

**Kashmir as a Center of Global Conflict: Historical, Political, and
Diplomatic Perspectives**

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ABSTRACT : Kashmir, a strategic region in the Himalayas, has long been a centre of historical, cultural, and political significance. Its geopolitical complexity stems from its contested status between India and Pakistan, with additional international involvement shaping the ongoing conflict. This research aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the Kashmir conflict by examining its historical background, key political events, and the broader implications of territorial disputes. The study employs a literature review approach to identify significant themes, including the historical evolution of Kashmir, the impact of the 1947 partition and Maharaja Hari Singh's accession to India, as well as contemporary challenges such as human rights violations and international diplomatic efforts. The findings reveal that the conflict is deeply rooted in historical grievances, political manoeuvring, and competing nationalistic ideologies. The study concludes that achieving a resolution requires sustained diplomatic efforts and a commitment to addressing the socio-political concerns of the Kashmiri people. This research contributes to the broader discourse on regional conflicts and international mediation by offering insights into the historical and political dimensions of the Kashmir dispute.

Keywords : Kashmir, Global Conflict , India.



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INTRODUCTION

Kashmir, a region located in the Himalayas, has long been the focus of global attention, not only for its cultural, religious, and political significance but also for its ongoing international conflict. Rich in history and culture, Kashmir has been recognised since ancient times as a centre for the convergence of various civilisations, mainly Hindu and Buddhist influences. Historically, Kashmir was where vital cultural and intellectual developments flourished in the

Indian subcontinent, heavily influenced by Hinduism, which later intertwined with Buddhist teachings (Kramer, 2019).

In ancient times, Kashmir played a pivotal role in South Asian history. As part of the Maurya Empire, Kashmir thrived through trade and international relations. From the 3rd century BCE, the influence of Hinduism and Buddhism became dominant in the region, evidenced by numerous archaeological remains and religious structures found throughout Kashmir (Ganguly, 2013). Historical records provide insights into how the people of Kashmir adopted different cultural and religious teachings, which helped shape the complex identity of the region (U. Ali et al., 2016; Bhat & Majumdar, 2021).

However, the peaceful history of Kashmir changed dramatically after the partition of India in 1947. This partition led to the creation of two new countries, India and Pakistan, and had a profound impact on Kashmir, which lies between the two nations. When Maharaja Hari Singh decided to accede to India, despite the majority of Kashmir's population being Muslim, this decision sparked a conflict that remains unresolved to this day (Schofield, 2003). This decision, made under duress, created tensions and instability that have persisted for decades.

The Kashmir conflict is not only a territorial dispute between India and Pakistan but also involves social and political dimensions, including issues of ethnic and religious identity. Tensions escalated after India and Pakistan engaged in several wars, including in 1947-1948, 1965, and 1999, making Kashmir a focal point of international crisis. Moreover, the region has become a battleground for global geopolitical interests, with significant powers influencing the political dynamics of South Asia (Vongpraseuth & Choi, 2015).

Kashmir's importance lies in its strategic status, both militarily and economically. The region's geographic location, bordering China, adds complexity to the conflict, given China's involvement in border-related issues. This dispute also impacts the balance of power in the region, with India and Pakistan each striving to strengthen their territorial claims over Kashmir, which has led to heightened competition, particularly concerning control over natural resources and strategic trade routes (Fair, 2007).

In addition to the political and economic aspects, this conflict has had a profound social impact on the people of Kashmir. The ongoing tensions between India and Pakistan have caused untold suffering for residents, including numerous casualties, forced displacement, and ongoing human rights violations. The prolonged uncertainty and tension have eroded the social and cultural fabric of Kashmir, which was once known for its harmonious ethnic and religious diversity (Bose, 2003).

Based on the background above, the author has identified the following three research questions: What happened in Kashmir in the ancient period? What's the reason for the struggle between Pakistan and India in Kashmir? Why has Kashmir become a vital territory?

The Kashmir conflict has been the subject of extensive scholarly analysis, with numerous studies exploring its historical, political, and cultural dimensions. Jha (2003) examines the region's complex identity issues, focusing on how historical narratives have been constructed and contested over time. This work provides a nuanced understanding of the interplay

between religion, culture, and politics in shaping Kashmir's identity (Jha, 2003). Similarly, Sumantra Bose's "Kashmir: Roots of Conflict, Paths to Peace" delves into the historical roots of the conflict, analysing the political developments and policy decisions that have contributed to the ongoing dispute. Bose offers a comprehensive overview of the factors leading to the current situation and discusses potential pathways to peace (Bose, 2003). Furthermore, Chitralekha Zutshi's "Kashmir's Contested Pasts: Narratives, Sacred Geographies, and the Historical Imagination" explores the region's historical narratives and sacred geographies, shedding light on how different communities perceive and interpret Kashmir's past (Zutshi, 2014). Zutshi's work emphasises the role of historical imagination in the conflict, highlighting the diverse perspectives that contribute to the contested nature of Kashmir's history.

While these studies offer valuable insights into the historical and political aspects of the Kashmir conflict, there remains a need for a comprehensive analysis that integrates these dimensions with an examination of the socio-economic factors influencing the region's dynamics. This research aims to fill this gap by providing an in-depth exploration of the historical, political, and socio-economic elements that have shaped the Kashmir conflict. By adopting an interdisciplinary approach, this study seeks to offer a more holistic understanding of the complexities surrounding the region, contributing to the existing body of literature with fresh perspectives and potential avenues for conflict resolution.

Research on Kashmir is crucial due to its wide-ranging implications for international politics, regional security, and the lives of the affected populations. Given that the conflict involves not only two countries but also has global ramifications, it is essential to gain a deeper understanding of the region's history, the causes of the conflict, and the dynamics at play to search for a sustainable peace solution (Sarker et al., 2018). Therefore, it is essential to explore Kashmir's ancient history, the reasons behind the ongoing dispute between India and Pakistan, and why the region continues to be a focal point for the world.

This research is significant as it offers a new perspective on understanding the Kashmir conflict. It does not solely focus on the political and military dimensions but also delves into the region's history and the cultural influences that have shaped its identity. By exploring the historical roots of Kashmir and understanding the underlying reasons for the territorial dispute, this study aims to contribute to the ongoing discourse on international conflict. Moreover, the region's importance from both geopolitical and social viewpoints makes this topic highly relevant in global discussions surrounding peace and security (Markosian et al., 2021).

