

Solving the autonomy puzzle

Have you noticed how sometimes politicians prefer to quarrel with what their opponents have said — even if in the process they misunderstand and misrepresent — rather than comprehend an important point made by an adversary? The Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) response to former Union Minister and [Congress leader P. Chidambaram's recent comment](#) on Kashmiri demands is a striking example.

Both Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Finance Minister Arun Jaitley have claimed [Mr. Chidambaram was advocating azaadi](#) and criticised him for it. But he wasn't. In fact, he said something subtly but significantly different. When Kashmiris call for azaadi, he claimed, they in fact mean autonomy. Perhaps the Prime Minister and the Finance Minister missed the point?

In the first instance, Mr. Chidambaram was reading down the cry for azaadi. He was suggesting the word is a rhetorical flourish to attract attention. For most — if not the majority of — Kashmiris, it's a way of asking for autonomy. He was, therefore, indicating an escape route from the present impasse between the Kashmiri people, who demand azaadi, and a government determined not to concede it.

At a deeper level, Mr. Chidambaram was also alluding to the fact that the autonomy Kashmiris want is something they actually had in the early years after accession and which successive governments in Delhi whittled down. This is what he meant when he said, "The demand in the Kashmir Valley is to respect, in letter and spirit, Article 370." Sadly, last week he didn't make this point fully clear.

However, last year he did. In an interview to me in July 2016 on *India Today TV*, he said: "We have ignored the grand bargain under which Kashmir acceded to India. I think we broke faith, we broke promises." This was an explicit reference to the fact that in 1947, Jammu and Kashmir acceded only in terms of defence, foreign affairs and currency/communications and, unlike other States, never merged. It wanted to retain its identity within the Indian sovereignty it accepted, but over the decades that's been eroded as the jurisdiction of myriad institutions was enlarged to encompass the State.

Though last week Mr. Chidambaram did not speak about a solution, in the July interview he spelt one out: "What is necessary is to give the assurance that the grand bargain under which Kashmir acceded to India will be fully honoured." This meant: "Let them frame their own laws as long as it does not conflict with the Constitution. As much as possible we have to assure them that we will respect their identity, history, culture, religion...and [still] allow them to be part of India."

Mr. Chidambaram did not say how this should be taken forward. However, Communist Party of India (Marxist) general secretary Sitaram Yechury, in a separate interview to me in September last year, outlined one possibility. He said we need to sit with Kashmiris and revisit developments since 1947 with a willingness to roll back some. In essence, this is also the position of the National Conference. Its leaders aren't clear about what needs to be rolled back, though some want a reversal of the nomenclature changed in the 1960s and how the 'head of state' is chosen. More importantly, many are confident that institutions like the Supreme Court, the Election Commission and the Comptroller and Auditor General, which are respected in Kashmir, will be retained. The key is to let Kashmiris decide for themselves.

The core of the Chidambaram-Yechury proposal is the belief there are many ways of being Indian. If 12 States, including Himachal, Uttarakhand, Gujarat, Maharashtra and in the Northeast, can have special constitutional provisions, why not Jammu & Kashmir? This can only add to the rich

texture of being Indian, not strain the national fabric. Indeed, this was the foundation on which the much admired Manmohan Singh-Pervez Musharraf back-channel agreements were built.

Now, this is not azaadi. Far from it. But it is a very different concept of India to that of the BJP and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. No doubt this is why the Prime Minister and the Finance Minister chose to attack rather than understand and explore it. But, then, what did Mr. Modi mean when he said the solution was to “embrace” Kashmiris? Surely, in practical terms, that means meeting them half-way. Or is he like Humpty Dumpty who famously said, “When I use a word it means just what I choose it to mean — neither more nor less”?

Karan Thapar is a television anchor

The new U.S. Fed Chairman is unlikely to opt for policies that might upset the President’s plan

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Insurgency morphs into drug trade

Numbered into submission: Drug addicts seen at a park in Lashkar Gah, Helmand Province, Afghanistan. NYTADAM FERGUSON

The labs themselves are simple, tucked into nondescript huts or caves: a couple-dozen empty barrels for mixing, sacks or gallon jugs of precursor chemicals, piles of firewood, a press machine, a generator and a water pump with a long hose to draw from a nearby well.

They are heroin refining operations, and the Afghan police and U.S. Special Forces keep running into them all over Afghanistan this year. Officials and diplomats are increasingly worried that the labs' proliferation is one of the most troubling turns yet in the long struggle to end the Taliban insurgency.

That the country has consistently produced about 85% of the world's opium, despite more than \$8 billion spent by the United States alone to fight it over the years, is accepted with a sense of helplessness among counternarcotics officials.

The refining makes the drug much easier to smuggle out into the supply lines to the West. And it is vastly increasing the profits for the Taliban, for whom the drug trade makes up at least 60% of their income, according to Afghan and Western officials.

The opium economy in Afghanistan grew to about \$3 billion in 2016, almost doubling the previous year's total and amounting to about 16% of the country's gross domestic product, according to the UN Office on Drugs and Crime.

High demand

The increase in processing means the Taliban have been able to take a greater share of the \$60 billion that the global trade in the Afghan opium crop is estimated to be worth. Demand remains high in Europe and North America: Ninety percent of the heroin on the streets of Canada, and about 85% in Britain, can be traced to Afghanistan, the U.S. State Department has said. NY Times

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China to block UN bid to ban Azhar

Citing a lack of “consensus,” China said on Monday that it is once again not designating Masood Azhar, head of the Pakistan-based militant group Jaish-e-Mohammad, as an international terrorist.

The Chinese position, expressed by its Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying, came ahead of Thursday’s meeting of the 1267 committee of the United Nations Security Council, where the status of Azhar would be discussed. In September, hopes had been raised of a shift in China’s position but they were belied.

This followed an “excellent” meeting on the sidelines of the BRICS summit in Xiamen between Chinese President Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Modi.

“We have made our position clear many times from this podium. The relevant resolutions of the Security Council have clear stipulations as to the mandate to the 1267 committee and also clear stipulations when it comes to listing of relevant organisations and individuals,” said Ms. Hua. “As for listing the application by the relevant country, there are disagreements. China raised the technical hold to allow for more time for all parties to deliberate. To our regret the committee so far has yet to reach a consensus.”

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Nirmala flags Indian Ocean issues

Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman with Navy chief Admiral Sunil Lanba and others at Dabolim on Wednesday. PTI

Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Wednesday expressed concern at the increased militarisation in the Indian Ocean and the extra-regional nations setting up a “near permanent presence” in the region, in an apparent reference to the expanding Chinese presence in the region.

“We have also witnessed extra-regional nations maintain near permanent presence within the region on one pretext or the other. In order to sustain such a presence through operational turn around, these countries which are extra-regional are creating naval outposts as well as dual-use infrastructure in the region,” Ms. Sitharaman said.

She was addressing the first Goa Maritime Conclave of Navy Chiefs of Indian Ocean littoral states hosted by the Indian Navy at the Naval War College in Goa.

Stating that there is an “incremental yet steady” increase in numbers of warships operating in the region, Ms. Sitharaman said this militarisation “increases the complexities for the countries of this region.”

The GMC is intended to be held every year and aims to “bring together like-minded countries to evolve collective responses to challenges in the maritime domain.”

Maritime challenges

Ms. Sitharaman said that land-based disputes and riparian issues which are predominantly a legacy of colonial rule are a key cause for conflict. “As international behaviour in the maritime domain is influenced considerably by land-based imperatives, cordiality or latent hostility prevalent among nations on land tends to get reflected in the seas too,” she stated.

In the last few years, China has set up or acquired stakes in a series of infrastructure facilities in the region and has recently opened its first overseas military base at Djibouti in the Horn of Africa.

The Chinese Navy has also maintained a steady presence of warships and submarines in the Indian Ocean under the garb of anti-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden.

To counter this, the Indian Navy has now put in place a new concept of ‘mission based deployment’ to maintain round the clock surveillance on India’s vital areas of interest across the length and breadth of the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).

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Naga peace can't happen without NSCN-K

The Naga peace process, Eastern India's most anticipated political show, has in the past couple of weeks added several important dimensions.

I hear of a move to have all 12 of Nagaland's council of ministers in New Delhi for a meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, to fast-track a satisfactory conclusion to the matter at the very latest before February 2018. This would be just in time for elections to that state's assembly and could pre-empt policy being affected by the Election Commission's model code of conduct.

It would, of course, be lovely if Nagaland's politicians made a grand gesture to include in the formal power structure Naga rebels who, for all the heartburn about their strong-arm tactics, extortion, and "taxation", occupy a special place in many Naga hearts and minds. There's the wonderful example of Mizoram's Congress chief minister Lal Thanhawla stepping aside to accommodate rebel leader Laldenga of the Mizo National Front in the wake of a peace deal in 1986 overseen by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi.

There has been some talk of a similar move. In June 2016, at a meeting in Kohima, all 60 legislators of Nagaland and its two members of Parliament put aside major political and tribal differences to "put pressure" on the Indian government and the Isak-Muivah faction of National Socialist Council of Nagalim, or NSCN (I-M), the largest Naga rebel group with which the government signed a framework peace agreement on 3 August 2015, to speed up the process. They even resolved to give up their seats to absorb rebel leadership into the political mainstream. This mirrored an earlier move by Nagaland's legislators in mid-2012.

If this works, it would be nothing short of stunning, and it is hardly a matter of kite flying. As I have written earlier, it mirrors the desire of the Naga people to formally end conflict, overcome a history of a genocidal war India waged against them, and seek an equitable future of peace and prosperity.

The issue is, of course, overcoming major hurdles both among the political and rebel establishments. S.C. Jamir, for many years the Congress chief minister—and more recently an itinerant governor to various states—has never hidden his ambition to once again rule Nagaland, though he is reviled in particular by NSCN (I-M). He has a competitor Nagaland's current chief minister, T.R. Zeliang, a canny political player who muscled his way back to power in July this year after a half-year hiatus; and is a favourite among Modi's courtiers, in particular Bharatiya Janata Party's president Amit Shah and Ram Madhav—the party's general secretary who retains great personal interest in North-East Indian affairs. The third player is Neiphiu Rio, a former chief minister who is, like his former protégé Zeliang, a power-player. Though Zeliang and Rio, a Lok Sabha MP, are currently ranged on the same political side, it's on shaky ground.

Rebel territory is as charged. I-M last year made a great departure from its norm when Rh Raising, the home minister—kilo kilonser—of its proclaimed administration, Government of the People's Republic of Nagalim, or GPRN, welcomed other competing rebel groups to the peace dialogue. Raising paraphrased other leaders when he invoked the spirit of reconciliation: "... to forgive our mistakes," he said, "as we have also forgiven their mistakes."

As if in agreement, more than a year later, on 26 September R.N. Ravi, interlocutor for the Naga peace process, met members of six rebel groups, including smaller factions of NSCN as well as remnants of Naga National Council, in the 1950s the fount of Naga resistance and rebellion. When Ravi visited Dimapur to hold talks with these groups, Naga tribal bodies and civic groups accorded him a massive reception at the airport.

That was unprecedented, but so is a lot happening in the peace process. These are far smaller and less influential groups than NSCN (I-M), but important from the comprehensive perspective a peace process must necessarily hold. The inclusion of these groups helps to carry both the credentials of past struggles as well as their membership that spreads across several Naga tribes, always an important emotional content when dealing with matters in Naga homelands.

But there remains NSCN-K or the Khaplang faction, the largest and most influential group after I-M, and at war not just with India but all other groups, in particular I-M. There can be no peace without K on board, and that game is unfolding rapidly, interestingly. More on that next week.

Sudeep Chakravarti's books include Clear.Hold.Build: Hard Lessons of Business and Human Rights in India, Red Sun: Travels in Naxalite Country and Highway 39: Journeys through a Fractured Land. This column, which focuses on conflict situations and the convergence of businesses and human rights, runs on Thursdays.

Respond to this column at rootcause@livemint.com

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Joint Indo-Russia Tri-Services Exercise Indra-2017 successfully conducted**Joint Indo-Russia Tri-Services Exercise Indra-2017 successfully conducted**

The Joint Indo-Russia Tri-Services Exercise INDRA-2017 was successfully conducted from 19 to 29 Oct 2017 at Vladivostok in Russia. The name of the exercise INDRA has been derived from **IND**ia and **RussiA**. So far INDRA exercises have been undertaken between respective Armies, Navies and Air Forces engaged with each other without concurrent participation from other Services. 17 such service specific exercises with the Russian defence forces have been conducted since 2003. Exercise INDRA-2017 is the first Joint Tri-Services Exercise between Russia and India. This is also the first time that Russia has hosted a Tri-Services Exercise on its soil.

The theme of Exercise INDRA-2017 was 'Preparation and Conduct of Operations by a Joint Force for Suppression of International Terror Activity at the request of a host country under UN mandate'.

More than 900 soldiers, sailors and air warriors from the Indian Army, Navy and Air Force participated in the exercise along with over 1000 personnel from the Russian Defence Forces. The exercise was conducted in the Sergeevsky Combined Arms Training Range, Cape Klerk Training Area and the waters of the Sea of Japan.

Army exercise tasks involved check point defence and humanitarian convoy escort in the back drop of threat from armed groups. Naval tasks comprised Visit, Board, Search and Seizure (VBSS) operations besides Force Protection Measures, Joint Air Defence and Anti-mining Operations. The Air Forces of both countries, combined their air crews for Combat Air Patrols, Reconnaissance Missions, Formation Flying and Slithering operations utilising Russian fighters, transport aircraft and helicopters.

It was indeed a historic occasion for two of the world's greatest Armed Forces to join hands and successfully conduct an exercise of this magnitude with professionalism, providing an opportunity for both defence forces to imbibe the best practices from each other and jointly evolve and practice drills to defeat the scourge of terror. The first ever Indo-Russia Joint Tri Services Exercise has been a combination of training and cross training in field conditions on land, sea and air, to achieve seamless integration. The validation of the exercise tasks is a testimony of the contingents of both countries having integrated and synergised seamlessly to achieve the laid down objectives. The exercise also provided an opportunity to all personnel for cultural exchange and for friendly sports competitions.

Exercise INDRA-2017 will surely be a benchmark for future exercises of this nature all across the world. The esprit de corps and goodwill generated during the exercise will facilitate further strengthening of bonds between the defence forces of India and Russia enabling them to understand each other's organisations and the methodology of executing joint counter terrorist operations. It is even more satisfying that this milestone in Indo-Russia defence cooperation has been realised as we commemorate 70 years of Indo-Russian friendship.

MJPS/NA/NM/RP

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“For our collective aspirations to bear fruition and their impact to be sustainable, having a peaceful, stable and secure maritime environment in the region is a pre-requisite”

“For our collective aspirations to bear fruition and their impact to be sustainable, having a peaceful, stable and secure maritime environment in the region is a pre-requisite”

- Smt Nirmala Sitharaman, Raksha Mantri

The Goa Maritime Conclave (GMC) was inaugurated by Honourable Raksha Mantri Smt Nirmala Sitharaman at the Tarang Auditorium of INS Mandovi, Goa. The conclave was aimed at “Addressing Regional Maritime Challenges” wherein the deliberations were focused on emerging maritime threats and force structuring, maritime domain awareness, maritime security architecture, and maritime security challenges in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). Each of these themes was elaborated upon by speakers of national and international renown, comprising a veritable who’s who of analysts, scholars and practitioners such as Admiral Arun Prakash (Retd) of India, Admiral Dr Jayanth Colombage (Retd) of Sri Lanka, Admiral Md Khurshed Alam of Bangladesh, Professor Ashley J Tellis, Dr C Raja Mohan, Professor Harsh V Pant and Dr Christian Bueger.

Delivering the key note address the Hon’ble Raksha Mantri said that the Goa Maritime Conclave (GMC) aims to bring together like minded nations to evolve and formulate collective responses to emerging challenges in the maritime domain. It would also provide an opportunity to communicate our viewpoints in a forthright manner and collectively shape a favourable maritime environment for all countries in the region added the Raksha Mantri. She further said that the IOR has progressively gained centre-stage largely due to the political impact of its regional dynamics on international geo-politics. One can claim with considerable assertion that the future of the world will be shaped, to a large extent, by the political and economic interactions between the stake holders in the IOR, she added.

She further stated that “Whilst it is good that the compulsions of globalisation have enabled economics to shape transactional relationships between nations, opaqueness in strategic intent and incoherent behaviour by certain nations are preventing these very relationships from evolving beyond their transactional nature. On land, the unresolved borders and riparian disputes which are predominantly a legacy of the colonial era are some of the key causes of conflict. Further, this impasse in international relationships, is a product of many causes such as ideological differences, political insecurities, economic dependency, technological dependencies, inequitable access to resources, geographical

imperatives etc. The net impact of these differences is that trust deficit and tensions between nations continue to persist, on account of perceived challenges to sovereignty, despite positive economic interactions between them. As international behaviour in the maritime medium is influenced considerably by land based imperatives, cordially or latent hostility prevalent amongst countries on land tends to be reflected in the seas”.

Concluding her address the Hon’ble Raksha Mantri recommended the following to be deliberated during the GMC:-

() Evaluation of the impact of emerging maritime security architectures on overcoming maritime security challenges.

(i) Shaping a discourse in the region in order to work out the differences and capitalise on commonalities so as to ensure maritime security in IOR.

(ii) Tapping the considerable intellectual capital resident in the region and evolve customised solutions to the challenges rather than importing extra-regional solutions and force-fit them on to the regional template.

While delivering the inaugural address, Admiral Sunil Lanba, Chief of the Naval Staff thanked the Hon’ble RM to have graced the occasion. He also thanked all the delegates whose presence reaffirmed the bonhomie that is shared by the navies and innate friendship that prevails amongst the nations. The CNS, however brought out that there is a perceptible lack of formal arrangements with respect to engagement between littoral navies of the south and south eastern IOR and the concept of GMC has been evolved to bridge this gap and to establish a regional maritime forum amongst like-minded navies of the region for the apex level dialogue.

The Admiral further stressed on creation of comprehensive infrastructure, equipping the force with technology and investing in quality training while exercising financial prudence. He also said that by making large and long term financial commitments to counter specific threats from perceived adversaries may not necessarily yield the desired results in the future. Instead it would be wiser to adhere to long term plan which is underpinned by a clear assessment of desired capabilities. The CNS concluded with remarks that we hope to consolidate the progress made so far and shape a way ahead for greater maritime cooperation in the region.

DKS/RB

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India offers to share real-time maritime data

Stronger vigil:The move comes as India gears up to counter China's presence in the Indian Ocean Region.S.R. Raghunathan

India has made an offer to share intelligence of maritime movements in the Indian Ocean in real-time with 10 Indian Ocean littoral states.

This comes even as India gears up to counter China's increased presence in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).

The information to be shared includes movement of commercial traffic as well as intelligence.

"It was very positively received," Navy Chief Admiral Sunil Lanba told *The Hindu* on Thursday at the Goa Maritime Conclave (GMC) when asked about the response to this proposal from the 10 littoral states present.

The Indian Navy is hosting Navy and Maritime Chiefs of 10 countries of IOR at the first GMC to identify common threats in the region and evolve a mechanism on how to tackle them.

Co-operative system

India already has co-operative arrangements with several countries in the region and this initiative would see that expanding further. For instance, white shipping agreements to share commercial shipping data have been signed with 12 countries and more are in the works.

Fusion centre

"We have offered them to share real time data on movement in the Indian Ocean. Now let them review it and get them. This is not so much for conventional military purposes but to deal with non-traditional threats arising at sea," a senior officer said.

India is in a position to be a fusion centre, the officer added and this would be based on the Navy's nerve centre for coastal surveillance and monitoring, the Information Management and Analysis Centre (IMAC) located outside the national capital.

