

Myanmar to take back Rohingya

Amid mounting international pressure on Myanmar to end atrocities on Rohingya people, Bangladesh and Myanmar on Sunday agreed to form a joint panel for repatriation of Rohingya refugees.

The joint panel was proposed by Myanmar to take back the Rohingya who had come to Bangladesh, fleeing the violence in the Rakhine State since August 25.

“Myanmar has proposed taking back the Rohingya refugees. We have agreed on forming a joint working group to oversee the repatriation process,” Bangladesh Foreign Minister A.H. Mahmud Ali told the media in Dhaka on Sunday after holding a meeting with visiting Myanmar Minister of the Office of State Counsellor Kyaw Tint Swe.

“Kyaw Tint Swe has shown interest in taking them [the Rohingya] back after forming a joint working group to identify the Rohingya people,” said Mr. Ali. However, the Myanmar Minister did not say anything about the framework of the commission.

This was the first bilateral meeting between the two countries since refugees entered Bangladesh following actions by the Myanmar security forces in late August. According to the UN, more than five lakh Rohingya people have entered Bangladesh since August 25.

Mr. Ali also said that Bangladeshi Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal will visit Myanmar soon to “discuss with the Myanmar government regarding border security and border management issue”.

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'Maoists raising new group'

A bus that was set on fire by alleged Maoists in Bijapur in September 2017. File

A senior Home Ministry official said on Monday that there were reports that Maoists were attempting to raise a new armed group along the Madhya Pradesh-Maharashtra-Chhattisgarh trijunction as they continue to face the heat at their stronghold in Bastar.

The official said the new unit, 'Vistara platoon,' was trying to gain a foothold at the tri-junction, which has lesser deployment of security forces than the seven districts in the Bastar division of Chhattisgarh, said to be one of the last Maoist bastions. "There are multiple reports about Maoists trying to expand at the tri-junction. In the past, there has not been much Maoist activity in this area. This is possibly a strategy, so that security forces lower their guard in Bastar and concentrate on this area instead," the official added.

An official of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) said the forces had opened new camps in the once-inaccessible Bastar region to "squeeze out" the militants.

"Our focus is on the South Bastar-Sukma region and Dantewad and Bastar districts. In the past few months, we have opened three new camps, which would help us in planning operations better and return the same night. With an ability to strike much faster and with an element of surprise," the official said.

There are more than 1.6 lakh CRPF personnel deployed in Chhattisgarh, of which 1.3 lakh concentrate on a 40,000 sq. km. area in Bastar, known for rich mineral deposits of iron ore, granite, tin and corundum.

Part of 'propaganda'

Another official said the expansion plans were part of "propaganda" to recruit more people.

"The recruitment by Maoists is at an all-time low. The composition of Bal Sangams, where they forcibly recruit children, has been dismal in the past two-three years," the official said.

He added that internal documents recovered from Maoist camps showed that there was an attempt to operationalise the Vistara platoon.

"Unlike the tribals in the Bastar area, those living near this tri-junction are more exposed to the outside world and understand Hindi. This is why Maoists are not able to bring more people to their fold," the official said.

He said there had been a churning in the Maoist leadership.

Turf war

The Hindu reported last week that Muppala Lakshman Rao, alias Ganapathi, the elusive head of the banned CPI(Maoist), was making way for his second-in-command and chief of the Central Military Commission Nambala Keshav Rao, alias Basavraj.

Another Maoist leader, Sudhakar Reddy, who moved to Jharkhand two years ago, is learnt to have been siphoning off money from the party fund, the official said.

“He is at loggerheads with Arvind *ji*, a key Maoist leader in Jharkhand, and there was a turf war between the two. Recently, a relative of Mr. Reddy’s was arrested with Rs. 25 lakh in Jharkhand.

Sudhakar Reddy had been asked to transfer the money to his family,” the official said.

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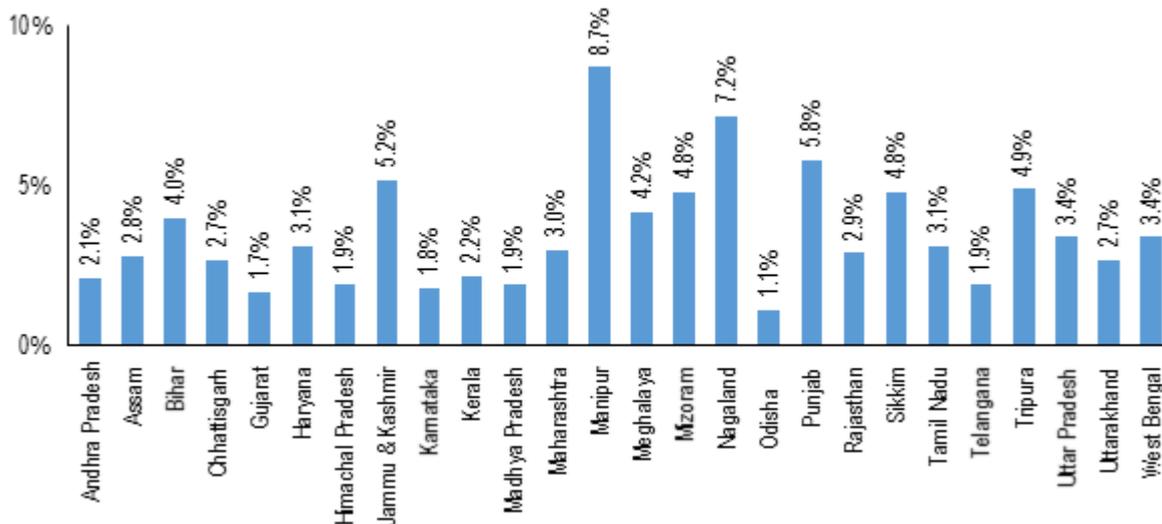
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In India, police and law and order come under the purview of state governments.^[1] Accordingly, each state has its own police force for maintaining law and order and investigating crimes. However, due to financial and other constraints, states have critical gaps in their policing infrastructure.² Figure 1 shows the expenditure by states on police, as a percentage of their total budget. In 2015-16, Manipur spent the highest proportion of its state budget on police, followed by Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir.

Figure 1: Police Expenditure as a proportion of total state budget



Note: Figure does not include data for union territories.

Sources: Data on Police Organisations, Bureau of Police Research and Development, 2016; PRS.

The Ministry of Home Affairs has been supplementing resources of states under the Modernisation of Police Forces (MPF) scheme.^[2] The Union Cabinet last week approved the implementation of an umbrella scheme of MPF and has allocated funding of Rs 25,060 crore for the 2017-18 to 2019-20 period.^[3] In light of this decision, we present the key features of the scheme and examine other issues related to the police forces.

Modernisation of Police Forces scheme

The MPF scheme was initiated in 1969-70 and has undergone several revisions over the years.² It was allocated Rs 11,946 crore for the period between 2012-13 to 2016-17, which has now been doubled after last week's Cabinet approval.^[4] Funds from the MPF scheme are typically used for improving police infrastructure through construction of police stations and provision of modern weaponry, surveillance and communication equipment. Upgradation of training infrastructure, police housing and computerisation are also important objectives funded through the scheme.

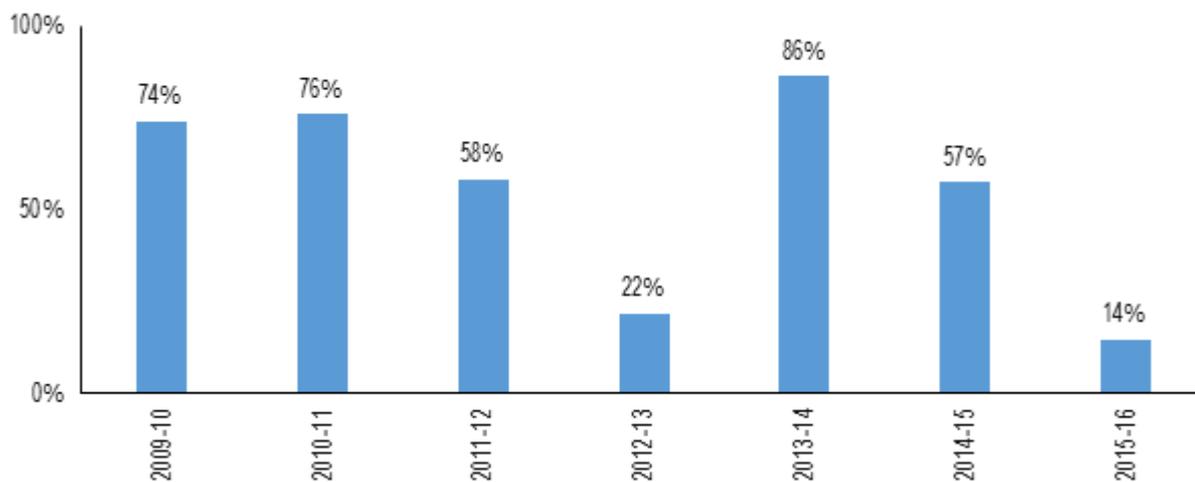
Following the recommendations of the Fourteenth Finance Commission, to increase the share of central taxes to states, it was decided that the MPF scheme would be delinked from central funding from 2015-16 onwards.^[5] States were expected to finance the scheme using their own resources. However, of the recent allocation made by the Cabinet, Rs 18,636 crore will come from the central government and Rs 6,424 crore will come from the states.³ This implies that the centre will fund almost 75% of the scheme.