METHOD

The data for this study will be collected through a comprehensive literature review, which serves as the primary method for gathering relevant information on the Kashmir conflict. This process will involve identifying key sources, including books, academic articles, journal publications, and reports from international organisations. The selected literature will address various aspects of the Kashmir issue, such as its historical roots, political dynamics, territorial

disputes, and humanitarian concerns. Once the sources are identified, they will be organised into themes, such as historical context, territorial disputes, political tensions, human rights violations, and the role of international relations. This organisation will help structure the analysis and establish connections between different perspectives.

The collected data will then be analysed using content analysis, a technique that systematically examines textual data to identify recurring themes, patterns, and trends. The first step in this analysis will be coding the literature to identify key concepts, such as "territorial dispute," "human rights," "international mediation," and "religious identity." These codes will allow the researcher to track how frequently these themes appear across the sources. The next step will involve categorising the coded data into broader themes, such as the historical perspectives on Kashmir, the role of religion and identity in the conflict, the political and territorial disputes between India and Pakistan, the impact on local populations, and the involvement of international organisations like the United Nations.

In addition to theme identification, the content analysis will also include a contextual analysis, examining how different authors and sources frame the conflict. This will involve analysing language, tone, and perspective to identify any biases or varying viewpoints, particularly between Indian, Pakistani, and international sources. Furthermore, a frequency analysis will be conducted to assess which terms or concepts dominate the discourse surrounding the Kashmir issue, offering insight into the narratives emphasised in the literature. For instance, the study will compare the frequency of discussions on the "peace process" versus "military escalation" or "humanitarian crisis."

Finally, the findings from the content analysis will be interpreted to conclude the Kashmir conflict's historical, political, and humanitarian dimensions. The study will aim to provide a comprehensive understanding of the ongoing dispute, shedding light on the factors that have shaped the conflict and its significance in regional and global politics (Oidine, 2013). Through this method, the research will offer valuable insights into the narratives surrounding Kashmir and contribute to the broader discourse on the region's political landscape.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

History of Kashmir

Kashmir is naturally created with beautiful flora and fauna and a culture-rich society. A peaceful life in the expanse of grassland when spring arrives. Dense trees and fast-flowing rivers are the source of life for the Kashmiri people. Women were busy pounding corn and preparing food in the kitchen, men with a herd of cows and horses, and children playing happily, making the atmosphere of Kashmir in the past like a paradise for the people and travellers who visited Kashmir. The houses are built using bricks and straw as roofs. The houses are made with a ground floor that is used as a cow or sheep pen. Perhaps we assume that Kashmiri homes will be very uncomfortable when summer or winter arrives. However, their house is quite warm and suitable for living in, even though it looks simple (Lawrence & C.I.E, 1895).

The Ancient history of Kashmir is passed centuries before the Muslims began the expedition into Hindustan. According to historical records, Kashmir was under control by the king of Ahsoka in the 3rd century BCE, Buddhism which the Mauryan king of Ahsoka spread became the religion adopted by the Kashmiri people during the era of Ahsoka's rule. He sent Buddhist missionaries to the Valley to preach Buddhism to the people. Further, the territory of King Ahsoka was extended into Bengal, Deccan, Afghanistan, Punjab, and Kashmir. In the first century AD, the Kushan Dynasty from northwest China invaded northern India. King Kaniska made Kashmir his first love and made it a significant territory of Kushan. The King of Kushan was renowned for their love of art and architecture. Under Kushan rule, the Kashmiri people enjoyed the Golden Age for several decades. Art, culture, and economy were developed directly, making the Silk Road a vital trade route for foreign countries. It encourages the economy of Kashmiri to trade crops and livestock. Musicians, poets, and scientists have taken a role in developing and create mix culture between natives and outsiders.

Lalituditya was one of the most prominent rules of ancient Kashmir. Around the early 8th AD, successfully extended the boundaries of Kashmir. He is a familiar king known as Alexander of Kashmir. He also built many temples because Lalituditya was a strong patron of both Hinduism and Buddhism. Under Lalituditya's rule, Kashmir became a significant, rich culture with development in art, literature, and architecture. His support of scholars and artists made Kashmir an essential centre of culture school in the Subcontinent. Lalituditya's legacy was spread not only in Kashmir but also influenced another part of his rules.

Lalituditya established his rule in Kashmir with totality, love, and greatness. He prepared his strongest army, led by a famous commander named Cankunya, who had the title Can kiun. He was also known as someone who loved science and culture. At that time, many famous Indian scholars served at the Palace and received protection. Apart from that, poets also enlivened the atmosphere of the palace. They inherited civilisation, science, and culture. Making his territory the cultural centre of South Asia. The temple was built as a means of worship and a religious symbol as a characteristic of Lalituditya, who succeeded in bringing Kashmir to a Golden Era.

Shah Mir was known as the great king of Kashmir and also the first Dynasty Muslim ruler. It differs from the origin of Shah Mir. However, generally, from Swat in Dardistan, modern historians accept that (Claude Markovits, 2002). Shah Mir dreamed of establishing Islam in Kashmir, assisted by his family. Previously, Shah Mir was associated with one of the Kashmiri Sufi groups, Kubrawiya. After that, Shah Mir's descendants took over the leadership of Kashmir, especially Sikandar Butshikan, who ruled from 1339 to 1342 AD, which his son then continued. His descendants helped develop Kashmir with architecture and culture as previously done by Hindu rulers. Cultural acculturation between Hinduism and Islam, as well as between society and rulers, makes the dynamics of Kashmir's social life increasingly diverse. Providing religious facilities and establishing schools to produce an intellectual generation.

Islam became a Popular religion in Hindustan In the 6th Century when the Umayyad Caliph appointed Muhammad Bin Qasim to expand the territory of Islam and start preaching. Still,

it took a long time to spread Islamic influence to Hindustan, including Kashmir. It also has a different theory. Islam entered Hindustan, passing through two regions, the northern areas and the Southern areas. It directly provides different experiences of it. Grassland and, incredible mountains, a wealth of flora and fauna, and water resources, including rivers, surrounded the northern area. All these things became pieces of evidence for every Foreign Kingdom to take over Kashmir and make it into their rules. It's contrary in the Southern areas. The geography of the southern areas is Desert, and the weather is very hot. At that time, Muhammad Bin Qasim and his troops had spurred their horses surrounding scenery deserts into multiple kilometres before they found civilisation.