Welcoming the offer, a Navy Chief of one of the Indian Ocean littorals present said all countries should pitch in equally in the effort. "It has to be done equally by all nations, small or big. We have to work out modalities for the information exchange," he said on the sidelines of the GMC.

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China blocks U.N. move on Azhar

China on Thursday blocked another bid by the U.S., France and the U.K. to list Pakistan-based JeM chief and Pathankot terror attack mastermind Masood Azhar as a global terrorist by the U.N., saying it had rejected the move as “there is no consensus”.

A veto-wielding member of the Security Council, China had repeatedly blocked India’s move to put a ban on the Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) chief under the Al-Qaeda Sanctions Committee of the Council.

The JeM, founded by Azhar, has already been in the U.N.’s list of banned terror outfits.

China had in August extended by three months its technical hold on the proposal after having blocked the move in February at the U.N. “China has rejected the move as there is no consensus,” sources in the Chinese Foreign Ministry told PTI here.

The comment came as the China’s technical hold was set to lapse on Thursday. The official’s comment indicates that China would veto the application in the 1267 Committee of the UN Security Council that would subject him to an assets freeze and travel ban to allow it to lapse.

This is the second year in succession that it has blocked the resolution.

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India hits out at China's stance

India hit out at double standards in the war on terrorism on Thursday, hours after China blocked a move at the United Nations Security Council to place Masood Azhar, the Pakistan-based chief of the Jaish-e-Mohammed, in a list of global terrorists.

India's strong response did not name China but hinted at "one country" that had hurt the global campaign to ban the terror mastermind who is blamed for several attacks against India, including the Pathankot airbase attack of 2016.

"We are deeply disappointed that once again, a single country has blocked international consensus on the designation of an acknowledged terrorist and leader of UN-designated terrorist organisation," said a late evening statement from the Ministry of External Affairs.

China blocked an attempt by the U.S., U.K., and France to place Masood Azhar in the list of global terrorists of the Al Qaeda Sanctions Committee of the UN Security Council citing "no consensus" as a ground for its objection.

"India strongly believes that double standards and selective approaches will only undermine the international community's resolve to combat terrorism," said the MEA statement.

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U.S. 'terror list' to Pak. includes LeT

The U.S. has shared with Pakistan a list of 20 terrorist groups like the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), the Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) and the Harkat-ul-Mujahideen (HuM) that Washington believes are operating from its soil to target India and Afghanistan, a media report said on Thursday.

On the top on the list is the Haqqani network which the U.S. says has safe havens in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas in northwestern Pakistan and uses them to launch attacks into Afghanistan, *Dawn* reported.

The list includes three types of militants groups: those that launch attacks in Afghanistan, those that attack targets inside Pakistan and those that are focussed on Kashmir, the newspaper quoted diplomatic sources as saying.

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Terror in New York

The [terrorist attack in New York](#) on Tuesday confirms fears that terrorism, especially in the West, is becoming more decentralised, with individuals radicalised by terrorist ideology taking up arms on their own. Like the 'lone wolf' terrorists in [Nice](#) or [Berlin](#), who killed over 100 people last year, the New York attacker ploughed a pickup truck into a busy bicycle path in Manhattan, killing eight. Officials say Sayfullo Saipov, the 29-year-old Uzbek immigrant, was inspired by the Islamic State and wanted to inflict maximum damage. This is a unique challenge for governments. Over the last few years, Western agencies have foiled multiple terror plots. The U.S. is a case in point. It has not seen any major coordinated terror attack since September 11, 2001. But the chances of detecting and foiling a sophisticated terror plan by a network are higher than preventing a lone wolf attack. Even before the IS suffered military defeats in its core territories in West Asia, it had outsourced terror to members and sympathisers. This means that someone inspired by the IS world view and living in, say, New York or Nice doesn't have to contact IS handlers or wait for orders from Raqqa or Mosul. He or she can be both planner and executor. That is what happened in Nice, Berlin, Orlando and now New York.

Governments face both political and security challenges. The political challenge is to find the root causes of radicalisation and address them. This cannot be done without support from community members and leaders. The security challenge is to be more efficient when it comes to preventive measures. In the case of Saipov, officials say he had been planning for a year to strike civilians. He had hired a truck earlier to practise making turns and rehearsed the route where he wanted to stage the attack. Once such an attack happens, the challenge is also to prevent polarisation along religious or ethnic lines while sounding the message of unity and resolve to fight terror. Instead, President Donald Trump has grabbed the moment to assail his political rivals and drum up support for his anti-immigration policies. He has already promised to step up "extreme vetting" — even though it is unexplained how "extreme vetting" could have prevented the New York attack, or how officials could have foreseen in 2010, when Saipov entered the U.S., that he would become a threat seven years down the line. Also, Uzbekistan is not on the list of countries targeted under Mr. Trump's immigration ban. Washington needs a result-oriented plan to check radicalisation as well as prevent more terror attacks rather than ideological plans that are, in a way, helping the extremist narrative about Muslims being discriminated against and persecuted in the West.

Congress needs a cohesive agenda if it wants to push back the BJP in PM Modi's home State

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Gathering the tribe

Perhaps one of the most talked about issues as far as the Northeast is concerned is the Naga struggle for sovereignty which started a day before India's Independence. In the Naga mind, this issue oscillates between nostalgia for its unique history and the promise of a better future without disturbing this irreplaceable past. The problem with reality is that it does not allow us to romance the past.

The Naga national workers are no longer in the prime of their lives. The chairman of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (I-M), Isak Chisi Swu, has passed away and Thuingaleng Muivah too is getting on in years. In an article, 'The Presence of the Past', Roger Cohen says, "As we grow older the past looms larger. The past is full of possibilities. The future may seem wan by comparison and, for each of us, we know where it ends. With a bang or whimper..."

Reams have been written, several seminars and workshops organised, and there have been daily cogitations on the Naga peace talks since they started in 1997. In August 2015, when the Framework Agreement was signed between the Government of India and the NSCN (I-M), expectations were high that an "honourable settlement" was in the offing. The problem is with the use of words which lend themselves to several interpretations depending on who the stakeholders are. What is honourable for the NSCN(I-M) may not seem honourable enough to Naga society as a whole, with disparate aspirations and interpretations. Be that as it may, the Centre's Interlocutor for the Naga Peace talks, R.N. Ravi, has taken on a formidable task.

No other interlocutor has interacted with and met so many Naga National Political Groups (NNPGs) and civil society groups. For the first time, Mr. Ravi was able to push the envelope and create that integral space where all voices are heard with equal respect, sometimes at the risk of the NSCN (I-M) calling off the talks, since they felt that being signatories to the Framework Agreement, they alone have the right to call the shots. This fact needs to be appreciated. And it has to be understood that the Indian establishment too is not an easy customer. There is scepticism and there are doubts whether wider consultations would result in cacophony, making the task of arriving at a solution much more difficult.

For the interlocutor it's a tightrope walk. The Naga people are a proud race and have held fast to their cultures, traditions and language. Yet it cannot be denied that tribal loyalty often comes in the way of a collective discourse for the future of Nagaland. Perhaps one organisation that has brought together people from all tribes is the ACAUT (Against Corruption and Unabated Taxation), which is seemingly inclusive of all tribes and a mass movement of sorts to protest against taxation by different armed groups and factions. So far, about 33 delegations, including the different tribal Hohos and recently the six NNPGs, have had their say. For Mr. Ravi, it is an opportunity to further understand how the Framework Agreement should pan out.

But Mr. Ravi's visit to Dimapur last month was also seen with some scepticism. A video clip of the public reception given to him drew some uncharitable comments. Is the pent-up rage and frustration among the youth due to the protracted peace talks or does the rage spring from something else?

For the Naga people at this juncture, the most pragmatic step is to take a balanced view of the past. Obsession with one point of view hinders any kind of progress. With 16 major tribes, each with a sense of nationality of its own and every tribe having its village republics which is a crucial part of their culture, there will be divergent 'national' narratives. Naga nationalism is both a sentiment and a movement.

Ethnic boundaries of yore which went beyond geopolitical borders of the present nation can be both problematic and defy pragmatism. Then there is the issue of the Indian nation state, a term that is also problematic but which has provided its own stability for 70 years. If one were to go by Benedict Anderson's "Imagined Communities", then all the communities of the Northeast fall in that ambit.

In an interview to the Nagaland Post, Mr. Ravi said the ongoing peace talks may have been initiated by the NSCN (I-M) but it has now become more inclusive. One ray of hope as far as the Framework Agreement is concerned is that there appears to be a political consensus and faith in the process. This in itself is a huge step forward. Now that the tribal Hohos and the NNPGs have all thrown in their support, there is hope that the much-awaited political solution will arrive sooner than later.

Patricia Mukhim is Editor, The Shillong Times, and former member, National Security Advisory Board

The definition of harassment needs to be constantly updated, and the process for justice made more robust

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Union Home Minister chairs a High Level meeting to review the LWE situation in Chhattisgarh**Union Home Minister chairs a High Level meeting to review the LWE situation in Chhattisgarh****Shri Rajnath Singh assures all possible support to Chhattisgarh Government**

The Union Home Minister Shri Rajnath Singh chaired a High Level Meeting to review the Left Wing Extremism (LWE) situation in Chhattisgarh here today. The meeting was attended by the Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh Dr Raman Singh, the Minister of State for Home Affairs Shri Hansraj Gangaram Ahir, Union Home Secretary Shri Rajiv Gauba, Chief Secretary of Chhattisgarh, DG CRPF and senior officers of the Union Home Ministry and the Chhattisgarh administration.

During the meeting, it was brought out that the declining trend of LWE violence continues across the country which has seen an overall reduction of 21% in violence incidents over corresponding period of last year. The Left Wing Extremists continue to remain under pressure with ever shrinking influence, both in terms of geographical spread and public support. Security and development related measures required to achieve the same were discussed. The Home Minister assured the Chief Minister of all possible support to the State to achieve this objective.

Currently the Centre is providing security related assistance to the State which includes provision of CAPF Bns, helicopters, UAVs and CIAT Schools. In addition, 11 India Reserve Bns and 02 Special India Reserve Bns have been sanctioned to the State. Funds have also been provided for fortification of 75 Police Stations and for capacity building of Special Forces under the Special Infrastructure Scheme.

As part of the multi-pronged strategy to deal with LWE, the Central Government gives equal focus to development measures to bring LWE affected districts at par with other areas. Towards this end, the Central Government has approved a Special Central Assistance Scheme for 35 worst affected LWE districts with an annual outlay of Rs 1000 cr. Important development schemes include the Road Requirement Plan Phase-I under which Chhattisgarh was sanctioned 1988 km of road out of which 1351 km have been completed. Under the newly launched RRP-II, Chhattisgarh has been sanctioned a further 891 km of road. To improve mobile connectivity, 519 mobile towers have been installed in Phase-I. Another 1028 towers are being planned in Phase-II of the project.

As part of efforts to enhance skill development, Chhattisgarh has been sanctioned 09 ITIs and 14 Skill Development Centres. The initiatives taken to improve education infrastructure include approval of 02 Kendriya Vidyalayas at Bijapur and Sukma and 03 JNVs at Bijapur, Narayanpur and Kondagaon. Jagdalpur Medical College has been approved for up-gradation as Centre of Excellence at a cost of 200 Cr under PMSSY.

The Jagdalpur Airport has been included under the Regional Connectivity Scheme and work for making it operational is nearing completion. Financial inclusion initiatives include sanction of 707 post offices and opening of 108 ATMs and 81 bank branches in LWE

affected districts in last two years.

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Pak. faces flak over terror funding

Maulana Masood Azhar

Even as it faced a Chinese veto on designating Masood Azhar a terrorist at the United Nations Security Council, India scored a major victory at the Financial Action Task Force that looks into terror financing that held its plenary in Buenos Aires this week.

Pakistan has failed to penalise or curb the activities of any of the terror groups [designated by the UNSC]. India raised the issue at the International Cooperation Review Group (ICRG) in Argentina. Other countries supported India and now Pakistan has to submit a compliance report during the next session in February 2018, Home Ministry and External Affairs Ministry officials confirmed to *The Hindu*.

The win for Indian negotiators was significant, said an MEA official, as it came even as China vetoed the latest bid to have Jaish-e-Mohammad chief Masood Azhar designated at the UNSC.

“China tried hard to defend Pakistan during the FATF proceedings,” the official said, “But unlike at the UN, two speaking countries are needed to block consensus, and China was isolated there.”

February deadline

According to the directive of the FATFs' International Cooperation Review Group (ICRG), Pakistan has been asked to report again in February on action taken against designated terror groups such as the Lashkar-e-Taiba and its off-shoots Jamaat-ud Dawa and Falah-i-Insaniyat.

Also for the first time, Pakistan's Central Bank, the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), has been asked specifically to report on its work in shutting off the finances to the groups. A report on “SBP's enforcement activity as it relates to ensuring compliance of the statutory regulatory orders [on terror financing] and penalising non compliance” has been demanded, according to the ICRG report.

During previous FATF sessions, India had raised the funding of the groups and leaders like 26/11 mastermind Hafiz Saeed, who openly addressed rallies and raised funds in Pakistan as well as LeT commander Zaki-Ur Rahman Lakhvi, who received bail in the Pakistani trial court hearing the Mumbai attacks case.

In addition, volunteers of the Falah-i-Insaniyat Foundation (FIF), also run by Hafiz Saeed, have travelled to Syria and other countries on alleged “charity missions”, all of which is proscribed by the UN Security Council 1267/1373 rules.

While officials concede the 37-member FATF is a voluntary group, without much power to enforce its ruling, it works through “peer pressure” and “naming and shaming” countries into compliance on terror finance by putting them on “grey lists and black lists”.

“Pakistan is obviously not immune to their orders, and is also facing growing pressure from the US to cooperate,” an MEA official privy to the process told *The Hindu*.

Saeed detention

In January this year, Pakistani authorities detained Hafiz Saeed in Lahore — an action understood to have been taken to avoid any negative reference at the FATF in February. During that session

India raised the issue of another front of the JuD, the Tehreek-e-Azaadi Jammu and Kashmir (TAJK). Pakistan banned the TAJK barely days before the FATF's next plenary in Spain in June 2017.

Officials in New Delhi and Washington said they hope the FATF move will ensure that Pakistan curtails activities of all groups under the scanner, and keep Hafiz Saeed in detention for the foreseeable future.

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On Rohingya crisis: Suu Kyi in denial

Nearly three months after [violence escalated against the Rohingya](#) in Myanmar's Rakhine State, leading to the exodus of more than half a million to neighbouring Bangladesh, State Counsellor [Aung San Suu Kyi finally visited the region](#). By all accounts, Ms. Suu Kyi had little more than platitudes to offer and her words showed no recognition that what transpired is a "textbook example of ethnic cleansing", as the UN Human Rights chief put it. This is extremely disappointing. Ms. Suu Kyi endured years of house arrest and unremitting hostility from the military junta before emerging victorious in a free and fair election two years ago. But despite taking over a top post after the election, her civilian government's powers have been clipped as the military still holds sway over defence, home affairs and border issues. Ms. Suu Kyi, a recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize, has found it pragmatic not to challenge the official rhetoric in Myanmar, which suggests the military's actions were aimed at tackling "terror" in Rakhine. This could be for two reasons. First, she does not want to upset the fragile balance of power in the fledgling democracy after years of rule by the junta. Second, there is a clear lack of empathy for the Rohingya in a country that has seen the rise of Buddhist and Bamar majoritarianism that has corresponded with an official "othering" of the Rohingya, who are Muslims, as non-citizens. Despite the widespread international condemnation of her government's actions, Ms. Suu Kyi has sought to pander to the domestic gallery by defending the military's actions in Rakhine. Her conduct during her visit to the region this week suggests that she has no intention of effecting any real or meaningful change in her government's position on the Rohingya.

The Rohingya, meanwhile, have been left to deal with themselves, unwanted and stateless in their homeland and forced to migrate, mostly to Bangladesh, in hazardous conditions. Dhaka has been trying to drum up support and relief for the constant and unremitting stream of refugees making their way to Bangladeshi soil. Against this background, it is unfortunate that New Delhi has turned its back on the Rohingya refugees, leading to perceptions that it has failed to rise to its status as a regional power and take the lead in dealing with the humanitarian crisis. The Myanmar government has said that it will repatriate returning Rohingya if they prove they were residents of Rakhine, but it is not clear how the refugees would be able to do so having been denied citizenship and having fled their villages under duress with barely anything in hand. Myanmar's evasiveness makes it all the more imperative that the international community, including India, quickly provide succour for the hundreds of thousands of Rohingya who are living on the edge.

Revving up infrastructure spending is necessary, but not sufficient

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Navy steps up patrols in the Indian Ocean

While India is looking at cooperative frameworks to deal with common threats, Adm. Lanba clarified that efforts like coordinated patrols and joint patrols will be done only with maritime neighbours. "We only do coordinated patrols and joint patrols with nations who are our maritime neighbours. We are not looking at joint patrols with the U.S. Navy at this moment," he added.

Over the last year, the Navy, to test the waters, stepped up its presence and maintained round the clock surveillance on India's vital areas of interest across the length and breadth of the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). This allows India to position itself as a net security provider in the region. "Earlier, there were flag showing missions in terms of overseas deployments for exercises and visits. The need of the hour is to change the nature of deployments. All choke points (meaning straits which connect seas or narrow water channels where ships and submarines of adversaries can be choked off) and sea lanes are now under 24/7 surveillance. They are now institutionalised deployments," a senior Navy officer said.

The new mission-based deployment concept, which was unveiled in the Naval Commander's Conference in May, has mission-ready ships and aircraft being deployed along critical sea lanes of communications and choke points from Malacca straits to the Persian Gulf. The biannual Naval Commander's Conference, which recently reviewed its effectiveness, has formalised it.

The cycle of 12-15 ships in effect means a turnaround of 36-45 ships, with one set deployed, one set in transit, and one set in maintenance.

"These ships are deployed always ready to meet any eventuality across the spectrum of operations ranging from acts of maritime terrorism and piracy to humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) missions," the officer stated.

Adm. Arun Prakash said the new maritime strategy had listed "naval presence" as a mission. "This is, firstly, to reassure our friends that you are there, second to send a message to your adversaries and third, it is a measure of maritime domain awareness."

In this backdrop, he said Bay of Bengal and Arabian Sea can be effectively monitored if India were to sit at the three choke points.

Another aspect is that India is positioning itself as the net security provider in the region and the first responder in the case of natural disasters.

For instance, in May, the Indian Navy was the first to respond to heavy rain and flooding in Sri Lanka as also to the requirements post Cyclone Mora in Bangladesh and Myanmar.

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Mission Kashmir

The government's new interlocutor will arrive in Srinagar on Monday, the storm winds of history pushing back against his face. Armed with the knowledge accumulated during an illustrious career in the covert services, and with status accorded by the government's decision to give him the rank of a cabinet minister, former Intelligence Bureau director Dineshwar Sharma has the authority to spark off a genuine dialogue on Jammu and Kashmir's political future. But he knows, better than most, that the odds are stacked against him. The All Parties Hurriyat Conference, as well as the hardline Tehreek-i-Hurriyat, have refused to participate in the proposed dialogue, citing, among other things, New Delhi's unwillingness to concede that Kashmir is a disputed territory. The two major parties in the Kashmir valley, the People's Democratic Party and the National Conference, have said they will restate their long-standing demands — "self-rule" for the former, which encompasses freedom of movement and joint institutions across the Line of Control, and wide-ranging federal autonomy, for the latter. In Jammu and Ladakh, Sharma will hear calls for greater autonomy from Kashmir — demands New Delhi has historically seen as divisive, and dangerous to the state's future.