Underutilisation of Funds

Data from the Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D) shows that funds have not been fully utilised under the MPF scheme. In the year 2015-16, out of a total grant of Rs 9,203 crore that was made available for modernisation, states utilised only Rs 1330 crore (14%).^[6]

Figure 2 shows the trend in underutilisation of modernisation funds from 2009-10 to 2015-16. Over this period, there has been a consistent underutilisation of funds by states. On average, states spent 55% of the funds allocated to them, with the highest being 86% utilisation in 2013-14.

Figure 2: Utilisation of funds for modernisation by states (%)



Sources: Data on Police Organisations, Bureau of Police Research and Development, 2016; PRS.

Issues related to police forces

While the MPF scheme seeks to improve police infrastructure, there are a number of structural issues that have been raised by experts over the years related to police forces. We discuss a few of these below.

(i) Overburdened police force

Apart from the core function of maintaining law and order, police personnel carry out various other functions such as traffic management, disaster rescue and removal of encroachments. The Second Administrative Reforms Commission (2007) has noted that these extra obligations lead to overburdening of the police force. It recommended that these functions should be carried out by other government departments or private agencies.^[7] Note that as of January 2016, 24 per cent of sanctioned police posts in India were vacant.⁶ This indicates that police personnel may be overburdened, which may have negative consequences on their efficiency and performance.

(ii) Poor quality of investigation

In 2015, the conviction rate for crimes recorded under the Indian Penal Code, 1860 was only 47%.^[9] The Law Commission (2012) observed that one of the reasons for low conviction rates in India is poor quality of investigation by police.^[8] The police lack training and expertise required to conduct professional investigations. They also have insufficient legal knowledge and inadequate

forensic and cyber infrastructure. In light of these deficiencies, the Second Administrative Reforms Commission (2007) recommended that states should have specialised investigation units within the police force for better investigation of crimes.⁷

(iii) Police accountability

In India, control over the police force vests with the political executive.^[10] The Second Administrative Reforms Commission (2007) noted that this has led to abuse of police personnel and interference with their decision-making authority.⁷ To allow the police operational autonomy while maintaining accountability, the Supreme Court issued guidelines to the central government and state governments (and Union Territories) in the year 2006.^[11]

The guidelines provided for the establishment of three institutions: (i) a State Security Commission, (ii) a Police Establishment Board, and (iii) a Police Complaints Authority.¹¹ The Supreme Court also stated that the state Director General of Police (DGP) should be selected from three senior-most officers of the state empanelled by the Union Public Service Commission and must have a minimum two-year tenure.

In addition, the court recommended that officers in key positions in the field (Inspector General in charge of Range, Station House Officer) must be given a two-year tenure. Currently, DGPs and senior officers are selected by the political executive of the state and are not guaranteed security of tenure.^[10] In order to improve the quality of investigation, the Court recommended that investigating police must be separated from law and order police.¹¹

These guidelines and recommendations of other expert bodies were used to create the draft Model Police Bill, 2015 by BPR&D, which states have been encouraged to adopt. While states have partially implemented some of these guidelines, no state has adhered to them in full.^[12] In most states, the three institutions which the Supreme Court has directed states to create have not been given the authority they need to ensure accountability and insulate the police force from political misuse.¹²

^[1]Entry 1 and 2, List II, Schedule 7, Constitution of India, 1950.

^[2] Modernisation of Police Force Scheme Book, Ministry of Home Affairs, 2010
http://mha.nic.in/sites/upload_files/mha/files/Scheme-MPF-11Nov.pdf.

^[3] “Cabinet approves umbrella scheme of Modernisation of Police Forces”, Press Information Bureau, 27th September 2017.

^[4] Annual Report, Ministry of Home Affairs, 2015-16,
[http://mha.nic.in/sites/upload_files/mha/files/AR\(E\)1516.pdf](http://mha.nic.in/sites/upload_files/mha/files/AR(E)1516.pdf).

^[5] “Major Programmes Under Central Assistance for State Plans”, Union Budget, 2015-16
<http://indiabudget.nic.in/budget2015-2016/ub2015-16/bag/bag8.pdf>.

^[6] “Data on Police Organisations”, Bureau of Police Research and Development, 2016,
<http://bprd.nic.in/WriteReadData/userfiles/file/201701090303068737739DATABOOK2016FINALSMALL09-01-2017.pdf>.

^[7] “Public Order”, Second Administrative Reforms Commission, 2007,
<http://arc.gov.in/5th%20REPORT.pdf>.

^[8] “Report No. 239: Expeditious Investigation and Trial of Criminal Cases Against Influential

Public Personalities”, Law Commission of India, March 2012,
<http://lawcommissionofindia.nic.in/reports/report239.pdf>.

[9] “Crime in India”, National Crime Records Bureau, 2006-15
<http://ncrb.nic.in/StatPublications/CII/CII2015/FILES/Compendium-15.11.16.pdf>.

[10] Section 3, Police Act, 1861.

[11] Prakash Singh vs Union of India, Supreme Court, Writ Petition (Civil) No. 310 of 1996, November 8, 2010.

[12] “Building Smart Police in India: Background into the needed Police Force Reforms”, Niti Aayog, 2016, http://niti.gov.in/writereaddata/files/document_publication/Strengthening-Police-Force.pdf.

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Can India protect Rohingya, SC asks govt.

Kindred spirits: A file photo of children belonging to the Rohingya community playing at a refugee colony at Kalindi Kunj in New Delhi. Sushil Kumar Verma

Can India protect a large section of humanity comprising Rohingya women, children, the sick and the old who are “really suffering”?

This is the question the Supreme Court wants the government to answer.

The government, meanwhile, said the crisis over its move to deport 40,000 Rohingya was not “justiciable”, that is, the issue outside the Supreme Court’s domain.

But the court rejected this stand outright.

“I, for one, believe, from my past experience of 40 years, that when a petition like this comes to us under Article 32 of the Constitution, the court should be very slow in abdicating its jurisdiction,” Chief Justice of India Dipak Misra, who leads the three-judge Bench comprising Justices A.M. Khanwilkar and D.Y. Chandrachud, responded to the government.

The Centre, represented by Additional Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta, submitted that its August 8, 2017 communication to all the States to identify Rohingya and aid in their deportation was based on certain “executive parameters” such as diplomatic concerns, on whether the country can sustain such an influx of refugees and geographically whether there would be tensions and threat to national security. It denied saying all Rohingya were terrorists, but only “some of them”.

Faced with stiff resistance from the Bench, the government climbed down to explain that whether an issue was justiciable or not ought to be decided on a case to case basis.

‘Out of sync’

Senior advocate Fali Nariman, appearing for the Rohingya community, said the government “has gone out of sync” with its August 8 directive for deportation of Rohingya. He submitted that the government’s affidavit claiming the question of deportation of Rohingya was exclusively “within its subjective domain and not justiciable” makes “big inroads into what we thought our Constitution was.”

He rubbished the government’s claims that the Rohingya refugees will eat into the resources meant for citizens. “Our Constitution is not made up of group rights but individual rights,” Mr. Nariman submitted. Mr. Nariman, who introduced himself as a refugee from British Burma, submitted that the fundamental right to life enshrined in Article 21 protects all “persons,” including refugees who fled persecution in their native countries.

Universal obligation

He said the obligation to grant asylum was universal. “The Government of India has constantly made efforts to substantiate, enhance the rights of refugees. The August 8 communication is totally contradictory to Article 14. It sticks out like a sore thumb in our nation’s policy towards protection of refugees,” he submitted.

Mr. Nariman referred to the December 29, 2011 directive which laid out the standard operating procedure and internal guidelines for the Foreigner Regional Registration Offices (FRRO), and if

necessary take steps to provide the foreign national with a long-term visa. This had to be done irrespective of religion, gender, etc.

