



Kill democracy, have self-rule

December 20, 2006

Nowadays, the most fashionable word in Jammu & Kashmir is 'self-rule'. Not only does the self-appointed President of Pakistan now swear by the slogan, but so do leaders of all tendencies, except of course those who are presently running the Government and remain in favour of rule-for-self.

It is nothing new othi Jammu & Kashmi

functions under the control of the Minister in charge of Kashmir Affairs in Islamabad and each and every legislation needs the approval of the Pakistani Government. As for Gilgit-Baltistan, it is considered as one of the last colonies on the planet (it will soon 'celebrate' 50 years without an elected executive head).

On the Indian side, 'self-rule' applies only to the Valley and there is no question of sharing the benefits of the scheme with the people of Ladakh and Jammu, and even less the exiled Pandits.

The greatest irony is that Jammu & Kashmir enjoys *de facto* and *de jure* more self-rule than any other State in the country through Article 370 of the Indian Constitution. Let us not forget that an Act of Parliament is not applicable to Jammu & Kashmir, unless ratified by the State Assembly.

g the size of Cabinets in States to 10 per cent of the total strength of the State Legislature. Not being ratified by the State Assembly, the 10 per cent restriction does not

While the drafting committee of People's Democratic Party is preparing

There is worse today: After the five-year term of the Halqa Panchayats ended in May 2006, not only were