New Delhi knew that secessionist parties would stay away: As Intelligence Bureau director, Sharma closely monitored cases against the Hurriyat leadership which have now crystallised into criminal proceedings, while the government snapped a programme of secret financial remuneration to some key leaders. This is of a piece with the Hurriyat's long-standing behaviour: Fearful of terrorist attacks, the conglomerate even walked away from Prime Minister [Manmohan Singh](#)'s round-table dialogue process in 2006, after promising to participate. But on its part, New Delhi must have a clear idea of precisely what it is bringing to the table. In recent months, the government has adopted an ambiguous position on Kashmir's special constitutional status, and repeatedly ruled out greater autonomy. It is hard to avoid the conclusion that while New Delhi wishes to appear to talk, it may have nothing to say.

This would be tragic. Despite substantial gains against terrorism and street violence in Kashmir, the larger problems of the alienation of the state's youth cohort, and the seduction of some by political Islam, remains unchecked. Political creativity, not a security-centric approach, is needed to address these problems. It would be a pity were Sharma's mission to go the same way as that of Prime Minister [Atal Bihari Vajpayee](#)'s interlocutor, K.C. Pant, and his many successors. Piles of interlocutors' reports and expert group findings never moved off the table, because political forces in Srinagar and New Delhi alike never had the will, or vision, to make them concrete. The cost of this has been paid by the people of Kashmir.

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Warring over disarmament in the UN

For most people the UN is the venue of an annual *kabuki* theatre where world leaders come to make sonorous speeches and snipe at each other to score points with populations back home. While these theatrics, played out every September from the UN General Assembly (UNGA), make for high entertainment, they do very little to either advance national interests or multilateral goals.

However, just weeks after the curtains come down on the UNGA drama, diplomats from all member-states gather in the less glamorous bowels of the UN to deliberate on disarmament and international security, promote national interests, and, if possible, do some global good. The deliberations of the First Committee have tended to be business-like and the envoys have sought to bridge differences and seek common ground, if possible. Until now.

According to Reaching Critical Will, a non-governmental organization that closely monitors disarmament developments, the First Committee has been “particularly fractious this year, influenced by events in the conference room but also by events in other conference rooms, and of course, in the real world”. These events include tensions over North Korea between the US and China, differences over the Iran nuclear deal, and the Russian veto in the UN Security Council blocking the extension of the Joint Investigative Mechanism mandated to probe alleged chemical weapons use in Syria. Perhaps, the biggest factor behind this year’s undiplomatic dust-up is the recently concluded Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW).

Adopted in July, the TPNW commits state parties not to “develop, test, produce, manufacture, otherwise acquire, possess or stockpile nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices” and forbids them to “use or threaten to use nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices”. This single treaty has exacerbated rifts not only between the nuclear-armed states and the non-nuclear armed states but also members of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), and in some cases, between nuclear-armed states and their allies, which are protected by these weapons.

At the crux of this bitter contest are two competing pathways towards a world free of nuclear weapons. The first, led by the NPT nuclear weapon states and their allies, prefer a “step-by-step” approach under the aegis of the NPT regime. This group also seeks to break the “deadlock of two decades in the Conference of Disarmament”, which has rendered the forum comatose. They see the TPNW as a danger to this traditional (but ineffectual) approach and refuse to recognize it. Second, the proponents of TPNW—all NPT states neither possessing nor protected by nuclear weapons—frustrated with the lack of progress, seek a more “comprehensive, inclusive, interactive and constructive” road to multilateral nuclear disarmament. They argue that while the NPT and the Conference on Disarmament are crucial, they are not sufficient and that the new treaty “is an essential contribution towards nuclear disarmament”.

This acrimonious war over disarmament is being fought through the votes for various resolutions in the First Committee. For instance, the resolution on taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations proposed by as many as 40 of TPNW’s staunchest champions and supported by another 77 countries was opposed by 39 states—eight nuclear armed states (North Korea abstained) and 31 states living under the nuclear umbrella provided by the US. This despite the fact that the TPNW resolution sought to accommodate the concerns of the opposition by making pointed references to the step-by-step approach and the NPT.

Perhaps the clearest sign of disunity in the proceedings was evident, ironically, in the voting on the resolution on united action with renewed determination towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Proposed by Japan, the resolution was supported by 45 countries, including the US and

the UK. This resolution made no reference to the TPNW and, worse, was perceived to be promoting nuclear deterrence over nuclear disarmament. The resolution also appears to have watered down many of the commitments made during previous NPT review conferences. Unsurprisingly then, the resolution invited an unprecedented number of votes on individual paragraphs and explanation of votes by nearly 30 countries. While the resolution was comfortably adopted by a vote of 144 for and four against (including China and Russia), the large number of abstentions—27, including India, Israel and Pakistan—highlighted the growing divisions.

While both camps may well leave the First Committee claiming victory, it is clear that the cause of disarmament has not been served and might even have been impaired. Indeed, this stalemate has the potential to derail the NPT before the crucial 2020 review conference as well as lead to the collapse of the Conference on Disarmament. Worse, this showdown has created a paralysis that prevents countries from discussing the crucial implications of exponential advances in science and technology on international security.

Against this backdrop, India's pithy resolution on the role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament, which was adopted by consensus not only highlights India's rule-shaping efforts but might also contribute to building a much-needed bonhomie among the disarmament community. This is a critical step to curb the war over disarmament.

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Unsettling the status quo in Jammu and Kashmir

“Or call it winter, which being full of care, Makes summer’s welcome, thrice more wished, more rare.” — William Shakespeare

Whatever the motivation, the [appointment of the former Director of the Intelligence Bureau \(DIB\) Dineshwar Sharma](#) as the interlocutor for Kashmir is to be welcomed. Better late than never.

Predictably, the beleaguered Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, Mehbooba Mufti, was the [first to welcome the appointment](#) which enabled her to claim that the Bharatiya Janata Party had fulfilled its promise of dialogue. She, however, subsequently clarified that it was the secular DNA of India that had encouraged her Peoples Democratic Party to align with its ideological opposite, the BJP, in the State. National Conference president Farooq Abdullah perhaps expressed the Kashmiri sentiment more aptly when he said that we also need to talk to Pakistan. The reservations of the wise men of the Hurriyat notwithstanding, there has been palpable excitement in Srinagar that peace may at last have a chance. At the very least, the appointment provides hope. Separatists have been egging the Hurriyat high command to respond positively and even the most hardline of the separatists, S.A.S. Geelani, [acknowledges that dialogue is the only way forward](#). The more moderate Mirwaiz has pleaded for dialogue umpteen times.

Heavy-handedness is not the answer in Kashmir; it never has been and is not likely to be in the future. It only furthers the cause of separation. Kashmir is not a military or law and order problem; it is a political and emotive issue.

The security forces have a difficult job in J&K and have been doing this admirably of late, but rubbing that in or stating the obvious where it touches a raw nerve makes no sense. Obviously the appointment of the special representative does not imply that Army operations would wind down. It does not require the Army Chief to say so repeatedly. The Kashmiris know fully well that no representative of the Government of India can engage or talk beyond the Constitution. Repeating it endlessly only betrays a lack of confidence. It did not require former Deputy Prime Minister L.K. Advani to say so when he held rounds of talks with the Hurriyat in 2004. Talks were in fact extremely cordial, with the Hurriyat leaders somewhat overawed by him. As a senior Hurriyat then acknowledged, they fully understood the ambit of engagement.

What Kashmir and the Kashmiris need is not another shopping list of concessions or promises but the shock therapy of absolute candour. Not magnanimity but hard-nosed common sense that former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee displayed. In fact, he is still revered in the Valley more than any other leader. Finding a way out of any mess requires a willingness to listen.

There is no better listener available in Delhi than Mr. Sharma, who has [all the attributes required of an interlocutor](#). He is humble, talks little, understands and feels for Kashmir, and has infinite patience. Plus, he has loads of experience, including a stint in Srinagar during the most difficult days. If press reports are to be believed, he has no restrictive mandate either. Nor should he feel hobbled by the situation on the ground. It is quite often left to Intelligence agencies to do the dirty work, to flirt in the grey areas. Kashmir is nothing if not grey. Mr. Sharma has been appointed interlocutor for exactly that reason: to try to alter the situation in Kashmir by investing in trust, building new bridges and repairing the old.

Given the mandate he received in 2014, Narendra Modi was in a position to do what no Prime Minister in recent times could do. The Jammu and Kashmir Assembly elections too went the BJP’s way. In Kashmir, there was hope that the new BJP government would follow in Mr. Vajpayee’s

footsteps. Even the Mirwaiz welcomed Mr. Modi's election as Prime Minister. But unfortunately, there has been no engagement in Kashmir.

Kashmiris crave peace and desire engagement. Not talking has again brought Pakistan into the game when it was quite out of the equation in Jammu and Kashmir. There is still no great love lost for Pakistan; Kashmiris realise they have no future across the border but it remains the most convenient fallback. Alienation, disillusionment and, of late, anger and disgust bring out the green flags.

Added to that is the Kashmiris' ultimate fear that they could be reduced to a minority in their State. Threats of scrapping Article 370 and 35A of the Constitution only add to Kashmiri apprehensions, leading to unnecessary turns in the debate on autonomy, a legitimate Kashmiri aspiration. The sentiment of subnationalism in Kashmir is not very different from that in most other States, except that in Kashmir it is guaranteed by the Constitution.

The detention and arrest of separatist leaders serves no purpose except that it may provide the interlocutor a ready concession to offer the Hurriyat. Invariably, release of their colleagues is their first demand. To that extent it could facilitate dialogue. But as Ms. Mufti rightly said in Delhi, the National Investigation Agency needs to step back to facilitate an atmosphere for talks. Ironically, Shabir Shah, who was once Narasimha Rao's favourite to be Chief Minister, is lodged in Tihar Jail.

There has been much talk of speaking to the youth in Kashmir, a consummation devoutly to be wished for except that antagonised youth who count are not easy to find in Srinagar. South Kashmir, where the young have been radicalised since Burhan Wani's killing, is a different world, far from accessible. Such is the situation that the long overdue parliamentary election in Anantnag has still not been held.

The much-maligned Hurriyat is far more accessible. Mr. Sharma's old friends should help him reach out to them even if being out is never quite the same as being in the system. Not talking to the separatists would render the dialogue meaningless. The mainstream does not need an interlocutor to engage. As former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah once said, they were always available to Delhi for talks, it is the separatists that Delhi needs to engage with.

Whether credible or not, Hurriyat thinking is still a factor in Kashmir as much as Pakistan. Basically, the Kashmiri is not at peace with the status quo. The peace with honour he bargained for still eludes him. The reason that we have reservations about talking to the Hurriyat and to Pakistan are the very reasons we need to talk to them. The magic of democracy is that hardliners get moderated and mainstreamed. The majority realise that their future lies with India. They deserve a chance.

It is unfortunate that Pakistan chose to immediately react negatively, saying that the interlocutor's appointment was neither sincere or realistic. No wonder we say, who do we talk to in Pakistan?

The Hurriyat must resist the trap. Nothing can redeem their credibility better than engagement. As Mufti Mohammad Sayeed would say, there is no better way but to talk. Not talking is no longer an option, if it ever even was.

A.S. Dulat, a former chief of the Research and Analysis Wing, was an adviser on Kashmir in the Prime Minister's Office

The definition of harassment needs to be constantly updated, and the process for justice made more robust

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Visit of Admiral Sunil Lanba, Chairman, Chiefs of Staff Committee and Chief of The Naval Staff to France

Visit of Admiral Sunil Lanba, Chairman, Chiefs of Staff Committee and Chief of The Naval Staff to France

Admiral Sunil Lanba, Chairman, Chiefs of Staff Committee and Chief of the Naval Staff is visiting France on a bilateral visit from 05 to 10 November 2017. The visit aims to consolidate cooperation between the Armed Forces of both India and France and also to explore new avenues of defence cooperation.

During his visit, the Chairman, Chiefs of Staff Committee and Chief of the Naval Staff will hold bilateral discussions with Her Excellency Ms Florence Parly, Hon'ble Defence Minister of France, General Francois Lecointre, Chief of Defence Staff, Admiral Christophe Prazuck, Chief of French Navy, General Joel Barre, Director General Armament and Vice Admiral Hervede Bonnaventure, Director General International Relations and Strategy.

In-addition to holding important bilateral discussions, the Admiral will be visiting the Maritime Prefectures at Brest and Cherbourg, and be conducted around the Maritime Operations Centre. He will also visit the French Airbase at Landivisiau, where he will be briefed on the operational employability of the Rafale aircraft by the French Air Force, and also visit the French Submarine Facility at Cherbourg.

India and France have traditionally maintained close and friendly relations. The two countries established a Strategic Partnership in 1998, thereby significantly enhancing bilateral cooperation in strategic areas such as defence, nuclear energy and space. The Defence relationship between the two countries has been one of mutual trust and confidence. India has been importing critical defence technologies from France; the latest being the Rafale fighter aircraft for the Indian Air Forces and the Scorpene submarines for the Indian Navy.

The Indian Navy cooperates with the French Navy on many issues, which include operational interactions such as the VARUNA series of bilateral exercises, training exchanges, exchange of White Shipping Information and Subject Matter Experts in various fields through the medium of Staff Talks. Warships from Indian Navy have been regularly visiting ports at France, with IN ships Mumbai, Trishul and Aditya making port call at Toulon from 24 to 27 April 2017. The French Navy ship Auvergne, a FREMM Class Frigate, also visited the Indian Naval Base at Karwar from 02 to 06 October 2017.

The Indian Army and Air Force also maintain robust cooperation with the French Army and Air Force. The Indian Army conducts the biennial exercise SHAKTI with the French Army, whilst the Indian Air Force conducts the GARUDA series of exercises annually. Both the Services also carryout exchanges of Subject Matter Experts and pursue a structured cooperation mechanism through the medium of Staff Talks of their respective Services.



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Asia's maritime-quad might prove elusive

The “quadrilateral” is back, and with a verve that is making strategic pundits sit up and take notice. After reports emerged last week that Japanese Prime Minister Shinz Abe would propose a four-way dialogue between the US, Japan, Australia and India during President Donald Trump’s visit to Tokyo this week, there is speculation in New Delhi that the new “quad” might seek to counter Chinese naval power in Asia. Indian analysts say New Delhi might be willing to experiment with the idea of a countervailing alliance if it addresses India’s power imbalance with China. India’s expansion of the Malabar Exercises to include the Japanese navy and the reinvigoration of defence ties with Tokyo and Canberra, they suggest, is a sign that Indian policymakers are amenable to the idea of hard-balancing in Asia.

Yet, the prospects for an Indo-Pacific “concert of democracies” in maritime Asia aren’t strong. A closer look at emerging naval dynamics in Asia makes clear that the maritime “quad” isn’t still a wholly viable proposition. First, neither Japan nor the US has given any indication that the new grouping will have a China-centric security agenda. Earlier this week, a senior US administration official rejected suggestions that the “quad” alliance was about containing China. If anything, reports from Tokyo and Washington suggest the group might be focused on finding an alternative to China’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

The second reason why India’s nautical observers might have to wait longer for their “quad” moment is Washington’s indifference to the geopolitics of maritime South Asia. Nearly a year into Trump’s presidency, the US is yet to address New Delhi’s key concerns in its near-littorals, including China’s growing footprint in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Myanmar, the Indian Navy’s inability to track Chinese submarines in the Bay of Bengal, and the strengthening China-Pakistan nexus in the Arabian Sea. Indian analysts say Washington’s real equities reside in the Western Pacific, where senior US officials expect New Delhi to play a larger security role. But even in East Asia, the Trump administration is looking circumspect, with a growing dependence on China to solve vexing problems like North Korea. From an Indian standpoint, the more Washington needs Beijing to negotiate with Pyongyang, the less leverage it has in shaping China’s strategic choices in the Indian Ocean.

New Delhi won’t be surprised if Trump’s promotion of a “free and open Indo-Pacific region” is more focused on trade, than maritime security. With rising angst among Apec (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation) members over Trump’s decision to withdraw from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), Washington is under pressure to underline its commitment to the economic development of the Asia Pacific. Even if the US wanted to signal a hardening of maritime posture in Asia, it is likely to be dissuaded by Asean (Association of Southeast Asian Nations), which is showing a new enthusiasm for naval engagement with Beijing (evidenced by the first joint China-Asean maritime search and rescue exercise in the South China Sea last month). With many South-East Asian states openly acknowledging China’s role in regional security and development, it seems unlikely a proposal aimed at the containment of Chinese naval power in Asia will find much support—regardless of Beijing’s real and perceived violations in the disputed littorals.

The third reason why New Delhi might have to wait longer for a four-way naval alliance is the lack of clarity over what a naval quadrilateral really means for Indian interests. For the US and its Pacific partners, the maritime “quad” is a concept aimed at the joint implementation of a rules-based order in Asia. For India, however, the endeavour is an opportunity to develop its military capabilities to secure the Indian Ocean, a primary theatre of strategic interest. However, with Japan no longer in contention for the India’s submarine project P-75 (I), and US defence firms still unwilling to part with proprietary technology (including vital anti-submarine warfare know-how), the proposal for a close maritime cooperation holds little promise for improving India’s underwater

surveillance and combat prowess.

Finally, if there is a need for a balancing coalition in Asia, it must happen only when the threat becomes clearer. Despite an expansion of PLAN (People's Liberation Army Navy) activity in the Indian Ocean Region, China does not pose a physical threat to Indian interests (not for the moment). Chinese naval assets haven't challenged Indian sovereignty in its territorial waters, or ventured close to Indian islands with malign intent. Nor have PLAN ships and submarines impeded the passage of Indian merchantmen in the regional sea-lanes and choke-points. To the contrary, the Chinese navy has avoided any entanglement with Indian naval ships in the subcontinental littorals, limiting its ventures to friendly countries in the region, many of which are happy to benefit from Beijing's economic and military power.

This does not mean India's grievances with China are invalid. New Delhi is rightly concerned about Beijing's use of its navy to normalize Chinese dominance of the littorals, a condition that supports Beijing's vision of a unipolar Asia. Indian maritime observers are convinced that China's maritime strategy in the Indian Ocean involves a "slow choke" of New Delhi's geopolitical influence in its strategic backyard. But Beijing is going about its business carefully, ensuring that its military presence in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) does not cross the threshold of conflict with India. Whatever the impact of China's naval expansion in South Asia on New Delhi's geopolitical and strategic equities, it does not constitute an intrusion for which Beijing can be held legally, politically or militarily accountable.

At the first quadrilateral discussion in the Philippines next week, India will observe how far Japan, Australia and the US are willing to take substantive cooperation forward in the Indian Ocean. The turn of events at Manila will determine whether and how New Delhi will expand its trilateral Malabar naval exercise with the US and Japan to include Australia.

For the moment, the maritime-quad remains an idea whose time still hasn't arrived.

Abhijit Singh is senior fellow and head, maritime policy project, at the Observer Research Foundation, New Delhi. Comments are welcome at theirview@livemint.com

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Naga peace: Indian govt has turned the pressure on Khaplang faction

A belligerent rebel group is now in a marquee moment in the Naga peace process.

Last week I suggested, reflecting substantial public opinion, that there cannot be true Naga peace and reconciliation without the National Socialist Council of Nagaland's Khaplang faction. As the second-largest Naga rebel group and in active combat against India, Myanmar-based NSCN-K has still-impressive reach in Indian territory in South-Eastern Arunachal Pradesh, North and East Nagaland, and parts of Manipur.

It is in alliance with several rebel groups rooted elsewhere in North-East India, such as the so-called independent faction of the United Liberation Front of Asom, a Bodo splinter group, a Kamtapuri offshoot that locates its emotional heart in Northern West Bengal, and a half-dozen Manipuri rebel groups under the umbrella of CorCom, or Coordination Committee. NSCN-K offers these groups sanctuary and/or logistics support. Since 2015, when it broke away from a ceasefire with government of India, NSCN-K has conducted joint operations in India with elements of CorCom.