He said India had been “supportive of burden-sharing, of providing humanitarian assistance,” citing the Nepal earthquake as an instance. The court asked the government to address Mr. Nariman’s submissions that humanitarian concerns of children, women, the sick and the old outweigh justiciability and cannot be viewed in the same light as “everyone”. The next date of hearing is October 13.

The Rohingya had offered that anyone among them found to be a militant can be proceeded against as per the law. They were replying to the Centre’s claims that the Rohingya community was a threat to national security, easy prey for radicalisation. Their affidavit had referred to India’s strong track record of hosting refugees .

The Rohingya community, represented by main petitioner Mohammad Salimullah, said the government could not make a “blanket claim that all Rohingya refugees have terror links.”

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Awaiting police reforms

The Indian Police Foundation was inaugurated in 2015 to mount pressure on State governments to implement the directions of the Supreme Court on police reforms (Prakash Singh v. Union of India). The court in 2006 had issued seven binding directions to implement those reforms. It took the court a little over 10 years to give its verdict on the writ petition filed by Prakash Singh and me in 1996. We were happy when the orders came because almost all the submissions made by us and several others such as the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, the Human Rights Commission, and the Ribeiro Committee were accepted. Eleven years have passed, but States have taken only some grudging steps to implement the reforms. September 22 is observed every year by the Police Foundation as Police Reform Day to create awareness for the much-needed reforms.

The fact is that political authorities still have a stronghold over the police. When a new government is elected, the first thing it does (as it happened recently in Uttar Pradesh) is to replace the Director General of Police (DGP) of the State. In some cases, this is also happening with the Chief Secretaries. There are a few exceptions, no doubt — the Chief Minister of Bihar changed neither the DGP nor the Chief Secretary, both of whom he inherited from his predecessor under rather acrimonious circumstances.

The result is that the police even today is not trusted by the people. They perceive the force as being partisan, politicised, and generally not very competent. Nothing confirms this more than the frequent demand for probes by the CBI into crimes which can be handled by Criminal Investigation Departments. Even in the recent murder case of journalist-activist Gauri Lankesh, there was a demand for a CBI probe.

And what about the CBI? Only a few years back, the Supreme Court had called it a “caged parrot”. If at all, the lock of that cage has become tighter. And very often now, the demand for a CBI probe is accompanied by a Supreme Court-monitored probe.

Much of the problem would not have been if the 2013 Lokpal legislation was put in place. The Lokpal would have the powers to oversee the CBI’s work and would ease the burden of the court. However, even the Opposition is not enthusiastic about the Lokpal as parties across the political spectrum have a vested interest in continuing with the present police system.

Ultimately, it is only strong public opinion that can move the political class to implement the 2006 directives. But the police has to set examples to win public trust. Reform must start at home. Since the political class has a vested interest in the present system, no amount of pressure will work. We will have to fall back on the judiciary, which wants an impartial and professional police force because it knows that the criminal justice system cannot function without a healthy police and investigative agency.

N.K. Singh is a former Joint Director of the CBI and member, National Executive of the JD(U)

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

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More Chinese boots near Doklam

Worry remains:Kupup in Sikkim, the closest point to the Doklam plateau.Special Arrangement

A conclave of Army Commanders next week is set to discuss military preparedness along the China border, amid indications that the Chinese may have beefed up their presence near the Doklam standoff site since the disengagement more than a month ago.

According to sources in the Indian security establishment, the Chinese have 1,500 to 1,700 troops of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) stationed a few hundred metres afrom the standoff site on their side.

New bunkers found

In the locality, Indian surveillance has also detected new bunkers. The sources said road construction stores that were moved to the area during the Doklam standoff also remain in the area, and some road re-laying has been done on the Chinese side not very far from the standoff point.

At least a couple of official sources admitted that they were uncomfortable about the Chinese presence and activities on the plateau. "It is not status quo ante," an official said. "Ideally, they should withdraw the troops and equipment," he said.

Defence Ministry officials here claimed that there were only some 300 Chinese soldiers in the area. "There has been no change in the levels (of deployment) since the end of the standoff. Since then, the Chinese troops have only pulled back 300-400 metres," a senior Army officer said.

The nearest PLA base is at Yatung which has a battalion headquarters with at least 600 soldiers, and is 12-13 km away.

Tanks deployed

Meanwhile, Army sources confirmed that the biannual Army Commanders conference, scheduled to be held from October 9 to 14, would be discussing the Chinese posturing and military preparedness along the border.

The Indian Army has carried out its own readjustments in the India-China-Bhutan trijunction, with forward deployment of T-72 tanks and BrahMos missiles among other equipment.

The two Armies were engaged in a standoff at Doklam near the trijunction since June 16 after Indian soldiers prevented the Chinese from building a road in the disputed territory. After prolonged diplomatic negotiations, the two sides announced disengagement on August 28 ending the 73-day standoff.

Officials said the present posturing by the PLA could be in the context of the crucial Chinese Communist Party Congress scheduled in two weeks. "It is more of a messaging by the PLA for the party. They may pull back after that," the MoD official said.

"They would not want to wait till winter. It will be difficult to sustain for them," the official added.

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Dhaka defends China's OBOR project

Countries must not become "isolated in the name of sovereignty," said Bangladesh Foreign Secretary Shahidul Haque, striking a counter to India's tough position against China's One Belt, One Road (OBOR) Initiative during a discussion on Asian connectivity projects.

"Economic issues now dictate how much sovereignty one should exert," Mr. Haque said at the World Economic Forum in Delhi. "We cannot be isolated in the name of sovereignty... There are times when you have to put the sovereignty issue behind, in the back seat, to the economic benefits to your people."

'High costs involved'

"We in South Asia are the least integrated compared to ASEAN countries," conceded Congress leader and Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on External Affairs Shashi Tharoor, speaking during the discussion "Asia's New Normal" at the WEF conference, but warned that while India could not "dictate" to its neighbours, they must see the high costs of the Belt and Road Initiative.

"Chinese are now coming to build projects in Pakistan and in Sri Lanka they are increasingly seeing the exorbitant costs of Chinese aid. Many now call Sri Lanka's Hambantota port project, a white elephant," Mr. Tharoor added.

Mr. Haque's comments came in defence of Bangladesh's decision to join the 60-nation connectivity project promoted by China, even as concerns grow over the "debt trap" that the massive infrastructure projects are leading smaller SAARC countries like Bangladesh, Maldives, and Sri Lanka into. In May, India had refused to attend China's Belt and Road Forum.

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Govt. to hold talks with Nagas today

The decision to create seven new districts in Manipur, which led to massive protests and blockade of national highways linking the State, will be reviewed at a tripartite meeting called by the Union Home Ministry for Friday in Senapati district, an official said.

The representatives of the United Naga Council (UNC) and the Central and State governments will attend the meeting.

The UNC, the apex political body of the Nagas residing in the hill districts of Manipur, staged protests after the districts were created, alleging that the measure would bifurcate the ancestral land of the Nagas. It demanded that the meeting be held in Senapati, its headquarters, and not in Imphal. It also demanded that the Centre send its representative to the meeting.

In 2016, the organisation imposed an economic blockade for 139 days on National Highway-2 (Imphal-Dimapur) and National Highway-37 (Imphal-Jiribam), the lifelines of the landlocked Manipur. The blockade was withdrawn in March after the BJP came to power in the State and assured the UNC that its demands would be considered, the official said.

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CCTNS Digital Police Portal launched to fast-track Criminal Justice System in the Country

*Deepak Razdan

As crime continues to grow, and criminals turn tech-savvy, police investigators across States face a tough challenge to bring the law-breakers to justice. The situation is, however, undergoing a revolutionary change. The Digital Police Portal launched by the Government of India as part of the Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems (CCTNS), in August this year, will not only help police sleuths track the criminals fast, but also help the victims seek redress online.

The total IPC crimes in the country increased from 28.51 lakh in 2014 to 29.49 lakh in 2015. According to the Union Home Ministry's latest annual report (2016-17), the share of IPC crimes to total cognizable crimes in percentage terms was 37.2 per cent in 2011, and it increased to 40.3 per cent in 2015. The crime rate, which shows the number of crimes per one lakh population, too increased from 497.9 in 2012 to 581.8 in 2015.

In such a complex scenario, the Digital Police Portal, with its various features, is expected to be a game-changer. The CCTNS portal will provide investigators the complete record history of any criminal from anywhere across the country. Equipped with a Google-type Advance Search engine and ability to give analytical reports, the portal is expected to become the backbone of the country's criminal justice system. For the State Police organisations and investigating agencies like the CBI, IB, ED and NIA, the Digital Police Portal provides a National Database of crime and criminals with facility for 11 searches and 44 reports. This will improve national security and revolutionise the way police works in the country.

