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## Kashmir Debate in UK's Parliament

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### Why in News

Recently, India has expressed its concern over a **debate on Kashmir in the Houses of Parliament complex in London.**

Earlier in October 2020 a delegation of **European Union Members of Parliament (MEPs)**, comprising 27 Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) from Italy, Britain, France, Germany, Czech Republic, and Poland, visited Srinagar, nearly three months after the **revocation of Article 370.**



### Key Points

- **Background:**
  - A debate was organised by some **Members of Parliament in the United Kingdom (UK)**, titled "**Political situation in Kashmir**".
  - It raised concerns of **alleged human rights violations** and called on the UK government to seek access to the region for direct reports from Jammu and Kashmir and **Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK)** to be presented in the UK Parliament in future.
- **India's Concern:**
  - The **terminology** used in the debate was problematic, regarding the reference to '**Kashmir**' in the title - there is a need to differentiate between **the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir**, which is an integral part of India, and **Pakistan Occupied Kashmir** (when the erstwhile princely state of Kashmir legally acceded to India in October 1947, this part was forcibly and illegally occupied by Pakistan).
  - The debate ignored current ground reality of **the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir** and, instead chose to reflect false assertions of the kind promoted by a third country (Pakistan), such as unsubstantiated allegations of '**genocide**', '**rampant violence**' and '**torture**'.
- **India's Stand:**
  - The Indian High Commission in London sought to highlight that since last year, a smart wi-fi project has enabled **high-speed internet access in the region** and that despite threats of terror attacks, challenging weather conditions and the **Covid-19** pandemic, landmark **District Development Council (DDC) elections were concluded in December 2020**.
  - India stands ready to engage with Pakistan on all outstanding issues – including on Jammu and Kashmir in accordance with the **Shimla Agreement (1972)** and the **Lahore Declaration (1999)** in an atmosphere free from terror, hostility and violence.
- **UK Government's Stand:**
  - Although there were human rights concerns on both sides of the **Line of Control (LoC)**, the UK will **not play any mediatory role in a bilateral India-Pakistan matter**.
  - The government's policy (on Kashmir) remains stable, **it's unchanged**.  
It continues to believe that India and Pakistan need to find a lasting political resolution to the situation that takes into account the wishes of the Kashmiri people as laid out in the **Simla Agreement (1972)**.

**Source: TH**