

STRONG INDIA

On 15 August 1947, after hundreds of years of repression, oppression, exploitation and subjugation. A star had emerged from the ugly dust - 'Independent-India'; Independent and self-respecting India, the sky-lamp of the hopes of freedom fighters around the world. Since then till today our India is moving forward on the path of continuous development. Today our politicians have started dreaming of making India a superpower very soon. Earlier the country had to import food grains from outside, today on the basis of green revolution, we have come in a position to export food grains. Textiles are also being exported. Building material is available in the country. Colonies are expanding unabated. In the field of medicine, the country has also made remarkable progress in the field of health and medicine. There has been an unprecedented increase in the number of health centers and hospitals. Treatment of many complex and incurable diseases is now available in the country. In the field of science and technology, our India has also come in the category of many developed countries of the world from scientific and technological point of view. From cycles to spacecraft are being made in the country. Continuous research is being done on nuclear science, metallurgy, space research, information technology, communication, agriculture etc. In information technology, India has established itself in the whole world. Many of our companies are acquiring well-known companies abroad. The acquisition of Corus by Tata Steel is notable in this direction. India is booming in the software business. There is also a significant increase in export trade. Foreign exchange reserves are continuously increasing.

In the field of security, India is no longer behind anyone in the field of security. Traditional and latest weapons are being manufactured in the country. The development of tanks, radars, missiles, combat vehicles, missiles like 'Prithvi', 'Trishul', 'Agni' etc. is making the country confident about its security. We have become the nuclear power of the world. The nuclear deal with America is remarkable. The successful test of Agni 5 missile is proof of India's growing security system.

Ruckus in Parliament on suspension of RS Member

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Parliament has witnessed ruckus over the suspension of AAP Rajya Sabha Member Sanjay Singh. The opposition parties have been vociferously demanding statement in Parliament on Manipur crisis by the Prime Minister. Despite the assurance from the Union Home Minister Amit Shah to hold debate, the adamant stand of Singh and his violation of the directive from the Chair forced the Leader of the House Piyush Goyal to move a motion which was adopted by voice vote. Singh has confessed that he went closer to the Chair with demand to allow him to speak under Rule 267. Singh should have waited patiently till the issue is taken up for discussion and debate. If the suspension of a single member could provoke the opposition parties to protest, why did they not protest when 10 MLAs were suspended in Karnataka for the rest of the session? The reason assigned for the suspension of members in Karnataka is "indiscipline". They had reportedly torn the copies of Bill passed in the House. Certainly the behaviour is unbecoming of the "honourable" members. If the behaviour of the MLAs in tearing off the copy of Bill is disrespectful, how respectful was the behaviour of Rahul Gandhi when he tore off the copy of ordinance brought by his own UPA government to allow those convicted in criminal cases to contest elections? Randeep Surjewala had hailed Gandhi's "courageous step" calling it as such to tear off the ordinance copy. It was active support, not passive, for misbehaviour. The point to be noted is that the current ruling political parties do not want the opposition parties to do the same when they come to power replacing them consequent to the outcome of election results. Speaker of the Assembly or Lok Sabha hails from the ruling party. Speakers are supposed to be impartial in conducting the business. But their party affiliation in the past does not permit them to be impartial. They play into the hands of the ruling party. There is no instance of a Speaker suspending ruling party members for their unruly behaviour. Speaker will be "willingly" "pawn" in the hands of a ruling party. When a government changes not being the outcome of election results but for the Members of the ruling party changing sides, the Speaker will also be changed. The reason is not far to seek. It is the same case in respect of Governors. The difference is that the Governors are not changed if the government changes. But more often than not, the Governors have played in the past, and possibly in future too, into the hands of the party which had posted them to be the Governors of state. They are also supposed to be non-partisan in their post. Being good is easier than being just. Opposition parties accuse the ruling parties of misusing the investigating agencies to stifle the voice of the opposition. But the same opposition parties will also do the same when they come to rule. Politics has edge over justice. It can be concluded that the suspension of Singh is right for ruling party at centre and wrong for opposition parties and suspension of 10 MLAs in Karnataka is right for ruling Congress and wrong for the opposition parties. What is good for one is bad for the other. Politics is like tongue. Some same eatables taste differently to different persons. One feels tasteful and the other feels distasteful.

