

THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL STUDIES

A Critical Look at BBC World Service in Kashmir, India

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Abstract:

The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) is a British public service broadcaster, headquartered at Broadcasting House in the City of Westminster, London. The privately owned BBC was the world's first national broadcasting organization and was founded on 18 October 1922 as the British Broadcasting Company Ltd. The BBC World Service is the world's largest international broadcaster, broadcasting in 27 languages to many parts of the world via analogue and digital shortwave, internet streaming and podcasting, satellite, FM and MW relays. Mainstays of the current BBC World Service schedule include the news programmes The World Today, News hour and World Briefing, and the daily arts and entertainment news programme The Strand, which started in late 2008. The BBC bureau in Kashmir started in the 1980s. BBC's headquarters observed that the region was becoming increasingly unstable, and therefore decided that the organization needed a permanent presence in Kashmir. The critical analysis of the work of BBC along with the content analysis in the year of 2005 (jan to may) has been documented in this study. The results are a collection of mix responses in the reporting of news and events. The issues of controversies related to BBC are also important specially when it comes to reporting in the sensitive atmosphere of Kashmir.

Keywords: BBC Broad casting

1. BBC: An Introduction

The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) is a British public service broadcaster, headquartered at Broadcasting House in the City of Westminster, London. It is the largest broadcaster in the world, with about 23,000 staff. Its main responsibility is to provide public service broadcasting in the United Kingdom, Channel Islands and Isle of Man. The BBC is an autonomous public service broadcaster that operates under a Royal Charter and a License and Agreement from the Home Secretary. Within the United Kingdom its work is funded principally by an annual television license fee, which is charged to all United Kingdom households, companies and organizations using any type of equipment to record and/or receive live television broadcasts; the level of the fee is set annually by the British Government and agreed by Parliament.

Outside the UK, the BBC World Service has provided services by direct broadcasting and re-transmission contracts by sound radio since the inauguration of the BBC Empire Service in December 1932, and more recently by television and online. Though sharing some of the facilities of the domestic services, particularly for news and current affairs output, the World Service has a separate Managing Director, and its operating costs have historically been funded mainly by direct grants from the UK government. These grants were determined independently of the domestic license fee. A recent spending review has announced plans for the funding for the world service to be drawn from the domestic license fee.

The company's activities include programme- and format-sales, magazines including the *Radio Times* and book publishing. The BBC also earns additional income from selling certain programme-making services through BBC Studios and Post Production Ltd., formerly BBC Resources Ltd, another wholly owned trading subsidiary of the corporation.

1.1. History

The privately owned BBC was the world's first national broadcasting organization and was founded on 18 October 1922 as the British Broadcasting Company Ltd. The original company was founded in 1922 by a group of six telecommunications companies—Marconi, Radio Communication Company, Metropolitan-Vickers (MetroVick), General Electric, Western Electric, and British Thomson-Houston (BTH)-to broadcast experimental radio services. The first transmission was on 14 November of that year, from station 2LO, located at Marconi House, London.

To represent its purpose and values, the Corporation adopted the coat of arms, including the motto "Nation shall speak peace unto Nation". The motto is generally attributed to Montague John Rendall, former headmaster of Winchester College, and member of the

first BBC Board of Governors. The motto is said to be a "felicitous adaptation" of Micah 4: 3 "nation shall not lift up a sword against nation".

2. BBC World Service

The BBC World Service is the world's largest international broadcaster, broadcasting in 27 languages to many parts of the world via analogue and digital shortwave, internet streaming and podcasting, satellite, FM and MW relays. The English language service broadcasts 24 hours a day. The World Service is funded by grant-in-aid through the Foreign and Commonwealth Office by the British Government. From 2014, it will be funded by the compulsory BBC license fee levied on every household in the United Kingdom using a television to watch broadcast programmes. BBC World Service is a patron of The Radio Academy.

On 3 January 1938, the first foreign language service, Arabic, was launched. German programmes commenced shortly before the start of the Second World War and by the end of 1942 broadcasts were being made in all major European languages. The Empire Service was renamed the BBC Overseas Service in November 1939, and a dedicated BBC European Service was added in 1941. These broadcasting services, financed not from the domestic license fee but from government grant-in-aid (from the Foreign Office budget), were known administratively as the External Services of the BBC.

The name "BBC World Service" took effect on 1 May 1965.

2.1. Aim

According to the World Service, its aims include being "the world's best-known and most-respected voice in international broadcasting, thereby bringing benefit to the UK, the BBC and to audiences around the world". The UK Government spent £241 million on the World Service in 2008.

The BBC is a Crown Corporation of the British Government, but operates independently of it. There is no direct control of the BBC by the British Government. The World Service is required to take a "balanced British view" of international developments.

2.2. Programmes

Mainstays of the current BBC World Service schedule include the news programmes *The World Today*, *Newshour* and *World Briefing*, and the daily arts and entertainment news programme *The Strand*, which started in late 2008. There is a daily science programme, including Health Check, Click and Science in Action. At the weekends, much of the schedule is taken up by *Sports world*, which often includes live commentary of Premier League football matches.

statistics & languages

2004 2006

The following audience estimates are from research conducted in 2004 by independent market research agencies on behalf of the BBC:

Language	2004	2006
English	39 million	44 million
Persian	20.4 million	22 million
Hindi	16.1 million	21 million
Urdu	10.4 million	12 million
Arabic	12.4 million	16 million

Besides English, the BBC World Service broadcasts in at least 27 different languages, including Hindi, Urdu and Arabi

3. BBC World Service in Kashmir

3.1. History

The BBC bureau in Kashmir started in the 1980s. BBC's headquarters observed that the region was becoming increasingly unstable, and therefore decided that the organization needed a permanent presence in Kashmir.

