

REVELATIONS BY SATYA PAL MALIK – PAKISTAN AGAIN STANDS VINDICATED

By
Mahwish Hafeez
Research Fellow
India Study Centre (ISC), ISSI

Edited by
Dr Arshad Ali

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*(Views expressed in the brief are those of the author, and do
not represent those of ISSI)*



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In a revealing confession, Mr. Satya Pal Malik, the former Governor of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), after four years of Pulwama incident, has acknowledged what Pakistan had been saying all along – that by blaming Pakistan immediately after the attack, the BJP government had actually intended to garner electoral gains in the then upcoming 17th Lok Sabha elections.

It was the fateful day of 14 February 2019 that a convoy of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) was targeted by a local Kashmiri youth in a suicide attack that killed at least 40 personnel.¹ Without having conducted any investigation, India started levelling wild allegations and blamed Pakistan for the attack. A war hysteria was created through belligerent statements of senior members of the BJP regime and amplified by its embedded hawkish media which brought the two countries to the brink of war. By hyping up anti-Pakistan sentiment and touting what it called a “muscular” approach towards Pakistan, the BJP ran an extremely negative election campaign and was able to win a second term with a majority even beyond its own expectations. However, as is famously said, “A lie has no legs.” The truth, though it took years, is out through the proverbial ‘horse’s mouth.’

It was in an interview with *The Wire* (a digital platform) telecast on 14 April 2023, the former Governor of IIOJK while responding to a question regarding the Pulawama attack (that took place

¹ “Modi vows action after dozens die in deadliest attack in Indian-held Kashmir in 3 decades, *Washington Post*, February 15, 2019, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/indias-modi-promises-retaliation-after-worst-attack-in-kashmir-in-three-decades-kills-dozens/2019/02/15/f5dd55d6-309e-11e9-8781-763619f12cb4_story.html.

while he was holding the office) lamented that the attack could have been avoided had the Home Ministry agreed to provide aircraft to ferry CRPF personnel as such big convoys never travel by road. He further disclosed that the route of the convoy was not 'sanitised' and all link roads (around 8-10) were unmanned.² Former Governor Satya Pal Malik most notably shared that when he told Prime Minister Modi that the incident took place due to their own negligence, he was advised to stay silent both by Prime Minister Modi as well as Indian National Security Advisor Doval and, hence, in the words of Mr. Malik, "I realised that this entire onus is going to be put on Pakistan so it's better to be quiet on the subject now."

Interestingly, similar revelations had surfaced in January 2021 as well when Whatsapp conversations between former Broadcast Audience Research Council (BARC) CEO Partho Dasgupta and Indian Republic TV's anchor Arnab Goswami (considered to be very close to BJP) were leaked which clearly indicated that Mr. Goswami had prior knowledge not only regarding the Pulwama attack but also the subsequent 'Balakot airstrike.' In the leaked chats, while on one hand, Arnab Goswami expressed his joy over the Pulwama attack as it would help his channel, on the other hand, Partho Dasgupta foresaw it as "good for big man [Indian PM] in this season" and "he will sweep polls then".³

Eversince this interview was aired, Satya Pal Malik has been severely criticised by the BJP and its sympathisers. Even vindictive measures have been initiated against him. In the debate that ensued after the interview, among other things, it has been insinuated that by spilling the beans, Satya Pal Malik took revenge from Prime Minister Modi for not giving him better position following his stint as governor of Goa. He was sent to Meghalaya which to Satya Pal Malik was a demotion.⁴ It is also alleged that Satya Pal Malik was speaking at the behest of opposition parties, exposing not only India's Pulwama fiasco but also referring to the Adani financial scandal and its implications for the BJP in the same interview.⁵ It is further alleged that Satya Pal Malik made his comments with a view to reviving his prospects as a politician. Question was also raised as to why his conscience suddenly woke up after the lapse of four years.⁶ It was also pointed out that *The Wire* interviewer, Mr. Karan

² "Pulwama, Modi, corruption: Full explosive transcript of Satya Pal Malik's viral interview," *The Wire*, April 16, 2023, <https://thewire.in/politics/satya-pal-malik-full-interview-pulwama-modi>.

³ "Arnab Goswami celebrated Pulwama attack, knew Modi would do "something major" to sweep polls," *Business Recorder*, January 16, 2021, <https://www.brecorder.com/news/40052212>.

⁴ "Why Satya Pal Malik is upset with the BJP," *The Week*, November 9, 2021, <https://www.theweek.in/news/india/2021/11/09/why-satya-pal-malik-is-upset-with-the-bjp.html>

⁵ Niraj Sharma, "Exposed: How Satya Pal Malik's interview with Karan Thapar helps Modi," *News Drum*, April 16, 2023, <https://www.newsdrum.in/analysis/exposed-how-satya-pal-maliks-interview-with-karan-thapar-helps-modi>.

