

JPNN| New Delhi| August 20, 2015 | In a flip-flop, Kashmiri separatist leaders were released on Thursday afternoon just hours after being detained ahead of their planned meet with Pakistani National Security Advisor Sartaz Aziz later this week in Delhi. After several separatist leaders were placed under house arrest or were arrested this morning, it was seen as a message from the Indian government to Pakistan. However, their release within hours – except that of hardline Hurriyat Conference leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani – has invited criticism and mockery. Former state chief minister Omar Abdullah, who had slammed the Central as well as J&K government for detaining Hurriyat leaders, called the episode “bizarre”. “The only word that describes all this - bizarre!!!! Playing out in Kashmir - confusion, pure & simple unadulterated confusion (sic),” Omar tweeted. “Why? No absence of coordination - centre say arrest so arrested, centre says release so released. Perfect coordination (sic),” he added. While Geelani had been under house arrest for several weeks now, the Jammu and Kashmir Police this morning had placed similar restrictions on moderate Hurriyat chief Mirwaiz Umer Farooq and Abbas Ansari. Spokesperson Hurriyat Conference (G) Ayaz Akbar was also put under house arrest in HMT area. Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front chairman Yasin Malik was first placed under house arrest and then arrested. The police also conducted a raid at separatist leader Asiya Andrabi's residence in Srinagar this morning. The Pakistani High Commission in Delhi has invited Geelani for a meeting on August 24 with Aziz, who will be in the national capital for talks with Indian NSA Ajit Doval on August 23. Moderate separatist leaders have also been invited for a reception being hosted by the High Commission in New Delhi for the visiting Pakistani official on August 23. India had cancelled Foreign Secretary-level talks with Pakistan in August last year after its envoy invited separatist leaders for consultations ahead of the meeting in Islamabad. Agency