In 1995, a letter bomb arrived at the BBC office addressed to the BBC's first reporter in Kashmir, Yusuf Jameel. The bomb killed a colleague, Mushtaq Ali in September 1995. After the attack, Jameel relocated to London, where he was treated for the injuries sustained in the parcel bomb explosion and on recovering completely continued working for the BBC for several months before rejoining The Asian Age.

BBC's Altaf Hussain was hired in the wake of this incident. In 2002, the Indian army raided Hussain's home for unconfirmed reasons.

4. A Critical Look of Content Analysis in 2005

Content analysis or textual analysis is a methodology for studying the content of communication. According to Dr. Farooq Joubish, content analysis is considered a scholarly methodology in the humanities by which texts are studied as to authorship, authenticity, or meaning. This segment is a content analysis of articles regarding Kashmir, specifically of those published on BBC's website in the year 2005. The analysis is NOT possible for all articles published on www.bbc.co.uk/news in 2005--including those related to natural disasters, conflict and bilateral talks because then this paper would be too lengthy for the readers. An attempt to bring some of the main and important news and its content analysis had been tried by the researcher.

4.1. January 2005

The month of January 2005 on BBC's website was marked by accurate and incisive reporting on BBC's website. World affairs are often quite complex and need to be understood on several levels in order to get a comprehensive picture.

One of the first stories on the BBC's website regarding Kashmir in 2005 was published on January 7th of that year. It was headlined "Four die in Kashmir office raid". The article was about four people killed as suspected separatists attacked and set fire to a government building in Indian-administered Kashmir. The building, in the Barbar Shah district of Srinagar housed the offices of the income tax department at the time when the article was published. The article gave details about the office fire, and reported that about 50 people who were trapped in the building were freed "when troops stormed it." Altaf Hussain, BBC's correspondent in Kashmir, is quoted saying that a prominent militant group, al-Mansurin, has said it carried out the attack.

To bring some context to the incident, the article went on to state "Militant separatists have been fighting Indian rule in Kashmir - which both Pakistan and India claim - since 1989. About 40,000 people have been killed since then." By definition a "militant" is someone engaged in warfare or combat, and a "separatist" is an advocate of independence or autonomy for a part of a political unit (as a nation). The death toll of 40,000 mentioned by the BBC in its article was largely accurate at the time when the article was published. This was independently verified by United Nations statistics and statistics provided by human rights groups such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch.

On the same day, another article was published on the BBC's website related to Kashmir—but specifically about the "peace process" between India and Pakistan. The headline reads "No agreement in dam talks." The article is about talks between Indian and Pakistan to find a mutual solution to a controversial dam being built in Kashmir. Those talks ended with no agreement. The talks were part of a series of ongoing peace talks, known as confidence building measures, between the two nuclear rivals. The article tried to balance both sides of the debate. According to Pakistan, the dam will obstruct the flow of water into its territory, however, India claims that the project is "strictly within the parameters of the treaty", and the dam will not disrupt water flow. In this given article, Kashmir is referred to as "Indian-administered" Kashmir. Political circles largely label the same region as "Indian-controlled" or "Indian-occupied" Kashmir, but the BBC clearly takes another line—by referring to it as "Indian-administered" Kashmir, and the area located in Pakistan as "Pakistan-administered" Kashmir.

Ten days later, BBC's website reported on another attack in Kashmir, and stated again that the Al-Mansurin militant group claimed responsibility for the attack. This particular incident—referred to in the article "Four dead in Kashmir gun battle"—was about a 25-hour siege in Kashmir. The siege ended after two reported militants were killed by security forces. Two Indian soldiers were also killed in the stand-off, which developed after two heavily armed men stormed a federal complex in Srinagar. BBC's correspondent at the time, Altaf Hussain, said authorities were unable to explain how the militants entered the complex without being noticed. He stated that the militant group reportedly behind the attack was a pro-Pakistani organization.

The siege led to a series of more incidents out of Kashmir, which were reported on BBC's website. On January 18, 2005, BBC reported "India 'kills Kashmir intruders'". It stated that according to Indian security forces, four suspected militants have been shot dead along the Kashmiri Line of Control. The gun battle happened in the Poonch district, near the line that divides the Indian and Pakistani parts of Kashmir. The BBC article stated that "Militant separatists have been fighting Indian rule in Kashmir, which is claimed by both Pakistan and India since 1989. About 40,000 people are reported to have been killed in the fighting. Both countries have been observing a ceasefire in the troubled region since November 2003." After getting into details about the day's incident, the article went on to provide some more context by stating that the incident comes just weeks before the Indian Foreign Minister's visit to Pakistan for peace talks. The article proceeds to delve into the recent history of the region, by reporting that India and Pakistan have fought two wars over disputes in Kashmir. They embarked on a peace process in January of 2004 to try to resolve outstanding differences, including those over Kashmir. The article concluded by stating that India had reduced the number of troops deployed in "Indian-administered" Kashmir because of the "perceived decrease in violence." These articles highlight the importance of attribution on BBC's website. Articles and even headlines often have text put in quotation marks, to signify that the words published are attributed to someone else, and are not the BBC's own.