To citizens, the Digital Police Portal offers online facility to register FIRs. There will be initially seven Public Delivery Services in 34 States & UTs, like Person and Address Verification of employees, tenants, nurses etc; permission for hosting Public Events, Lost & Found Articles and Vehicle theft. The portal will turn criminal investigation a completely citizen-friendly affair. The citizens' reports and requests are forwarded to State and Union Territory Police without loss of time for follow-up action.

In 2004, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) initiated a project named- Common Integrated Police Application (CIPA) as a component of the "Modernization of State Police Forces (MPF)" project, aiming at computerization of crime records in police stations on a stand-alone basis. The need for setting up of a national database of crime records was realized later, and the MHA

introduced a Central sector project of Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems (CCTNS) in 2009, with the objective of inter-linking all police Stations under a common application software for the purpose of investigation, policy making, data analytics, research and providing Citizen Services.

The project provided the State Police officials with a platform to enter Crime & Criminal data onto a CCTNS application, which could be accessed any time through State database at State Data Centre as well as at National Database at National Data Centre (NDC). The total approved outlay of the CCTNS project is Rs. 2000 Crore. The Central government provides funds to States and Union Territories towards hardware, CCTNS software, connectivity, system integration, data entry of legacy data, project management manpower and training. The Centre has released to States Rs 1450 crores out of which Rs 1086 crores have been spent by the States and UTs.

At present, the CCTNS software is deployed at 14284 Police Stations out of the 15398 Police Stations covered under the scheme. A total of 13775 Police Stations out of 14284 Police Stations are using this software to enter FIRs 100 per cent. As many as 13439 Police Stations out of the 15398 Police Stations covered by the scheme are already connected and linked with State & National database of Crime and Criminal records. The total number of FIRs registered using CCTNS leapt from less than 1.5 lakhs in March 2014 to about 1.25 crores before June, 2017, registering a jump of almost 100 times. Thirty-four States and UTs have launched their State Citizen Service portals with key services such as reporting a crime, request for verification, permission for events etc. Thirty-five out of 36 States and UTs are sharing data with National Crime and Criminal database. The system has seven crore records for crime and criminal data including 2.5 cr FIR records and legacy data.

The scope of the CCTNS project has been enhanced to integrate the Police data with other pillars of the criminal justice system namely -- Courts, Prisons, Prosecution, Forensics and Fingerprints and juvenile homes, and accordingly a new system -- "Inter-operable Criminal Justice System (ICJS)" has been developed. The ICJS system has been developed as a dashboard approach with an advance search facility for the purpose of retrieving the desired data from the system. The ICJS project is being monitored by a Working Group chaired by a Supreme Court judge, Mr Justice Madan B. Lokur.

State police organisations and all investigating agencies have been greatly empowered by the Digital Police Portal. The portal provides 11 searches and 44 reports based on CCTNS National database. The advanced search is equipped with high performing search and analytics engine. The advanced search can be carried out in two ways. In the first way of search, the search engine will look for full names entered (for eg. Name and Relative Name) but will get all the

records where one or both of these names exist. In the second way of searching, it also fetches records with partial matches and returns all the results.

There are various kinds of filters available on the portal through which data can be sorted and narrowed down. Search can be carried out through Person Name, Person and Relative Name, Person and Act/Section, free text search and exact search on FIR Regd. Number/ Mobile Number/Email. The CCTNS portal will provide investigators the complete record history of any criminal from anywhere across the country.

The software offers Google-type Advance Search engine and analytical reports. Recently, the software was used to trace few mentally challenged women from Tamil Nadu in Uttarakhand and reunited with their families. The CCTNS database will be later linked with the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MORTH) database on vehicle registrations.

The “Advanced Search” allows the user to find crime correlations, crime trends, outliers (anomalies) and crime patterns by having access to CCTNS dashboard.

Since the launch of the Digital Police Portal, citizens have begun registering complaints on the portal, and requests have been made for antecedent verification of persons. The Digital Police Portal is helping the Government in the efficient delivery of citizen-centric services in a friendly manner, which is an important responsibility of a modern welfare state today.

**Deepak Razdan, is a senior journalist and at present Editorial Consultant, The Statesman, New Delhi.*

Views expressed in the article are author's personal.

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China's North Korea conundrum

Show of force: A file photo of a missile during a military parade in Pyongyang. AP

Securing North Korea's missile launchers and nuclear, chemical and biological weapons sites would likely be a chief priority for China in the event of a major crisis involving its communist neighbour, analysts say, although Beijing so far is keeping mum on any plans.

Despite China's official silence, its People's Liberation Army likely has a "vast array" of contingency plans involving military options, said Dean Cheng, an Asia security expert at the Heritage Foundation think tank in Washington.

The PLA and paramilitary People's Armed Police could also be deployed to deal with refugees and possible civil unrest, he said.

What's less clear is whether and under what conditions China would commit troops as an occupying force should North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's regime fall apart, Mr. Cheng said. "We can hypothesise that they might, but, as the observation goes, those who know don't say and those who say probably don't know," he said.

With tensions between the U.S. and North Korea running high and relations between Beijing and Pyongyang at a historic low, questions are being raised about how China might respond in the event of a regime collapse. The scene along the China-North Korea border in the wild mountains of northeast Asia provides some clues.

Despite a dearth of traffic and trade, construction crews are at work on a six-lane highway to the border outside the small Chinese city of Ji'an along the Tumen River, a corridor that could facilitate the rapid movement of tanks and troops.

Strategic choice

Guard posts, barbed wire-topped fences and checkpoints manned by armed paramilitary troops mark the frontier along the border signs of concern about potentially violent border crossers or even more serious security threats.

China's unwillingness to discuss its plans is likely a strategic choice by the notoriously secretive PLA, but potentially threatens unintended consequences were a major crisis to emerge, experts say. Asked about Chinese preparations for a North Korean crisis, defense ministry spokesman Col. Wu Qian offered assurance but no details at a monthly news briefing on Thursday.

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Indian Navy Foils Piracy Attempt in Gulf OF Aden

Indian Navy Foils Piracy Attempt in Gulf OF Aden

A piracy attempt on the high seas was foiled by an Indian Naval warship on 06 October 2017

INS Trishul a stealth frigate of the Indian Navy whilst on Anti-piracy patrol in the Gulf of Aden, was escorting a merchant vessel MV Jag Amar when she detected a boat carrying out suspicious manoeuvres in the vicinity of the merchant ship.

INS Trishul closed the boat for investigation and launched her integral helicopter to investigate. The skiff was carrying items identified as piracy triggers and some small arms with ammunition. Marine commandos boarded the pirate boat and neutralised all piracy triggers in accordance with Standard Operating Procedures. The merchant vessel Jag Amar with all 26 Indian crew is safe and is continuing her passage. The skiff and her crew were released.

The Indian Navy has been deploying a warship in the waters in and around the Gulf Of Aden since 2008 and has safely escorted hundreds of merchant vessels through these treacherous waters. Indian ships are mandated to prevent piracy and are not mandated for regional law enforcement. The actions taken by the ship are the rationale for the continued deployment of Indian ships for anti-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden.

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Next Door Nepal: Red versus rest

The coming together of like-minded people or political parties driven by a common ideology and principles would generally be taken as a welcome move. But a sudden declaration last week by three prominent left parties that they will contest the federal and parliamentary elections scheduled for November 26 and December 7 as allies and that the alliance is a precursor towards the formation of a single communist party has triggered skepticism. In response, Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba, also the chairman of the Nepali Congress (NC), has initiated a move to bring together all non-left parties to counter the communists.

Nepal has been through political instability, frequent change of government and political equations in the past 11 years. This is not for the first time that the Nepal Communist Party (Maoist Centre) and the Communist Party of Nepal-Unified Marxist Leninist have come together - they have joined hands to form a government in the past. What no one anticipated were the moves to form a single party. When Maoist chief Pushpa Kamal Dahal and CPN-UML chief K.P. Oli announced the pre-poll alliance and subsequently the merger move on Tuesday, even cadres and mid-rank leaders were taken by surprise. Why did such a move come without enough debate in the party ranks? And why was the alliance and merger plan made in such a conspiratorial manner?