This continues the policy of S.S. Khaplang, the chief of this faction who died in June this year, by his successor Khango Konyak. Unlike Khaplang, who was a Hemi Naga from Myanmar—which has substantial Naga homelands separated by Britain's sharp partitioning knife—Konyak is from the eponymous tribe largely located in Nagaland's northern Mon district.

It's not a pretty picture in the otherwise hyped Naga peace process, in which the largest group of Naga rebels, the Isak-Muivah faction or NSCN (I-M) is in active talks with the government of India; these formally began in August 2015. That happened just months after NSCN-K went its way, as if in recognition of India's compact with its arch-enemies: NSCN (I-M). The peace process has since September been joined by six smaller Naga rebel groups.

It is clear that the government has turned the pressure on the Khaplang faction. Besides hitting back with combat operations, including an end-September hit by India's Army on some NSCN-K strongholds across the border in Myanmar. In end-October, a team from National Investigation Agency (NIA) seized nearly Rs28 lakh in Dimapur from Shelly, wife of a key general in NSCN-K, the flamboyant and crafty Nikki Sumi, the mastermind of several attacks against Indian troops. Days later NIA announced it had proof of four Nagaland government officials channelling Rs20-25 crore of extorted funds to NSCN-K from 2012-16.

This is classic power play with signals going out loud and clear. For several years now, combat in this sphere has generally kept away from families of combatants on every side. The government publicly tagging the wife of a senior NSCN-K officer is a "back-off" gambit. It's also seen as a move to create fissures in NSCN-K by exposing Sumi's vulnerability, though whether that will actually happen as part of a continuing play to get NSCN-K or a substantial section of it back to the talks table, is as yet wide open.

Significantly, there is no such public tagging when it comes to NSCN (I-M), though by all accounts, the faction gathers maximum revenue among all rebel groups in India with the exception of the Maoist machinery; or the six Naga groups recently added to the peace process. After all they are at the table for talks.

India's security establishment has increasingly got better at keeping tabs on rebels, including knowledge of assets that leaders and their families own, say, in India, Myanmar and Thailand, let alone homes in what is sometimes jocularly called the Beverly Hills suburb of Dimapur,

Nagaland's commercial hub. A senior army officer once boasted to me of how they could roll it all up—at least in India—if they wished. Naturally, there is a limit to penetration, as attacks by NSCN-K on India's Army and paramilitaries have shown, but it's all point and counter-point.

The cat-and-mouse game extends to containing China, which India's security apparatus believes is the puppeteer behind NSCN-K and its allies. Indeed, another chess move came earlier this week, when *Mizzima*, a respected Myanmar news organization, cited a general saying, "We will not allow our soil to be used against India." *Mizzima* claimed the statement was made in Imphal, Manipur's capital, at the end of a seminar on 3 November.

Will it bring it all to boil, bring NSCN-K in one form or another to the table alongside efforts by Naga citizens' groups to reach out for peace and reconciliation—citizens who realize there can be no true peace without NSCN-K either on board or strictly contained in Myanmar? Game on.

Sudeep Chakravarti's books include Clear.Hold.Build: Hard Lessons of Business and Human Rights in India, Red Sun: Travels in Naxalite Country and Highway 39: Journeys through a Fractured Land. This column, which focuses on conflict situations and the convergence of businesses and human rights, runs on Thursdays.

Respond to this column at rootcause@livemint.com

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Shri Rajnath Singh chairs second meeting of Island Development Agency**Shri Rajnath Singh chairs second meeting of Island Development Agency****IDA approves holistic development of 9 islands****Shibpur Naval Air station to be converted into Joint User Airport**

The Union Home Minister Shri Rajnath Singh chaired the second meeting of Island Development Agency (IDA) here today. The Island Development Agency reviewed the concept development plans and detailed master plans for holistic development of 09 islands (four in A&N Islands i.e. Smith, Ross, Long, Avis) and (five in Lakshadweep i.e. Minicoy, Bangaram, Thinnakara, Cheriya, Suheli). The project being steered by NITI Aayog aims at promoting and implementing development based on sustainable approach to building a thriving maritime economy of the project islands.

The Union Home Minister expressed satisfaction at the progress made since its last meeting held on July 24, 2017, when directions were given to identify and execute infrastructure and connectivity projects together with provisioning of water and electricity. It was noted that site development potential reports have clearly mapped and delineated environmentally sensitive zones in the project islands and considering the unique maritime and territorial bio-diversity of the islands, enhanced connectivity has been recommended as one of the key priorities. Accordingly, it was decided that the Naval air station at Shibpur near Diglipur in northern Andaman & Nicobar Islands would be co-used as Joint User Airport.

During the meeting, it was also decided to develop a PPP package including a airport (Joint User Airport) at Minicoy Island, to unlock the tourism potential. It was agreed to promote tuna fishing industry for improving livelihoods in Lakshadweep. Union Home Minister directed all concerned to expedite implementation of ongoing key infrastructure projects in the islands and develop community based tourism in consultation with local stakeholders.

NITI Aayog was also asked to drive the formulation of PPP projects and proposed detailed guidelines to boost private sector participation.

The IDA was set up on June 01, 2017 following the Prime Minister's review meeting for the holistic development of islands.

The meeting was attended by Lt. Governor of Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Admiral D.K. Joshi, Former Navy Chief (Vice Chairman of IDA), Cabinet Secretary Shri P. K. Sinha, CEO, NITI Aayog Shri Amitabh Kant, Union Home Secretary Shri Rajiv Gauba, Secretary, Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Shri C. K. Mishra and representatives of Ministries of Tourism, Power, Defence, Health, Telecommunications and Civil Aviation.

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India vows to keep oceans free

S. Jaishankar

India is working with “like-minded” countries on preserving security of the oceans where India has a particular responsibility, Foreign Secretary S. Jaishankar has said.

“As the Indian Ocean takes centre stage in the 21st century, the onus is on us, as equal stakeholders, to collectively secure and nurture our oceanic states,” Mr. Jaishankar told a meeting of maritime experts at the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) held in Delhi.

“The Indian government has been working with like-minded countries to preserve the integrity, inviolability and security of the maritime domain,” he said, according to a release issued by the Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA) that organised the conference.

The words of India’s top diplomat are significant ahead of the ASEAN and East Asia summits in Manila next week, where Japan has reportedly suggested an official meeting of the “Quad” grouping of U.S.-Japan-Australia-India. While India is not a military alliance partner, as the other three countries are, the MEA spokesperson had said India is “open” to the idea of the quadrilateral. In Perth last week, Australian Foreign Minister Julie Bishop had also endorsed the idea, calling it a continuation of a 2008 quadrilateral plan that was subsequently shelved.

“Already Australia has regular meetings with Japan and Australia and the U.S. so it’s natural that we should continue to have such discussions but there is nothing formal but there has been no decision made on [the quadrilateral with India],” Ms. Bishop told reporters.

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Quad is a good idea, not Quad-plus

US President Donald Trump is on a 12-day-long Asia trip. On the last day, he will attend the East Asia Summit in Manila. It is also expected that the quadrilateral dialogue between India, the US, Japan and Australia will resume on the margins of this summit after a hiatus of nearly a decade. The voices in support of resuming “the quad” had grown louder in recent weeks. First, it was Rex Tillerson who had, in his important speech at the Center for Strategic and International Studies last month, clearly expressed America’s desire to include Australia in the India-US-Japan security collaborations. More recently, Japanese foreign minister Tar Kono also made a similar call. Kono went a step ahead and suggested that Britain and France too could be involved in this grouping.

The coming together of India, the US, Japan and Australia is being seen as building a strategic partnership to deal with China’s rise and its implications. As all these countries have noted in different ways, China’s rise has presented a serious challenge to a rules-based international order. India, the US and Japan already engage with each other in a ministerial-level trilateral dialogue and annual naval exercises. The logic of expanding membership in a security-focused group is not very obvious. Unlike, say, trade negotiations where the involvement of more countries helps achieve uniformity of standards and, consequently, greater scale, more intra-supply chain compatibility and higher efficiency for businesses and economies, security collaboration among a larger group is a challenging task as success depends on the credibility and commitment of each participant. Moreover, the greater the number of people at the table, the narrower the agenda on which a consensus can be achieved.

India has been reluctant in accepting Australia in the grouping for multiple reasons. One, it was Australia under prime minister Kevin Rudd which had decided to exit the quad last time around in 2008, in deference to China’s concerns. Two, Australia’s economy is heavily dependent on commodity exports to China. Three, Chinese money is deeply enmeshed in Australian politics owing to lax rules related to the foreign funding of political parties. And four, unlike Japan and India, Australia has no direct dispute with China.

However, there is some merit in considering Australia’s entry and concomitant resumption of the quad. First, despite all its economic and political ties with China, Canberra has been very critical of Chinese activities in the South China Sea. Second, Australia is mulling reforms to its political donation laws in order to limit foreign influence in its politics. Third, Australia is a major maritime democracy in the Indo-Pacific region. India, the US or Japan, all of them frame this partnership in terms of common political values rather than as a counterweight to China—a strategy that makes a lot of sense. Fourth, there are already three trilaterals in operation—India-US-Japan, India-Japan-Australia, and US-Japan-Australia. Coalescing them into one quadrilateral will not be a bad idea. And fifth, the last time the quadrilateral engagement was attempted, it was successful in making China sit up, take notice, and register protest with all the members. In essence, the coming together of these four powers had worked.

The above arguments are, however, not valid for either Britain or France. Even if the two have islands and military facilities in the region, they are extra-regional powers. Both their capacity and willingness to engage in tough operations in the region is suspect in case the US chickens out—and the unreliability of the US is one of the reasons (goo.gl/HF24sy) being given for their inclusion. Most importantly, the European powers are still too fixated on Russia (rather than China) as the primary security threat to be of much utility to their Asian partners.

The resumption of the quadrilateral dialogue, therefore, is a good idea but there isn’t much rationale for involving Britain and France at this stage. This doesn’t preclude India and other members of the quad from having separate, productive partnerships with the European powers.

But some strategic analysts in India are still debating the utility of the Indian partnership with the US and Japan, leave alone Australia, Britain or France. They argue that India is needlessly dragging itself into the US-China rivalry. There cannot be a more misleading argument. As the world's biggest military and economic power, the US is more than capable of meeting the China challenge without New Delhi's helping hand. But can the same be said of India? Facing a huge power deficit, India needs partnerships to balance China. Another argument is that India's political profile in its neighbourhood will stand diminished if it accepts the need for assistance from other powers. To the contrary, India's neighbours—as foreign secretary S. Jaishankar has pointed out—are bound to feel more reassured of India's (as against a rapacious China's) words if New Delhi has the economic, military and political backing of major powers in the region.

And one should never forget that for all of New Delhi's grand political and moral standing as a founding member of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), not many countries chose to condemn Chinese aggression against India in 1962. There isn't a starker lesson from independent India's history.

Should India support the inclusion of Britain and France in the quadrilateral dialogue? Tell us at views@livemint.com

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MEA seeks details of U.S. programme

A day after the United States announced a funded programme for organisations interested in fighting religious intolerance in India, the Ministry of External Affairs said such funding would have to conform to legal processes at home and sought more details.

The statement from the MEA came even as the U.S. Embassy in India maintained that the fund would improve civilian security.

“We have requested for more details [from the U.S.]. Once we have more details, we will be in a better position to comment on this. But in any case, any such activity in India, in this area, by anybody has to follow the rule of the land,” MEA spokesperson Raveesh Kumar said.

The MEA would look into the context in which the U.S. had pledged the amount, he said.

Religious tolerance

The Ministry’s response came a day after the U.S. State Department’s Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor announced a competition-based programme through which suitable organisations willing to counter religious intolerance in India would get funds amounting to \$4,93,827.

The programme which has called for applications from interested organisations is understandably aimed at countering majoritarian acts of discrimination and violence targeting the minority communities.

The MEA spokesperson refused to interpret the announcement at the moment but it is understood that those who will win the grant for their programmes will have to seek clearance from the Indian government before undertaking any work.

Explaining the nature of the grant, the U.S. Embassy’s spokesperson said: “This programme is funded by U.S. government foreign assistance funds. The goal of the programme is to increase societal tolerance and improve civilian security to reduce religiously-motivated violence and discrimination, and funds will support activities that work toward that end.”

Any such activity in India by anybody has to follow the rule of the land

Raveesh Kumar

MEA spokesperson

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India, China border talks next month

India and China will hold the 20th round of border talks at December-end, the first since the 73-day stand-off at Doklam.

“Starting next month, the bilateral exchanges will begin. The first one is of our Foreign Minister Wang Yi who will attend the India-China-Russia Foreign Ministers’ meeting here... Then our State Counsellor Yang Jiechi will come to attend the 20th round of border talks... So these two very important visits... will start a new chapter in bilateral relations,” said Li Bijian, Minister Counsellor at the Chinese Embassy here, said on Thursday. He was speaking on the sidelines of a seminar organised by the Observer Research Foundation.

Mr. Li said that when Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping met on the sidelines of the BRICS Summit in Xiamen after the Doklam incident in September, they agreed to take forward the ties, and these visits were part of the initiative.

The two Armies were locked in a stand-off at Doklam on June 16 after Indian soldiers prevented the Chinese from building a road in a disputed territory near the India-Bhutan-China tri-junction.

After tough negotiations, the two sides agreed to disengagement on August 28.

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Time to talk about business-driven security

India is as vulnerable to cybercriminals and cyberattacks as other parts of the world. According to the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team, at least one cybercrime was reported every 10 minutes in just the first six months of 2017. These attacks ranged from ransomware, phishing, scanning or probing and site intrusions to defacements, virus or malicious code and denial of service attacks.

There are no official figures available on the loss of business due to cyberattacks. But unofficial analysis done by some of the cybersecurity firms show this figure is around \$4 billion every year. The bigger problem in India is the secrecy around cyberattacks where the firms or promoters would rather put a lid on cybercrime than come out in the open. The problem with this is that other companies which are potential targets don't get a chance to even be prepared, while hackers tend to share their secrets on the dark Web—a platform where hackers interact, buy and sell information anonymously.

According to cyber experts, India was among the countries worst hit by the recent WannaCry ransomware. Several isolated incidents were reported in states such as Gujarat, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal.

Companies can no longer look at cybersecurity as an afterthought. Rather, there is an urgent need to bring cybersecurity policy to take centre stage in all business decisions.

The greatest risk comes from the fact that firms are not considering cybersecurity as a business driver. Sometime back, McKinsey and the World Economic Forum undertook joint research to develop a fact-based view of cyber risks, assess their economic and strategic implications, and lay a path forward. They found that despite years of effort, and tens of billions of dollars spent annually, the global economy is still not sufficiently protected against cyberattacks. The risk of cyberattacks could materially slow the pace of technology and business innovation with as much as \$3 trillion in aggregate impact.

While everyone generally agrees that security breaches are bad, balancing the cost of prevention against other business priorities can be trickier. Unified in preventing breaches, these same stakeholders diverge when forced to choose between security and business values such as profitability, operational uptime, or ease of use. We should start to think beyond just the technology and connect the security incidents to business context for a business-driven approach to security. The following are the first few steps organizations can take:

Raise executive awareness: Risks should be made part of boardroom discussions to receive the visibility they need to be properly addressed. Technology risks are still not translated well enough into business value terms that executives can understand to make educated decisions on courses of action.

Strengthen the human factor: Not changing passwords or opening unknown emails or links increases exposure to a host of cyberthreats including ransomware. This makes people one of the weak points in the defence against cyberthreats. Test and measure vulnerability, then provide essential education to raise user awareness of security issues.

Focus on what is critical: Business impact analysis (BIA) should be performed regularly to identify which business processes are most critical to the organization's objectives. Highly critical business processes, systems, devices and information assets should receive prioritization for resiliency and recovery efforts.

Maintain your systems: Firms must employ an upgrade and maintenance cycle to reduce their attack surface. Failure to patch, update and upgrade (especially away from unsupported operating systems) can permanently ruin a firm's reputation or even put public safety at risk.

Back up your data: Not being able to retrieve lost data can heavily impact an organization. During BIA, should you determine that critical information assets were lost, find out how far back in time you can reasonably recreate the data. Organizations must have mechanisms to ensure data is backed up accordingly.

Perform continuity planning: What happens if the system you use to do your job is not available? Some functions can stop until the system is available. Others, such as medical services or airline flights, cannot. A critical step to building resiliency is to plan for the inevitable disruption to business processes, systems or facilities. Continuity or recovery plans should be documented and tested for potential threat scenarios to ensure functional continuity.

The current state of cybersecurity at most enterprises is not uniformly mature to detect, prevent and respond to these threats in a timely manner. Cyber risk is but one dimension of risk an organization faces. The best way to thwart and respond to a cyberattack is to take a business risk management approach.

Rajnish Gupta is regional director for India and South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation at RSA Security Llc, a Dell Technologies Inc. business.

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It's finally time to make the Pacific a bit bigger

As President Donald Trump makes his way across Asia, ears in local capitals have picked up a subtle but unmistakable change in messaging from the US administration. The shift focuses on an apparently innocuous term: “the Indo-Pacific.” US national security adviser H.R. McMaster introduced the president’s itinerary to reporters as “a great opportunity to demonstrate America’s and the Trump administration’s commitment to the Indo-Pacific.” Trump himself has used the term and it’s all over the official press releases from the White House.

This isn’t just semantics. The difference between the more commonly used “Asia-Pacific” and the new “Indo-Pacific” is actually quite deep. Those who prefer the latter want to stress that the great power conflicts in East, South and Southeast Asia are essentially maritime—over the control and openness of trade routes and over who gets to build and secure the infrastructure through which the vast majority of the world’s trade passes. By pushing the borders of America’s awareness as far as India, it means that China and its concerns are no longer at the center of US strategy. And it might also reflect a desire to “bring India permanently into the US web of alliances and partnerships in the region.”

For the Japanese, it reflects their pressing need to keep sea routes free of Chinese influence; for Indians, the term embodies the conviction that the most important relationship between any two capitals over the next century will be that between Delhi and Beijing. For the countries of Southeast Asia, the term mirrors the hope that a network of alliances, led by the US, Japan, Australia and India, would allow them to preserve their sovereignty and strategic independence amid China’s rise.

Indeed, the one country that clearly dislikes the term is China. And that may be the biggest takeaway from this presidential progress so far—the Trump administration’s decision to shelve its predecessors’ diffidence and junk the notion that the US might accommodate China’s preference for a unipolar “Asia-Pacific.” From an “America First” president, this willingness to ally if not lead in the effort to counterbalance China may be the best that countries in the region could have hoped for.

The phrase “Indo-Pacific” has been used before, of course, though only rarely by US presidents. During Shinzo Abe’s first term as prime minister of Japan in the mid-2000s, it was hoped that a “quadrilateral” that encompassed the US, Australia, Japan and India could help patrol sea lanes and stabilize the region. But that initiative foundered. Prime minister Kevin Rudd’s Australia, its economy thriving on China’s demand for commodities, had no intention of displeasing Beijing. India’s government wasn’t too keen on unsettling relations with its giant northern neighbour either.

Australia pulled out of the quadrilateral dialogue in 2008 explicitly to soothe Chinese sensitivities; Rudd’s foreign minister told the press after a visit from his Chinese counterpart that “one of the things that caused China concern last year was a meeting of that strategic dialogue. ... Australia would not be proposing to have [another] dialogue of that nature.”

But times have changed. Having returned to power, Abe is firmly in command in Tokyo; he’s turned “a free and open Indo-Pacific” into something of a mantra. Meanwhile, the commodity market has cooled and Australia has been reminded of the costs of economic dependence. “Indo-Pacific” has become its official definition of its neighbourhood.

