

Pakistan's New Political Map:

Junagadh included in Pak Map, how Pakistan is claiming part of Gujarat



Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan revealed a new political map on August 4, 2020 including J&K, Ladakh and parts of Gujarat including Junagadh, Sir Creek and Manavadar. The move comes on the first anniversary of the abrogation of Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir.

India sharply rejected Pakistan's new map calling it as a 'political absurdity.' Among all of Indian territories claimed by Pakistan, the addition of Junagarh in Pakistan has evoked the sharpest reaction. Gujarat CM Vijay Rupani rejected the new map, calling the action both preposterous and obnoxious.

Junagadh was a princely state in British India before its integration into the Union of India. Pakistan's claim to Junagarh completely disregards the February 1948 plebiscite.

What are the features of the new map?

The new political map of Pakistan has claimed the entire region of Jammu and Kashmir stretching all the way to the edge of Ladakh. The map also claims Junagarh and Manavadar, a former princely State and territory, respectively, that are part of present-day Gujarat. It leaves out a claim line at the eastern end of J&K indicating Pakistan's willingness to make China a third party in the Kashmir issue. This clearly runs counter to the Simla Agreement which treated Kashmir as a bilateral matter. At the launch of the map, Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan said the border in that area will be fixed after resolving the Kashmir issue. Pakistan also claimed the entire territory and water bodies that fall in the Sir Creek region in the westernmost part of India.

How different is it from previous ones?

A similar map has been part of school textbooks of Pakistan for many years which highlights the territorial aspiration of Pakistan over the northern part of the subcontinent. The document also maintains bits of reality on the ground as it shows the Line of Control in Kashmir in a red-dotted line.

What is February 1948 Plebiscite?

- ➔ Junagarh was a princely state of British India. During the Independence and partition of British India in 1947, all the princely states were given an option to either join the Union of India or the newly formed state of Pakistan.

- ➔ The Nawab of Junagadh, Muhammad Mahabat Khanji III, was a Muslim whose ancestors had ruled the region for over 200 years. He decided that Junagadh should become a part of Pakistan.
- ➔ However, the state's population that comprised an overwhelming majority of Hindus opposed the move. The Junagadh Nawab acceded to the Dominion of Pakistan on September 15, 1947 against the advice of Lord Mountbatten, the last Viceroy of British India.
- ➔ However, two principalities- Babariawad and Sheikh of Mangrol- claimed independence from Junagadh and acceded to the Indian Union. Sheikh of Mangrol, however, withdrew his accession the following day.
- ➔ The Indian Government objected to Junagadh's accession to Pakistan as it went completely against Muhammad Ali Jinnah's argument that Hindus and Muslims could not live as one nation. India's Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel believed that Junagadh's accession into Pakistan would further accelerate the communal tension in Gujarat.
- ➔ Junagadh is not connected to Pakistan by land. It is surrounded on all of its land borders by India, with an outlet onto the Arabian Sea.
- ➔ The Junagadh Nawab, was, however forced to flee to Karachi with his family and followers after the region fell into crisis and there he established a provisional government.
- ➔ India gave Pakistan time to reverse its decision to accept and hold a plebiscite in Junagadh. Junagadh's state government, facing financial collapse had invited the Indian government to take control.

Finally, a plebiscite was held on February 20, 1948, in which all except 91 out of 190,870 voted to join India. As per this, roughly 99.95 percent voted to join India.

Junagadh's accession to India

Junagadh upon its accession in the Indian Union was made a part of Saurashtra till November 1, 1956 after which Saurashtra became a part of Bombay. The Bombay state was later split into Gujarat and Maharashtra in 1960. Junagadh is now a part of Saurashtra in Gujarat.

Pakistan approaches UN in Junagadh dispute

Pakistan brought up Junagadh dispute in the United Nations in January 1948. The UNSC had directed its commission on Kashmir to examine the Junagadh dispute. However, the Kashmir conflict overshadowed the Junagadh dispute in the UNSC. The issue still remains unresolved in the UN Security Council.