



Terrible Thursday

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As investigations into the Pulwama attack begin, Pakistan must act against the Jaish

- As India mourns the death of 40 CRPF personnel in terrorist strike in Jammu and Kashmir's Pulwama district, it is clear that the attack was meant to provoke.
- The Jaish-e-Mohammed, the Pakistan-based terrorist organisation which has orchestrated numerous strikes in the Kashmir Valley, has taken responsibility for what is now the highest toll of security forces in any attack in the State.
- Investigations should yield a better picture, but it is a matter of extreme concern that a suicide bomber could time his attack to hit a security convoy.
- There is no question that Pakistan bears the onus to explain why Masood Azhar, the leader of the Jaish-e-Mohammed, enjoys such freedoms on its territory, if not outright support from the establishment.
- Certainly, diplomatic backing by Pakistan and China has been crucial in defeating efforts at the United Nations to put Azhar on the list of banned terrorists.
- However, if the terrorists have acted from an updated playbook, New Delhi's response must not play into their plans with reflexive and precipitate official action.
- India has withdrawn the Most Favoured Nation status to Pakistan in a signal that it will not wait for preliminaries in the effort to isolate Pakistan.
- Coercive diplomacy is likely to continue, but to be effective the effort needs a wider net, especially at a time when the U.S. is seeking Pakistan's help in firming up a deal with the Afghan Taliban.
- Beijing too must not, and cannot, evade questions about its previous blocking of action at the UN, specifically against Azhar.
- New Delhi's response must, instead, be to isolate the perpetrators and keep the peace on Indian territory.

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