India’s Narendra Modi, who is close to Abe, has lately embraced the term as well, especially after his nation emerged from a nasty border confrontation with the People’s Republic. China’s protestations of a peaceful rise may not sound quite as credible in 2017 as they did in 2007.

Much work will need to be done before the new terminology results in practical changes on the ground, of course. Officials from the “quadrilateral” are likely to meet at the upcoming East Asia Summit in the Philippines. They will need to set concrete goals for military and strategic cooperation—for example, scheduling regular patrols together for their navies.

The meeting itself would send a message: When it became a possibility, China warned it had better not be set up to “target or damage a third party’s interest.” That’s probably not an issue yet. None of the countries is engaged or powerful or determined enough at the moment to contain Chinese ambition in the short-term. Still, leaders such as Trump and Abe have taken an important first step towards ensuring that, in the decades to come, China’s leaders don’t have it all their way in, yes, the Indo-Pacific. **Bloomberg View**

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South China Sea, Rohingya on ASEAN map

The maritime dispute over the South China Sea, exodus of the Rohingya citizens of Myanmar into Bangladesh and India, North Korean nuclear posturing and Islamic State-linked terrorism are likely to be the key talking points at the 31st ASEAN summit beginning here on Monday.

The South China Sea has been at the centre of discussions on multilateral problems at the ASEAN-China level, which has been further complicated by China's land reclamation projects aimed at building air surveillance and domination projects in the region.

Common future

ASEAN has been battling with the task of framing a Code of Conduct (CoC) for the common maritime future, which officials of the Philippines say is likely to get the green light during the ASEAN summit.

"We expect the leaders to announce the negotiations but the actual start of the negotiations will probably happen sometime next year," Foreign Affairs spokesperson Robespierre Bolivar said in a press interaction at the International Media Centre on Saturday.

Attention is also focused on Myanmar State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi, who arrived here on Saturday, and is expected to present her country's stand on the Rohingya issue.

Rohingya crisis

A Bangladeshi source told *The Hindu* that Dhaka expected ASEAN to raise the issue in a prominent way and convince Myanmar to stop the atrocities against the Rohingya. It is likely to be a major issue at the "retreat" where leaders can speak freely about all issues away from the media glare.

"It will be discussed, it will be up to Myanmar to raise the issue because this is a domestic concern for them," said Mr. Bolivar giving the official position of the Philippines.

The presence of the pro-Islamic State militants in the Marawi city in southern Philippines is also expected to receive attention as the fight with the militants has been a major domestic issue of the Philippines. The developments in Marawi have also emerged as a reason for it to seek international support. China has in recent months extended support to the Philippines.

Counter-terrorism

"China also provided timely weaponry assistance in the counter-terrorism campaign in Marawi, and on the second day after the campaign successfully concluded, Chinese engineering machinery were delivered for local reconstruction," said Premier Li Keqiang of China in a newspaper article.

It is expected that the simmering tension between the North Korea and the U.S. and Japan will also feature prominently on Monday's talks.

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Sea rights figure in first Quad talks

The event was also attended by Premiers Li Keqiang of China and Dmitry Medvedev of Russia.

The U.S.'s statement indicated that further cooperation "to curtail DPRK (Democratic People's Republic of Korea)'s nuclear and missile programmes and unlawful acts" were also on the agenda of Sunday's discussions.

Indian official sources emphasised that the quadrilateral was not aimed at any other country and said New Delhi was also involved in similar groupings in the region to deal with security and political issues.

The quadrilateral meeting is significant as it was held in the backdrop of the comments by the Chinese Premier urging reduction in tension over regional issues like the South China Sea dispute. "The wise expand common ground while the unwise aggravate differences," said Premier Li in a newspaper article, defending the Chinese position in the dispute.

Official sources emphasised that the quadrilateral was not aimed at any other country and said India was also involved in similar groupings in the region to deal with security and political issues.

India's commitment towards the region was highlighted by Mr. Modi as he took to the social media before arriving here and said, "I will take part in the ASEAN-India and East Asia summits, which symbolise India's commitment towards deepening engagement with ASEAN and India-Pacific region."

On Monday, Mr. Modi will take part in the inauguration of the ASEAN summit and will hold talks with Mr. Trump and Mr. Duterte.

He is also expected to deliver an address at the ASEAN Business and Investment Summit.

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Contours of a counter-BRI

Recent high-level visits to India show distinct contours of a counter-alliance to China's Belt and Road Initiative taking shape. AP

India finds itself at a crossroads of grand alliances unfolding in the Indian Ocean Region. While one axis is a maritime one across the Indo-Pacific, the other is land-based, extending from Afghanistan into Southeast Asia. Interestingly, both are intended to act as a check on China's growing clout.

On Sunday, foreign ministry officials from India, Australia, Japan and the U.S. held discussions on the sidelines of the [East Asia summit in Manila in the Philippines](#) and discussed peace and stability in the region in addition to addressing common challenges.

"The discussions focussed on cooperation based on their converging vision and values for promotion of peace, stability and prosperity in an increasingly inter-connected region that they share with each other and with other partners. They agreed that a free, open, prosperous and inclusive Indo-Pacific region serves the long-term interests of all countries in the region and of the world at large," a statement from the Ministry of External Affairs said while reiterating that India's Act East Policy was the "cornerstone of its engagement in the Indo-Pacific region".

Four corners

Of late, the U.S. has been more vocal in its desire to include Australia in the India-Japan-U.S. security cooperation in the Indian Ocean Region, referred to as the "quad" — a quadrilateral alliance of "like-minded" countries. Taking it a step further, Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Kono has called for the inclusion of France and Germany. Against this backdrop, the prospect of quadrilateral discussions in Manila have generated considerable global interest on the possible outcome which China hoped "would not target or damage" a "third party's interest." Prime Minister Narendra Modi's meetings during his visit there will be watched closely.

While the quad still remains an idea, and it has to be seen what shape it takes, the diplomatic discussions in the national capital over the last few weeks and the statements by world leaders in the run-up to some recent high-level visits to India show distinct contours of a counter-alliance to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), also called One Belt, One Road, taking shape. The arc extends from Afghanistan on India's west all across the Northeast and into Myanmar and the Southeast Asian countries.

Various strands of this are already under way. India has been trying to build connectivity under various initiatives in its own Northeast region, in its neighbouring countries, and further into ASEAN (the Association of Southeast Asian Nations). Now the U.S. has begun investing in India's periphery, and Japan is attempting to align its own development initiatives to improve connectivity in the region with India's Act East policy. The broader attempt is to institutionalise this into a structured trilateral format, and possibly a quadrilateral one at a later stage.

Collaborating with India

Last month, ahead of his visit to India, while delivering a speech at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, U.S. Secretary of State [Rex Tillerson expressed the need to collaborate with India](#) to ensure peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific so that it "does not become a region of disorder, conflict, and predatory economics."

Elaborating on the predatory economics, Mr. Tillerson said there are a “number of fledgling democracies for infrastructure investment” and stressed on the need to have alternative means of developing them. He referred to China’s investment model, saying, “the financing mechanisms it brings to many of these countries [results] in saddling them with enormous levels of debt.”

Mr. Tillerson further said, “We think it’s important that we begin to develop some means of countering that with alternative financing measures, financing structures” and added that they began a “quiet conversation” during the East Asia ministerial summit in August to create “alternative financing mechanisms” in a multilateral way.

In September, the [U.S. signed a \\$500 million agreement with Nepal](#) to build infrastructure for the latter’s electricity and transportation needs and to promote “more trade linkages with partners in the region like India.” Earlier, U.S. Secretary of Defence James Mattis had endorsed India’s sovereignty concerns surrounding the BRI.

Speaking at a think tank in New Delhi last month, Foreign Secretary S. Jaishankar endorsed the U.S. investment in Nepal. Stating that India cannot be in denial of other players coming into the region, he said: “I think an intelligent nation harnesses the changes and sees what works for you. To the extent we have countries whose broad goals are aligned with us.” India and Japan are also cooperating on a project for LNG (liquefied natural gas) supplies to Sri Lanka in addition to aligning their connectivity projects in Africa under the proposed ‘Asia Africa Growth Corridor’.

The broad mechanism is akin to China’s own build-up of the BRI initiative. China spent over a decade building capacities independently in its areas of interest — for instance, it built a series of dual-use facilities across the Indian Ocean surrounding India which is popularly referred to as its ‘string of pearls’ strategy. All such efforts have now been consolidated under its grandiose idea of BRI, bringing legitimacy to them and succeeding in getting the global community on board with offers of lucrative investments and long-term returns.

Time for caution

While cooperative mechanisms are crucial to maintain stability in the Indian Ocean Region, it would be prudent on India’s part to do a cost-benefit analysis of building such grand alliances in such uncertain times, especially on the role of the U.S. with President Donald Trump at the helm. One of the agreements reached between Mr. Trump and his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping was China’s Silk Road Fund, under the People’s Bank of China, to promote the Belt and Road international trade initiative. This shows the dichotomy in American policy, and India should exercise caution before jumping on to the bandwagon. It must await policy clarity from the U.S. both on Afghanistan and beyond.

On the other hand, Russia has asked India to join its International North-South Transport Corridor, arguing that it would be a gateway for India to connect with Central Asia through Chabahar port in Iran and via Afghanistan.

While India has objections to the BRI, it wouldn’t be ideal to bracket the country in a counter camp, but rather it should balance its outreach in accordance to national interests and its own terms. After all, the very countries which are pushing India into alliances are deeply intertwined with China in terms of trade. Excessive dependence on multilateral frameworks to fulfil national objectives may seem lucrative in the short term but could prove to be a costly mistake in the long term and comprise Indian sovereignty.

The definition of harassment needs to be constantly updated, and the process for justice made more robust

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Where clashes of geopolitics, politics and economic interests intersect

Discontent over saleA protest in Colombo in February against the proposed sale of stake in Hambantota port.AFPISHARA S. KODIKARA

Home to about six lakh people and investments worth billions of dollars, the district of Hambantota, along Sri Lanka's southeastern coast, is currently witness to at least three clashes.

At the geopolitical level, the competing strategic interests of China and India are no secret. From being almost invisible to becoming the most-watched district in Sri Lanka, Hambantota's image makeover foretells Sri Lanka's pivotal role in the Indian Ocean Region, more so after Colombo sold majority of its stake in the Hambantota port to China.

India in turn has offered to run the nearby Mattala airport, famous for its emptiness. While there is no final word yet, New Delhi is exploring options of using the airport facility to manage its air traffic or possibly run a flying school.

Also watching from India's side are countries such as the U.S. and Japan. They share India's concern over the heightened presence of China, which has pumped in billions of dollars into infrastructure projects in post-war Sri Lanka. China sees the port town as a valuable transshipment hub in 'One Belt One Road'.

In domestic politics, it is the constituency where the political futures of Sajith Premadasa and Namal Rajapaksa clash. Their fathers, both former Presidents — Ranasinghe Premadasa and Mahinda Rajapaksa — rose to power with a strong rural backing.

Living in uncertainty

The third clash, which is the least apparent but the most telling, is that between the people of Hambantota, the animals inhabiting the district and the development that is threatening to shake its ecosystem.

"Our lives have remained uncertain from the time of the tsunami in 2004," says G. Milani Harim, an aspiring politician who plans to contest in the local polls in 2018. "People are in perpetual fear, worrying when their land might be gazetted for development activity," she said, about the predominant fear of farmers and fisher-folk who constitute over 90% of the district's population.

Clearly, concern over land is on top of people's minds. With forest cover diminishing in the wake of development, locals point to an increase in incidence of human-elephant conflict — often leading to destruction of agricultural fields, damage to houses, and, at times, injuries or death to humans encountering the tusker. At least 25 people in the district died between 2010 to 2017 succumbing to wild elephant attacks, local newspaper *The Sunday Times* reported. As many as 57 elephants got killed in the same period.

However, Prithiviraj Fernando, Chairman of the NGO Centre of Conservation and Research, argued that there is scope for both conservation and development. Nearly 6,000 elephants in Sri Lanka are found in 62% of the country's expanse. "Of those, 70% live outside national parks and that is because elephants can coexist with humans," he said, countering popular anxiety. In his opinion, planned development where elephant paths are clearly demarcated with electric fencing can make a difference.

Development question

On the one side are farmers, fishermen and community leaders like Ms. Harim who remain sceptical of the huge projects surrounding them. On the other hand are local businessmen who are counting heavily on the mega development and the investment they hope it will bring.

“It does not matter if the investment comes from China, India or America, we want businesses in our district to benefit,” said K.A. Hemantha Padmalal, a former president of the Hambantota Chamber of Commerce, an organisation with representatives from the 4,000-strong local business community. India being “like a brother” could invest in the local agriculture and information technology sectors and boost them, Mr. Padmalal said. “India can also set up an automobile assembly facility, considering that car manufacturers in India transship their vehicles through the port,” he added.

Ms. Harim sees development differently. In her view, it should speak to the needs of an entire family. “Be it education, health, or access to jobs — all these should improve. For that, development should be holistic, not merely about infrastructure projects or businesses. At present, we can see the development, but not feel it.”

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Stone-pelting drops 90% in J&K

Welcome change: Demonstrators throw stones at the police during a protest in Srinagar last year. File Photo: AFPROUF BHAT

Jammu and Kashmir Police chief S.P. Vaid has said that there has been a 90% dip in incidents of stone-pelting in Kashmir valley this year as compared to last year and credited the people for the improvement in the situation.

“(There is) a more than 90% fall in stone-pelting in Kashmir valley (this year) as compared to last year. It is a huge decrease,” the Director General of Police said.

Far cry from last year

“There are weeks when there is not even a single case of stone-pelting while in a day (last year) there used to be more than 50 incidents taking place. There is a huge change in the mood of people,” he said. “It is a huge change. The law and order situation in Kashmir is for everybody to see, particularly those living in Kashmir or those dealing with it,” he added.

The DGP said while National Investigation Agency raids helped, there were multiple factors at play, including demonetisation and action against top militant commanders, that have resulted in a drop in stone-pelting incidents. “Of course, that (NIA raids) helped, but the main credit goes to the people of Kashmir. Probably they have also realised the futility of this and damaging their own property and targeting the police, which also belongs to their own society,” he said.

Apart from these, detentions under the Public Safety Act also helped, he said. “I will also give credit to the resumption of political activity,” he added.

The police chief said there has been a tremendous success as far as “Operation All-Out”, the Army’s master plan to flush out militants from Kashmir, is concerned. “The credit goes to officers and jawans who are working in the fields. There is very good coordination among the police, Army and other security agencies,” he said.

‘Huge success’

“Most of the top leadership of HM (Hizbul Mujahideen) and LeT (Lashkar-e-Taiba) has been neutralised. I think roughly 170 militants have been eliminated this year. It is a huge, huge success,” the DGP said.

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Myanmar: human rights under the junta?

The picture that accompanies this article has become iconic — iconic for all the wrong reasons of course, a symbol of an unhinged, dismal world where the mother with a dead baby in her arms must hold herself up in all her vulnerabilities to convince the world of the seriousness of the issue she represents. The issue here is the displacement and persecution of a desperately poor ethnic minority — the Rohingya from the Rakhine State in western Myanmar. It is also an issue that seems to have the uncertain prestige of unifying the world — from U.S. President Donald Trump [to her Oxford college](#) — all are willing to shake their head and say with a self-righteous sigh, Aung San Suu Kyi should be shorn of all honours.

The background

Unlike the earliest Muslim migrants to Burma who came from Persia, Arabia or India as traders, the Rohingya Muslims of Rakhine were never really well-assimilated in Burmese life. The community grew mainly through immigration and exogamy, because of the proximity of Muslim Bengal. This gave the community an inherent fragility which perhaps made them repeatedly reach out for external assistance, thus deepening the communal divide.

Rohingya's hope floats on a boat

But the fact that they were never well-assimilated and at a point in history dared to express solidarity with another nation, reason enough for the punishing circumstances they suffer today? Is that justification for the wretched mother's misery who kisses the forehead of her dead child? No.

News also keeps trickling in that the Rohingya might not be as vulnerable as they look. A local terrorist outfit called the ARSA (Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army) is said to have connections with even the Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba. In fact, the entire security operation by the Burmese Army this year that sparked off the mass exodus of half a million Rohingya to Bangladesh in what has been called a textbook case of ethnic cleansing was actually triggered by the ARSA simultaneously attacking 30 police outposts and one Army regiment's headquarters in Rakhine. But are we convinced by this explanation? That this was merely an act of self-protection by the Burmese military? No.

The picture of that unfortunate mother, eyes closed in resigned acceptance of her cruel destiny, lingers. And out tumbles our final question, angry because it is desperate: then what was Ms. Suu Kyi, State Counsellor since the landmark elections of 2015, doing? The winner of the Peace Prize, the upholder of human rights, the voice of conscience and hope in a world gone all wrong? And herein lies the twist to the tale. In a country where the military junta still holds unbridled power, granted to it by the Constitution of 2008, how much power does the State Counsellor really have? Did she really give the marching orders to the Army to unleash felony and violence on the community in August 2017? For let us not forget, the Burmese Army, or the Tatmadaw, still functions more or less as a parallel establishment, with unquestioned control over the departments of defence, internal affairs and border security. The 2008 Constitution guarantees it not only a guardianship role but also places it outside civilian control. No debates on defence or strategic matters are ever held in plenary sessions of the Burmese Parliament and the annual defence budget is merely a matter of parliamentary record, not scrutiny.

Rohingya: Bangladesh's burden to bear

And as we take note of these facts, let us also not forget the extraordinary timing of the first grisly rape and murder of a young Rakhine girl in the Muslim dominated township of Ramree in the

Rakhine State — May 28, 2012 — just before Ms. Suu Kyi was to leave after a period of 24 years for her first high-profile foreign trip outside Myanmar. Even as she officially accepted her Nobel Peace Prize on June 16, 2012, more stories of sectarian violence against the Rohingya surfaced in the international media. Too much of a coincidence to be taken at face value? Maybe.

Look at the system

To view the Rohingya issue merely as a racial or religious one is to catch the most superficial glimpse of it. It has deep roots which go back to 1948 or even beyond, it has a geographical spread that encompasses nearly the entire world or large tracts of it, causes of conflict that are social and economic as much as they are natural or religious. It also has at its epicentre something as basic and tangible as Myanmar's Constitution of 2008 — a document that the Tatmadaw pledges to protect with its life and the amendment of which is one of the main objectives of the Suu Kyi-led civilian government. It is only after its amendment that Myanmar can look forward to emerging as a true democracy and till that happens Ms. Suu Kyi has to continue her careful tiptoed walk with the military as well as the Buddhist ultranationalists with whom the Tatmadaw seems to be in an unholy alliance. Otherwise in jeopardy will be not only the Rohingya but also the fragile hopes of Myanmar's 53 million people with consequent ramifications for the ASEAN region and the rest of the world.

So while we mull over these facts, babes in arms die to prove to us the seriousness of the issue. It is indeed a world gone all wrong.

Nilanjana Sengupta is the author of 'Female Voice of Myanmar: Khin Myo Chit to Aung San Suu Kyi'

The definition of harassment needs to be constantly updated, and the process for justice made more robust

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Union Home Minister reviews measures to check cyber crimes in financial sector**Union Home Minister reviews measures to check cyber crimes in financial sector**

Union Home Minister Shri Rajnath Singh chaired a meeting of all agencies concerned and representatives of relevant states here today to review the progress of the decisions taken during the meeting taken by him on September 19, 2017 for curbing the financial sector frauds emanating from the usage of cards and e-wallets in particular.

