul.
- ❖ **policing** (noun) – the enforcement of rules/regulations.
- ❖ **pave the way for** (phrase) – clear the way for, create a situation to do something, precede, make provision for.
- ❖ **episodic** (adjective) – occasional, irregular, periodic, sporadic.
- ❖ **misery** (noun) – pain, grief, anguish, distress, torment, suffering.
- ❖ **determination** (noun) – will power, resolution, resolve.
- ❖ **scores** (noun) – a large number of people.
- ❖ **detoxification** (noun) – the medicinal/therapeutic process of eliminating or neutralizing toxins from a living organism, including the human body, which is mainly carried out by the liver.