In the era of Mughal dynasty rule, Kashmir also took on the role of a government region. Kashmir is an area of the Mughal government which is located in the northernmost region where the Mughal government was based in Delhi. The Battle of Panipat occurred on April 21, 1526, in India between Zahiruddin Muhammad Babur's troops against the Lodi Empire, which resulted in the death of Ibrahim Lodi and the end of the Lodi Dynasty as well as marking the start of the Mughal Dynasty. This battle took place near the village of Panipat in the present-day Indian state of Haryana (Asher & Talbot, 2006)

Kashmir came under Mughal rule in 1586, under the leadership of Akbar the Great. Akbar adopted a policy of conciliation and arranged marriages between Mughal and Kashmiri nobles to strengthen his power (Akba, 1993). Jahangir, as Akbar's successor, often did the same thing as his father, Akbar the Great, had done. Strengthen Mughal rule in Kashmir and develop urbanisation activities such as plantations, animal husbandry, and culture. Akbar had inherited a royal travel route stretching from Lahore to Kashmir, known as the Mughal Road (K. Ali & Ali, 1956).

The Mughal government in Kashmir had clashes with Hindus during the reign of Aurangzeb. Western historians consider Aurangzeb to be an intolerant leader, unlike his predecessor, Akbar, who was close to the Brahmins. This is very controversial from the point of view of Muslim historians. Because Akbar made a political decision called Din E Illahi as a new policy to unite Muslims and Hindus. Akbar's decision drew a lot of criticism from Muslims. Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi also expressed the opinion that what Akbar had done was blasphemed. Aurangzeb tried to restore Islamic values lost in the Akbar era by implementing *Fatava-e-Alamgiri* or *Al-Fatava al-'Alamgiriyya*, also called *Fatava Al-Hindiyyah*, which was published in 1672 AD. Alamgir's decision reaped opposition from the Brahmanas. Hindus opposed Alamgir, and some left Kashmir. This is considered to be the era of the decline of Mughal rule in Kashmir.

During Mughal rule in Kashmir, the Sultans continued to make many innovations, primarily scientific and cultural. With many governments and kings who controlled Kashmir for centuries, Kashmir has become a very culturally and scientifically diverse region. Foreign Scholars and poets also came to Kashmir. After the weakening of the Mughal government in Kashmir, the Kashmir region constantly changed governments, such as Dogras and Sikhs, until the British came to Hindustan to start colonialism, capture the last Mughal Sultan, Bahadur Shah Zafar, and send him to exile in Burma, Myanmar. Around 3 - 4 Century AD, the British officially demolished the Mughal Dynasty, including the Islamic System.

The Dogras Dynasty began to exist when the Mughal Dynasty disappeared from Kashmir. Dogras originate from the Jammu region, which is inhabited by a majority of Hindus from the Rajput caste. The state of Kashmir is divided into two central regions, namely Jammu and Kashmir. Jammu, which is predominantly Hindu and Sikh, is strongly influenced by Hindu traditions, and Dogras are the leading ethnic group of Jammu, while Islam and the traditions of the Persian people strongly influence Kashmir (Stein, 1892)

Although the Mughal Dynasty lost authority in Kashmir, the Sultans passed on Islam to the Kashmiri people, making Kashmiri society dominated by Muslims. However, after Hindu rulers controlled Kashmir, the Dogra Dynasty ruled since 1846 after the agreement of Amritsar, where the region was purchased from England by Raja Gulab Singh. The lives of the Kashmiri people are very worrying. This went on for a very long time. Hindus, with a powerful caste system, are considered not to be fair towards lower-class people, mainly Muslim people. Maharaja Hari Singh, who is known as the last ruler of Jammu and Kashmir under the Dogra Dynasty, took the throne in 1925 after the death of his uncle, Maharaja Pratap Singh. Hari Singh is known as a leader who tried to provide new ideas in his political decisions in Jammu and Kashmir, but this received strong resistance from society, including the Muslim community. Hari Singh, in his politics, introduced reforms in many aspects, including the economy, but this was considered a form of discrimination against lower-class people.

Hari Singh's controversial leadership stance sparked protests among the public, similar to Fatawa e Alamgir, which was legally under Aurangzeb's authority. Opposition to Hari Singh became increasingly widespread and incendiary. In 1931, there were massive protests in Kashmir which were triggered by oppression and injustice. The Muslim Community at that time saw this condition as an opportunity to invite Muslims in Jammu and Kashmir to be active in politics in an effort to restore justice in Jammu and Kashmir, which had been lost under Hari Singh.

The Dogra dynasty, which was filled with many controversies, in fact, really pushed the Jammu and Kashmir region into the modern era due to the strong influence of British colonialism in Hindustan. Several Maharajas built significant infrastructure, such as roads and developed Srinagar as an administrative centre, expanding territory and strengthening militarisation. The resistance put up by Muslims during the reign of Hari Singh encouraged political aspirations on the part of Muslims. 1931 saw the beginning of a more organised political movement among Kashmiri Muslims.

Conflict of the Kashmir Movement Before the Independence

The escalating oppression and systemic injustice in Jammu and Kashmir during the early 20th century led to the formation of a political organisation known as the Jammu Kashmir Muslim Conference (JKMC), which influential Muslim leaders, including Sheikh Abdullah, Chowdhary Ghulam Abbas, and Mirwaiz Yusuf Shah spearheaded. These figures were deeply concerned by the political and social marginalisation of Muslims in the region, particularly under the rule of the Maharaja, who they believed had failed to address the needs and aspirations of the Muslim population. The primary objective of the JKMC was to advocate for the political and economic rights of Muslims in Kashmir, as they were facing severe

discrimination in various aspects of life, including governance, employment, and resource allocation. The organisation sought to challenge the policies of the Maharaja's government, which they viewed as oppressive and exclusionary, especially towards the Muslim community. In addition to political struggles, the JKMC also aimed to strengthen social welfare and improve educational opportunities for Muslims, who were primarily deprived of access to quality education and social services. This dual focus on political representation and social development was integral to the group's vision of creating a more equitable and inclusive society for Muslims in Kashmir. The formation of the JKMC marked a pivotal moment in the region's history, as it laid the foundation for later political movements and was a precursor to the broader struggle for self-determination in Jammu and Kashmir.

