

**INDIA WILL NOT DISCARD ILL-INTENTIONS AGAINST PAKISTAN EVEN
IF WE DROP KASHMIR: MASOOD**





MUZAFFARABAD, August 10: The President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), Sardar Masood Khan has said that the history of the past 73 years bears testimony that even if we drop Kashmir, India will not discard its nefarious intentions against Pakistan.

In a detailed article he wrote for a Pakistani news web portal and its print edition, he said that we have to squash the myth that Kashmir is responsible for the slow economic growth of Pakistan.

The AJK President stated that Kashmir is not responsible for the decline in the economic growth of Pakistan. There are other factors that keep pushing down our macroeconomic indicators, such as hidden wealth, a subterranean economy that refuses to join the tax regime, chronic dependence on external debt, corruption, and rent-seeking, he argued.

President Masood expressed his optimism that despite these barriers, Pakistan's economy is poised to grow rapidly in the coming years. Kashmir is no drain on economic development. So this is a false argument if ever invoked. With or without Kashmir being a factor, we still need to allocate resources for the armed forces for our national security because we have long vulnerable borders on all sides that need to be defended 24/7.

Dispelling the notion that if we drop Kashmir temporarily, India would open the door for economic development and wealth for us, President Masood said he doesn't think so as the current and past literature dating back to the very inception of Pakistan substantiates that India wants to emasculate Pakistan and turn it into its economic satellite for raw materials, semi-finished goods, and a monopolist's consumer market.

"Kashmir or no Kashmir, India will not discard that agenda, and it will not matter whether the reins of government are with the proponents of Hindutva or a disingenuous brand of secularism", he emphasized.

He said that Pakistan's economic opportunities lie in its north and northeast, Western Hemisphere, the south, southeast Asia, and Africa; not with the eastern neighbor though we share the same subcontinent and have multiple cultural, social, and historical linkages. The division with the eastern neighbor is strategic and civilizational.

He went on to say that the fault line of Kashmir sits at the center of the existential divide that we live through. Maybe one day wisdom would prevail, and India's people would be persuaded to give Kashmiris their right, and we would be able to create South Asia's brave new world.