Two days later, a report on BBC's website highlighted the growing problems between India and Pakistan. The article "Pakistan seeks help in dam row" was about Pakistan saying that it is seeking arbitration in a dispute with India over a controversial dam being built in "Indian-administered Kashmir." The report stated that according to a Foreign Ministry spokesman, the World Bank had been asked to intervene. According to the report, the spokesman accused India of refusing to budge in talks on the dam, which Pakistan says breaches a shared water treaty. India had called the Pakistani move unjustified. The BBC's Paul Anderson in Islamabad was quoted as saying the dispute is bound to be a setback to peace talks.

This was evident in another report on BBC's website on the same day. "India-'shells fired in Kashmir'" was an article stating that according to the Indian army, shells had been fired by Pakistan across the Line of Control. The army was quoted as saying 12 to 13 shells landed near the town of Poonch in Jammu, but no one was hurt and no damage was done.

The latest tensions continued to be followed closely by the BBC's website. On January 19, 2005, it published an article "Rivals discuss 'ceasefire breach'". The article focused on India and Pakistan holding talks aimed at defusing tensions along the Line of Control. India had accused Pakistan of violating a ceasefire along the de facto border by firing shells into Indian-administered territory. Pakistan had denied the allegation, saying its soldiers had no role in the firing. The article went on to bring some background into the events, by reporting that a ceasefire has been in place along the Line of Control since November 2003, and that peace talks began last year.

On the same date, BBC reported that the situation was tense on the streets of Kashmir, because of the Indian army clearing an officer of facing rape charges in a court martial in Kashmir. In the article headlined "Soldier cleared of Kashmir rape," BBC reports that

according to any army spokesperson, DNA tests conducted on the soldier and his alleged victims had proved inconclusive. The article stated that an Army major faced five charges, “including raping a woman and molesting her 10-year-old daughter and another woman in the town of Handwara last November.” The allegations had provoked huge protests across the Kashmir valley.

On January 28th, the BBC’s website published a feature story on the Saffron industry by the BBC’s correspondent in Kashmir, Altaf Hussain. The article was about the ‘heritage crop of the state’—Saffron—and how it was going through difficult times due to drought and disease. The Indian market was instead flooded with saffron coming from Iran.

The month ended with mixed messages. On one hand, there was a report on January 31 headlined “Pakistani PM reaches out to India.” The article was about the Pakistani Prime Minister at the time, Shaukat Aziz, stating that he will propose a series of confidence-boosting joint projects with India. He planned to put them to the Indian Prime Minister at a regional summit in Bangladesh that was coming up. On the other hand, on the same date, the BBC’s website published an article headlined “Dismissal ruling for Indian major.” It reported that an Indian court martial had recommended the dismissal of an officer who it cleared of rape in a case that provoked huge protest across the Kashmir valley.

4.2. February

February’s coverage of Kashmir on the BBC’s website started with pictures. In the website’s section called “Day in Pictures” on February 1, a photograph from Kashmir was featured. It showed a close-up of two women wearing scarves that showed only their eyes. The caption underneath the picture said, “Women queue to vote in the first local elections for 27 years in the restive Indian-administered state of Kashmir.” The image was an interesting choice, in some ways declaring to the world that Kashmiri women—in stereotypical Muslim attire—actually go out to cast their votes.

The same week, the BBC reported on at least 27 passengers being killed and 35 injured when a bus skidded off a road in Kashmir. The article, headlined “Kashmir bus plunge leaves 27 dead” reported the accident took place near Udampur, about 90 km north-east of the state winter capital, Jammu, according to authorities. To give some background, the BBC reported that accidents are fairly common on the mountainous roads of northern India. A similar accident-related story was published the very next day, on February 7. It was titled, “Avalanche kills Indian soldiers”. The article reported that at least eight Indian soldiers died when an avalanche hit their barracks in Kashmir. The article also mentioned that “India has more than 200,000 soldiers deployed in the Kashmir valley.”

On February 8, 2005, the BBC’s website did a follow-up piece on the Baglihar Dam dispute. The story, headlined “Dam mediator ‘to be named soon’” reported that according to The World Bank, an expert would soon be appointed to mediate in India and Pakistan’s dispute over the hydroelectric dam. The article went on to give a quick brief on the perspective of both India and Pakistan. It stated that India says it is building the Baglihar Dam on the River Chenab to provide “badly needed power to the part of Kashmir it administers.” It went on to report that Pakistan fears the dam will “give India control of one of its most important water supplies.”

The next day, the website reported on news resulting from the forces of nature. At least 3,000 people were stranded on a highway in Kashmir in the heaviest snowfall the region had seen for five years. The story, “Kashmir snowstorms strand 3,000” reported that the 300 km Jammu-Srinagar National Highway which connects the state to the rest of India was closed at about six points by landslides caused by snow. It went on to give some background about the avalanche which was reported on earlier, and also gave more insight about the nature of the conflict in Kashmir. It went back a bit further in time as well to bring perspective, and concluded the article with “more than 100 people were killed in an avalanche in 1995 when it snowed heavily along the highway for a week.” The next day, there was similar news—this time from Pakistan. “Bad weather kills 17 in Pakistan” was regarding the same strain of severe storms hitting the Pakistan region. It went on to report that in “Indian-administered Kashmir, snow is still blocking the Jammu-Srinagar road, stranding hundreds of people.” Focus on Pakistan continued a few days later, with the article “Musharraf promises flood relief” on February 12. The article stated that more than 30,000 people were affected by the bad weather, and that the situation had made a turn for the worst after a dam burst in the Balochistan province.