What changed after abrogation of Article 370: Fact Check

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The abrogation of Article 370 and 35A in Kashmir marked a significant turning point in the region's history. For three decades, Kashmir had been plagued by terrorism, with frequent hartals, stone pelting incidents, and terror attacks disrupting the everyday lives of its residents. However, following the abrogation, a remarkable transformation occurred. Terrorism in Kashmir seemingly vanished, giving way to a newfound era of peace and stability. This article delves into the impact of this historic decision, exploring the disappearance of terrorism, the end of hartals, the curbing of stone pelting incidents, and the dismantling of terror networks.

The decision to abrogate Article 370 and 35A

In a historic move, the Indian government decided to abrogate Article 370 and 35A on August 5, 2019. This decision effectively revoked the special status granted to Jammu and Kashmir and aimed to foster greater unity and development in the region. The move received mixed reactions, with some hailing it as a positive step towards integration, while others expressed concerns about the potential implications for the people of Kashmir.

Pre-abrogation scenario: Three decades of terrorism in Kashmir

For the past three decades, Kashmir has been plagued by terrorism, insurgency, and violence. The roots of this conflict can be traced back to the late 80s, when an armed insurgency against Indian rule erupted in the region. Separatist groups, backed by external forces, resorted to violence, leading to a cycle of unrest and bloodshed.

The impact of terrorism on Kashmir has been far-reaching. Innocent lives have been lost, infrastructure has been damaged, and the economy has suffered immensely. The constant threat of violence created an atmosphere of fear and instability, hindering the progress and prosperity of the people in the region. The ongoing conflict also strained relations between communities, causing deep divisions and animosity.

Impact of abrogation: The disappearance of terrorism in Kashmir

Since the abrogation of Article 370 and 35A, there has been a noticeable decline in terrorist activities in Kashmir. The number of terror attacks, stone pelting incidents, and insurgency-related incidents has significantly decreased. This shift has brought a sense of relief and hope among the people, who can now envision a future free from the constant shadow of violence.

Several factors can be attributed to the disappearance of terrorism in Kashmir. The increased presence and effectiveness of Indian security forces have played a crucial role in curbing terrorist activities. The government's efforts to engage with the local population, address their concerns, and promote development initiatives have also contributed to creating an environment that is less conducive to extremism. Additionally, the abrogation of Article 370 and 35A has paved the way for a more integrated and inclusive society, fostering a sense of belonging and reducing the appeal of separatist ideologies.

End of Hartals: A new era of peace and normalcy

Hartals, or strikes, have been a regular occurrence in Kashmir during the tumultuous years of terrorism. These strikes often led to the shutdown of businesses, disruption of essential services, and loss of livelihood for the people. The cycle of violence and enforced closures perpetuated a sense of despair and stagnation, further exacerbating the challenges faced by the region.

With the decline in terrorism and the abrogation of Article 370 and 35A, Kashmir has entered a new era of peace and normalcy. The absence of hartals, stone pelting, and terror attacks has allowed people to resume their daily activities without fear and uncertainty. This transition presents an opportunity for the region to focus on development, economic growth, and the overall well-being of its residents. While challenges remain, this historic decision has created a foundation for unity, development, and integration, marking a turning point in the history of the region.

Curbing stone pelting: Addressing the root causes of unrest

Stone pelting has been a distressing problem in Kashmir for several years. While it is crucial to understand the underlying factors contributing to this form of protest, it is equally vital to approach the issue with sensitivity and empathy. Stone pelting is often a manifestation of deep-rooted grievances, including a sense of alienation, unemployment, and political discontent. It is essential to delve into these concerns to address the root causes of unrest and pave the way for lasting peace.