⁶ "Why was Satya Pal Malik mum when he was governor, Amit Shah on his allegations," *India Today*, April 22, 2023, <https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/amit-shah-media-check-credibility-satya-pal-maliks-claims-against-centre-2363232-2023-04-22>.

Thapar, was a known critic of the ruling dispensation in India and, hence, it was not surprising that the entire interview was conducted in a manner that put the BJP in a bad light just as the country was heading towards the 18th Lok Sabha elections in 2024.⁷ Significantly, soon after the interview, Satya Pal Malik was questioned by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in a case related to an insurance scam in IIOJK.⁸ Mr. Malik contended that since he was himself the complainant in this case, there was no point for the CBI to question him and, therefore, this was nothing but a harassment measure because of what he had said regarding Pulwama.⁹

For their part, the opposition parties expressed ‘shock’ at the revelations. While Congress demanded a white paper on the Pulwama attack¹⁰, Rashtriya Janata Dal leader Manoj Kumar Jha took to the social media and observed that “the truth of the Pulwama attack is coming out. The real face of fake and gimmicky Sanghi nationalists is coming to the fore. Everyone is understanding why Pulwama happened before the Lok Sabha elections.”¹¹ Shiv Sena leader Sanjay Raut recalled that the opposition leaders who had raised questions about the Pulwama attack were dubbed as “traitors”.¹² Mamata Banerjee, Chief Minister of West Bengal, demanded a Supreme Court monitored investigation into Satya Pal Malik’s statement.¹³

Interestingly, a few days after Satya Pal Malik’s revelations, former Chief of the Indian Army General Shankar Roychowdhury also came forward and placed responsibility for the Pulwama attack “on the government headed by the Prime Minister, who is advised by the national security advisor.”¹⁴

This latest development exposes, once again, India’s deceitful approach not only towards Pakistan but towards its own people as well. Levelling baseless allegations, and feeding hate against Pakistan

⁷ “How Karan Thapar’s interview of Satya Pal Malik gives a free pass to terrorists and Islamist ideology responsible for the Pulwama attack,” *OpIndia*, April 15, 2023, <https://www.opindia.com/2023/04/karan-thapar-interview-of-satya-pal-malik-gives-a-free-pass-to-terrorists-and-islamist-ideology/>.

⁸ “Former J&K Governor Satyapal Malik questioned by CBI for 5 hours in Rs 300 crore bribery case,” *India Today*, April 28, 2023, <https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/former-jk-governor-satyapal-malik-questioned-by-cbi-for-5-hours-in-rs-300-crore-bribery-case-2365993-2023-04-28>.

⁹ “Harassment for what I said on Pulwama’: Satya Pal Malik after CBI’S visit to his house,” *The Wire*, April 28, 2023, <https://thewire.in/government/satya-pal-malik-cbi-pulwama>.

¹⁰ “Congress demands white paper on Pulwama attack,” *The Hindu*, April 18, 2023, <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/congress-demands-white-paper-on-pulwama-attack/article66752017.ece>.

¹¹ “‘Disturbing, incompetent’ : Opposition reacts to Satyapal Malik’s allegations about PM Modi,” *The Wire*, April 15, 2023, <https://thewire.in/politics/opposition-raises-sharp-questions-after-satyapal-maliks-explosive-revelations-about-modi>.

¹² Ibid

¹³ “Mamata demands SC-monitored probe into Malik’s comments on 2019 Pulwama attack,” *National Herald*, April 17, 2023, <https://www.nationalheraldindia.com/india/mamata-demands-sc-monitored-probe-into-maliks-comments-on-2019-pulwama-attack>.

¹⁴ “PM Modi, NSA Doval should take responsibility for Pulwama attack: Former Indian Army Chief,” *The Wire*, April 17, 2023, <https://thewire.in/security/modi-doval-responsibility-pulwama-general-roychowdhury>

with the purpose of making electoral gains, is downright dangerous for the peace and security in the region. The strike and counter-strike in the aftermath of Pulwama fully illustrate this point.

Pakistan, in its response to Satyal Pal Malik's revelations, has aptly underscored that the "disclosures demonstrate how the Indian leadership has habitually used the bogey of terrorism from Pakistan to advance its sham victimhood narrative and the Hindutva agenda, clearly for domestic political gains."¹⁵ It is time that the world community also saw true colours of India, particularly as the Lok Sabha elections are hardly a year away and the threat of the RSS-BJP regime conducting another false flag operation and blaming Pakistan to win a third term remains real.

¹⁵ "Latest revelations about the Pulwama attack vindicate Pakistan," Press Release, Ministry of Foreign affairs, Pakistan, April 16, 2023, <https://mofa.gov.pk/latest-revelations-about-the-pulwama-attack-vindicate-pakistan/>.