JKMC played an essential role in fighting for the political, economic and social rights of Muslims under the Maharaja's rule. JKMC provides new hope for Muslims in Kashmir and expands the campaign for Muslims to unite against the injustices that occur. JKMC, as a political party, has a similar role to the All India Muslim League (AIML) as a form of resistance to the Indian National Congress (INC). However, the JKMC, which Muslims formed at that time, had more complicated problems which, in the future, would determine the fate of the Kashmir region itself. Until now, the mediation carried out by the United Nations (UN) and the division of territories are not enough to reconcile the two countries.

16 October 1932, JKMC was officially established in Srinagar. Srinagar is a city in the middle of the Kashmir region, which is currently under Indian rule. Before independence, Srinagar played an essential role as a government and administrative centre because of its strategic location. This city also witnessed the JKMC's struggle against the Dogras government, which Maharaja Hari Singh then led. The JKMC opposed the Maharaja's policies and taxation system, which Muslims considered burdened. Apart from that, they also demand religious freedom and fair political representation. JKMC, over the past few years, has tried to unite all the supporters of Muslims in Kashmir, including the Jammu, Ladakh and Valley.

Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah, known as 'The Lion Of Kashmir', was a very influential figure in the Muslim community, especially in Kashmir at that time. Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah was not only fighting injustice and the feudal system implemented by the Maharaja but also fighting for independence against British rule. In 1939, JKMC was renamed Jammu Kashmir National Conference (JKNC). He supported the concept of a secular state. Another thing, he showed his controversial side towards many other Muslim figures, making Islamic political instability in Kashmir split into two groups (Khan, 2018)

JKNC aims to get support from all religious communities in Kashmir, not just Islam, which is very different from JKMC, which only represents Islam. Naturally, with the change of JKMC to JKNC, Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah indeed agreed that Kashmir would join India rather than Pakistan because Pakistan, which at that time was planned by AIML, had a mission to create a new country as a representation of the Islamic State on the Sub Continent.

Differences in viewpoints between Islamic figures cause problems in Kashmiri society. They are faced with internal conflicts by the political elite, while society continues to face fear and discrimination carried out by the upper class. JKNC, which had a secular vision, received

support from the INC led by Jawaharlal Nehru, making Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah's relations closer to India. On the other hand, Chowdhary Ghulam Abbas chose to continue with the Muslim Conference Party. He refused to make Kashmir a state with a secular ideology, making this party pro towards the ideology of establishing the state of Pakistan.

After several years, Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah changed JKMC to JKNC. However, Chowdhary Ghulam Abbas still chose to maintain the reputation of the Muslim community without having to change his political views to become secular. Chowdhary Ghulam Abbas disagrees with secular ideology, as he feels that the priorities of Muslims are neglected. He played an essential role in maintaining the aspirations of Kashmiri Muslims amidst political divisions in India

1940, after the idea of creating Pakistan emerged Chowdhary Ghulam Abbas became the leading supporter of uniting Kashmir with Pakistan, considering that the majority of Kashmir's population was Muslim. Despite Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah having a close relationship with Jawaharlal Nehru and agreeing to merge Kashmir with India into a secular state, Chowdhary Ghulam Abbas has a close relationship with Quaid e Azzam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and the Muslim League, which was fighting for the creation of Pakistan. Another thing Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah had reasons for merging Kashmir with India. He considers that Kashmir is a multi-religious region. This is why he also used it as an argument to strengthen his determination to change JKMC to JKNC and his views on secularism. Joining India is the solution to maintain the diversity of Kashmir under the government of Secularism India. Chowdhary Ghulam Abbas responded to this statement by considering that Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah had forgotten and ignored the aspirations of Kashmiri Muslims, who were the majority.

Each party then utilises the differences between these two political attitudes to realise their ideals for the future. Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah was in alliance with Jawaharlal Nehru, and Chowdhary Ghulam Abbas was in alliance with Quaid E Azzam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. The Kashmiri people felt the impact because these two figures were figures who Kashmiri Muslims highly respected.

In 1930 - 1940, Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah and Chowdhary Muhammad Abbas had the same enemy, namely Maharaja Hari Singh. They agreed to overthrow Hari Singh and end the Dogra Dynasty rule in Kashmir, although in their ways.

The result of the impact of these differences in political attitudes makes Kashmiri Muslims increasingly distant from justice solutions. They have to choose between Islamic ideology with Pakistan as their future or secularism with India as their future. Meanwhile, the presence of these two political groups made the Kashmiri people aware that they had to break away from Hari Singh's government immediately, and this made Hari Singh's position even weaker.

The emergence of the Quit Kashmir movement in May 1946 by Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah in the Jammu Kashmir region was a momentum used by the JKNC to end Hari Singh's government and call for the handover of power to the Kashmiri people (C. M. Ali, 1998). This was caused by public dissatisfaction and also indicated the weakening influence of Hari Singh's government. This movement was inspired by Quit India, which was

launched by the INC in 1942 to end British colonial rule in India. Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah and his political party are trying to mobilise mass support to demand political and social reform and want a democratic and representative government that reflects the aspirations of the Kashmiri people.

The Quit Movement received opposition from Chowdhary Ghulam Abbas, who considered this movement an example of secularism being implemented by Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah and his party. The agenda supports INC's interests in Kashmir and ignores Muslim rights. Chowdhary Ghulam Abbas is worried that the tagline "handing over power to the people" will provide space for non-Muslim communities to take over. At the same time, Kashmiri Muslims will not get their rights.

Ali (1998) gave an adverse reaction to the Quit Kashmir Movement. Just like Chowdhary Ghulam Abbas, the Quit Kashmir Movement will only benefit the INC and JKNC (C. M. Ali, 1998). JKNC does not represent Kashmiri Muslims at all and sees the quit Kashmir Movement as a secular agenda supported by the INC. Ali Jinnah's attitude reflected a strategic view in fighting for the creation of Pakistan. He still chose to ally with Chowdhary Ghulam Abbas and JKNC, who were considered to have the same vision for Kashmir joining Pakistan.