Since the abrogation of Article 370 and 35A, the situation in Kashmir has witnessed a significant transformation. The government has made commendable efforts to engage with the local population and create platforms for dialogue. By addressing the economic and social challenges faced by the people, including unemployment and lack of opportunities, steps are being taken to mitigate the causes of stone pelting and promote a more peaceful environment. While the road ahead may still be challenging, it is encouraging to see the commitment to long-term solutions and the willingness to engage in meaningful conversations.

Dismantling terror networks: The crackdown on militant activities

The abrogation of Article 370 and 35A has also had a significant impact on curbing terrorist activities in Kashmir. The government, in collaboration with security forces, has taken decisive steps to dismantle terror networks operating in the region. Through intelligence-based operations, targeted strikes, and enhanced border security, the Valley has seen a significant decline in terrorist infiltration and related incidents. These efforts have undoubtedly been instrumental in restoring a sense of security and stability to the region.

The impact of counter-terrorism operations

The operations conducted by security forces have dealt a severe blow to terrorist organizations in Kashmir. By neutralizing key operatives, cutting off their funding sources, and tightening security measures, these actions have disrupted the functioning of militant outfits. The decline in the number of terror attacks is a testament to the effectiveness of these

operations and the commitment of security forces to safeguard the lives of Kashmiri civilians. While the threat of terrorism may not be entirely eliminated, the concerted efforts to dismantle these networks have undoubtedly made a significant difference.

The role of security forces: Ensuring peace and stability

The role played by security forces in preserving peace and stability in Kashmir cannot be overstated. They have worked tirelessly, often in challenging conditions, to protect both the locals and the region from external threats. The dedication and professionalism displayed by these forces have been pivotal in restoring a semblance of normalcy to Kashmir. It is important to acknowledge their contributions and support their ongoing efforts to create a secure environment that allows the people of Kashmir to live their lives without fear.

The collaboration between security forces and local authorities has been crucial in maintaining law and order in Kashmir. By working hand in hand, they have been able to address the concerns of the people, bridge the gap in communication, and build trust within the community. This partnership has not only strengthened the security apparatus but has also paved the way for effective governance and development. The coordination between security forces and local authorities is a vital pillar in ensuring a peaceful and prosperous future for the region.

Post-abrogation Kashmir: Rebuilding and moving towards development

In the aftermath of the abrogation of Article 370 and 35A, the government has taken several initiatives to drive the socio-economic development of Kashmir. These measures include investments in infrastructure, education, healthcare, and tourism, aiming to create a conducive environment for growth and prosperity. By focusing on broad-based development, the goal is to address the underlying grievances of the people and provide them with avenues for a brighter future.

The post-abrogation period offers a unique opportunity for peacebuilding and reconciliation in Kashmir. By fostering an environment of inclusivity and dialogue, the government is encouraging all stakeholders to come together and work towards a shared vision of peace and prosperity. This involves engaging with all sections of society, including political leaders, civil society organizations, and youth groups, to collectively build a future that leaves behind the scars of the past. It is through such efforts that lasting peace can be achieved and a new chapter for Kashmir can be written. In conclusion, the abrogation of Article 370 and 35A in Kashmir has brought about a remarkable shift in the region's dynamics. The disappearance of terrorism, the end of hartals, and the curbing of stone pelting incidents signify a newfound era of peace and tranquility. The determined efforts of security forces in dismantling terror networks have played a crucial role in ensuring the region's stability. As Kashmir moves forward, it now has the opportunity to focus on rebuilding and pursuing socio-economic development, paving the way for a brighter and more prosperous future.

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Importance of Shrawan month in Hindu Religion

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The month of Shrawan-Sawan has a special importance for Hindus and is of great significance in Hindu religion. It is regarded as a holy and sacred month in Hindu calendar and Hindus perform many religious functions in this month and many observe fast and also worship Lord Shiva and seek his blessings and devotees worship the Lord of destruction -Shiva with great devotion and propitiate this God by performing special Puja.