The first response to the tremor, expectedly, was felt in Delhi. The government of Nepal, especially the Prime Minister's Office, was expecting that New Delhi will officially announce the date of Prime Minister [Narendra Modi](#)'s visit to Kathmandu in less than two weeks - the third in three years and the first after the Indian blockade made him unpopular in Nepal - ostensibly to lay the foundation of the India-funded 900-MW hydro project. Chinese President Xi Jinping's visit to Nepal in October 2016 was called off at the last minute as the Oli-led government that China considered very friendly had quit three months before, following the defection of the Maoists to form a new coalition government with the NC. The Indian establishment as well a section of the pro-India political class in Nepal had hailed the formation of the NC-CPN (Maoist Centre) alliance as indication of New Delhi's success in promoting democracy and its own interest in Nepal. Two months ago during Deuba's state visit, Modi had heaped praise on the maturity of Deuba and Dahal, ostensibly for pursuing the political equation that India had helped to construct and pulling the rug off Oli's feet.

When Dahal ditched Deuba and joined ranks with Oli, it marked the failure of India's Nepal policy, yet again. This is, arguably, New Delhi's biggest diplomatic failure since it brought the Maoists to the centre stage of Nepali politics. Not only was the monarchy, the oldest cultural and diplomatic link between India and Nepal, sacrificed for this purpose, but the oldest democratic force of Nepal, the NC, a party that was active in India's freedom struggle, was forced to play a secondary role, having told by India to back Maoist agendas with reservation. In fact, the NC, all along believed that a constitutional monarchy and democratic forces working together was the best guarantor for Nepal's independent existence and economic stability. That belief was at the core of the constant refusal of B.P. Koirala, the legendary founder leader of the party, to launch a pro-democracy movement in the country. Instead, he gave a call for national reconciliation in December 1976. Throughout his political career, Koirala followed the mantra that "my neck is tied with the king". Is Koirala's prophesy coming true? The NC has never been so weak and confused in its seven-decade long existence.

Following the Maoists and their agenda under India's mediation has forced the NC to go on the defensive. New Delhi's assessment that the Maoists "are the real representatives of Nepalese people" has been proved wrong as the party, 11 years after joining the peace process, has accepted the status of a junior ally in the CPN-UML led Left alliance, content with 40 per cent of seats as against 60 per cent seats to the UML.

The new Left alliance may not officially assume an anti-India posture, but their worldview is fairly well-known. The Chinese ambassador to Nepal recently stated that Beijing wants to be the biggest stakeholder in Nepal. But all these issues will take time to become clear.

While the future of the three former prime ministers - Oli, Dahal and Baburam Bhattarai - together in one single party is still unclear, they at least have similar pasts. All three had begun their political career by practicing a politics of "annihilation of class enemies" - Oli in the 1970s and Dahal and Bhattarai in the 1990s.

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Can insecurity in Asia be managed?

Since the end of World War II, Asia-Pacific has been the locale of direct and indirect military confrontation (in Korea and Indo-China, respectively) between the two superpowers; experienced unprecedented economic growth, which did not translate into closer integration (particularly among the countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations or Asean); witnessed the economic and political rise of two ancient powers (China and India); and, consequently, experienced several wars interspersed with an uneasy peace.

In contrast in Europe, superpower military confrontation was avoided during the Cold War and did not lead to war; economic growth was facilitated by the generous Marshall Plan, which led to the establishment of institutions that promoted integration and cooperation; and resulted in a long and prosperous peace in the region. Consequently, Europe also emerged as a significant global player and—with the exception of Yugoslavia—was able to peacefully manage the collapse of the Soviet Union and the emergence of independent states in its region.

There are several reasons why the Asian experience was different from that of Europe, even though both were equally affected by World War II.

The post-war roots of insecurity in Asia were driven by the failure to create institutions that could accommodate former enemies, notably Japan and China as well as Korea and South-East Asia.

Japan's inability to either apologize for its wartime role and atrocities or reconcile with its enemies meant that any regional arrangement, despite the best US efforts, was a non-starter. Consequently, Washington and the region had to contend with a series of bilateral arrangements.

Similarly, the contestation between China and India first evident in the 1950, following Beijing's annexation of Tibet, meant that efforts to create a cooperative arrangement in Bandung with these two powers also came to naught. Whatever hope there was of a regional institution centered around China and India evaporated following the 1962 war.

While Asean did eventually emerge, its role as a regional organization was constrained by two factors: first, its unabashed anti-Communist stance during the Cold War and, second, its inability to include the regional hegemons, notably, China and India. Although this, clearly, allowed Asean to exist, it also limited its scope and appeal to just a small part of Asia.

Against this background, a recent report by an independent commission on regional security architecture established by the Asia Society Policy Institute, which included Thomas Donilon, former US national security adviser, Igor Ivanov, former Russian foreign minister, Shivshankar Menon, former Indian national security adviser, and Wang Jisi, former Chinese foreign minister, is noteworthy. Titled *Preserving The Long Peace In Asia*, the report identifies the challenges facing the region and suggests ways to build an effective security arrangement.

It warns that tensions between the US and China are causing a ripple effect among other Asian nations. While many still look to the US for security, they are increasingly dependent on the Chinese economy. Thus, as their economic and security interests diverge, the nations are being compelled to choose between the US and China "in uncomfortable ways".

The report cautions that while the alphabet soup of regional organizations is "comforting", it is also "hazardous". The multiplicity of organizations in the region allows countries to "shop for the forum they find most suited to the issue at hand". This trend "obviates the necessity of developing a stronger regional consensus around norms and rules of the road".

In addition, there are at least four other challenges facing Asia's regional architecture. These are the fast-paced political and economic transitions and the need to manage them flexibly; the growing strategic competition among key actors; the risk of instability or even conflict on account of the inability to bridge the trust deficit that permeates key bilateral relationships; and the rapid proliferation of state-of-the-art military and dual-use technologies, which in combination with the growing mistrust, are "altering military operations in a manner that further enhances risk" of conflict.

Given this suite of challenges, the report identifies five ambitious functions that regional institutions need to perform, including "play a binding role," "mitigate against historical mistrust," "facilitate better management of crises and disputes", "rationalize and align the institutions and mechanisms" and have flexibility in setting a forward-looking agenda.

Predictably, none of the organizations fulfil all these functions. However, instead of suggesting the establishment of a new organization *ab initio*, the report calls for strengthening the East Asia Summit (EAS)—a grouping that includes Asean members plus Australia, China, India, New Zealand, South Korea, Russia, and the US. It suggests retaining the informal nature of the EAS for now but calls for greater institutionalization and an operational role in preventive diplomacy, crisis management, and confidence-building measures in the medium term. In the long term, the EAS should become a "more formal organization that brings together broader components of security cooperation across the region."

While the report is commendable and the proposals logical, the recommendations are likely to remain on paper unless there is a political impetus to implement it. So far, given the state of relations among the principal actors, the political drive is missing.

W.P.S. Sidhu is visiting professor at New York University's Center for Global Affairs and associate fellow at the Geneva Centre for Security Policy.

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1 TS Ships Visit Penang, Malaysia

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IN Ships Tir, Sujata, Sudarshini, Shardul and ICGS Sarathi are visiting Penang, Malaysia from 08 to 12 Oct 17. The visit is aimed to expose the trainees to the conduct of *IN* warship in foreign waters, port familiarisation and foster 'bridges of friendship' between the two countries. The ships belong to the First Training Squadron of the Indian Navy functioning under the Southern Naval Command, headquartered at Kochi and comprises six indigenously built ships, namely, Indian Naval Ships Tir, Sujata, Shardul, Indian Coast Guard Ship Sarathi and two Sail Training Ships, viz, INS Sudarshini and INS Tarangini.

The Southern Naval Command (SNC) is the Training Command of the Indian Navy which is headed by Vice Admiral AR Karve, AVSM, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Southern Naval Command.

Executive Branch trainee officers, after completing ab-initio training at the Indian Naval Academy, including the successful completion of B Tech degree course, join the First Training Squadron for intensive Practical Sea Training of 24 weeks designed to enable them get their 'Sea Legs'. The Sea Trainees are taught seamanship, basic navigation, ship handling, boat work, engineering aspects besides exposure to the rigours of life at sea. The curriculum also includes sail training onboard the Sail Training Ship, where the trainees are exposed to the elements and get to grips with the art of sailing and rope work. On successful completion of this phase, the trainees are appointed to various ships of the Indian Navy and Coast Guard for the Afloat Training Phase and Seamanship Board. At the First Training Squadron, the *IN* also trains officers from friendly foreign countries.

The Indian Navy has imparted training to international trainees for more than four decades, and approximately 13,500 personnel from over 40 countries have been trained. Presently **four** officers from Malaysia are undergoing various Ab-initio to advanced courses at SNC. The Command has gained the reputation of being the finest training destination by maintaining a focussed approach to provide high quality training and by constant adaptation to evolving tactics and technologies.