Union Home Minister was informed that in pursuance of the decisions taken in the meeting taken by him on September 19, 2017, an Inter Ministerial Committee on Phone Frauds (IMCPF) has been constituted in the Ministry of Home Affairs on September 28, 2017. The Committee under the chairmanship of Additional Secretary MHA and members from other stakeholder organisations namely Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY), Department of Financial Services, Department of Telecommunication, Reserve Bank of India and law enforcement agencies held its first meeting on October 24, 2017 and discussed various nature of phone frauds taking place in India and the steps to be taken by the various stakeholder organisations in order to curb such instances.

Union Home Minister reviewed the measures contemplated such as:

- Big data analysis by involving IIT Delhi for identification of perpetrators of phone frauds in order to prevent duplication across e-wallets.
- Providing of additional information in SMS/email alerts to customers from banks or e-wallet companies, as part of customer alert mechanism to include names of beneficiaries of any financial transaction wherever necessary for better traceability and crosschecking on the part of the victim.
- Publishing online statistics depicting the specific incidents, frauds against e-wallet companies and banks along with details including investigation to enable customers to make an informed choice before subscribing to e-wallet services.
- Legal aspects involved in making this Metadata Archival possible by way of sharing of data among different government/ private agencies etc.
- Reduction of insurance cost; and mandatory KYC for all the entities issuing Prepaid

Payment Instruments (PPIs); disabling of default international transactions facility for credit/debit cards etc.

Union Home Minister was informed about the measures taken by Jharkhand Police to crackdown on the perpetrators of phone frauds which has resulted in considerable fall in instances of these crimes. Union Home Minister directed that IMCPF shall examine all the highlighted issues in consultation with all the relevant stakeholders expeditiously.

KSD/SB/NK/PK

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'Joint Training Doctrine Indian Armed Forces – 2017' Released**'Joint Training Doctrine Indian Armed Forces – 2017' Released**

Chairman Chiefs of Staff Committee & Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Sunil Lanba released **'Joint Training Doctrine Indian Armed Forces – 2017'** at a simple function here today. It is for the first time in the history of the Armed Forces that such a keystone document has been promulgated. The document has been prepared in a 'collegiate manner' involving all the three Service Headquarters and flowing from its mother and capstone Doctrine namely, Joint Doctrine Indian Armed Forces -2017 released in April last.

The aim of the Doctrine is to promote 'Synergy' and 'Integration' amongst the three Services and other stake-holders leading to an enhanced efficiency and optimum utilisation of resources. Besides numerous advantages of the Doctrines, this document will also go a long way in 'fostering initiative' and 'stimulating creativity' for promoting 'Integration' between the three Services in times to come.

The Doctrine brings out our approach to Joint training at macro-level, Fundamentals, Objectives, Joint Structures, Planning, Organisation amongst other aspects in existence and in use in the Armed Forces which have matured over 15 years of the existence of Headquarters Integrated Defence Staff (HQ IDS). The concept includes 'Joint Training' as a leverage for promoting 'Diplomacy' and 'Civil – Military interface' issues have also been highlighted in the document. The recently concluded INDRA – 2017 and three Humanitarian and Disaster Relief Exercises held every year are some shining examples towards this end.

This key stone Doctrine will basically serve as a 'foundation' and 'knowledge base' from which specific Directives and Strategies will be issued by the Chairman Chiefs of Staff Committee to the HQ IDS and Service HQs to consolidate proven concepts, structures, mechanisms, capacities, capabilities, etc, from time to time.

Consequent to consolidation of Joint Training, this maiden Doctrine will be further developed in due course as Doctrines are always 'unfinished products' being 'Evolving in nature', for ready reference as 'Distilled wisdom' and a 'Referral document' for the policy makers, armed forces personnel, academia, etc.

Chief of the Army Staff General Bipin Rawat, Chief of the Air Staff Air Marshal Birender Singh Dhanoa and Chief of Integrated Defence Staff to the Chairman Chiefs of Staff Committee (CISC) Lt Gen Satish Dua were also present on the occasion.

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300 Cyber security experts to attend first ever Asia Pacific Computer Emergency Response Team (Apcert) Conference

300 Cyber security experts to attend first ever Asia Pacific Computer Emergency Response Team (Apcert) Conference

The Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) under the aegis of Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology organizing the Asia Pacific Computer Emergency Response Team (APCERT) Conference from November 12-15, 2017 in New Delhi. This is the 15th Conference of APCERT and first ever conference in India and South Asia and is expected to be attended by 21 economies.

The conference theme is "Building Trust in the Digital Economy". November 12-14 are closed for AGM and other APCERT meetings. The open session including industry, academia, civil society and Government stakeholders will be held on November 15, 2017 at Hotel The Ashok, New Delhi. This will be inaugurated by Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad, Hon'ble Minister of Electronics & Information Technology, and is expected to be attended by over 300 cyber security professionals from the Asia Pacific region, USA, Europe, Industry, Academia, Government and Media.

This conference would cover contemporary topics around strategies of CERTs, Technology and Instruments for building trust in digitally evolving economies and best practices for handling cyber security in mobile and social media.

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France wants to work with India in Indo-Pacific

Jean-Yves Le Drian

France will like to deepen cooperation with India in the Indo-Pacific bilaterally and not as a part of a multilateral arrangement like the recently convened “quadrilateral” between India, U.S., Japan and Australia, officials said here on Wednesday.

“We have a growing cooperation in the Indian Ocean, where both India and France have focal positions, and we are in the process of forming a defence and security partnership in the Indo-Pacific,” announced France’s Ambassador Alexandre Ziegler, adding that this new cooperation would be discussed as part of the strategic partnership along with cooperation in counter-terrorism, defence hardware, nuclear energy, and space cooperation during the upcoming visit of Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian to India.

However, senior diplomats clarified that France and India have a “special and specific” interest in the Indian Ocean, and would prefer to conduct their exchanges across the Indo-Pacific bilaterally. “There is a very strong interest on both sides to keep this bilateral,” a French Embassy official told reporters. “We should not forget that India and France have both a geographical presence as well as a traditional connection of trust in the Indian Ocean,” the official added.

Large territory

France is the only western country with large territory in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) including the Reunion Islands, that spans about two million square kilometres of an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), and it has a population of one million French Citizens in the region, including about 30% of Indian origin. The French navy maintains bases in the UAE, Djibouti as well as in Reunion, with a total of 20,000 forces permanently based in the IOR. In addition, said the official, France is India’s oldest strategic partner, and has conducted India’s first international ‘Varuna’ joint naval exercises since 1983.

“Therefore, the idea would not be for France to join some other formation, but for others to join what India and France are already doing,” the official said in reply to a question about whether France would consider joining the quadrilateral that met in Manila on November 12. Both the official and Ambassador Ziegler declined comments on the nature of the projects being considered for bilateral cooperation.

Mr. Drian, who will meet with External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj and other Ministers on Friday, will be in India as part of a series of trips by senior French officials, including the Defence Minister and the National Security Adviser who are preparing for a visit by France’s President Emmanuel Macron in “early 2018.”

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A plan for Asia

The renewal of the quadrilateral security dialogue between senior officials of India, United States, Japan and Australia dominated the coverage of Prime Minister [Narendra Modi](#)'s annual political pilgrimage to East Asia this week. When you cut through the hype though, it is easy to see that the quad is not among Delhi's immediate priorities. The conversation between the four capitals on reviving the quad has been taking place for some time. That the meeting took place in Manila on the margins of the annual ASEAN-led meetings was just a matter of diplomatic convenience. The separate national statements issued by the four governments after the meeting underlined the exploratory nature of the consultations. It will be a while before the quad acquires unity of purpose and an action plan that can make a decisive impact on the region.

The quad's significance, however, lies in the future. That President Donald Trump referred to the region as "Indo-Pacific" is a reflection of the emerging expectations from India amidst the increasing unsustainability of the present Asian order. The rise of China, the expansion of its military capabilities and Beijing's assertiveness on territorial disputes has ended the prolonged tranquility in the region. China's pressure on its neighbours is weakening the unity of the ASEAN and limiting the options of most countries — big and small — in the region. The US, which has long dominated Asian order, as well as many of China's neighbours, want Delhi to contribute a lot more to regional peace and security. On his part, the PM has signalled India's intent to promote a rules-based architecture in Asia.

The problem, however, is with Delhi's capacity to deliver on the PM's promises. On security cooperation, for example, the Ministry of Defence neither has the time nor inclination to think positively about military diplomacy in East Asia. While substantive MoD reforms are not on the cards, the PM must be prepared to announce a specific set of measures for deepening security cooperation with the ASEAN, when all the 10 leaders of the forum show up for Republic Day celebrations in January. Modi's challenge is a lot harder in the commercial domain, given his government's apparent political discomfort with trade liberalisation. India is the laggard in the negotiations on the ASEAN framework for Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). If Trump has shocked the region by pulling America out of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) talks and China is claiming the leadership of Asian regionalism, Delhi is paralysed. Without a plan to advance economic integration with East Asia, the gap between India's strategic promise and its performance will continue to grow and undermine Delhi's political credibility.

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Asia Pacific Cert (APCERT) Discuss Building Trust in Digital Economy**Asia Pacific Cert (APCERT) Discuss Building Trust in Digital Economy**

First ever Asia Pacific Computer Emergency Response Team (APCERT) Open Conference in India and the first in South Asia was held in New Delhi on November 15, 2017. It was inaugurated by the Hon'ble Minister of Electronics and Information Technology, Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad in the presence of the Minister of State of Electronics and Information Technology, Shri K J Alphons. In their presence the Indian Compute Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) received the host country award from the APCERT, handed over by Japan CERT (JPCERT). CERT's from 22 digital Asia Pacific economies participated along with participation from USA, Europe, Industry, Academia, Government and Media totalling to over 350 professionals to discuss response mechanisms in the complex and evolving threat landscape for Building Trust in the Digital Economy on the contours and vision laid down by the Hon'ble Minister of Electronics and Information Technology, Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad during the inauguration of the open conference on November 15, 2017.

The Hon'ble Minister of Electronics and Information Technology made three significant announcements:

He announced that under the government's programme of supporting PhD scholars in digital technologies, the government will offer PhD scholarships in cyber security to candidates from Asia Pacific, who do their PhD in any of the 100 leading universities of India, including IITs, IISc and other universities. He invited research scholars to explore doing their research in India.

The Hon'ble Minister mentioned that innovation in cyber security is a big focus of the Government. There are more than 100 cyber security product companies in India and it was proposed that in furtherance of the Public Procurement (Preference to Make in India) preference shall be provided by all procuring entities in the government to domestically manufactured / produced Cyber Security Products.

He also said that the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology was in the process of working with Data Security Council of India to conduct Challenge Grant for cyber security as a means to encourage budding start-ups to develop innovative technologies.

India was selected to be part of the steering committee of APCERT along with 6 (Australia, China, Japan, Korea, Malaysia and Taiwan) other countries to shape the agenda for the next 2 years across the region.

In India, cyber security professionals got an opportunity to attend a highly content rich technical conference, interact with the Asia Pacific incident response leaders in cyber security and the International community got to see the skills and depth of some of the cyber security start-ups from India.

The spectrum of topics covered included setting up sectoral CSIRTS, Nation State exploits, vulnerabilities of block chain, secure communication in industrial internet, cyber crime in financial technology ecosystem, building a sharing economy, machine learning, malicious behaviour in encrypted traffic, mobile security and Artificial Intelligence.

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Pak. using social media to lure Kashmiri youth: police

Multiple battles:Inspector-General of Police Muneer Ahmad Khan addressing media in Srinagar.NISSAR AHMAD

Pakistan has started a relentless social media campaign to lure youth to join militancy in Kashmir, Inspector-General of Police (IGP), Kashmir Range, Muneer Ahmad Khan said at a press conference here on Thursday.

He said “religious exploitation” was another reason for the youth to join militancy. “Most of them [militant recruits] are either school or college dropouts,” Mr. Khan said.

He said over 15 militants had been arrested in the past four months in south Kashmir, where militancy figures are showing an upward trend this year.

Describing the arrest of three militants from an encounter site in Kulgam in the past 24 hours, Mr. Khan said this was a reflection of “our commitment to the repeated offer of surrender to local boys”.

“All militants will be welcome if they want to join their families and the mainstream. We will continue to offer the surrender option to militants caught in an encounter if they raise their hands up for it,” Mr. Khan said.

Operation continues

He said the detention of three militants during the Kund operation in Kulgam showed the resolve of the security forces.

“Despite the fact that a soldier was killed on November 14, security forces shifted an injured militant, Atta Muhammad, hit by bullets in the legs, to hospital. He is out of danger now. He could have died too,” he said.

Mr. Khan said the operation in Kulgam continued to “arrest two on-the-run militants, including a foreigner”.

The police identified the two detained militants as Shams-ul-Viqar and Bilal Sheikh, who were brought before presspersons in Srinagar on Thursday.

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Rajnath asks Gates to adopt 1,000 Maoist-hit villages

Bill Gates

Home Minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday asked Microsoft founder Bill Gates to adopt 1,000 villages affected by violence due to Left-wing extremism in Odisha, Bihar and Jharkhand and make them “model villages” by focussing on sanitation and cleanliness.

Mr. Gates, co-chair and trustee of the Gates Foundation, met Mr. Singh at North Block.

The meeting comes amid the Home Ministry’s recent order to cancel the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) licence of Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI), a health advocacy group, majorly funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF).

The licence, which lets an NGO or association receive foreign funds, was cancelled days after Swadeshi Jagran Manch, the economic arm of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) had brought out a ‘white paper’ on the BMGF’s influence in India’s health sector.

A Gates Foundation spokesperson said the cancellation of the FCRA licence of the PHFI was not discussed in the meeting.

“Mr. Gates’s meeting with the Union Minister of Home Affairs focused on the progress made in our partnership with the government across the foundation’s priority focus areas — health, urban sanitation, digital financial inclusion and agricultural development. The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation is committed to working collaboratively with the Government of India in providing global and local technical expertise to advance the country’s ambitious development goals,” the spokesperson said.

Mr. Gates is learnt to have apprised Mr. Singh of a new cheaper sanitation technology for treating “faecal sludge”. An official who was present in the meeting said that Mr. Gates also suggested that new guidelines should be issued by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) to include mandatory levels of “salts and oils” in foods served under universal health programmes.

“He wants India to introduce handheld spectrometers for dry spectral soil analysis that can be used by farmers in India,” the official said.

“The Home Minister appreciated the welfare works being undertaken by the BMGF. He requested Mr. Gates to initiate health awareness programmes in India and suggested that the Foundation should concentrate on developing villages and make them Model Villages so that the local people get inspired,” a Ministry statement said.

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An unsafe world

The International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) task at 60 — to balance the benefits of nuclear technology for human development against the irreversible risks to the planet's survival — could not be greater. In the historic 1953 Atoms for Peace address to the UN General Assembly, U.S. President Dwight Eisenhower proposed the establishment of the agency to harness nuclear science for peace. Eisenhower was apt to appreciate the rapid end to U.S. nuclear monopoly and underscore that the notion of mutual deterrence was a dangerous delusion. Nevertheless, the history of the Cold War and subsequent developments illustrate that global instability from proliferation and weaponisation may well be a reality, at least in the near future.

As the world's nuclear weapon states (NWSs) continue to flout their disarmament obligations with impunity, countries outside this elite club have felt encouraged to nurture their own big ambitions. The possession of the deadly bomb by four other countries, besides the five nations that founded the nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT), testifies to the impediments to restrict the use of nuclear energy for civilian purposes. North Korean leader Kim Jong-un's defiance to expand the country's weaponisation programme is only the latest instance of erosion of the NPT's authority. Rather than engage diplomatically with Pyongyang, U.S. President Donald Trump is bent on ripping apart the 2015 agreement that the five permanent members of the UN Security Council and Germany brokered with Iran. Against this backdrop, the prospects are remote that the 2017 treaty to legally ban nuclear weapons could win support from the NWS.

The IAEA Director General, Yukiya Amano, told the UN last week that lessons from the 2011 accident at Japan's Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant have been incorporated into safety plans. But Mr. Amano also emphasised earlier this year that countries could not outsource the safety and security framework on the deployment of nuclear technology. That cautionary remark should not be taken lightly across the developing world, where a culture of safety and public accountability is lacking. This is especially critical since the share of nuclear power is expected to increase as part of attempts to reduce countries' dependence on fossil fuels. Equally, the emphasis on nuclear science to promote the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals would be subject to the safety frameworks in place.

IAEA member states have evidently been slow to adopt measures to enhance the safety (from terrorist threats) of nuclear material transferred within and across national borders. For instance, an amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material came into force only in 2016. [The Fukushima disaster](#) has brought into sharp focus major concerns over the management of nuclear waste, with potentially dangerous consequences for human civilisation and the environment over the long term. The issue will pose questions on the merits and sustainability of nuclear technology as a credible source of energy. Governments ought to be more transparent on these matters.

The definition of harassment needs to be constantly updated, and the process for justice made more robust

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Joint Indo-Bangladesh Exercise Sampriti 2017 Culminates**Joint Indo-Bangladesh Exercise Sampriti 2017 Culminates**

Joint Indo-Bangladesh Training Exercise SAMPRITI 2017, which is being conducted at Counter Insurgency & Jungle Warfare School, Vairengte in Mizoram culminated today with a validation exercise.

It is the seventh such exercise in the SAMPRITI series. The exercise has been aimed to strengthen and broaden the aspects of interoperability and cooperation between the Indian and Bangladesh Armies. The 13-day long field training exercise commenced on 06 November 2017, which was culminated with a validation exercise on November 15-16. It was conducted in a progressive manner wherein the participants initially familiarised themselves with each other's organisational structure and tactical drills. Subsequently, the training advanced to various joint tactical exercises by the two Armies.

Scenario of terrorists hiding in a village was painted for the validation exercise. It had commenced with joint briefings by the company commanders of both the Armies. Based on which troops established a cordon of the village. Validation Exercise finally culminated with a daring raid in the jungle terrain to neutralise the terrorists. A spectacular demonstration on room intervention drills was also conducted jointly by Indian and Bangladesh Army troops.

The final exercise was reviewed by Major General Md Moshfequr Rahman of the Bangladesh Army and Major General M S Ghura of the Indian Army. The combined exercise was an unprecedented success. Besides promoting understanding and interoperability between the two Armies, it further helped in strengthening bilateral ties.

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India to Host Global Conference on Cyber Space 2017: A Giant Leap Towards a Secure and Inclusive Cyberspace

India to Host Global Conference on Cyber Space 2017: A Giant Leap Towards a Secure and Inclusive Cyberspace

- ***GCCS 2017 to be much bigger than its previous editions***
- ***The Curtain Raiser events to kick-off from 20th November***
- ***A 36-hour Grand Finale of Global Cyber Challenge - Peace-a-thon to take place in the GCCS 2017***
- ***A nearly paperless event in which entire chain starting from pre-registration to travel to hotel booking to meals to session check in will be done through App and Web***

India, for the first time ever, is going to host the **Global Conference on Cyber Space (GCCS)**, one of the world's largest conferences in the field of Cyber Space and related issues, on **23 & 24 November 2017**, at **Aerocity, New Delhi**. The Hon'ble Prime Minister of India **Shri Narendra Modi** will inaugurate the mega event, while **Smt. Sushma Swaraj**, Hon'ble Minister of External Affairs will deliver the keynote address in the Valedictory function.

Incepted in 2011 in **London**, second GCCS was held in 2012 in **Budapest** with focus on relationship between internet rights and internet security, which was attended by 700 delegates from nearly 60 countries. The third edition of GCCS was held in 2013 in **Seoul** with commitment to Open and Secure Cyberspace. The fourth version GCCS 2015 was held on April 16-17, 2015 in **The Hague, Netherlands** which saw participation from 97 countries.