The holy month of Shrawan usually falls in the Georgian calendar month of July-August. The month of Shrawan is wholly devoted and dedicated to the worship of Lord Shiva who is pleased very easily and with simple worship and so Shiva is also called Ashutosh. The month of Shrawana is very important for the entire Indian subcontinent, as it is connected to the arrival of south west monsoons.

For many Hindus the month of Shrawan is a month of fasting. Many Hindus fast every Monday for Shiva and/or every Tuesday for Parvati. Fasting on Tuesdays is known locally as Mangla Gauri Vrat.

Shrawana is considered to be holy month in the Hindu calendar due to numerous festivals that are celebrated during this time. Also special worship of Shiva and fasting is observed on Mondays. Dashama Varata is dedicated to Dashama and is observed as per Gujarati tradition. Krishna Janamashtami marks the birth of Krishna on the eighth day after full moon, which is the 23rd day of Shrawana according to Amanta tradition and is celebrated with great pomp and show by Hindus across the world, especially those of Vaishnava traditions. Raksha Bandhan also called Rakhi Purnima or simply Rakhi in many parts of India

and Nepal, is a Hindu religious festival and is celebrated on Shrawana Purnima and famous Anamath Yatra also culminates on Shrawana Purnima. For Kashmiri Pandits it is Shrawan Purnima and they observe fast on this day and visit Shiv temples for the worship of Shiva and Parvati.

In western India and parts of Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Goa Shrivana Purnima day is celebrated as Narali Purnima. On this day an offering of a coconut -Naryal in Gujarati, Niral in Marathi is made to the sea as a mark of respect to Varuna, the God of sea. Nag Panchami is also celebrated in many parts of India including Jammu on the fifth day after Amavasya of Shrawana month.

The snake God Naga is worshipped on this day. In Karnataka Basava Panchami is celebrated on the fifth day after amavasya. In southern and central parts of India including Maharashtra, Goa, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Orissa, Shrawana Purnima day is when many communities perform the ritual of Avani Avittam or Upakarma.

Shrivana Purnima day is also celebrated as Balam's birth day. In some parts of India Ganhla Purnima is celebrated on Shrawana Purnima.

Besides this Kajari Purnima, is celebrated in central parts of India such as MP, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand. In Gujarat, Shrivana purnima day is celebrated as Pavitropana.

On this day people perform grand Puja or worship of Shiva. On the Eakadshii of Shrawana in Gujarat and Rajasthan Vaishnavas celebrate it as the birth of Pushtimarga, the path of grace.

Jandhyam Purnima is celebrated in AP on Shrivana Purnima. In Haryana and Punjab

Hindus in addition to Raksha Bandhan celebrate Salono. It is celebrated by priests solemnly tying amulets on peoples wrists for protection against evil. Shrawani Mela is a major festival time at Deoghar in Jharkhand with thousands of saffron clad pilgrims bringing holy water around 100 Km on foot from the Ganges at Sultangunj Bihar. Shrawana is also the time of the annual Kanwar Yatra, the pilgrimage of devotees of Shiva, known as Kanwaria make to Hindu pilgrimage places of Hardwar, Gaumukh and Gangotri in Uttarakhand to fetch holy water from Ganga.

Study of the Vedas begins in Shrawana with Upakarma and pauses in Magha with an Utsarjana ritual resuming the following Shrawana. Thus Shrawana month is considered as one of the holiest months in the year according to Hindu Calendar. But why is this month called Shrawan? It is believed that on Purnima or full moon day or at any time during this month, the Shrawan Nakshatra or star rules the skies and hence this month derives its name from this Nakshatra. Devotees offer Patram-Pushpam-Falam toyam to Shivalingam in Shrawan Maas. The Shrawan month is synonymous with auspicious festivals and events. It is the best time to conduct all important religious ceremonies, as all most all days in this month are auspicious for good beginning. Shrawan Maas ruling deity is Lord Shiva. In this month, each Monday is celebrated as Shrawan Sonvar across all temples with the Dharastrata hanging over the Shiva Lingam, bathing it with holy water and milk throughout the day into the night.