On February 16, there were several hard news and feature stories related to Kashmir on BBC’s website. This was because of an historic moment. “Landmark Kashmir bus link agreed” read one article. It stated that India and Pakistan had agreed to launch a landmark bus service across the ceasefire line dividing Kashmir between the nuclear rivals. The deal was announced after a meeting between the Indian and Pakistani foreign ministers in Islamabad. The two sides had also agreed to begin discussions on reducing the risk of nuclear accidents. BBC correspondents were quoted as saying the agreements would “give a boost to a peace process that began more than a year ago.” While the article stated the bus agreement had been welcomed by most Kashmiris—it also gave a voice to the separatist point of view, stating that separatists say it “sidesteps the main issue-resolving the long-running Kashmir dispute.” Out of the many feature stories that were published on this particular day, there was one called “Kashmir’s severed link.” The article was by Zulfiqar Ali of BBC’s Urdu Service. The article came as India and Pakistan agreed on the bus service across the ceasefire line dividing Kashmir. Ali traveled on the road that once connected Pakistan’s garrison city of Rawalpindi with Srinagar, the capital of “Indian-administered” Kashmir. He spoke to people who remembered the bus service between Rawalpindi and Srinagar, and to families who have been divided between the two sides. The linkage was severed with the first war between India and Pakistan in 1948, giving an entirely new meaning to a distance that once had no significance. Other feature stories talked about why the bus agreement was so historic, and another story delved into why separatist factions were dismissing the move.

A few days later, an article emerged about a Shia march reportedly dispersed in Kashmir. It reported that police in Srinagar had used batons and teargas to break up a Shia mourning procession. Several mourners were arrested as they marched through a party of the city where processions had been banned since 1988, according to the BBC correspondent. Officials said they “dispersed the mourners for security reasons.”

4.3. March

Coverage of Kashmir in the month of March began with a story on March 4, 2005. “Kashmir is upset over bus permits” reported that people in “Indian-administered Kashmir” had lined up for special permits to travel on the first bus services to cross the ceasefire line. But many were disappointed after the authorities only handed out 100 application forms for April 7th and the 14th. The article stated that Special travel documents were being issued to those planning to use the service instead of passports and visas, which had remained a major sticking point in negotiations between India and Pakistan. No foreigners would be allowed to travel on the bus, “but non-Kashmiri Indian and Pakistani citizens will be allowed,” according to the report. The article went on to give a background on the situation, and stated that “Thousands of families have been divided by the Kashmir dispute,” and that many of them see the bus service as a chance to renew contacts and meet their relatives on either side of the Line of Control that divides Indian-and Pakistani-administered Kashmir. The article tried to state the frustrations of people involved while still reporting on the background and facts—with clarity and accuracy.

Ten days later, there was more coverage of Kashmir in regards to the bus permits. In the article “Kashmir is clamour for bus permits”, BBC’s website reported that thousands of people had queued in Pakistani-administered Kashmir to get special permit forms for the first bus services to cross the ceasefire line. Long lines of men and women of all ages had thronged outside government offices in the regional capital, Muzaffarabad. It stated that those lining up had to show their Pakistani identity card to receive an application form to travel on the service, scheduled to start the next month. The article put faces behind the news by quoting people about how they feel regarding these developments.

The next day, however, Kashmir was in the news again for violence. “‘Seven wounded’ in Kashmir attack” stated that at least seven people had been injured in a grenade attack by “suspected separatists in Indian-administered Kashmir”, according “to authorities.” The militants threw a grenade at soldiers guarding a bank in the town of Poonch, according to police reports. One element to be noted in this article and in many others on the BBC website is their meticulous attempts at attributions in their news. Many headlines have a word or two in quotation marks because the BBC wants to make it clear that they are attributed to someone else, and are not the BBC’s own. Same was the case in this particular article’s headline, where the words “Seven wounded” were put in quotation marks—and the article proceeded to attribute that number to police authorities.

The following coverage of Kashmir on BBC’s website went back to the bus link, with a feature story by BBC’s Kashmir correspondent, Altaf Hussain. “Kashmir bus helps build bridges” was in fact a play on words—because it talked about a literal wooden bridge that soldiers from the Indian and Pakistani side were rebuilding on the border. The article stated that the bridge would make the proposed bus service between Srinagar and Muzaffarabad possible. The feature story concluded with some facts about how many people from the Pakistani and Indian side had applied for a seat on the bus, with numbers indicating that there were more applicants from the Pakistani side.