Themed on **Cyber4All: A Secure and Inclusive Cyberspace for Sustainable Development**, this is the fifth edition of GCCS wherein international leaders, policymakers, industry experts, think tanks and cyber experts will gather to deliberate on issues and challenges for optimally using cyber space. The overall goals of GCCS 2017 are to promote the importance of inclusiveness and human rights in global cyber policy, to defend the status quo of an open, interoperable and unregimented cyberspace, to create political commitment for capacity building initiatives to address the digital divide and assist countries, and to develop security solutions in a balanced fashion that duly acknowledge the importance of the private sector and technical community.

While briefing the press, **Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad**, Hon'ble Minister for Electronics & IT and Law & Justice, said, *"This is a historic moment for all of us to host the Fifth edition of the Global Conference of Cyberspace in India. I believe it is recognition of India's emerging role as a massive cyber power, accelerated by the Digital India push, which has acquired international*

acknowledgment. The GCCS 2017 is certainly in accord with the Hon'ble Prime Minister's vision to transform India into a digitally empowered country. GCCS 2017 will give the world's cyber community a unique opportunity to learn from global experience and expert insight, and discover more about the technology led transformation being engineered in India. As India is poised to become a US\$1 Trillion digital economy and lead the digital revolution in the world, it is imperative to formulate and put across a robust cyber space."

*"The GCCS 2017 is going to be four times bigger than its previous edition in terms of its magnitude. The last conference held in The Netherlands saw about 1800 delegates, and I am happy to announce that we have over 10000 delegates who will participate in person. There will also be virtual participation from over 2800 locations across the world will be connected in an interactive mode. We have had over 40 Run-up events around the world since March 2017 to precede the main event that received an unprecedented response from the policy makers, industry, academia, civil society and think tanks. We look forward to cooperation and knowledge sharing among countries to implement and replicate successful initiatives as one of the major expected outcomes of this conference. "added **Shri Prasad.***

GCCS 2017: Key Highlights

- Tens of thousands of delegates (Both in person and through Webinar/ Video Conference from around the world). Millions will watch over webcast from 5 Conference locations at the venue
- Representatives from 124 countries
- 33 Ministerial delegates from 31 countries already including PM of Sri Lanka
- 2800 locations to be virtually connected in an interactive mode
- 15 Parallel sessions & 12 Side events
- Participation of policy makers, industry, academia, civil society and think tanks
- Grand Finale of worldwide Peace-a-thon Events

The plenary sessions and other activities during GCCS 2017 have been designed around the themes of **Cyber4Inclusive Growth, Cyber4DigitalInclusion, Cyber4Security and Cyber4Diplomacy**. During various sessions and activities focused around these themes, GCCS 2017 will bring forth the business, empowerment and developmental potential of Cyber space for realizing the goals of sustainable development.

GCCS 2017 in India is going to be the biggest ever cyber event of its kind. Including about 35 run up events, more than **ten thousand delegates** from **more than 123 countries** are expected to participate in person

- About 7000 in run-up events held by Academia, Civil Society, Industry and Policy

Makers since March, 2017 in India and abroad.

- More than 1000 in 13 Curtain Raiser Events
- More than 2000 (about 700 from abroad and 1500 from India) in 18 Plenary & Parallel Sessions and 12 Side Events on November 23 and 24

33 ministers from various nations dealing with the subject matter of cyber space (ICT or similar ministries in some countries and Foreign Ministry in others) have already confirmed. Prime Minister of Sri Lanka also is expected to come for the inaugural ceremony.

More than 7000 people have already registered on the website; only 2500 will get their invites to the conference. Till now, some of the **eminent speakers** at the conference who have already confirmed participation include **Ministers** from various countries such as **France, Russia, Israel, Kazakhstan, Mexico, Portugal, Bangladesh and the United Kingdom**; **Mr. Houlin Zhao** (Secretary General, International Telecommunication Union); **Mr. Mukesh Ambani** (Chairman, MD, RIL); **Mr. Sunil Bharti Mittal** (Founder and Chairman, Bharti Enterprises); **Mr. Tarek Kamel** (Senior Advisor to President & SPV, Government And IGO Engagement, ICANN); **Ms. Marina Kalijurand** (Chair, Global Commission on Stability of Cyber Space, Estonia); **Mr. David Martinon** (Ambassador for Cyber Diplomacy and the Digital Economy, France); **Mr. Uriël "Uri" Rosenthal** (Ex- Foreign Minister, The Netherlands); **Mr. Lalitesh Katragadda** (Founder, Google Map Maker); **Mr. Veni Markovski** (Bulgarian Internet pioneer, Co-founder and CEO of bol.bg); **Ms. Debjani Ghosh** (Former MD, Intel, South Asia); **Mr. Saurabh Srivastava** (Founding Member, Indian Angel Network); **Mr. Paul Wilson** (Director General, APNIC).

The list of illustrious speakers from around the world can be viewed at www.gccs2017.in/speaker.

In a first ever initiative, 800 locations for Video Conference and 2000 locations are being made available for Live Webinar across the world. Assuming average participation of about 10 at each location, nearly thirty thousand persons are expected to participate virtually during live sessions and even ask questions. This has been made possible using a combination of NIC VC (200 locations) and Learning Management System (2600) locations.

6 oldest IITs and IISc are among academic partners of the GCCS. Leading multinationals, SBI and PNB also are among the sponsors.

In a first time ever initiative, a world-wide Hackathon and Appathon are being hosted by top Universities worldwide. 15 winning teams will compete in the grand finale in Delhi during Curtain Raiser. Prize winners are proposed to be honoured by the Hon'ble PM.

GCCS 2017 - A Truly Digital One: A web-based Portal and a unique app have been created to inter-alia include the following so as to have a less-paper Conference:

- Pre-registration on the web by the target group
- Work-flow based verification by Ministry of External Affairs and Ministry of Home Affairs (including IB)
- Approval and generation of Invitation Letter
- Confirmation by the applicant and subsequent generation of discount codes for travel and stay.
- Final travel programme (including hotel stay)
- Reception at flights / hotels
- Assignment of blocks
- Electronic check-in to sessions
- Chat among delegates and fixing of appointments for side meetings.
- E-Food Coupons
- Priority of questions for checked in users

The tentative program for GCCS 2017 has been planned on the lines of previous conferences to ensure uniformity and continuity of GCCS. The detailed program has also been made available on <https://gccs2017.in/>. The conference is planned as a two-day event which will include an inaugural, plenary sessions, parallel sessions and valedictory session. GCCS 2017's structure has tracks with plenary sessions and parallel sessions. These are a mix of keynote addresses, panel discussions, parallel sessions, along with side events and curtain raiser events.

Besides the conference sessions, technical poster exhibition and a digital exhibition showcasing over 20 exhibitors from government, industry, sponsors etc. will also be showcased. As a post conference event, we are happy to announce that a doctoral colloquium co-organized by IIT, to learn about the standards/methodology and global research practices in e-Governance. We are also releasing a coffee table book which documents 25 success stories from 5 continents. A Country book with thought leaders visioning the future of Digital India, and its contribution to a Safe and Peaceful Cyber Space is another expected output.

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CRPF offers helpline for local militants

Mr. Khan who had joined the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) returned home after a video clip of an appeal by his mother went viral online.

The officer said the Centre has increased the civic action programme budget of the CRPF significantly this year.

“We are focussing on sports and are in touch with schools and colleges to organise tournaments. We have used the budget to construct basketball courts in some schools.”

The officer said that as per the J&K police 60 boys had been weaned from militancy. “Following Majeed’s case, two more families have also appealed for their sons to return,” he said.

A senior Home Ministry official said that as of now 200 militants remained active in the Valley. On Sunday, J&K DGP S.P. Vaid had said that 190 terrorists had been killed this year and of them 66 were local boys.

As per a new surrender policy the State was considering, “passports and jobs to any local youth who gives up the gun” and “support for his full assimilation into society” would be provided.

Another official said that fresh recruitment of local boys by terrorist groups was going on primarily in South Kashmir districts.

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China's indigenous long-range missile could be inducted in 2018

China's next-generation multi-nuclear warhead intercontinental ballistic missile with a proclaimed ability to hit targets "anywhere in the world" may be inducted into the PLA early next year, a media report said on Monday. The new missile — the Dongfeng-41 — also has a speed of more than Mach 10 and can use decoy devices and chaff to pierce its way through the enemy's missile warning and defence systems.

The missile which underwent another test — the eighth since it was first announced in 2012 — could be in the People Liberation Army's line-up as early as the first half of 2018, state-run *Global Times* said. It must have matured considerably if it is to start serving in the PLA, Xu Guangyu, a senior adviser of the China Arms Control and Disarmament Association said.

Three-stage missile

The Dongfeng-41 is a three-stage solid-fuel missile with a range of at least 12,000 km, meaning it could strike anywhere in the world from a mainland site, Mr. Xu told the *Global Times*, adding that, "it can carry up to 10 nuclear warheads, each of which can target separately".

The *South China Morning Post* reported that China had possibly tested the ICBM in its western desert area in early November, but it did not give the exact location or date of the test.

Song Zhongping, a Phoenix TV commentator and former member of the PLA's Second Artillery Corps (Rocket Force), is of the view that the Dongfeng-41 is very likely already in service, since tests and other checks of missiles can be conducted after deployment as well.

Russian experts feel that the missile deployment is aimed at the U.S. as it could reach most of America and Europe.

A commentary in *Global Times* had earlier said that the deployment of the DF-41 was a "strategic deterrence tool" and Beijing would "ready itself for pressures" imposed by the new U.S. government.

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New J&K surrender policy for local ultras

Earlier, the surrender policy was limited to those who crossed the Line of Control into Pakistan-occupied Kashmir in the early 1990s and were stuck there.

The new surrender policy is considering provision of “passports and jobs to any local youth who gives up the gun” and “support for his full assimilation into society,” official sources said.

Meanwhile, parents of two more militants — Ashiq Hussain Bhat from Shopian and Manzoor Ahmad Baba from Pulwama — have appealed through the media to their sons to give up militancy and rejoin the family.

Around 60 boys have already been “brought back into the fold”, said the police. At least 190 militants have been killed this year. Of these, 66 were locals. “There is a remarkable change in the situation. The agitation that peaked earlier this year has been brought under control,” said GOC Sandhu.

On the Hajin operation, in which six LeT militants were killed on Saturday, DGP Vaid said, “These militants killed [former counter-insurgency personnel] Rashid Billa and Ramzan Parray, an officer, and attempted a fidayeen attack in Bandipora.”

The Saturday operation had “cleaned up the area,” the DGP said. “People will heave a sigh of relief and can live without fear now,” he said.

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Catalonia's lessons for India

The ongoing crisis in the Catalonia region of Spain, where an attempt at secession was ruthlessly put down by central authorities, is a salutary reminder to us in India of what can go wrong when regional grievances in a federal political and economic union are allowed to fester.

One of the roots of the putative independence movement is a sense of Catalan identity distinct from that of much of the rest of Spain—an identity rooted in language, culture and history. Yet, it should not be overlooked that a growing dissatisfaction with fiscal transfers within the kingdom of Spain, which many Catalonians believe hurt their region disproportionately, was, and remains, an equally important driver of the desire for independence.

Like most federal unions, the Spanish central government engages in fiscal redistribution among regions, which, effectively, transfers resources from “have” regions to “have-not” regions. A 2012 research paper, by economist Núria Bosch of the Institut d’Economia di Barcelona, finds that Catalonia contributes 119% of national fiscal resources compared to the national average, but receives only 102% of the national average after central government redistribution—knocking it from third to ninth in the fiscal league table.

This is not outlandish when compared to other federal unions: for instance, in the US, the wealthy state of New Jersey receives only 57 cents back as federal spending out of every dollar it contributes in taxes to federal coffers, according to a 2011 piece of data analysis by *The Economist*. Similarly, Canada has a system called “equalization” in which have-not provinces in the centre and east of the country receive federal transfers while have provinces of the west do not. At present, Québec is the largest single recipient, accounting for a whopping 60% of total federal equalization payments, while the wealthy, resource-rich provinces of Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia receive nothing.

What about India? Central statistical authorities do not release such data to the public, but my IDFC Institute colleague, Praveen Chakravarty, has estimated that a sizeable quantum of inter-state fiscal redistribution occurs between have and have-not states through the Centre’s taxing and spending policies. For example, for every Rs100 that the average citizen of Maharashtra contributes to Central coffers, he or she receives Rs15; by contrast, the average citizen of Bihar receives Rs420 for every Rs100 that he or she contributes.

The crux is this: Resentment and separatist zeal in Catalonia have been fuelled by the feeling among many residents that their hard work and thrift are paying for the alleged indolence, welfare dependency culture, and absence of entrepreneurial ethos in lagging regions. Something similar is afoot in Italy, where many in the wealthy north resent large fiscal transfers to the poorer south, the way many in former West Germany bristle at transfers to the poorer former East Germany within the reunified German republic. In Canada, many Albertans and British Columbians complain that their tax dollars go to subsidize Quebec, which as a French-speaking province claims to be culturally distinct as well as having the largest claim on federal coffers. It is perhaps only the US among major federal economic and political unions which has little, if any, of such feeling: but then that country fought a bloody and bitter Civil War in the 19th century and emerged a stronger union from it.

Could India witness a Catalonian-style separatist movement from have states on the back of the potent brew of fiscal and cultural elements?

For a nation that has combatted numerous armed insurgencies, this question is not outlandish. The mix of economic and cultural sources of alienation amongst have states is perhaps strongest

in Tamil Nadu, where there exists a pre-existing vein of pan-Tamilian nationalism that may be tapped by vote-getting politicians.

As recently as 4 June, Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam working president M.K. Stalin tweeted: “Willful erosion of States Rights by Centre which seeks to establish a Monolith will only incite a renewed War of Independence.” Meanwhile, the late All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam leader and chief minister, J. Jayalalithaa, argued last year that greater demands for fiscal and other forms of autonomy from the Centre by the states, “should not be seen as centrifugal or fissiparous trends that have to be curbed, but as a manifestation of India’s maturing as a nation with diversity and as a democracy”.

It would be short-sighted to dismiss such statements as merely political bravado. Many Spaniards dismissed similar statements coming from Catalanian leaders in the lead-up to the recent independence referendum as political posturing to help strike a more favourable deal, and that nation is now in crisis: lesson learnt.

The lesson for India is clear. The need of the hour is to move away from the over-centralizing tendencies of the Centre—which have characterized all dispensations—and towards a model which takes fiscal and policy devolution to the states seriously.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi often speaks of “competitive/cooperative federalism”. It is time to turn that rhetoric into reality.

Vivek Dehejia is a Mint columnist and resident senior fellow at IDFC Institute, Mumbai. Read Vivek’s Mint columns at www.livemint.com/vivekdehejia

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First-time offenders to go scot-free in J&K

The move comes days before the second visit of Special Representative Dineshwar Sharma to the State as his first visit from November 6-10 did not evoke much interest. The Centre's decisions are also in consonance with the recent initiatives of the J&K police for surrender and rehabilitation of young men who have joined terror groups.

Around 700 young men were slapped with criminal cases for throwing stones and damaging public property in the Kashmir Valley in 2016, after Hizbul Mujahideen commander Burhan Wani was killed in an encounter with security forces. "Of the 700 youths who face criminal charges, 40 remain in jail. Of them 20 are in the 19-21 age groups," said the official.

The official said the decision was taken after Mr. Sharma on his return gave a preliminary report to Home Minister Rajnath Singh regarding the feedback he got from meeting several delegations in Srinagar and Jammu.

The Home Ministry has also decided to increase its share in providing *ex gratia* relief to J&K Police personnel killed in the line of duty and it will be at par with the central armed police force (CAPF) personnel now.

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GCCS 2017**GCCS 2017****Day 1 of The Curtain Raiser sets the tone for the mega event**

- ***Winner of the Ideathon Challenge hosted by State Bank of India felicitated***
- ***GCCS 2017 set to begin from 23rd November, inaugural session to be addressed by the honorable Prime Minister of India – Shri. Narendra Modi***

An action packed week leading to the Global Conference on Cyberspace 2017, kicked off today with a 2 day Curtain Raiser. The first day of the curtain raiser began with the 36-hour challenge in the Grand Finale of the Global Cyber Challenge called Peace-a-thon, one of the major highlights of the GCCS 2017. The Global Cyber Challenge is one of the major GCCS 2017 event conducted with the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), National Critical Information Infrastructure Protection Center (NCIIPC), MyGov, Cyber Peace Foundation (CPF) and Policy Perspectives Foundation (PPF) as collaborators.

The open challenge to computer wizards, hosted by top Universities worldwide for competing in a Hackathon and an Appathon had 15 top winning teams and the CTF winners competing for the top honor that would be closed at 2100 hours on the second day (21st November) of the Curtain Raiser. The open Cyber Challenge has attracted millions of registered users of MyGov, professionals and tens of thousands of scholars/students from Premier Institutions.

As a side event to the Hackathon Grand Finale, the State Bank of India also hosted ***Ideathon***, wherein ideas to strengthen their soon-to-be launched app YONO (You Only Need One) were invited from the participants. The top three ideas were recognized with a prizemoney worth INR. 25,000, INR. 15,000 and INR. 10,000 and two consolation prizes worth INR. 5,000 each. The prizes were transferred to the individual winners' bank accounts through BHIM UPI App, in the presence of Mr. Sanjeev Gupta, President & CEO, NeGD and Mr. Mrityunjay Mahapatra, CIO, SBI.

Session on Digital Policy - Key Imperatives:

NASSCOM and DSCI hosted a half-day session on Digital Policy that covered topics of relevance from policy angle and deliberate on the role of stakeholders in the changing landscape. The event saw diverse set of speakers and participation from range of stakeholders.

The multi stakeholder discussion examined issues from varied perspectives, allow better understanding and more informed policy decision-making. As a techno-legal-commercial platform,

the need for balancing interests of the stakeholders, as well as the tradeoffs that policy making should contend with, the outcome of the deliberations will be appropriately fed into the Plenary and Parallel tracks of GCCS.

The panel saw high profile speakers like Ms. Rama Vedasree, CEO DSCI, Mr. Rajat Kathuria, CE - ICRIER (Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations), Mr. S Chandrasekhar, Microsoft, Ms. Gowree Gokhale, Leader Cyber Law, Nishith Desai Associates, Mr. Vinayak Godse, DSCI, Mr. Bhairav Acharya, Facebook, Mr. Rohan Bhasin, IBM and Mr. Sudhanshu Pandey, DoC while, Mr. Gautam Kapoor, Deloitte moderated the panel.

Digital Transformation - Experience Sharing by Digital Champions:

Digital transformation is described as "the total and overall societal effect of digitalization". Digitization has enabled the process of digitalization, which resulted in stronger opportunities to transform and change existing business models, socio-economic structures, legal and policy measures, organizational patterns, cultural barriers, etc. The session on Digital Transformation - Experience Sharing by Digital Champions, was chaired by Mr. Dinesh Tyagi, CEO, CSC SPV. Besides some heartwarming experiences shared by the VLEs from Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and Haryana, the session witnessed some inspirational words from Mr. Shrikant Sinha. CEO, NASSCOM Foundation, Prof. Abhay Karandikar, Dean (Faculty Affairs), Institute Chair Professor, Department of Electrical Engineering, IIT Powai, Mumbai, Prof Alok Pande- Professor (Accounting & Finance), Lal Bahadur Shastri Institute of Management, Mr. Krishnamachari Srikanth, Ex-Cricketer and member of the World Cup Winning Team, 1983. While, Mr. Shrikant Sinha emphasized on reduction of e-waste and greater focus on re-use, re-furbish and recycle, Mr. Krishnamachari Srikanth called out for **empowering the rural India through digital transformation, that provides more opportunities** to the citizens belonging to the remote locations to have access to **everything what a city dweller enjoys**. He also cited the example of M.S. Dhoni, who albeit hailing from a small town, ruled the cricket world. **Mr. Alok Pandey** summed up the session highlighting livelihood, **education and healthcare as the three basics, which needs to be digitally transformed.**

Session on Artificial Intelligence in Cyber Security:

As the role of IT in businesses gets diversified with a greater role of digital in global economy, securing the business processes and transactions gets tougher. While the digital economy is creating new business opportunities on one side, it also intensifies the spectrum of attack vectors for both attackers and opportunists to thrive on. A very relevant session by Checkpoint, on **Artificial Intelligence in Cyber Security**, was chaired by **Mr. Pavan Duggal**, Cyber Law Expert, while eminent speakers and experts like Partha Sengupta, ITC, Mr. R S Mani, NIC, Mr. Pranab Mohanty, UIDAI, Mr. Venugopal N, Checkpoint, Mr. Ramandeep Singh, QoS, Mr. Bhaskar Bakthavatsalu, MD, Checkpoint and Mr. Harsh Marwah, Country Manager, Checkpoint put forward their views on how we have to execute a Cyber Resilience framework by working on:

(a) high volume, veracity and velocity of data for ingestion telemetry;

(b) applying the un-supervisory machine learning models to generate local intelligence from the ingested data in the form of indicators of attack (IOA) & pivot (IOP);

(c) to enrich the intelligence with 3rd global and dark web feeds and apply the Artificial Intelligence through Supervisory Machine Learning models to assign the risk scores to each event.