Apart from the opposition from Chowdhary Ghulam Abbas, the Quit Kashmir Movement launched by Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah caused a reaction from the Hari Singh government. Hari Singh responded harshly and arrested Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah on 20 May 1946. This arrest sparked larger protests, which resulted in around 20 people being killed and 300 people being arrested. Jawaharlal Nehru, who was a friend and ally of Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah, tried to support and defend him in court. However, Nehru was arrested by Hari Singh's authorities and forced to leave Kashmir.

It's different from Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah, Chowdhary Ghulam Abbas tried to take a diplomatic approach to support the rights of Kashmiri Muslims without having to provoke Maharaja Hari Singh. The approach to Quaid E Azzam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and AIML was one form of Chowdhary Ghulam Abbas's efforts in fighting for Kashmir Muslims, which continued until the independence of Pakistan and India.

India became increasingly complicated because religious groups such as Hindus and Muslims wanted to be free from British colonialism. AIML and INC, as the dominant parties in India, are campaigning to establish a government based on their perspective. The division of 2 regions based on religion is considered to be a solution for Muslims to resolve religious conflicts that often occurred several centuries ago. Meanwhile, the INC, with its ideology of secularism, tries to unite all regions of India, uniting all religions in one government. The plan to establish Pakistan received many responses from Muslim figures; some agreed, and some disagreed on the grounds that Islam must continue to fight injustice in any form, including fighting governments and securing Muslim votes in elections. Pakistan ensures that the regions have a majority of Muslim people, and Punjab is one of them. Punjab has been an essential sector since the Islamic conquest of Hindustan. Despite independence, Punjab was divided into 2, Pakistani Punjab and Indian Punjab. What about Kashmir? Kashmir is a territory of the Princely States, which has the freedom to decide its fate after independence.

The Cabinet Mission Plan proposed by the British government to resolve political conflicts between the INC, AIML, and other political parties regarding the future of post-independence India had an impact, directly and indirectly, on the political situation in Kashmir. The Cabinet Mission Plan aimed to avoid splitting India into states by establishing a federation in which power would be shared between the centre and the provinces. Kashmir was not mentioned explicitly in the Cabinet Mission Plan, as the decision rested entirely with Maharaja Hari Singh as ruler of Kashmir. Hari Singh took an independent stance and decided not to join Pakistan or India to maintain his territorial sovereignty. The political decisions taken by Hari Singh cannot be blamed because he has authority in his region of Jammu and Kashmir, even though his own decision does not give a solution yet between Muslim and Hindu communities in Jammu and Kashmir.

The Cabinet Mission Plan received a positive reaction from the INC because it was considered to make it easier for India to become a secular country. However, the INC rejected the idea of provincial autonomy. After all, it was considered to weaken the power of the central government. Further, the INC opposed the idea of grouping provinces based on religion, which could strengthen Hindu-Muslim polarisation.

The AIML, led by Quaid E Azzam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, accepted the British proposal on the condition that significant autonomy be granted to the Muslim-majority provinces. Ali Jinnah felt that this step would facilitate the formation of Pakistan as the first Muslim country on the Subcontinent. The Cabinet Mission Plan has grouped several predominantly Muslim regions, such as Punjab, Sindh, and the North West Frontier Province (NWFP).

Kashmir, as a princely state, will wait and take an independent stance, even though it is involved in internal conflict between JKNC and JKMC. Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah supports Kashmir being included in India and rejects the idea of dividing the region based on religion promoted by AIML. Naturally, Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah is considered to have forgotten the aspirations of the majority of Kashmiri Muslims. Chowdhari Ghulam Abbas saw the cabinet mission plan as an opportunity to create Pakistan and support the integration of Kashmir into Pakistan.

The Cabinet Mission Plan was declared a failure after differences in interpretation and withdrawal of support from AIML due to AIML's suspicions that INC was superior. INC claims that every province that has been grouped based on religion is free to leave the grouping. AIML considers this a threat to Muslims and their dream of creating Pakistan. AIML responded to the rejection of the INC with Direct Action Day, which was announced by Ali Jinnah on 16 August 1946 in the city of Calcutta in the Bengal province, as a form of AIML's determination to fight for Pakistan. Direct Action Day caused major riots and further strengthened the division between Hindus and Muslims.

The Impact of Independence

After the failure of the Cabinet Mission Plan and the ensuing riots in Calcutta, Hindu-Muslim relations deteriorated significantly, setting the stage for the partition of India. In February 1947, the British announced their decision to leave India by June 1948, appointing Lord Mountbatten as the last Viceroy of India. His primary responsibility was to oversee the transition of power, which included devising a plan for the future of the subcontinent.

Mountbatten's proposal was the division of India into two nations based on religious majority: India, a Hindu-majority state, and Pakistan, a Muslim-majority state. On August 14, 1947, Pakistan was officially established as an independent country, divided into two regions: West Pakistan (comprising Punjab, Sindh, Baluchistan, and the North-West Frontier Province) and East Pakistan (now Bangladesh, including the region of West Bengal). The name "Pakistan" was coined by Choudhary Rahmat Ali, a Muslim student at Cambridge, England, and its establishment marked a pivotal moment in history, with Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the leader of the All-India Muslim League, becoming Pakistan's first Governor-General. At the same time, Liaquat Ali Khan was appointed as its first Prime Minister.

However, Pakistan's newfound independence created complex challenges, particularly the mass migration of Muslims across the newly drawn borders, which sparked widespread violence and social upheaval. The migration was seen as a critical action by many Muslim figures. However, not all Muslims chose to move to Pakistan due to doubts about its prospects for prosperity and security. In the midst of these tumultuous events, the princely state of Kashmir found itself at the heart of a growing crisis. Maharaja Hari Singh, the ruler of Kashmir, was faced with intense pressure from both sides—India and Pakistan—each seeking to annex the region. Although Hari Singh initially desired Kashmir to remain independent, he found his position increasingly untenable, especially given the influence of local political movements like the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference (JKNC) and the Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference (JKMC), which strongly favoured accession to Pakistan due to the Muslim-majority population in the region.