Towards the end of the month, BBC’s website reported on “Soldiers killed in Kashmir attack”. It stated that at least two Indian soldiers had been killed and eight others injured in an attack by “suspected militants in Indian-administered Kashmir.” The article said that according to police, the soldiers were part of an Indian Border Security Force patrol that was attacked in Rajouri. Again, to bring some context to events taking place in Kashmir, the article mentioned that the landmark bus service to be launched between India and Pakistan would start a week from the time of the article’s publication. On March 30th, more violence was reported on in Kashmir. The BBC’s website stated that Indian soldiers had “shot dead two militants after they attempted to storm a military camp in Indian-administered Kashmir.” The article also mentioned that “separatist militants have opposed the bus service.” The last two articles regarding Kashmir on BBC’s website in the month of March were related to the bus service. “Kashmiris journey into history” by BBC’s Binoos Joshi spoke of the “festive mood” in a village north-west of Jammu. It highlighted the excitement of those who would be travelling in these buses and how families were preparing for the historic trip. The second article “Kashmir bus route declared safe” by BBC’s Altaf Hussain stated that authorities in “Indian-administered Kashmir” had declared the route for the landmark bus service as safe from militant activity. However, it also stated that the names of those travelling on the first day had not been released for security reasons.

4.4. April

The month of April saw heavy coverage of developments from the bus service between India and Pakistan, and also considerable coverage of bilateral talks between the two countries.

April of 2005 started with continuing coverage related to the bus service. On April 4th, the article “Kashmir bus passengers protected” reported that several passengers on the bus service between “Indian and Pakistani-administered Kashmir” had been given police protection. At least ten travelers were reported to have been staying a heavily guarded tourist reception center in Srinagar in Indian sector, “amid security fears.” The article stated that a spokesperson for the al-Mansurin group told the BBC that militants were not opposed to the reunion of divided families but that they should take a different route for the journey. The article concluded with a brief glimpse into the human side of this—by talking to the man chosen to drive the bus on the Pakistani side. On the same day, there was an in-depth look at “Kashmir’s road less traveled” by BBC’s Andrew Whitehead. Whitehead was writing a book at the time about the origins of the Kashmir conflict, and had travelled along the road on the both sides of the ceasefire line. In the feature piece, he looked back on the road’s history before the historic bus journey started across the divided territory.

The next day, a bomb blast occurred on the route of the bus service in Kashmir and according to police at least seven people were wounded. The article, titled “Bomb blast hits Kashmir bus route” came just two days before the first buses were due to link the divided territory. The article mentioned that two other landmines on the route were defused. It went on to talk more about passenger fears in light of this incident. In depth coverage of the bus service continued with a feature piece by BBC’s Sanjoy Majumder called

“Divided Kashmiri families look to the big day”. The article focused on a handful of families, how they were affected by the partition of Kashmir, and what the bus link means to them.

On the same day, “Kashmir fruit growers’ sales bid” was published on the BBC’s website. It stated that fruit-growers in “Indian-administered Kashmir” have demanded they be allowed to sell their produce to “Pakistani-controlled Kashmir.” This article stood out from others of a similar nature, because it was the first time since January 2005 that the BBC referred to the Pakistani side of Kashmir as “Pakistani-controlled” and not “Pakistani-administered,” as they would usually do. In the same sentence, the article mentioned “Indian-administered” Kashmir and “Pakistani-controlled” Kashmir. The article stated that Kashmir’s fruit industry had an annual turnover of more than \$300 million, but the industry was facing some challenges in the “newly competitive environment.” The article reported that traders had expressed a desire to visit Muzaffarabad, capital of “Indian-administered Kashmir” to “explore business opportunities.” Secondary references to the Pakistani side of Kashmir were written as “Pakistani-administered,” but the introductory sentence in the article referred to it as “Pakistani-controlled”, without explaining any reasons for it, or attributing it to anyone else.

On April 13, BBC published “Key Kashmir rail link is launched.” The Indian Prime Minister had opened a key railway line in “Indian-administered Kashmir” according to the article. According to the article, the 54 kilometer track in south of Kashmir is the first phase of an “ambitious plan to link all of the mountainous state with India by rail.” The Prime Minister was quoted as saying it was “yet another step to strengthen the relations between India and the people of Kashmir.” The article reported on the challenges this project posed for rail engineers, as it “has to go through very high mountains in the Himalayan range.” It also provided a brief context, stating that the opening of the rail link came just a few days before Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf was scheduled to visit India.

On April 15, “Musharraf upbeat on Kashmir peace” on BBC’s website quoted the Pakistani President at the time, General Pervez Musharraf, as saying that he considers the peace process in Kashmir as “irreversible.” The article also stated that Musharraf reiterated that Pakistan could never accept a solution “under which the Line of Control would become an international border.” The article was supplemented by a “Quick Guide” to the Kashmir dispute, and links to articles such as “What does the future hold?,” “Relatives meet for the first time,” and “Kashmir’s Berlin Wall”.

One the same day, “Timeline: Steps to peace in South Asia” was uploaded on BBC’s website. This was a brief history of attempts at dialogues between India and Pakistan from April 2003 to April 2005. It started with April 2003, when the former Indian prime minister Atal Behari Vajpayee offered the “hand of friendship” to Pakistan in a “landmark address in Indian-administered Kashmir.” The timeline included events from March 2004, when around 30,000 cricket fans watched India beat Pakistan in the “historic first contest for their first tour of Pakistan since 1989.” The section was accompanied by a “Kashmir Flashpoint” supplement on one side of the page. This section is a mainstay for all articles on Kashmir. It provides history, different perspectives and details about anyone interested in having comprehensive information on Kashmir.