The Curtain Raiser have 14 events where approximately 1400 stakeholders are participating. Besides this, there are multiple side events in the backdrop of GCCS 2017 that are presenting a unique opportunity for people to engage with delegates present in the conference, particularly on niche topics such as Block chain technology, Internet of Things, Proliferation of Indic languages and Smart Cities.

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A silver lining for peace and progress in Kashmir

In the most visible sign of tensions reducing in Kashmir, the government of India is planning to announce an amnesty scheme for stone-pelters in the Valley, and even withdraw cases against first-time offenders, [Hindustan Times reported on Tuesday](#). This would not be the first time amnesty is being offered, however it appears that this time it is possible to move ahead with the peace process.

Conditions in the Valley have changed dramatically since July 2016 when tension because of stone-pelting reached its peak following the killing of Hizbul militant Burhan Wani. Hundreds were killed during the ensuing protests, and if today there is a silver lining visible it is because of the sustained efforts of both state and central governments. The latest in this [string of positive developments is the appointment of Dineshwar Sharma](#), a former intelligence chief, as the interlocutor between the State and various representatives from Jammu & Kashmir.

Last year 88 locals took to militancy, and it is important for the government to arrest this trend. This cannot be done through brute force. The focus on reaching out, especially to the youth in the Valley, is the right approach because winning their trust and building their confidence in the State is what will help in the long run. Sharma has said that his focus will be on the youth and on "...how to change their mindset because they are the ones who are angry", the HT report quoted.

The J&K police's decision to not register a case against Majid Khan, a militant who surrendered following an emotional appeal from his mother, is reflective of the hope the State has in its efforts to reach out to the youth. Following Khan's return, two other mothers have also [appealed to their sons to return](#).

Helplines like [Madadgaar \(Dial 1441\)](#), where families and well-wishers of youth who want to surrender can call, is another positive initiative.

These positive developments come at a time when support for terrorists in the Valley is on the wane. Still security forces are on vigil as infiltration bids and ceasefire violations as recently as on November 17 at the Poonch sector. As winter sets in, cross-border terrorism and militancy is expected, which is also works in the government's favour. All in all, this is a golden opportunity to put an end to the cycle of unrest in the Valley, and usher in progress and development.

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Army action for troops on China border

In the backdrop of the Doklam standoff, the Army has decided to significantly ramp up road infrastructure along the Sino-India border and tasked its Corps of Engineers to work on it to ensure swift movement of troops whenever necessary.

Official sources said the Corps of Engineers has already initiated a series of steps including placing orders for latest versions of various mountain cutting and road laying machines and equipment besides procuring assault tracks for fast movement of troops.

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Arrest Hafiz Saeed, U.S. tells Pakistan

Hafiz Saeed

Pakistan should ensure that Hafiz Saeed, mastermind of the 2008 Mumbai terror attack, is arrested and charged for his crimes, the U.S. said a day after he was released from house arrest. Saeed is a designated global terrorist and the U.S. has declared a bounty of \$10 million on his head.

The Pakistani authorities had put him under house arrest in January this year, which was widely interpreted as an attempt by them to ward off pressure from the Donald Trump administration that had just taken charge in the U.S. Pakistan had detained him several times since the Mumbai attack, but he has largely remained free, addressing rallies and giving interviews.

“The United States is deeply concerned that Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (LeT) leader Hafiz Saeed has been released from house arrest in Pakistan. The LeT is a designated foreign terrorist organisation responsible for the death of hundreds of innocent civilians in terrorist attacks, including a number of American citizens. The Pakistani government should make sure that he is arrested and charged for his crimes,” said State Department spokesperson Heather Nauert.

Saeed’s release came days after the Trump administration pushed back against attempts by U.S. lawmakers to put the LeT and the Haqqani Network in the same category in the recently passed National Defence Authorisation Act (NDAA). A significant portion of U.S. aid to Pakistan is tied to certification by the Secretary of State that it is taking adequate action against the Haqqani Network. With the Secretary unable to issue this certification, the U.S. has held back large sums in recent years. The Senate version of the NDAA proposed such certification requirement with regard to action against the LeT also, but the Pentagon objected to it. The final version of the law does not have that provision.

‘Act against LeT’

The U.S. has, however, repeatedly asked Pakistan to act against the LeT. “In May 2008, the U.S. Department of the Treasury designated Saeed as a specially designated global terrorist under Executive Order 13224. Saeed was also individually designated by the UN under UNSCR 1267 in December 2008 following the November 2008 Mumbai attack in which 166 people, including six American citizens, were killed,” said Ms. Nauert. “The LeT and several of its front organisations, leaders and operatives remain under both State Department and Treasury Department sanctions. Since 2012, the U.S. has offered a \$10 million reward for information that brings Saeed to justice.”

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Doval for cooperation on cybersecurity

Ajit Doval

National Security Adviser Ajit Doval on Friday said all stakeholders, including States and the private sector, need to cooperate to mitigate the negative effects of cyberspace, especially amid emergence of technologies such as artificial intelligence and internet of things.

“The security agencies of geographies also need to have better cooperation and they should have very specific cybersecurity structure which are able to do faster exchange of information, identify the defaulters, to see against them give support to law enforcement agencies so that the cybernorms and laws are adhered to,” Mr. Doval said at the GCCS 2017.

Artificial intelligence

He warned that the situation would get more complex as “we are entering into domain of artificial intelligence, machine learning, IoTs, robotics... [these] are going to create and compound problems manifold.”

“So we have got to think of the structures, systems, methodologies, inter-operability, governmental support, multilateral and bilateral cooperation, which will be able to cope,” he said.

Mr. Doval, however, added, “We may not be able to completely wipe off this negative side, but at least can do a lot to mitigate them.”

“Never before has there been any change which is so wide in its expanse, and which can affect the lives of so many people... [but] if it provides you global connectivity, it also provides global connectivity to terrorists and criminals. It also provides connectivity to the people who want to subvert the minds and hearts of young generation and take them to a certain path of thinking,” Mr. Doval said.

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GCCS 2017 – Chair’s Statement- Summary**GCCS 2017 – Chair’s Statement- Summary**

1. Starting with the London Process in 2011 which initiated a broad dialogue on the opportunities and challenges in an increasingly networked world and to create a platform to address key themes in cyberspace, the delegates to the Fifth Global Conference on Cyberspace (GCCS) 2017, met in New Delhi from November 23-24, 2017 to promote an inclusive, sustainable, open, secure, stable and accessible cyberspace.
2. The Conference recognised that international community, including the governments, private sector, civil society, industry and technical and academic communities have developed significant capacities, technologies and mechanisms/frameworks to harness the vast potential of ICTs for development. The Conference agreed that the focus needs to be on looking beyond digitisation to digital technology as means to empower people.
3. We noted with concern that the existing digital divide among the countries presents a challenge to many States. Therefore, we cannot have a situation where access to internet is discriminatory or controlled through selective gateways. The conference strongly supports this concept as reflected in its theme of cyber4all.
4. In particular the conference noted with satisfaction India’s Digital Initiative of transformation and empowerment of the people through programmes like Digital India, Skill India, Start-up India, Stand-up India that are empowering common people as well as our Mass digital movements like Common Service Centres in the rural areas that are promoting entrepreneurship and and promoting digital inclusion.
5. The conference noted that women form a significant part of the IT workforce. Digital technology has facilitated several new enterprises led by women. In this way the IT sector has potential for gender empowerment.

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Cyber 4 Growth:

6. The conference highlighted the use of new technologies has a major potential for transformation of governance structures of the future. Artificial Intelligence, IoT, data analytics, robotics and virtual reality are transforming global business and economies. We appreciate the need to develop

proper policy environment with open and free cyber space.

7. We noted with satisfaction that Governments around the world are leveraging digital platforms, and building digital infrastructure, to transform how they deliver public services and support to citizens, enabling participative, bottom-up citizen engagement and anytime/anywhere service delivery within disadvantaged communities.
8. Cyberspace remains a key area for innovation. Startups, are providing solutions to common everyday problems. The global investor community must recognize the immense potential waiting to be tapped. The global economy is becoming increasingly dependent on cyberspace and digital technology. It is important to give primacy to human face of technology in this context.

Cyber 4Digital Inclusion

9. The conference stressed the fact that Inclusiveness is the bedrock of sustainability. This calls for a program based approach with focus on access programs, digital skill training, community technology spaces and low cost access devices. India's myGov initiative is an example of how digital technologies could be tools of effective citizen engagement.

Cyber4Security

10. Securing the cyberspace has become one of the biggest challenges in the present day. Nations must take responsibility to ensure that the digital space does not become a playground for the dark forces of terrorism and radicalization.
11. We recognize that we must coordinate our security services in order to detect and deter attacks. We need to create the fine balance between privacy and openness on one hand, and national security on the other. Together, we can overcome the differences between global and open systems on one hand, and nation-specific legal requirements on the other.

Cyber 4Diplomacy

12. The extensive use of cyber space by states to carry out its legitimate activities including service delivery of its citizens, has thrown up new challenges in terms of establishing norms of responsible state behaviour, handling cyber-crime through trans- national cooperation and resolving conflicts in cyberspace. Cyber diplomacy in digital age can be used as a tool to promote economic growth, development of technology to ensure an open source, interoperable and accessible cyber space

to all.

Conclusion & Way Forward

13. Cyberspace is a public resource, improving the quality of life of individuals, improving the reach and productivity of business and effectiveness of governments. Technology breaks barriers.
14. India emphasizes the need for creation of a digital platform which would enable various stakeholders to address potential information and communication technology gaps and harness information and communication technology for sustainable development. There is particularly the need for finding scalable models and innovative solutions in education and health, using digital technology. There is also the need to make cyberspace an enabler for the differently-abled.
15. To facilitate this India will enable a Digital Knowledge Sharing Platform which will help in sharing of knowledge and expertise between different countries
16. The large multi-stakeholder participation at this event is proof of the global endorsement that this platform has received. India calls upon Nation states, the industry, academia and civil society, to work towards a formal collaborative framework. This will enable a secure cyberspace which improves quality of life.

NNK/MD

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Road to chaos: Pakistan's face-off with extremists

The long stand-off between the authorities and Islamist protesters on the edges of Islamabad, once again, has exposed the vulnerability of the Pakistan government while dealing with extremist groups. The protesters, led by a little-known group, Tehreek-i-Labaik Ya Rasool Allah (TLY) paralysed the city by [blocking the main road from Rawalpindi for three weeks](#), demanding the resignation of Law Minister Zahid Hamid. The demonstrations were purportedly a response to a proposed change in the oath for lawmakers that moderated the mention of the Prophet. Islamist groups, with Khadim Hussain Rizvi, the chief of Tehreek-i-Labaik, taking the lead, alleged that this amounted to blasphemy. Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi appeared to have no idea how to find a way out. He withdrew the proposed amendment in the wake of Islamist protests, hoping that it would pacify them. When the crowd started blocking the road to Islamabad, the government first ignored it, clearly underestimating Tehreek-i-Labaik's capacity to sustain the demonstrations. When the protesters persisted, the authorities offered to hold talks. When that failed and its handling of the crisis came under judicial criticism, the government decided to use force, resulting in violent clashes between security personnel and protesters on Saturday, in which at least six people were killed and over 100 injured. Even then, the civilian leadership had to seek the Army's help to broker a deal with the protesters. It was after Mr. Hamid resigned as Law Minister that Mr. Rizvi finally asked his supporters to disperse.

The way the government handled the crisis and its final capitulation, under military mediation, to the protesters' ultimatum clearly point to the continuing erosion of executive authority. The Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) government, which suffered a massive setback in July when Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif was disqualified, is yet to recover its equilibrium. Mr. Abbasi must take part of the blame for what happened in Islamabad. He failed to act swiftly when the crisis broke. Instead, he waited and watched as the capital city was paralysed. By the time things came to a head, the military played its hand not just to help resolve the crisis but also to project the civilian leadership as being clueless. An equally worrying sign for Pakistan is that a political upstart with extremist views has showed it can hold the government to ransom. It is not clear whether Tehreek-i-Labaik has the support of the ruling party's rivals. But the pace at which thousands of supporters were mobilised in Islamabad against the government reinforces the sensitivity of the blasphemy issue in the country's politics. The growing street power of Islamist fringe groups, the reluctance of the government to take them on and the mediatory role the Army plays at a time when divisions among political parties run deep, all confirm the risk of instability in Pakistan.

Revving up infrastructure spending is necessary, but not sufficient

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Closing down a country: the nature of democratic politics in Pakistan

Around three thousand unarmed men, of a recently founded group, the Tehreek-i-Labaik Ya Rasool Allah (TLY), have been able to [close down key parts of Pakistan's main cities, which include Rawalpindi, Islamabad, Lahore and Karachi](#). On account of state action taken against this very tiny group of Islamic protesters on Saturday near Islamabad, the Government of Pakistan closed down all television news channels for a day, except Pakistan Television (PTV), and shut down Twitter, Facebook and YouTube. Moreover, in Islamabad and Lahore, education institutions have had to be closed for two days, one day in Karachi.

The fact that the three-week-long dharna, even by just 3,000 unarmed men, has created such a [major crisis for a government](#) which is trying to stabilise itself under a new Prime Minister shows how a minuscule political entity can have such major consequences. Either non-mainstream actors and parties now do politics outside the rules of democratic politics or, the rules of democratic politics have changed to include disruptive and threatening gestures which might completely destabilise democracy itself.

In the case of Pakistan, in particular, the threat of destabilising democracy by extra-democratic means, has loomed large since the ouster of the military and the return to democracy in 2008. In 2014, a dharna organised by cricketer-turned-politician Imran Khan and Tahirul Qadri, a cleric who lives in Canada and flies into Pakistan at times of political crises, lasted four months. Much evidence since that time clearly suggests that the dharna was supported by very senior members of Pakistan's Army, who had clear designs to use the agitation as a means to dismiss Nawaz Sharif and his government. The fact that the then Chief of Army Staff, Raheel Sharif, decided not to intervene and dismiss the government may have been on the basis of expediency and prudence, rather than the military's support for democratic practices.

The Imran Khan/Tahirul Qadri dharna was peaceful, had many tens of thousands of participants including women, and did not cause any death on account of it. The current protest, in contrast, is tiny, but accounted for at least six deaths and 187 cases of injuries. Moreover, the 2014 dharna was confined largely to Islamabad (with some protest in Lahore), while the consequences of police action on this current protest in Rawalpindi and Islamabad instantly mobilised TLY group members and sympathisers in many cities across Pakistan, paralysing parts of Lahore, Faisalabad and Karachi, and even parts of Sindh and Balochistan.

For a small, apparently insignificant group, to be so well coordinated across diverse cities suggests that it has a cadre which responds well and quickly when members of the group need support. Of course, such well-coordinated action also gives rise to speculation that it is actually the military which is behind the protest of the TLY and is trying to further destabilise a weak government. Of course, nothing could be farther from such fantasy.

The background and the reasons for the protests in Rawalpindi and Islamabad — which have brought much of Islamabad to a standstill since key routes in and out of the city have been blocked — rests on the demand for the Law Minister to resign on account of a supposed change made in the oath by Members of Parliament about the finality of Prophet Muhammad, as per the Elections Act 2017. A change was made by Parliament in the oath to be taken, where the old "I solemnly swear ...", was replaced by "I believe...", and where the legal consequences remain the same. Parliament even realised that it had apparently made a "mistake" in approving this change, and opted to reverse its decision going back to the earlier wording. Islamists accused the Law Minister of blasphemy for this change in the wording of the electoral oath, and called for his blood. He refused to resign and they started their protests.

As happens in such stand-offs, it was expected that through some cajoling and over time, the protesters would disperse. They did not despite the rain that came and stayed put. The government then decided to push the protesters out, and security personnel were called in to remove them. Clashes occurred and the government soon backed off, leaving the protesters holding firm, with protests launched in other cities as well. The civilian government called in the military “for law and order duty according to the Constitution” but the military was nowhere to be seen, a clear act of disobedience.

The government has been criticised for taking such a long time in removing the protesters and making a mess of the situation. With swift action it could have chased off the protesters. Instead, the organisation consolidated itself, gaining strength and support as it continued to resist.

The reporting and analysis in the English language press has been indicative of the strong reaction towards the Islamist group. They have been called “zealots”, “fanatics”, “hard-line Islamists”, “bigots”, that they have “dark passions”, are “hot blooded”, and much worse. What is also interesting is how Pakistan’s Interior Minister, Ahsan Iqbal, has quite bizarrely stated that his government has evidence that the protesters have “contacted India” and was “investigating the matter”.

Before social media went off the air, there was strong reaction to the numerous remarks made by military spokesmen as well as the Chief of the Army Staff, General Qamar Javed Bajwa. Before the actions against the protesters started, Gen. Bajwa said that violence should be avoided “by both sides”, i.e., the protesters and the government, which got a strong reaction from many on social media, pointing out that it was the protesters who were being violent, not the government. When the civilian government asked for the military’s help in removing the protesters, he said that since the people “loved the Army”, the Army could not become part of any such action. He stated that the Army “cannot take action against its own people”, a statement which invited a barrage of criticism reminding the General of the military’s action against its own people, in East Pakistan, Federally Administered Tribal Areas, Balochistan, Karachi, and against the Okara peasants.

The protest, or siege as many called it, ended on Sunday night following an agreement between the protesters and the government. The agreement was mediated by a Major General of the Inter-Services Intelligence, and the Law Minister resigned. The signed agreement concludes with: “we are thankful to him [Gen Bajwa] for saving the nation from a big catastrophe”, crediting the Army Chief and his representative team for their “special efforts”. The Islamabad High Court in its proceedings on Monday morning criticised the Interior Minister for giving the military the role of “mediator”, especially since the military had turned down the civilian government’s request to intervene earlier. The judge asked: “Where does the law assign this role to a general?” The rather brave judge said that this was “proof of the military’s involvement”.

Even this tiny incident in Islamabad allows one to make a number of observations about the political economy of Pakistan: religious groups and parties are far better organised and committed than their liberal cousins, and civil society; the present government is suffering from the absence of Nawaz Sharif as Prime Minister, and the current leadership is weak; the military overrules its chief executive, the civilian government; and the military is needed to ensure agreements between the government and protesters. The role of Imran Khan and his party has been particularly opportunistic and pro-military in this encounter. It seems now that the nature of democratic politics in Pakistan is also changing, and even though elections are to be held next year, the ballot box will no longer be the only forum to determine political outcomes.

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