The Maharaja's refusal to align Kashmir with Pakistan raised numerous questions about his true intentions. Given the historical and political background of Kashmir, where the Muslim community had long suffered under both Sikh and British rule, it seemed unlikely that Kashmir would join Pakistan despite its religious affinity with the Muslim-majority population. Hari Singh, holding firm to his authority as the Maharaja, faced political resistance, but his position remained relatively strong. Kashmir's complicated past, including its purchase by the British in 1846 through the Treaty of Amritsar, left the region in a state of neglect, where British interests were primarily focused on more strategic regions. Despite its small size, Kashmir held significant value due to its cultural legacy, its strategic location, and its vast water resources—elements that both India and Pakistan coveted. India, led by Sheikh Abdullah, saw the region as a crucial part of its secular vision. At the same time, Pakistan viewed it as integral to its religious identity, founded on the aspirations of figures like Jinnah and Allama Iqbal. Amidst these pressures, Hari Singh struggled to maintain his power and independence, facing challenges not only from internal political forces but also from the growing influence of both neighbouring nations.

Instrument Of Accession and Pakistan – India War I (1947 – 1948)

In October 1947, Hari Singh was increasingly pressed to make a decision quickly. Pakistan is supposed to have Maharaja Hari Singh join India because he has religious connections. Pakistan took the initiative to urge Hari Singh to leave Kashmir by launching the tribal invasion NWFP. Tribal invasion aims to maintain Kashmir before India also launches its military to hold Kashmir. This operation was named the Gulmarg Operation. Tribal groups launched rapid attacks, trying to take control of Srinagar, the capital of Kashmir, and control

critical infrastructure. Operation Gulmarg began on 22 October 1947. They crossed the border into Kashmir and began an invasion of the city of Muzaffarabad. The tribal group was equipped with weapons by the Pakistani army and received support from the government to immediately take over Kashmir with the aim of saving Muslims who were experiencing discrimination and urging the Maharaja to leave Kashmir before Kashmir joined India (Mohsin, 2021)

The Pakistani government officially denies any direct involvement in the Tribal Invasion, although this is very difficult to validate by the public, as Pakistan has connections with Tribal areas. Another thing that we can assume is that the invasion could have had a positive impact on Pakistan and Muslims if Maharaja Hari Singh's government had been successful in the coup. Pakistan could control the entire Kashmir region. Many opinions have emerged among political observers who say that tribal groups are carrying out descent and destroying the city of Baramullah, creating fear and nightmares for the Hindu community. I cannot confirm that this is true due to a lack of valid evidence and sources. Still, Operation Gulmarg started a new historical record in the Kashmir Story, which will continue to be remembered as a Nightmare.

Maharaja Hari Singh responded to the invasion. He had heard initial reports of troop movements on the border, but an invasion of such large numbers was unthinkable to him. Hari Singh, who had not been actively involved in the fighting in the past, had very little chance of defending his territory. Hari Singh did not have an army capable of fighting and only had limited military resources. Hari Singh seemed to have received a surprise from the Tribal group. In just a few days, they had captured several important areas in Kashmir. Some Muslim residents of the Poonch and Mirpur regions supported the Invasion as a form of resistance to Hari Singh's rule. As they neared Srinagar, Hari Singh sent a delegation to request military assistance from India. India is worried that if the Tribal group succeeds in controlling Srinagar, this could make it easier for Pakistan to overthrow Hari Singh's power and include Kashmir in Pakistan's territory.

The Gulmarg operation gave rise to a protracted conflict, pitting Pakistan against India on the battlefield known as Pakistan - India War I (1947 - 1948). India responded to the delegation sent by Maharaja Hari Singh, but India did not readily accept this assistance without conditions. India saw an opportunity to launch a counterattack and include Kashmir into Indian territory by making an offer to Hari Singh called the Instrument of Accession. The Instrument of Accession is a secret document weapon owned by India which was used to force Hari Singh to sign an agreement so that Kashmir would become part of Indian territory. Jammu and Kashmir in the Instrument of Accession was given special status in the Indian constitution through Article 370, which guarantees greater autonomy for Jammu and Kashmir (India Today, 2014)

When the tribal group almost reached Srinagar, Maharaja Hari Singh was increasingly pressed and was forced to sign the Instrument of Accession in order to receive military assistance from India. 26 October 1947, Hari Singh signed the Instrument. Lord Mountbatten accepted the document and it was Legally Valid. 27 October 1947, India immediately sent troops to help Hari Singh fight against the Tribal group. This marked the

start of Pakistan- India War I (1947 - 1948). The fighting between the Tribal groups and the Maharaja and India was fierce. The two camps resisted and caused riots around Srinagar. Indian troops successfully defended Srinagar from the Tribal Group.

Pakistan sent regular military with a mission to save Kashmiri Muslims from Indian troops. The conflict continues to spread to various areas such as Uri, Poonch and Naoshera. Before that, on October 14, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) National Volunteer Organization, which is the Hindu nationalist right wing, attacked various villages, including Atmapur and Kochoura. They killed Muslims, looted their property and burned their houses. Other reports say they massacred Kashmiri Muslims and expelled them to migrate to Punjab. Muslims experienced genocide. They created a flood of blood by killing many Muslims. This event is known as the Black Day of Kashmir.

The genocide experienced by Kashmiri Muslims has always been used as an opinion by Pakistan to liberate Kashmir from India. This incident caused quite a prolonged trauma and became a very historical story, which was told from generation to generation. This genocide had the aim of changing the demographics of Kashmir, reducing the majority Muslim population and ensuring that Kashmir remained under the control of Maharaja Hari Singh and India in the future. Pakistan feels that the Instrument of Accession signed by Maharaja Hari Singh was a unilateral act that angered Kashmiri Muslims and Pakistan. The decision to remain independent, previously announced by Hari Singh, also raised suspicions in Pakistan. India considered that the Instruments they offered to Hari Singh were a legally valid diplomatic step, a fair solution to help Hari Singh on the condition that they would join India as a unique region. Furthermore, Pakistan will never forget this instrument as a form of coercion by India on Hari Singh and a unilateral decision taken by the Kashmiri ruler.

