

## Visit of European MPs to Kashmir :

# A Farcical and Futile Propaganda Stuff

**BJP Govt.**'s worst repressive moves associated with its August 5<sup>th</sup>, 2019 onslaught on Kashmir people have triggered off much criticism, condemnation and protest in India and abroad. Total black out and the circulation of lies and cock and bull stories on the situation in Kashmir by the pet media could not convince anyone. The Indian rulers find themselves sinking in deep credibility crisis and alienation. So, they are contemplating ways and means to bail themselves out of this crisis. The recent visit of the Members of European Parliament (MEPs) to India and Kashmir is one such move.

Twenty seven Members of European Union Parliament (from eleven countries) came to India on a visit to Kashmir. It is said that a Brussels – based British person of Indian origin Madi Sharma, of a NGO called Women's Economic and Social Think Tank (WESTT) has arranged this visit. She claims herself as an 'international business broker' too. She claimed: "I am organizing a prestigious VIP meeting with the P.M of India, His Excellency Narendra Modi.." "The PM Modi would like to meet influential decision makers from the European Union." She also claimed that all expenses for the visit (flight and accommodation, etc) would be sponsored by a Delhi-based International Institute for Non-Aligned Studies. Thus the MEPs delegation has come to India virtually on the invitation from the Indian Govt. As the European Union made it clear that the MPs have undertaken the visit in their 'personal capacity'. Most of them belong to far right, anti-immigration and anti-Muslim parties in the Countries of European Union and do not represent political mainstream of their countries.

Interestingly, of 27, only 23 could visit Kashmir. The Indian Govt. has withdrawn the invitations of 4 MPs, as one MP, Chris Davies, from Britain said, because they wanted to meet Kashmir people without police and Army security. In reaction to it, Davies said, he was "not prepared to take part in a PR stunt for the Modi govt. and pretend that all is well. It is very clear democratic principles are subverted in Kashmir and the world needs to start to taking notice."

Thus the entire visit of MEPs was sponsored, state managed and monitored by the Indian Govt. It was co-ordinated with India's NSA office and Ajit Doval himself has accompanied MPs to Kashmir.

The facts speak for themselves.

\*On Oct 28, 2019, the MEPs met the PM Modi. He said: "Urgent action must be taken against all those who support such activities and organizations or use terrorism as a state policy." The NSA's Ajit Doval gave the MPs a lunch. Here Doval briefed them that Kashmir is faced with the danger of cross border terror emanating from Pakistan and also explained the situation in Kashmir after Aug 5<sup>th</sup>.

Coincidentally, 5 migrant workers were abducted and killed by the militants while the MEPs were on a Kashmir visit.

The MEPs also met the External Affairs Minister S. Jai Shankar and had a dinner hosted by him.

\*A convoy of security vehicles escorted the MEPs in bullet proof vehicles from the air port in Sri Nagar straight to their hotel located near Dal Lake under heavy security blanket. The cavalcade also drove past four detention centres where three former CMs and several political leaders were being held since August 5<sup>th</sup>.

\*The MPs met the Governor and the chief Secretary. They were taken to the head quarters of Go C – in C of 15 corps in Badami Baugh. They were served lunch and briefed on the security situation in the valley and the Lo C. The Army also appraised the MPs of the "constant attempts...by Pakistan to disturb peace in Jammu and Kashmir by pushing the terrorists" and "inciting the local youth to violence." The reports say that the authorities have arranged an interaction of MPs with 15 'delegations' and some civil society members. The MPs were taken to boating near Centaur Hotel [Here more than 30 politicians and activists are under detention since Aug 5<sup>th</sup>].

The Deccan Chronicle dated Oct'30, 2019 has reported: The visit set off fresh tensions in the valley. Irate youth clashed with the security forces at dozens of places in Sri Nagar and elsewhere. The Security Forces fired tear gas canisters and pellet shot guns at a few places, leaving a large number of people injured. The people have put up blockades in at least 5 different places in Sri Nagar, including Down Town and 90 Feet Road. Groups of youth attacked the running cars with stones and causing damage to them. A complete shutdown was continuing.

But the MPs kept their eyes tightly closed to these happenings because they were not a part of the script supplied to them by the organizers of their visit.

The Hindu reported on Nov 3, 2019 that at least six civil society groups which met MEPs were headed by ex-Army personnel. Several other groups working in tandem with the Army in North Kashmir were presented as local youth groups. Most delegates belonged to Baramulla and Kupwara districts close to the Lo C.

One report says that MPs conversations were monitored. The Economic Times said, “a group of businessmen who had raised the issue of special status and business losses due to the ongoing clamp down were interrupted by the officials and cued to change the topic.” According to Times of India, at least two MPs accepted that they were given a ‘sanitized view’. They were “kept away from some people.”

At the end of their visit on Oct 30, 2019, the MPs held a ‘carefully controlled Press Conference and spoke to a ‘select group of journalists’ at the old Airfield in Sri Nagar. They said: We interacted with youth, politicians, women, traders in Kashmir. But here they were deliberately concealing the truth that they were not allowed to meet the affected people of Kashmir. The so-called men of civil society the MPs claim to have met were only a bunch of selected and tutored parrots of the Indian rulers.

The MPs claimed, “We are well equipped now” with information. “The situation is not as bad as we thought. The people here want peace, better life, and better vocations and want Jobs. Terrorism has destroyed such dreams.” To be frank, there was no need for the MPs to travel such a long distance burning people’s money and make so much fake drama just to collect the information supplied by the Indian govt. and its agencies. Clearly, the so called study of ground situation carried on by the MPs of European Union is totally one sided, biased and tutored one. It is utterly meaningless because the MPs closed their eyes and ears by not interacting and not listening to the real sufferers – the common people of Jammu and Kashmir and the political and democratic forces who are trying in their own way to reflect and represent the aspiration of people.

In their press meet, the MPs said: Revoking the Article 370 was an internal issue and “it should not be used (against India).” “Terro-rism is not finished in Kashmir... we support India in fighting for a solution to the problem.”

In response to a wide spread criticism in India and abroad on not allowing the parties of Indian opposition to interact with the people of Kashmir, the European MPs spoke a few consoling words like, “if you let in EU Parliamentarians into Kashmir valley, you should also let the politicians from India. So there is some imbalance. The govt. should somehow address it.” Here, the MPs are concealing the facts, firstly, they know that four MPs from Europe were not allowed to visit Kashmir because they wanted to meet Kashmir people without police and Army Security forces; secondly, even those who visited Kashmir could do so only because they agreed to be guided, monitored and stage-managed by the Indian govt. and their officials. The so called observations or conclusion they had spelt out are quite in line with the stuff put in circulation by the BJP govt. and its agencies. So, the European MPs must question themselves why they allowed the Indian rulers to tie their hands and foot and shut their eyes and ears all through their Kashmir visit and what moral right they have to pass certain judgments on the Kashmir situation sitting on the lap of Indian rulers who are the real creators of whole problem in Kashmir.

The visits and studies of this kind are only farcical and futile exercises. They would neither lift the Indian rulers from out of the mud of credibility crisis nor can mislead the people. The rulers only stand more exposed than before.

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