

## **Kashmir 'core dispute' between India and Pakistan, says Nawaz Sharif; Sartaj Aziz hails Burhan Wani**

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**Islamabad:** Amid heightened tension between the neighbours, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif today said Kashmir is the "core dispute" between India and Pakistan while his adviser on Foreign Affairs dubbed the killing of self-confessed militant commander Burhan Wani as a "turning point" for Kashmir.

### **Kashmir core dispute between India and Pakistan, says Nawaz Sharif**

Speaking on the occasion of 'Kashmir Solidarity Day', Sharif described Kashmir issue as the "unfinished agenda of partition and the oldest disputes in the UN Security Council" and said the dream of peace and prosperity of the people of the region will remain elusive without resolving the issue.

Sharif said that "for the last seven decades India has denied the people of Kashmir the right to self-determination promised to them by the international community through numerous UN Security Council resolutions".

"The people of Pakistan join their Kashmiri brothers and sisters in observing Kashmir Solidarity Day today to reaffirm our moral, diplomatic and political support to the legitimate struggle of the Kashmiri people for their basic human rights, especially the right to self determination enshrined in the relevant UN Security Council resolutions," Sharif said.

Pakistan, he said, "strongly condemns the systemic state terrorism and brutal killings of the innocent people of Kashmir by Indian forces".

"However, all the Indian brutalities have failed to deter the people of Kashmir from their cause for freedom from Indian subjugation," he said.

Pakistan calls upon the international community to raise its voice in seeking an end to the "gross violations of human rights and the reign of terror unleashed by Indian forces" in Kashmir and fulfil the promises it made with the people of Jammu and Kashmir 70 years ago, he said.

"Jammu & Kashmir is the core dispute between Pakistan and India. The dream of peace and prosperity of the people of this region will remain elusive without resolving this dispute in accordance with the UN Security Council resolutions," Sharif said.

"We urge India to stop bloodbath in....Kashmir and allow the holding of free and fair plebiscite under the UN auspices," he added.

Hailing Burhan Wani, who was killed in an encounter with the security forces in J&K last year, Pakistan Prime Minister's Adviser on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz termed Hizbul commander's death as a "turning point" for Kashmir.

He termed the ensuing violence in the Valley an "indigenous youth-led movement" triggered by India's "misguided efforts" to change the state's demography.

Aziz claimed that the violence following the killing of Wani on July 8 by Indian security forces led to the several deaths and many were blinded either completely or partially.

"This brutality, which has continued unabated in the past 7 months, has not however dampened the resolve of Kashmiri

youth to secure their right of self-determination," Aziz said, according to a statement by Pakistan's Foreign Ministry.

Another important factor, Aziz claimed, after Wani's death was the "total rejection of the Indian narrative by the international community" that Kashmir was an integral part of India.

Following the death of Wani, Kashmir witnessed protests and chaos last year. The situation normalised towards the end of last year.

Aziz also said: "The whole world now acknowledges that this is an indigenous youth-led movement which has become stronger because of the Indian government's misguided efforts to change the demographic composition of the state and its insensitivity to the rights of minority communities in India."

He said several countries have debated this issue and human rights organisations in Europe and North America have been mobilising public support to "force" India to resume dialogue with Pakistan to find an acceptable "solution to the longstanding dispute, still on the UN agenda."

He accused India of "desperately trying to divert the attention" of the global community from the situation in Kashmir by "intensifying" cross-border firing along the Line of Control and "pretending" to be a victim of terrorism from Pakistan.

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