This was followed by an article on the same day titled “Musharraf to make rare India trip.” It stated that Pervez Musharraf was due in India on a “rare visit at a time of improving relations.” The article stated that General Musharraf would meet Manmohan Sing, and watch the weekend’s “deciding one-day cricket match” between India and Pakistan. The article also stated that this would be the Pakistani president’s first visit to India since he attended a “failed summit” in 2001. It also stated that the trip follows a “year of peace talks, which last week saw the first buses in nearly 60 years cross divided Kashmir.” The article concluded with information on Musharraf himself, and the fact that he was born in the Indian city of Delhi.

On April 16, 2005, the headline on the South Asia section of BBC’s website read “Musharraf in India on key visit.” The article stated that Pakistan and India had spoken of the need to “resolve the issues that divide them” at the start of Musharraf’s trip to India. The article mentioned BBC’s Zaffar Abbas in Islamabad as saying that Musharraf believed the “majority in Pakistan are prepared for some compromise on Kashmir if India is prepared to do the same.” But analysts said that there is unlikely to be any further breakthrough during the president’s short trip. The article included two photographs, one of Musharraf with his wife with the caption “Musharraf, with wife Sehba in Delhi, brought a “message of peace.” The second photograph showed the Pakistani president wearing a turban and doing a salute at the Sufi shrine of a saint in Rajasthan. The photograph’s caption was the text of what Musharraf wrote in the shrine’s notebook. On April 17, more Indo-Pak articles followed. “India and Pakistan to build trade” reported that leaders of the two countries had decided to build trade and business ties after a “rare summit meeting.” It stated that the leaders of both nations had held two hours of discussions in what was described as a “very warm” atmosphere. The article included a point-by-point list of what the two countries had agreed upon during their talks. The article also had a subsection called “Cricket diplomacy”, which reported on the events of the day prior to the meeting. The two leaders had watched the start of the final one-day international cricket match between India and Pakistan. It was accompanied by a photograph of the two leaders sitting side by side in the cricket stadium. The article included the standard historical background of Kashmir that is present in most BBC articles pertaining to the region.

On the next day, BBC’s website uploaded the article “Rivals say peace ‘irreversible’”. It stated that the leaders of India and Pakistan have said that peace between the two nuclear rivals was “irreversible.” The two leaders were quoted as saying this after signing a joint statement that followed peace talks in New Delhi. The article mentioned that the two sides had also agreed to increase trade and transport links between each other. The article included a photograph of Musharraf with Kashmiri separatist leaders from a recent meeting. It was also supplemented by a link to the full text of the joint statement, a pictures section of Musharraf’s visit, and a link called “Peace process: Your views”.

On April 18, the website highlighted media coverage given to bilateral talks. In the article “Press split on India-Pakistan talks,” the BBC reported that Indian newspapers had “hailed progress” in peace talks between the Indian Prime Minister and Pakistani President. It stated that many papers felt agreements to boost trade and transport ties could act as a “catalyst for peace.” The article also mentioned that in Pakistan, there was praise in the media, but much press commentary focused on the issue of Kashmir, with some “hardline columnists” accusing Musharraf of “a sell-out”. The analytical piece on BBC’s website quoted some headlines, such as The

Economic Times' headline "Man of the Match: Musharraf." It stated that the newspaper carried at least 16 photographs of the Pakistani leader in its 22-page edition. It went on to detail headlines and analysis from other newspapers, both Indian and Pakistani. From the Pakistani side, the BBC reported that bilateral talks dominated the front pages of Pakistani newspapers as well, but that some commentators were critical of Pakistani policy, fearing a "raw deal for Kashmiris."

On April 21, "Second Kashmir buses arrive safe" was an article accompanied with a picture of residents from "Pakistan-administered Kashmir" waving to the camera as they crossed the Line of Control. The article reported that the second bus services to cross the divided region of Kashmir had arrived safely at their destinations, despite continuing threats from militants. The article brought in the human element to the picture, quoting those who were on the bus. The article reiterated the significance of the bus service, and the implications of this for the peace process as a whole.

On April 22, the BBC's website reported that according to the Indian army, "troops have killed 11 suspected militants in Indian-administered Kashmir." This was mentioned in the article headlined "Troops 'kill Kashmir militants.'" The news of the killings came just a day after the second run of the landmark bus service. The article mentioned an Indian defence spokesman who told the BBC that the soldiers "intercepted the infiltrators on the Indian side of the LOC very close to where the cross-Kashmir bus service drives past." The article continued with the significance and recent history of the bus service.

Just a few days later, on April 26, there was more news of violence. "'Six militants killed' in Kashmir" was the headline for a BBC article stating that according to police in Indian-administered Kashmir, six suspected militants had been killed in clashes with Indian troops in the border district of Kupwara. The article detailed the events that led to this incident, and concluded by stating that Jammu and Kashmir security forces had stepped up their campaign "against militants".

4.5. May

The month of May began with the article "Kashmir leader's nephew shot dead" on May 2. The article detailed that the nephew of the Kashmiri Chief Minister at the time, Mufti Mohammad Sayeed, had been shot dead by "suspected militants," according to police. The article stated that his nephew died of gunshot wounds in the hospital. According to the BBC, this was the third relative of Mufti Sayeed to be "attacked in the past year." The piece was accompanied by a photograph of Mufti Sayeed, and a "quick guide" to the Kashmir conflict.

