

Despite Pak's efforts, Ban Ki-Moon makes no reference to Kashmir in UNGA address

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United Nations: Despite Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's repeated calls to the United Nations to help resolve the Kashmir issue between India and Pakistan, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon on Tuesday made no reference to Kashmir and the situation in the Valley in his last address.

Ban Ki-Moon

In his final address as the UN chief to the opening session of the General Debate in United Nations, Ban touched upon a plethora of global issues including the crisis in Syria, the Palestinian issue, the situation in Myanmar and Sri Lanka, the refugee and migrant movements.

He also addressed tensions in the Korean Peninsula and the Middle East, the South Sudan tensions, violent extremism and its impact on regions from Yemen, Libya, Iraq, Afghanistan to the Sahel and the Lake Chad Basin.

However, Ban did not make any mention of Kashmir or the tensions in the Valley, that have escalated in the recent months, even as Pakistan made repeated pleas to the UN to help resolve the dispute between India and Pakistan.

Kashmir will be the focal point of Mr Sharif's address to the General Assembly tomorrow. Tensions are particularly running high between India and Pakistan in the wake of the attack by heavily-armed terrorists from Pakistan-based JeM on an army base in Uri on Sunday that killed 18 soldiers.

Ban's office has repeatedly said that the UN chief's "good offices" are available to help resolve the Kashmir issue, only if both India and Pakistan request for it, a clear message that it is a bilateral issue and should be solved by the two countries.

Last month, Mr Sharif had written two letters to Ban asking him to intervene in the Kashmir issue. The letters were among the many that Islamabad had shot off to the UN, calling for the world body to take up the Kashmir issue.

However, in his long and final address to the world leaders, Ban did not make one reference to Kashmir while highlighting the issues on the UN agenda.

In his address, Ban referred to the Sustainable Development Goals, Paris Agreement on climate change, security threats by armed conflicts and its "tragic consequences" which are on brutal display from Yemen to Libya and Iraq, from Afghanistan to the Sahel and the Lake Chad Basin.

He also spoke about the conflict in Syria, which "is taking the greatest number of lives and sowing the widest instability".

Ban also touched upon the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, saying "replacing a two-state solution with a one-state construct would spell doom: denying Palestinians their freedom and rightful future, and pushing Israel further from its vision of a Jewish democracy towards greater global isolation".

"In Myanmar, the transition has entered a promising new phase. In Sri Lanka, post-war healing efforts have deepened. In both countries, true reconciliation rests on ensuring that all communities, minorities and majorities alike, are included in building a new union," he said.

The second five-year term of Ban is expiring on December 31.

- (With PTI inputs)