

India: Wave of protest in Ladakh after special status abolished

Hartal in Kargil Against Centre's Decision to Read Down 370, Make Ladakh a UT

Wednesday 7 August 2019, by [The Wire \(IN\)](#) (Date first published: 7 August 2019).

The BJP MP from Ladakh had lauded the government's decision in parliament on Tuesday.

New Delhi: On Tuesday, while Bharatiya Janata Party MP from Kargil Jamyang Tsering lauded the Narendra Modi government for reading down Article 370, scrapping Article 35A and reorganising the state of Jammu and Kashmir into two union territories, not all his constituents were celebrating. In Kargil, all local religious and political groups had called for a *hartal* to protest the Centre's decision.

Kargil is completely closed today in protest against the scrapping of Art. 35A and the UT status. pic.twitter.com/BxoOu2zito

— Asmita Bakshi (@asmitabee) [August 6, 2019](#)

According to the government's plan, Kargil will be part of the union territory of Ladakh, which will not have its own legislature.

On Monday, all religious and political organisations of the Kargil district got together to discuss the changes. They released a joint statement condemning the Centre's move and announced a district-wide hartal on Tuesday (August 7). In a statement, the joint action committee said, "All the participants unanimously condemned and rejected which was taken without the consent from the people of Jammu & Kashmir and against the aspirations of the people of the state."

The hartal, the statement said, was "a token of public resentment against the unjustful (sic) decision taken by the union government".

Contrary to govt claims, people of Kargil strongly oppose abrogation of Art 370 - across political and religious lines. pic.twitter.com/cqHviuzcy2

— Road Scholarz (@roadscholarz) [August 7, 2019](#)

The statement was signed by the president of the Anjuman-e-Jamiat-ul-Ulema Isna Ashriya Kargil and chairman of the Imam Khomeini Memorial Trust Kargil.

While leaders and groups from Kargil have made their feelings clear, their elected representative does not seem to be getting the message. In both parliament and on other platforms including social media, Tsering has been insisting that there is nothing but celebration from the people of Ladakh.

Several BJP leaders, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, lauded Tsering's speech in parliament. Modi said that the MP "coherently presents the aspirations" of Ladakhis.

My young friend, Jamyang Tsering Namgyal who is [@MPLadakh](#) delivered an outstanding speech in the Lok Sabha while discussing key bills on J&K. He coherently presents the aspirations of our sisters and brothers from Ladakh. It is a must hear!
<https://t.co/XN8dGcTwx6>

— Narendra Modi (@narendramodi) [August 6, 2019](#)

Even before Tuesday, [press reports](#) had talked about how people in Kargil were unhappy with the move and there was no unified voice coming from Ladakh.

"Leh was demanding that Ladakh be freed from the Kashmir region over a long time but we are against the revocation of Article 370," Sajjad Hussain, who fought the 2019 Lok Sabha elections supported by the National Conference and People's Democratic Party but lost to Tsering, told PTI. "Kargil residents are safeguarding the borders of the country and the decision which was taken by the government is against our desire and aspirations."

The town of Kargil is the second-largest town in Ladakh, after Leh. Kargil town is part of the Ladakh Lok Sabha constituency.

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