The Training Squadron is helmed by Captain DJ Revar, Senior Officer First Training Squadron, who is also Commanding Officer INS Tir. He has under him, a team of highly

motivated officers and sailors to assist him in conduct of the sea training.

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New Pattern Of Urban Terror

The sniper attack by a "lone wolf", which took a heavy toll of innocent lives at a Sunday night country music concert in Las Vegas, has been described as the deadliest shoot-out in modern US history. This happened in the richest and most powerful democracy in the world on the heels of similar attacks carried out by small groups of terrorists in London. The change in the pattern of global urban terrorist attacks is clearly discernible. Instead of large groups of trained and armed terrorists attacking targets selected by their masters, we see lone wolf attackers targeting large gatherings.

As a former internal security professional, I am struck by the contrast in the reactions to such attacks by the political leadership, public, police and media in the US and those in our own country. The US president, after expressing grief, profusely thanked the Las Vegas Police for their "miraculous response" to the attack, and extolled their "exemplary professionalism". Police agencies, local and federal, were on the same page. The electronic media was not overreacting or speculating. The people on the streets of the city that never sleeps were quiet, not indulging in rumour mongering or spreading panic. There was no politicking, blame games or mudslinging.

A comparison of these reactions to those witnessed after the last major terrorist attack in India - Mumbai, 26/11 - is not out of place. Mumbai Police, one of the finest metropolitan police forces in the country, was taken by surprise and was ill-prepared to respond to such an attack. It reached out to the Indian Navy which had helicopter-borne commandos, who did fly around but did not engage the attackers. The NSG (Black Cat) Commandos who flew out from Delhi reached Mumbai in about eight long hours, and could locate the attackers and neutralise them but not before 166 innocent persons including four Mumbai Police bravehearts were killed. About the role of certain sections of the electronic media, the less said the better. The blame game over intelligence and police failure went on and on. A committee was constituted to go into the lapses and some progress has been made in training and equipping the Maharashtra and Mumbai Police with their own commandos.

Fortunately, there has not been any major terrorist attack since 26/11, but terrorist attacks have been on the increase in J&K where the police with the help of the Central police forces and the army has been able to respond swiftly and effectively.

Indian police officers and men are second to none in bravery and courage but they need to be trained and equipped. But is our political and bureaucratic leadership willing to pay attention to this need? Similarly, raising the strength of our police thanas and posts in cities, the first responders to any terrorist threat to our citizens, needs to be stepped up on a war footing. The thana beat staff is the nerve centre of law enforcement, while also gathering intelligence to inform the higher-ups about tell-tale signs of brewing trouble or terrorist attacks. But unfortunately, the limited resources of the Central and state home ministries are being mindlessly spent in rapidly expanding the para military forces and hordes of policemen and officers continue to be deployed on so-called VIP security duties. Finally, our response of flooding places requiring law and order arrangements with untrained and ill-equipped policemen must be replaced by meticulously planned operations on the ground.

Finally, our response of flooding places requiring law and order arrangements with untrained and ill-equipped policemen must be replaced by meticulously planned operations on the ground.

Here are a few suggestions for consideration from an ex professional: One, the approach has to be dynamic. The importance and urgency of security concerns must be appreciated and addressed. Urgency must dictate the implementation of steps needed for security measures.

Two, audit of the work done has to be an ongoing process and obstacles must be addressed with urgency without waiting for a repeat of a disaster. Mock/simulated exercises to check the efficacy of the measures should factor in new threats and tactics which the enemy may possibly adopt/think of. Finally, communication to the nation about the need to understand security threats has to be carried out. A nation which understands the importance of the issue is well prepared. An alert citizenry is a powerful countermeasure, perhaps the most effective preventive weapon.

Unfortunately, there is a tendency to leave everything to the government and police, a legacy of the long years of British rule. The citizens too must learn to become the eyes and ears of law enforcement agencies.

The writer is former secretary, Internal Security, MHA, GOI

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Accountability, not armour plating

Representational image. | Photo Credit: [Deepak Harichandan](#)

The buzzword of police “reform” is upon us once again with the Union Cabinet approving a 25,000 crore outlay for upgrading the internal security apparatus in States. An umbrella scheme, ‘Modernisation of Police Forces’, has been cleared, with the government projecting this as “one of the biggest moves towards police modernisation in India”.

It is big money, especially the Centre’s contribution of about 75%, with the promise that gaps in police transport, weaponry, communications, and forensic support among others will be met. The funds are to be rolled out over the next three years, with the Centre contributing 18,636 crore and States 6,424 crore along the lines of the established police “modernisation” model. Under the scheme, Jammu and Kashmir, the Northeastern States and those affected by Maoist violence are to receive special focus.

In the absence of a comprehensive policy document in the public domain that details the benchmarks of this scheme, several questions arise. It is important to cut through the hype and get to the model of reform being propagated, and be reminded of the essential reforms aimed at democratising the police which are still being firmly resisted by States and the Centre.

This push is geared to armour plate State police in their responses to internal security challenges. Yet, with reference to Naxalism, the annual report of the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), 2016-17 notes that there has been a reduction in violent incidents and violence-related deaths since 2013. Alarmingly, there has been a 50% increase in encounters, a 122% increase in the “elimination” of armed Maoist cadres, and a larger number of arrests and arms recoveries. By its own admission, the State is killing and arresting more alleged Maoists.

It is important to point out that a Central paramilitary force, not the State police, is at the forefront against Naxal groups. With the new funds, some may argue that the police need this ‘upgrading’ in order to gradually phase out the reliance on the paramilitary. The key questions of whether further militarising of police could only increase violence, or the consideration of alternative strategies not solely reliant on coercive force, remain, unsurprisingly, absent.

There is no dent in the political discourse which accepts encounters as a legitimate crime-fighting strategy, irrespective of the strictures of the Supreme Court. Governments and the police have become glaringly opaque in their responsibility to account for deaths caused due to police action. The state needs to be reminded that it is bound to register a First Information Report and initiate a criminal investigation into any encounter killing by the police. Unaccounted deaths at the hands of the police are violations of the right to life, yet they are seen as policing dividends.

Also, there are bookkeeping requirements. It may be wise to first analyse the underutilisation of existing funds in the broader context of state capacity to absorb such a significant tranche.

The 2013-14 MHA guidelines on modernisation funds mandate that every State and the Centre furnish a utilisation certificate for the full amount of modernisation funds released yearly. The Finance Ministry stresses that unless the certificates account for the full amount of funds sanctioned, no new funds will be released. Considering that only 14% of modernisation funds were spent in 2015-16, one would advise a tempering of the excitement around this infusion of funds until the previous year’s accounting is done. Not only are modernisation funds underspent, on average, but also only about 3% of Central and State Budgets are spent on policing.

Ironically, the 11th anniversary of the Supreme Court's directives on police reform fell on September 22, and five days before this announcement. It is no secret that neither the Centre nor any State has complied with the directives in letter or spirit, with hardly any reprimand by the court itself.

Herein lies the rub; "reform" geared towards technical and infrastructural advancement is prized, but reform which squarely demands greater checks and balances is resisted and violated. Less than 10 States provide security of tenure to their police chief and key field officers. Only five States provide for independent shortlisting of candidates in the process of appointing police chiefs; everywhere else, directors general of police are handpicked by Chief Ministers. Serving police and government officers are adjudicating members on police complaints bodies even though these are supposed to be independent from the police department. "Reform" through the pathway of the directives is being mauled and distorted. This cannot be ignored in the wider discourse on police reform.

This infusion of funds could enable police organisations to overcome endemic shortages of operational resources, from transport to weapons to forensic equipment. However, the police reform to aspire for is to move beyond armour plating to accountability and the upholding of the law as measures of police effectiveness.

Devika Prasad is Coordinator, Police Reforms, at the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI)

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

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Banning the bomb — on nuclear weapons

The Nobel Peace Prize conferred on the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) is equally a recognition for the 122 countries that backed the 2017 UN treaty this summer to ban the bomb. The fact that it has taken over seventy years to codify the UN General Assembly's 1946 goal to eliminate atomic weapons from national armaments is a measure of the significance of this year's prize. Today, the terms of the anti-nuclear debate encompass larger issues of environmental destruction, in conjunction with the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of a potential holocaust. ICAN's emphasis on this latter dimension, an aspect underscored by the Nobel committee in Norway, marks a departure of sorts in the nuclear discourse. To appreciate it, one merely has to draw a comparison with the preoccupations of the peace movement during the years of the Cold War. The emphasis then was principally on the grave danger from serious miscalculations, stemming from mutual threat perceptions between the U.S. and the USSR. The committee has also lauded ICAN's endeavours to fill the legal gap through its leadership on the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. With cluster munitions, land mines and chemical and biological weapons having been banned, nuclear weapons remained the last category of weapons of mass destruction that had not been outlawed. Here again, ICAN's emphasis on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear destruction have galvanised global support for the new treaty. Notable is the perception that the sheer magnitude of destruction wrought by any nuclear strikes would amount to crimes against humanity.