Devotees offer Bael leaves, flowers, holy water and milk to Lord Shiva on every Shrawan Sonvar. They fast until the sun goes down and the Nandadeep, the Akhand Diya, burns throughout. The Samundra Manthan is very important episode as per the Puranas. The churning of the milky ocean, that is Samundra Manthan in search of the Amrit took place during the month of Shrawan. Devout devotees of Lord Shiva consider it auspicious to wear Rudraksha during the month of Shrawana. Shrawana the fifth month of the Hindu calendar. In India's national civil calendar, Shrawana is the fifth month of the year, beginning on July 23 and ending on August 22. In Tamil calendar, it is known as Avani and is the fifth month of solar year. In lunar religious calendars, Shrawana begins on the new moon (according to the Amanta tradition) or full moon (according to the Purnimanta tradition) and is the fifth month of the year. Being the period when monsoon falls over the heated plains of India, the season is celebrated in various texts, such as the Sanskrit text Meghaduta by Kalidasa.

Many films too have been made with Savan in their title like Aya Savan, Jhoom ke, Savan Bhadon, Solva Savan, Savan ko Aane Do, Pyassa Savan. Also, in Hindustani classical music, many songs are themed around Radha and Krishna during the rainy season, and also Bollywood songs for example Savan ki Ritu Aai, Savan ka Mahina Pavan kare Sor and Rim Jim gire Saawan. During the month of Shrawana, Hindu community in the regions of Goa, Maharashtra and Karnataka practice a vegetarian diet. In short all the above shows that the month of Shrawan has got a special importance for Hindus across the country and abroad and it is considered as the holy month in the Hindu Calendar.

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Lavender flowers bring 'Purple Revolution' in J&K

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People usually associate lavender with two specific traits: its fragrance and its color. But you may not know that the lavender flower and the oil derived from it have long histories in herbal medicine.

The word lavender comes from the Latin root "lavare," which literally means "to wash." The earliest recorded use of lavender dates back to ancient Egypt. There, lavender oil played a role in the mummification process. During later times, lavender became a bath additive in several regions, including ancient Persia, Greece, and Rome. These cultures believed that lavender helped purify the body and mind.

Lavenders are small evergreen shrubs with gray-green hoary linear leaves. The purple flowers are sparsely arranged on spikes at the tips of long bare stalks and produce small nutlet fruits. The fragrance of the plant is caused by shining oil glands imbedded among tiny star-shaped trichomes (plant hairs) that cover the flowers, leaves, and stems. The plants in cultivation do not usually produce seed, and propagation is accomplished by cuttings or by dividing the roots.

Lavender oil, or lavender flower oil, is obtained by distillation of the flowers and is used chiefly in fine perfumes and cosmetics. It is a colourless or yellow liquid, the fragrant constituents of which are linalyl acetate, linalool, pinene, limonene, geraniol, and cineole. Lavender water; a solution of the essential oil

in alcohol with other added scents, is used in a variety of toilette preparations.

Lavender cultivation, which was introduced to Jammu and Kashmir in 2007 as an experiment to help farmers switch to more profitable crops, is now showing revolutionary results. A group of farmers in the region were selected for a trial program in which they were given 2-3 canals of land to grow lavender.

These initiatives, along with the enthusiasm of farmers, have fueled lavender plantings a growth coined the "Purple Revolution." There are currently over 200 acres of land devoted to Lavender cultivation in the region, which is projected to double by the end of the year.

Lavender cultivation is practiced in almost all twenty J&K districts, while Kashmir has recently taken over this prestigious crop. Particular districts that have made substantial progress in this area include Kathua, Udhampur, Doda, Ramban, Kishtwar, Rajouri, Srinagar, Pulwama, Kupwara, Bandipora, Budgam, Ganderbal, Anantnag, Kulgam and Baramulla.