The war that lasted from mid-1947 to early 1948 was quite detrimental for India because they had to survive the winter. Pakistan also experienced losses. They had to accept a nightmare. Genocide of Muslim Communities has always been a Bad Story ever, in religious, political and international history. In January 1948, India took advantage of the situation. They sent a report to the UN raising the opinion that Pakistan invaded Indian territory by launching military aggression. Pakistan categorically denies the allegations. The United National Security Council (UNSC) called for a ceasefire on 1 January 1948 for both parties and the division of territory based on the Ceasefire line, which we now know as the Line of Control (LOC), a border that stretches for 740 kilometres that separates Pakistan - Occupied Kashmir (POK) from India's state of Jammu and Kashmir (Bouzas, 2024).

The LOC divides the Kashmir region into two parts :

1. Around 65% of Kashmir remains under Indian rule, including the Kashmir Valley, Jammu and Ladakh
2. Pakistan has 35% of the region of Kashmir, Azad Jammu, and Kashmir including Gilgit-Baltistan.

Referendum and Resolution 47

After the ceasefire, the conflict over Kashmir continued. Pakistan and India are watching each other. What they want is a claim to the entire Kashmir region; mediation by the UN is

only temporary. Pakistan and India are unwilling to withdraw their militaries, fueling further tensions. The UN formed the United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan (UNCIP) to oversee the ceasefire to find a peaceful solution and proposed another referendum to determine the future of Kashmir.

21 April 1948 UN resolution regarding the referendum, which was coded resolution 47 UNSC planned a referendum in Kashmir which had several points, one of which was the withdrawal of troops from both countries and the implementation of a fair referendum by giving freedom to the people of Jammu and Kashmir to choose whether they wanted to join Pakistan or India (Resolution 47, 1948). The subsequent resolution of 1949 - 1950 confirmed the need for a ceasefire and holding a referendum. The UN also sent observers called the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) to monitor the ceasefire.

The proposed referendum never took place because neither country met the referendum requirements. Pakistan and India have not withdrawn their troops from Kashmir. India still considers that the Instrument that has been signed is legally valid, but Pakistan still denies it and asks for a referendum to be held to respect and give freedom to the Kashmiri people. Once again, India rejected the referendum on the grounds that Pakistan was changing Kashmir's political demographics because the majority of Kashmiris were Muslims. India would almost be in defeat if they accepted the referendum and gave political rights to the Kashmiri people.

Indo – Pak War 1965

In 1951, India experienced a territorial dispute over the McMahon Line, which had previously been determined unilaterally by the British. India also controls areas that should belong to China and has established 43 military posts on the border to claim these areas. 1962, India suffered defeat against China, and they succeeded in controlling Aksai Chin in its entirety. The momentum of India's defeat is an opportunity for Pakistan to try to reclaim Kashmir at a time when India's military strength is weakening. In August 1965, Pakistan launched Operation Gibraltar. Pakistani troops infiltrated the Jammu and Kashmir region with the aim of fomenting a rebellion against India. This operation was considered a failure after India discovered traces of Pakistani infiltration and immediately responded to the operation by sending troops to Jammu and Kashmir. The fighting between the two countries over the Kashmir region has repeated itself, confirming that mediation efforts carried out by the UN have failed.

Intensive-scale fighting occurred in the Kutch and Jammu areas. Both sides attacked each other's strategic posts until large-scale fighting occurred on September 1, 1965. Pakistan launched a massive attack with the code Operation Grand Slam with the mission to seize important areas in Akhnoor. Furthermore, the war spread to Punjab with a counterattack from India on September 6 1965. India targeted several areas, such as Lahore, Sialkot, and several other border areas. In historical records, the Indo-Pak War is known as the largest land battle since the end of World War II and the largest tank battle in the world, which is known as the Origin of the Uttar War.

After several weeks, the UNSC called for a ceasefire for both parties. In January 1966, with

mediation from the Soviets, Indian Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri and Pakistani President Muhammad Ayyub Khan signed the Tashkent Agreement in Uzbekistan. This agreement included the restoration of the status quo before the war, the return of territories captured by each party, and ending the Indo-Pak War. Both countries suffered significant losses. Pakistan suffered a crushing defeat and loss in the war.

The Lahore Declaration

Pakistan's failure in 1971 to defend West Bengal (now Bangladesh) caused scars that were recorded in the history of South Asia. They have not succeeded in including the Kashmir region into Pakistani territory, but on the other hand, Bangladesh decided to leave and separate from Pakistan. The war between India and Pakistan that has occurred for decades has slightly disturbed Pakistan's focus on the prosperity of its region, including Bangladesh, triggering large protests from the people of Bengal.

Under the government of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, Pakistan attempted to improve diplomatic relations with India after a long conflict, especially regarding the Kashmir region. Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee took diplomatic steps to improve relations with Pakistan. Nawaz Sharif supports the initiative in the hope of creating and enhancing regional cooperation. India and Pakistan signed the Lahore Declaration on 21 February 1999 in Lahore. The Lahore Declaration aims to encourage both countries' commitment to peace, including the Kashmir conflict and calls for a peaceful solution. Pakistan and India also agreed to avoid the use of nuclear weapons, maintain good relations along the LOC established by the UN and increase Economic and Social cooperation.

The Lahore Declaration is a symbol of peace, which is expected to maintain good relations between the two countries and create new hope for Kashmir, even though no definite steps have been agreed upon regarding this issue. One unique moment when The Lahore Declaration was held was when Prime Minister Vajpayee visited Lahore by bus. This historic moment shows that India has good intentions in establishing diplomatic relations with Pakistan.

