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**Kashmir-speak**

IN THE report Kashmir has spoken (January 25), Anand K. Sahay has rightly opined that Kashmir's first panchayat election showed that its people have voted for a democratic India. But this is not the first time that Kashmir has spoken thus. The first verdict in favour of India was given by the Kashmiri Muslims in 1947 itself when, after Pakistan's invasion, not a soul stirred in Srinagar to protest against the Maharaja seeking India's help and offering to accede to India, even though there were no troops in the town who could have prevented him from doing so.

One disagrees with the writer's assessment of the Government's decision to announce a unilateral ceasefire. Inevitably, the common man in Kashmir suffers during counter-insurgency operations. The cease-fire has provided much relief to him. By instilling in him a feeling that 'the Government cares', the common man could be expected to help fight insurgency.

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