The 'Aroma Mission' or 'Purple Revolution,' initiated by the central government in 2016 through the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research's (CSIR) Aroma Mission, has played a transformative role in the lives of farmers in Jammu and Kashmir. The mission aims to support the domestic aromatic crop-based agro-economy by shifting from imported aromatic oils to locally grown varieties.

The CSIR Aroma mission is expected to bring

about transformative change in the flavouring sector through desired interventions in the areas of agriculture, processing, and product development to drive the growth of the flavouring industry and rural employment. The objective of the mission is the cultivation of important medicinal and aromatic plants at the national level to empower domestic farmers and support India's aromatic crop-based agro-economy by reducing imports of aromatic oils and increasing varieties of homegrown. However, the cultivation of lavender is native to Europe. Thousands of Jammu and Kashmir farmers are switching to lavender cultivation, which has been very profitable for them. According to the statistics, 5,000 entrepreneurs/farmers are growing lavender on more than 200 acres of land, which has led to a 4-5 times increase in their economy. Farmers in Jammu and Kashmir traditionally grew grains such as corn, rice and millet, which did not provide much profit, but with the cultivation of lavender, their profits have multiplied several times.

Lavender cultivation has emerged as a profitable and sustainable alternative for the farmers in Kashmir, enabling them to improve their economic prospects and enhance their livelihoods with fewer agricultural inputs.

Officials said lavender cultivation has gained significant traction across all twenty districts of Jammu and Kashmir, and its future in the region looks promising, fuelled by the increasing demand for lavender and its derived products both domestically and internationally.

The agro-climatic conditions of Kashmir provide the perfect environment for lavender cultivation, as it thrives in mild summers, bright sunshine, and even marginal soils. As land holdings and natural resources are shrinking, lavender cultivation requires fewer inputs, less irrigation, and can thrive in stress conditions, making it a promising future crop. In addition to the economic benefits, lavender cultivation has also created livelihood opportunities for local women. With rising demand due to its medicinal values and the prospect of better returns, growing lavender has become a preferred choice for many farmers in the area, which is considered as the most fertile belt in Kashmir. Lavender is a signature crop which is a buzz word today because of its varied uses in the industry, which includes cosmetics, toiletries, fragrances, therapeutics, etc, as the weather of Jammu and Kashmir is conducive for the crop. Also, the lavender plant is antimicrobial, antifungal and anti-bacterial and even anxiolytic, and these inherent characteristics help farmers save cost.

It does not need to use or spray agro-chemicals on it for maintaining the good crop, health and yields. It is an ecologically viable crop for regions of Jammu and Kashmir as its essential oil sells at Rs 10,000 to Rs 15,000 per kilogram.

Today, lavender is more than just a fragrant plant. As it turns out, this herb is also commonly used for medicinal and therapeutic benefits. Everyday stresses can take a toll on your mental health. The greater

your anxiety level, the higher the risk for headaches, depression, and low energy.

The good news is that lavender may help lift the black cloud hanging over your head and give your mental outlook a much-needed pick-me-up. There's plenty of research that suggests lavender has positive effects on mood, stress, anxiety, and depression.

At present more than 1,000 farming families are cultivating the lavender on more than 200 acres in different parts of the union territory of Jammu and Kashmir. Each farmer has employed at least five other people. Thus, the mission has already employed over 6,000 families.

A scented flowering plant called lavender is widely cultivated throughout temperate areas for usage as a decorative or culinary herb. The crop is grown in Jammu and Kashmir's 20 districts. The cultivation of lavender is well renowned in Pulwama and Anantnag. This framework has been embraced by many farmers. Tourists come to these gardens during harvest season to see the flowers.

Farmers traditionally in Jammu and Kashmir grew cereals such as maize, rice and millets which didn't provide great returns but with lavender cultivation, their earnings have gone up several times. It is expected to enable Indian farmers and the aroma industry to become global leaders in the production and export of some other essential oils in the pattern of menthol mint.

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