The Kargil War 1999

The Lahore Declaration, which was supposed to have a future as a symbol of peace between Pakistan and India, failed. Peace between the two countries almost succeeded in being realised after both parties felt that the war they were waging only caused losses. They also agreed to no longer involve third parties in this matter, including the UN and UNSC and will resolve all forms of conflict, including Kashmir, diplomatically. Pakistan, under the Nawaz Sharif government, took steps to end the war and start good relations with India. However, these good intentions did not fully meet the approval of Pakistan's political elite. After the era of General Zia's leadership, the political situation in Pakistan experienced instability and various internal conflicts between the political and military elite. Corruption and dynastic politics, two internal problems that Pakistan has made their steps increasingly complicated in determining their position in national and international forums (Talbot, 1998)

Kargil is part of the Ladakh region, which has been under Indian control since 1947. After successfully securing Siechen in 1984, India used the route as a supply route. Pakistan secretly

launched an operation to seize the Kargil region with the aim of disrupting India's supply routes to Siachen. The secret operation was named Operation Badr, in which the Pakistani military infiltrated Indian territory and captured strategic positions in the Kargil mountains. The operation designed by General Pervez Musharraf had the primary mission to cut Indian supply lines on National Highway 1A connecting Srinagar and force India to abandon Siachen.

Pervez Musharraf recruited local militias and then placed them in strategic positions along the LOC. More than 7 days later, Pakistan started a minor attack by attacking Indian patrol troops in Kargil on 5 May 1999. Furthermore, on 9 May, Pakistan destroyed an Indian military post in Kargil, which killed several guard soldiers. Pervez Musharraf, as the war engineer, ordered the Pakistani army to secure the Kargil mountain area. The Indian military had identified that they were Pakistani soldiers in disguise. The Pakistani army succeeded in building bunkers at heights that were difficult to access.

In June 1999, India responded to Pakistan's actions by launching two military operations. The first operation, known as Operation Vijay, launched a large-scale military effort to reclaim positions that Pakistan had taken over. This operation was complicated to carry out because the battle took place at an altitude of 5,000 meters, and Indian troops faced Pakistani artillery. The second operation carried out by India was named Operation Safed Sagar. India launched the India Air Force (IAF) to support Indian ground forces in destroying Pakistani military positions. The Kargil War was a betrayal by Pakistan, considering that they had just signed a peace agreement in Lahore as a symbol of normalising relations between the two countries. Pakistan is under international pressure and faces diplomatic isolation. 11 July Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif agrees to withdraw troops after meeting with US President Bill Clinton. 26 July The Indian military succeeded in reclaiming almost all the territory controlled by the Pakistani military. 26 July is celebrated as Kargil Vijay Diwas Day in India.

The Kargil War not only gave rise to external conflicts but also internal to Pakistan. The conflict between Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and General Pervez Musharraf resulted in a military coup by Pervez Musharraf, who returned Pakistan to an era of military leadership like the Zia era. Relations between the two countries have deteriorated further, and Kashmir remains under pressure. India is increasingly tightening military patrols in border areas.

Kashmir in the Modern Era

The Kashmiri people continue to live in uncertainty, shaped by the legacy of the conflict between Pakistan and India. India has intensified military supervision in the region, enacting the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA), which grants broad powers to the military to combat insurgents in Jammu and Kashmir. This policy has drawn international criticism and pressure over alleged human rights violations, including extrajudicial killings. Meanwhile, Pakistan has provided moral and diplomatic support to the Kashmiri cause. However, it faces its challenges, including international pressure from the UN and the US to curb militant groups labelled as terrorist organisations.

In 2010, riots erupted in Kashmir following the death of a teenager hit by a tear gas shell, leading to the deaths of more than 100 people. This unrest highlighted widespread

frustration with India's policies in the region, as demands for freedom and justice once again dominated the public discourse. In 2016, the killing of Burhan Wani, a commander of Hizbul Mujahideen—a militant group designated as a terrorist organisation by India—during an Indian military operation sparked massive protests. The demonstrations escalated into violence, resulting in over 100 civilian deaths and thousands of injuries during clashes with security forces.

The situation worsened in August 2019 when Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government abolished Articles 370 and 35A of the Indian Constitution, stripping Jammu and Kashmir of its special autonomous status that had been in place since 1947. This move divided the region into two union territories under direct central government control: Jammu and Kashmir, with a legislative council, and Ladakh, a non-legislative region. The decision had a profound impact on the Kashmiri population. The Indian government implemented a stringent lockdown, cutting off internet access for months and detaining thousands of local political leaders and activists to suppress dissent. These measures fueled anger in Pakistan, which raised the issue in international forums like the UN and warned that India's actions could risk triggering open war.

The Kashmiri people's demands for justice remain unmet. They face increasingly harsh military operations, declining economic conditions, and ongoing violence and oppression. The Indian government, despite its stated commitment to secularism, has failed to address the region's grievances adequately. Internet access and mass media are heavily monitored, further limiting freedom of expression. Dissatisfaction with central government policies continues to drive tension and resistance among the local population. India accuses Pakistan of supporting militant groups in Kashmir, exacerbating diplomatic hostility and fueling instability in the region. This long-standing conflict has not only undermined peace in South Asia but also brought international attention to the region's persistent human rights issues.

CONCLUSION

The historical and contemporary discourse surrounding Kashmir reveals a region deeply rooted in cultural and political complexity. From its early history as a hub of art, culture, and religion to its strategic significance during colonial and post-colonial eras, Kashmir has remained a focal point in South Asia. The region's transition from peaceful coexistence to a conflict zone highlights the profound implications of geopolitical rivalries and identity politics.

The partition of India in 1947, the Instrument of Accession, and subsequent wars between India and Pakistan have turned Kashmir into a contentious territory marked by unresolved territorial disputes, humanitarian crises, and external interventions. Despite various attempts at resolution, including UN mediation and bilateral agreements like the Lahore Declaration, a lasting peace remains elusive.

Modern developments, including the revocation of Jammu and Kashmir's special status in 2019, further underscore the region's volatility. This move has exacerbated tensions, leading to widespread dissent, human rights concerns, and diplomatic friction between India and

Pakistan. The Kashmiri people's aspirations for justice and self-determination remain unfulfilled, reflecting the broader challenges of achieving harmony in a region fraught with historical grievances and political instability.

Ultimately, the Kashmir issue continues to be a microcosm of broader global challenges involving national sovereignty, ethnic identity, and international diplomacy (Komatsu, 2016). Addressing these challenges requires not only political will but also a comprehensive understanding of the region's history, socio-political dynamics, and the human cost of prolonged conflict. Achieving a sustainable resolution will demand renewed efforts toward dialogue, inclusivity, and adherence to international norms, ensuring peace and stability for Kashmir and the broader South Asian region.

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