



Yet another fiasco in J&K

Posted at: 27/11/2018

Yet another fiasco in J&K-New Delhi must not allow the downward spiral to continue through to the general election

- Last week's dramatic development — of Jammu and Kashmir Governor Satya Pal Malik's decision to dissolve the Legislative Assembly immediately after rival parties staked claims to form a government — was so patently wrong as to be outrageous.
- Mr. Malik's actions clearly reveal what he was thinking.
- Having given five months to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) to try to cobble together a government, the surprise challenge by the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), supported by the National Conference (NC) and the Congress, forced him to reverse course, and hastily dissolve an Assembly that he had kept in suspended animation without once consulting the MLAs.

Strange reasons

- The Governor's reasons for dissolution are not only disingenuous, they are downright dangerous.
- The allegation that political parties with opposing ideologies should not come together can more plausibly be levelled against the coming together of the People's Conference (PC) and the BJP than against the PDP-NC-Congress grouping.
- The PDP, the NC and the Congress share several common positions, including on confidence-building measures (CBMs), peace talks and safeguarding constitutional rights.
- The greatest damage done by Mr. Malik has been to strengthen Kashmiri cynicism about New Delhi.
- Most Kashmiri commentators, in any case, argue that there has never been more than a pretence of democracy on the part of New Delhi when it comes to Kashmir.
- What happened vindicates their argument.
- The graph of violence has been rising since 2014 not only in the Valley,

but in the border districts of Jammu as well.

- In this volatile situation, the impact of the events of the past six months, from the BJP toppling its coalition government with the PDP to the Governor thwarting the PDP-NC-Congress claim to forming a government, has been disastrous.
- It has driven even those who sought a peaceful and feasible resolution to the sidelines.

Time to build confidence

- The Kartarpur agreement has been widely welcomed by India-Pakistan experts, but the hope that peace initiatives on Kashmir will follow could be misplaced.
- The Modi government's acceptance of the Kartarpur proposal might have been prompted by the desire to garner credit, especially for its alliance partner, the Shiromani Akali Dal, rather than to pave the way for peacemaking on Kashmir.

Think big

- All the factual information — whether political, security, social or economic — shows that the Modi government's counterinsurgency-alone policy has gravely damaged the Valley as well Jammu and Kashmir's relations to the Union.
- Will the Central government allow this downward spiral to continue through to the national elections next year, with increasing rhetoric on terrorism, anti-national elements and the like, or will it put the interests of the State and the Union first?

The Hindu