On the next day, there were reports of more violence. "Ten die in fresh Kashmir violence" reported that ten people had been killed in "fresh separatist violence" in "Indian-administered Kashmir." It was accompanied by a photograph of Indian soldiers on the Line of Control, and the "quick guide" to the Kashmir conflict. The article quoted the Indian army as saying it had killed "six suspected militants near the Line of Control" which divides the territory between India and Pakistan.

On May 5, the BBC's website reported on the third bus services linking the divided region of Kashmir. "Third Kashmir bus service rolls" stated that the third service rolled out with 78 passengers, according to officials. It quoted BBC's Altaf Hussain in Srinagar saying that people living in neighbourhoods on the bus route on the Indian side said that the security environment "was more relaxed" than when the service was inaugurated. In addition to file pictures that accompanied the article, there was also a small graphic on the side of the article called "India Pakistan Talks" which gave a schedule of current and forthcoming talks scheduled between the two countries.

The next day, BBC's website reported that according to the Pakistani Prime Minister, Indian companies would continue to be barred from investing in Pakistan, "until progress is made over Kashmir." The article was headlined "Pakistan rejects India investors." It stated that the Pakistani Prime Minister at the time—Shaukat Aziz—had urged "other countries" to increase investment in Pakistan. The article stated that according to the BBC's correspondents, although Pakistan had no formal ban on Indian investment, it had not approved "any proposals in the past." On May 8, the BBC published the article "Soldier held carrying explosives" on their website. It stated that a Pakistani soldier had been detained in the city of Rawalpindi carrying explosives, according to officials. The article named the soldier and quoted an army spokesperson about the incident. It stated that Pakistan had "been on alert since its arrest last week of key Al-Qaeda suspect Abu Faraj al-Libbi." The article then detailed the events leading up to the particular soldier's detainment. This article factored into the "Kashmir" stories from the website because the soldier was held while he was on leave from Muzaffarabad, which is in "Pakistan-administered Kashmir."

On May 20th, BBC's website published the article headlined "Four killed in Kashmir ambush." It stated that It stated that at least four Indian army personnel, including an officer, had been killed by suspected separatist militants in "Indian-administered Kashmir". The article detailed the incident, and spoke of the large picture of peace moves between India and Pakistan. On the same day, the article called "Kashmir solution 'within grasp'" was uploaded on the website. It reported that the Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf had said a solution to the dispute over Kashmiris "within the grasp" of himself and the Indian leader, Manmohan Singh. The article reported on Pakistani and Indian perspectives to the matter. It included a map of Kashmir, and a photograph of Musharraf.

On May 25th, the website reported that Leaders of a "moderate faction opposed to Indian rule in Kashmir" had accepted an invitation from Pakistan to travel there for talks in the coming weeks. According to the website, the "Moderate All Party Hurriyat Conference leaders" in Indian-administered Kashmir would travel on the new bus service that crosses the divided region." This was reportedly the first time India had allowed the leaders to travel to Pakistan as a representative group. The article had a photograph of Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, a map of Kashmir, and the "quick guide" to the dispute. On the next day, BBC uploaded the article "Kashmir's JKLF to visit Pakistan." The article stated that a Kashmiri separatist group campaigning for independence had accepted an invitation to visit Pakistan. The article stated that some separatist leaders had travelled to Pakistan individually but this was the "first time" India had permitted the separatist groups to visit the country in an official capacity.

On May 28, BBC uploaded the article “Sir Creek talks start in Pakistan.” The article stated that officials from Pakistan and India had ended the first of two days of talks over a marshlands boundary dispute. The article was accompanied by a small map of the region between India and Pakistan. The article stated that talks over the Sir Creek area began after efforts to end another land dispute—that of the Siachen Glacier—“ended inconclusively.” The next day, the story was followed up in the article “Talks on Sir Creek end in impasse,” with the BBC article stating that talks between Pakistan and India on the marshlands dispute also ended without agreement. In addition to the same map, there were links to the Indian government’s website, and the Pakistani government’s website.

Three articles regarding Kashmir surfaced on BBC’s website on May 30, 2005. The first was “Peace brings Kashmir tourists back.” This was a feature piece by BBC’s correspondent in Srinagar, Altaf Hussain. Hussain wrote that tourists were returning to “Indian-administered” Kashmir after staying away for years. He also mentioned that most tourists were from within India, and foreign tourists were still “keeping away.” The second article to be published on the same day was “India seeks ‘borderless’ Kashmir,” another analytical piece by BBC’s Sanjeev Srivastava. He wrote that India’s prime minister had said a borderless Kashmir and more autonomy for the areas India administers “could help resolve the dispute with Pakistan.” The article took a closer look at the Indian Prime Minister’s press briefing during which he made this statement. The third article to be uploaded on the same day was “Kashmiris ‘will visit Pakistan.’” It stated that the moderate faction of a leading separatist alliance in “Indian-administered Kashmir” is set to travel to Pakistan that week. The BBC reported that the Pakistani foreign ministry had said leaders of the Hurriyat Conference would visit the capital Islamabad and hold talks with leaders there.

5. Issues & Controversies

The BBC has been the subject of many controversies that have been widely reported elsewhere which can be documented as to their source within this article. Although the BBC has generally sought to distance itself from controversy, it has generated controversy due to its unique position within British society. The most common example being the BBC news website featured a story claiming that a dog had been sentenced to death by stoning by an Israeli court. It later transpired that the story was untrue. The BBC published a retraction and a denial.