A catalyst to this process was the stricture that the use of nuclear arms had to be compatible with humanitarian law. This was laid down in a 1996 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice. The long-term health implications for local populations from underground nuclear detonations have also been a growing concern. A plea last year, also at the ICJ, for compensation for exposure to contamination from the explosions in the Marshall Islands failed on technical grounds. But the case amplified these concerns, which human rights groups and organisations engaged in humanitarian relief activities exploited to shape a new narrative — with the result that a provision on victim protection has been codified in the new UN treaty. Given this overall dynamic, it seems reasonable to expect that the minimum number of ratifications would be submitted soon for the treaty to come into force. In September, the Italian parliament passed a resolution urging the government to explore accession to the UN agreement without contravening its obligations to NATO. A similar step by the Dutch legislature had authorised the government to participate in the treaty deliberations. These developments may not culminate in immediate ratification. But they raise the prospect that governments will be forced to heed public sentiment sooner than later. The ICAN's endeavours may pay off eventually.

Rajasthan's ordinance shields the corrupt, threatens the media and whistle-blowers

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'Global Wizards set to Converge in New Delhi for the 5th Global Conference on Cyber Space'
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The **Global Conference on Cyber Space (GCCS) 2017** is getting bigger and better. The 5th edition, being hosted by India is to be inaugurated by the Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi on November 23, 2017. It will see participation of ministers, officials, industry leaders and academia engaged in the global cyber ecosystem.

The world's who's who in the field of cyber space will congregate in India's capital city. **Over 3500 participants will take part in the weeklong event directly and millions virtually from India and abroad through video conference, webinars and webcast. For those who are not travelling to Delhi, about 800 locations around the world will be connected to GCCS 2017 (www.gccs2017.in) through video conference and 2000 locations through webinars.**

More than 40 events and sessions are being organized by the **Ministry of Electronics and IT, Government of India**, in partnership with the Industry, International Organizations, Academia and Think Tanks. Over **3 dozen events** have been held in leading institutions in India and abroad over the last 7 months, involving the participation of more than **3000 experts in the field** as a **run up to the GCCS 2017. More than 3500 persons** are expected to **participate in the Curtain Raiser and Main Events**. Various activities and events during the GCCS 2017 will expound on how cyberspace is transforming our lives -how we live, govern and create value. There is a lot of excitement around the world with a large number of pre-registrations seeking invitation for this event as either delegate or speaker.

The host of the 5th GCCS, Mr. Ravi Shankar Prasad, Hon'ble Minister for Electronics & IT and Law & Justice, has said **"As we approach November, I look forward to warmly welcome 3000+ delegates at GCCS 2017, New Delhi."**

'Cyber4All' will be the main theme of this largest ever event of its kind with four sub-themes - Cyber4InclusiveGrowth, Cyber4Digitalinclusion, Cyber4Security and Cyber4Diplomacy for the 3-4 plenary and 12-16 parallel sessions, which will see deliberations on various issues of cyber space over a period of 2 days. An action packed week will start with a 2 day **Curtain Raiser** on November 20, 2017 in the Aerocity. The **Curtain Raiser** will also have **12 events** where approximately **1400 stakeholders** are expected to participate. Besides this, there will be **multiple side events** in the backdrop of GCCS 2017 that will present a unique opportunity for people to engage with delegates present in the conference, particularly on niche topics such as **Blockchain technology, Internet of Things, Proliferation of Indic languages and Smart Cities**. The **rising ESDM sector in India, National Software Policy India, and Cyber Policy** will be some of the **key focus sessions**. Each of these events will be **available on Webcast** besides **interactive Video Conference and Webinars** so as to benefit millions of stakeholders across the world.

A unique initiative at the 5th GCCS is the **Global Cyber Challenge called Peace-a-thon**. The **open challenge to computer wizards** will be hosted by **top Universities worldwide** for competing in a Hackathon and an Appathon. The 15 top winning teams and the CTF winners will then compete further in a 36-hour challenge in the **Grand Finale being held in New Delhi on November 20 & 21**. The open Cyber Challenge is expected to attract millions of registered users of MyGov, professionals and tens of thousands of scholars/students from Premier Institutions.

Digital Exhibition and Technical Poster Competition are the other special attractions of the 5th GCCS. Till now, some of the eminent speakers at the conference who have already confirmed participation include Ministers from various countries such as France, the Netherlands, 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. Jonathan Reiber (Senior Fellow and Writer, University of Berkley); 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. Emma Smith (Group Tech Security Director, Vodafone); Mr. Brad Smith (President and Chief Legal Officer, Microsoft).

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. **GCCS 2017** is expected to reinforce India's pioneering position in cyberspace.

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CEOs must view cybersecurity holistically

As technology advances and businesses become more technology-driven, the rate of cybercrimes is likely to increase exponentially. According to research firm Gartner, in 2017, businesses are likely to spend over \$90 billion to secure their systems against potential cyberattacks, which is expected to reach \$113 billion by 2020.

The first two quarters of 2017 saw cybersecurity attacks ranging from leaks related to voter record information, leaks of spy tools from the US intelligence agencies to the outrageous ransomware threats. WannaCry ransomware spread around the world targeting thousands of public and large corporations; another malware, Petya, was modified to be more complex and caused devastating impact at even higher levels.

While the world was still recovering from the impact of these major attacks, HBO became the prime target of the cyber underworld, where hackers claimed to have stolen an estimated 1.5 terabytes of data and demanded about \$6 million to stop the leaks.

Indian enterprises have also increasingly become a target for cyberattacks. According to the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In), India has seen a total of 171,000 cybercrimes in the past three years with 27,482 cases being reported between January and June 2017. Given the growth of cybercrime incidents in India, board members and C-level executives of many companies are forced to identify the spread of ever-changing cybersecurity risks as one of the greatest challenges for their organizations.

Last year, India witnessed one of the biggest security breaches, placing about 3.2 million debit card users at high risk. Further, according to a study, mobile apps of seven Indian banks were found to be infected with malware. There have been a lot of opinions on the kind of harm that cybercriminals are expected to cause to various sectors. While the banking and financial services market faces the greatest cybersecurity risk, India also aims to transform itself digitally on the back of the Digital India initiative undertaken by the government, which, consequently, may lead to greater risk for government bodies, as consumers are moving towards digital transactions using smartphones. India's cybersecurity preparedness has been challenged—a case in point being the recent HBO cyberattack that focused on the vulnerability of our media and entertainment industry, as an unreleased episode of HBO's *Game of Thrones* was leaked online.

According to KPMG India's CEO Outlook Survey 2017, over 89% of Indian CEOs agree that mitigating cyber risk is now at the top of the boardroom agenda, and almost 84% of them plan to invest significantly in it over the next three years. About 45% of the CEOs surveyed in 2017 said that they feel prepared for a cyber event, up from 17% in 2016. While CEOs now feel they have a better understanding of cybersecurity, many still do not 'own' cyber to the extent where they need to properly manage risks associated with it.

Another key highlight from the survey is that humans have emerged as one of the weak links in cybersecurity attacks and it is imperative to focus on cyber hygiene and awareness. About 62% of Indian CEOs acknowledge that the biggest threat to enterprise security lies within an organization in the form of its own employees, who have access to sensitive information and company assets. This puts the staff at an inherent risk, a challenge compounded by the always-connected environment that they operate in. Knowingly or unknowingly, insiders could provide an opening for malicious external attacks.

The 'fear factor' apart, there is another very good reason to view security differently—it has the potential to generate revenues and achieve differentiation for businesses. Until recently, cyber was

considered part of risk and was seen as a function of the information technology (IT) environment. However, CEOs are now gradually becoming cognizant of the business opportunities in building cyber resilience across the board: 76% of CEOs view cybersecurity as an opportunity to innovate and find new revenue streams. At a time when clients and consumers are wary of security breaches, businesses are employing digital technologies to create value and increase operational agility for competitive differentiation—a well-designed cybersecurity programme can help organizations build trusted customer relationships.

With the growing sophistication of the cyberworld and the rapid pace of cyberattacks, the need of the hour is to deal with cybersecurity in a holistic manner, rather than treat it as a technology risk alone. As the nature of the threats evolves, so should an organisation's efforts to secure its data and intellectual property. The current IT environment demands that we look beyond traditional security measures and, instead, create an agile and flexible security capability.