With regards to Kashmir, the website briefly came under surveillance of some critics in January 2011. The website www.diplomaticnews.in reported “for the past few months, the British Broadcasting Corporation’s (BBC) website had been treating Kashmir on par with other countries in South Asia such as Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.” In the South Asia section of BBC News, BBC has a list of country profiles, under which it had listed Kashmir—in the category of “countries.” Diplomatic News’ website stated what was “worse” was the fact that under the Kashmir label, “stories about Indian Kashmir and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir were listed together.”

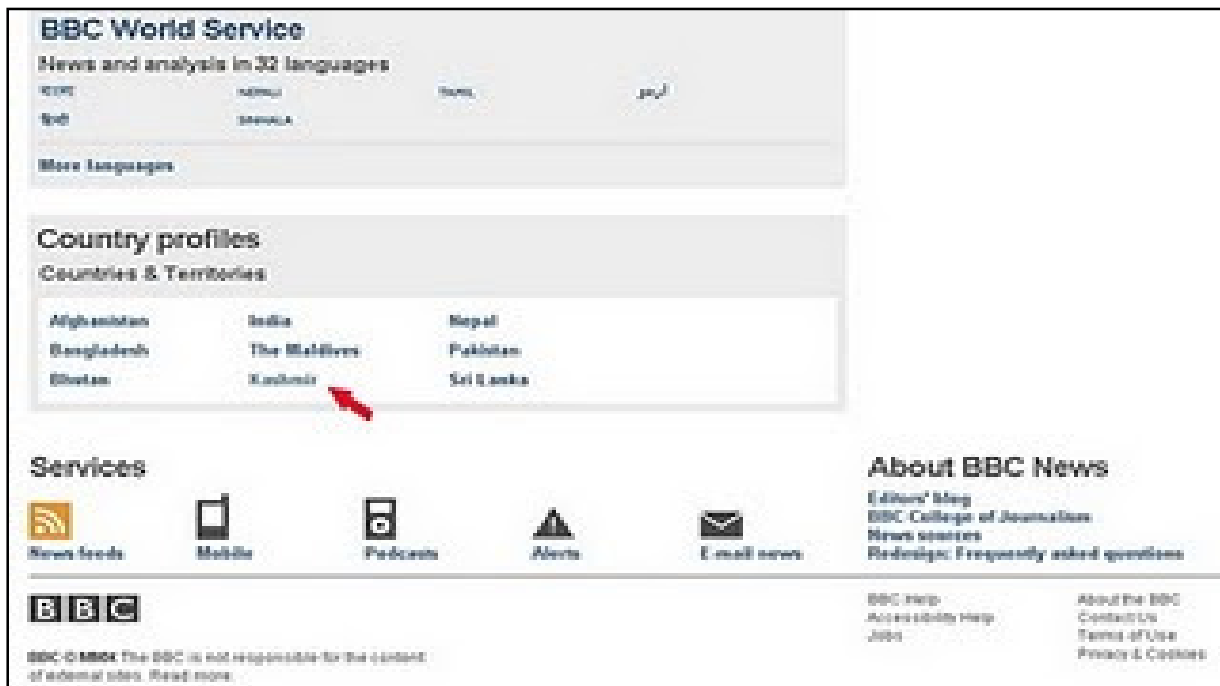


Figure 1

The website further states that the addition of Kashmir in the list of countries was removed, after a communication from the Indian Ministry of External Affairs. Kashmir has been taken off from the list of countries. It is learnt that the ‘mistake’ was corrected on 9 December 2010 after a communication from the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).



Figure 2

6. The End of an Era

6.1. Phasing Out

In January 2011, the state-funded British Broadcasting Corporation announced plans to shut down five language services as part of efforts to cut costs. At the time, the BBC World Service said the five languages to be cut were Albanian, Macedonian, Serbian, the English service for the Caribbean region and Portuguese for Africa. In response, the National Union of Journalists held a protest march outside BBC headquarters in London. Union officials said the language cuts would cost hundreds of jobs and severely damage British national interests. The BBC also announced that it planned to close down 200 Internet websites and cut 360 jobs over the next two years. Officials stated they would save about \$54 million, and that the move was a response to funding cuts by the British government. Audiences were estimated to fall by more than 30 million, from 180 million to 150 million a week, according to the BBC.

The economic crisis in the UK and crunch of funds from the UK Government had forced BBC to discontinue its Hindi bulletins from 1 April 2005. In India, BBC will continue its Hindi online service with more intensive reporting and added visual content, as well as its nominal presence on the private FM scene. The Urdu service on short-wave would also continue but the Tamil and Bangla services would move from short-wave to FM.

India is the only South Asian nation that does not allow private FM news channels. In fact, reports state the BBC launched its preliminary FM initiative, providing entertainment and non-news content to partner channels reaching 52 cities, in the hope that the government would soon agree to allow news content as well. While the BBC continues to provide short-wave services in India in Tamil, Urdu, Bengali and Nepali, reports suggest that all short wave services will ultimately be shut down. Unless they are allowed to broadcast news on FM, the BBC radio's era in India may soon be over.

July 31, 2011 marked the last working day for BBC's correspondent in Kashmir, Altaf Hussain.

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