Akhilesh Tuteja is partner and head of risk consulting, KPMG in India.

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Moving towards a user data rights regime

The collection and use of personal data in order to deliver public and commercial services is now routine in India. For a country with large digital ambitions, one of the key questions will be: How should we think about regulating the use of Indians' personal data?

We believe that like rights to most goods, personal data will be best protected by a system of user data rights. The objective of such a regime would be dual: to empower people to use their information as they desire and to protect people from undesirable harms. Rights jurisprudence stretches back several hundred years, but a pithy definition encapsulating our modern understanding of rights is found in the *Stanford Encyclopaedia Of Philosophy* which defines rights as "entitlements (not) to perform certain actions, or (not) to be in certain states; or entitlements that others (not) perform certain actions or (not) be in certain states". The underlying nature of this entitlement can be understood as freedom of two kinds: freedom to enjoy certain conditions (i.e. empowerment) and freedom from certain conditions (i.e. protections against harms).

The Supreme Court decision in the K.S. Puttaswamy case (2017) sits squarely within this understanding. It declares privacy to be a fundamental human right of Indian citizens—protecting us from undesirable privacy harms that result from disclosure of our personal details and empowering us by reiterating our right to determine what we disclose about ourselves in different aspects of our lives. The core of a new data protection regime for India must be built around a system of user data rights serving these dual objectives. Such an approach would trigger graded obligations and liabilities for entities using personal data.

The implied premises of several existing approaches to data protection are that of a "property-only" view that commodifies data to give users the illusion of control. This has led to the creation of the fiction that when users are given a voluminous legal notice and asked for consent through "I agree" buttons, they are in effect exercising their property rights to sell or trade their data in exchange for services. The limitations of this "informed consent" or "notice and consent" model are well established. We know that users face cognitive constraints in evaluating the costs and benefits of consenting to data collection and use, since the benefits to be had are immediate and the costs of sharing personal information are often not apparent. This means we cannot rely solely on consent, but consider other user data rights to control the flow of personal data.

We propose that the focus of our future regime should be a system of user data rights. These rights should build in features from a range of legal paradigms to empower and protect individuals. Property-like rights granting "ownership" over personal data can only be a starting point. To avoid reinventing the (broken) wheel, we must consider lessons from paradigms like intellectual property, moral rights and human rights. Intellectual property rights like copyrights allow holders to grant licences for use for limited periods—a device which could have relevance to data sharing protocols. Moral rights, which give authors the right to stop modifications of their work that could harm their reputations, could provide parallels when considering the distortion of personal data. Human rights paradigms have increased relevance with the growing interaction between our digital and physical selves, binding us closer to our personal information. The judgements in the Puttaswamy case embolden this view, placing, as they do, certain rights in relation to informational privacy within the realm of inalienable human rights which individuals even acting autonomously cannot discard or give up.

Borrowing from the entire universe of rights jurisprudence would also help us think creatively about liability frameworks and obligations for entities processing data. Consider, for example, the financial transactions of a person purchasing medication for a serious illness. She might be happy to have this transaction history stored with her bank, and used by the bank's personal finance

management tool to recommend a monthly budget plan. This use could be dealt with through property-like data rights. However, disclosure of these details to third parties or the public could have terrible consequences—from social shaming to implications for future employment. This could trigger stronger sanctions and remedial rights for the person underpinned by moral or human rights, especially if it results in privacy violations or discrimination.

In India, we are at a decisive moment for data protection regulation. The Supreme Court has recognized our fundamental right to keep certain information about ourselves private. A committee on data protection chaired by Justice B.N. Srikrishna is currently working on a framework for a wider law that will determine the granular data protections afforded to individuals. We believe that a system of user data rights will balance the reality of new technologies and increased data processing with the need to limit harms to individuals and society. The law that enshrines these rights must be in line with users' reasonable expectations about how their data will be used, and also identify harms to be avoided. While designing these user data rights, we must cast the net wide to gain insights from a range of legal paradigms rather than defaulting to the current, unsatisfactory notice-and-consent-led model that neither empowers nor protects users.

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Trump to announce new Iran nuclear deal strategy

Loud and clear:Iranians shout anti-United States slogans during Friday prayers in Tehran.AFP

The nuclear deal with Tehran is the worst in the history of the U.S. and he would no longer be certifying for its continuation, President Donald Trump announced on Friday, unveiling a new American strategy on Iran that could heighten tensions in West Asia.

The new policy abandons the focussed approach of the previous Obama administration on rolling back Tehran's nuclear weapons programme and threatens punitive measures against Iran for a range of alleged transgressions. Mr. Trump has also called upon American allies to join in the effort to confront Iran, adding that he would not allow it to obtain a nuclear weapon and threaten America like North Korea is currently doing.

Terming Iran the world's "leading state sponsor of terrorism," Mr. Trump said Tehran was in violation of the terms of the agreement, a doubtful claim as other countries party to it do not share that view. He blamed his predecessor Barack Obama for signing the deal when sanctions were leading to a "total collapse of the Iranian regime."

According to Mr. Trump, the deal would not stop Iran's nuclear pursuit. "... in just a few years, as key restrictions disappear, Iran can sprint towards a rapid nuclear weapons' breakout," the President said. "The Iran deal was one of the worst and most one-sided transactions that the United States has ever entered into."

With the President refusing to certify the deal as required by law, the onus is on U.S. Congress to decide the next course of action.

U.S. Congress key to deal

The Congress will get 60 days to decide whether or not to reimpose the sanctions on Iran that were lifted as part of the nuclear deal. "... I am directing my administration to work closely with Congress and our allies to address the deal's many serious flaws so that the Iranian regime can never threaten the world with nuclear weapons," he said adding that he would use his authority to scrap the entire deal otherwise.

Mr. Trump said he has asked the Treasury department to devise new sanctions against Iran, particularly targeting the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, which he termed as a "terrorist militia."

He linked Iran to a litany of terrorism incidents around the world that targeted the U.S and its allies. He said the Iranian regime regime harboured "high level terrorists including Osama bin Laden's son" and accused it of supporting the Al Qaida, Taliban, Hamas and Hezbollah. The President also blamed Iran for the civil wars in Syria and Yemen.

The new approach would target "the full range of the Iranian regime's malign activities," the White House said in a statement ahead of the speech. The statement termed Obama's Iran policy "myopic" and repudiated the U.S policy towards Tehran "over the last decade and a half."

The new "comprehensive" strategy does not immediately upend the deal, but the administration's intent to decertify it, and to pursue a raft of punitive measures against Iran for other alleged transgressions, could make it unsustainable. Iran has said it would not renegotiate the deal.

The other five countries that are party to the deal, Germany, U.K, France, Russia and China, have all said the deal is working fine.

The new Trump policy warns of punitive moves against Iran for “ballistic missile development and proliferation, material and financial support for terrorism and extremism, support for the Assad regime’s atrocities against the Syrian people, unrelenting hostility to Israel, consistently threatening freedom of navigation....cyber-attacks against the U.S., Israel, and America’s other allies and partners in the Middle East; grievous human rights abuses; and Arbitrary detention of foreigners, including U.S. citizens, on specious charges and without due process,” the statement said.

Israel and Saudi Arabia, the American allies in the region, have been calling for scrapping the deal altogether. Following the nuclear deal that removed a range of sanctions against Tehran, Indian private and public sector entities had quickly reached out for opportunities in the country.

Increasing cooperation with Tehran is also meant to counter the Chinese-led One Belt One Road project, as Iranian ports of Bandar Abbas and Chabahar could be creating new transportation routes to Afghanistan, Central Asia and Europe for India. Mr. Trump’s Afghan policy, which involves a more unforgiving approach towards Pakistan for its inability to rein in terrorist groups, could also be under strain as more battlefronts open across the region.

Allies unnerved

While the Sunni regimes in the Asian Gulf and Israel would be pleased by Mr. Trump’s move. Other American allies, already unnerved by a series of recent moves by Mr. Trump — such as withdrawal from the Paris Climate Agreement and criticism of NATO — could find ties with America under unprecedented stress.

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U.S., South Korea to launch major Navy drill next week

Swords crossed: The USS Michigan, a nuclear-powered U.S. Navy submarine, arrives in the port of Busan on Friday. AFPYONHAP

The United States and South Korea will kick off a major Navy drill next week, the U.S. Navy said on Friday, a fresh show of force against North Korea over its missile and nuclear tests.

Tensions over North Korea's weapons programme have soared in recent months with Pyongyang launching a flurry of missiles and conducting its sixth and most powerful nuclear test in defiance of multiple sets of UN sanctions.

The United States has since ramped up military drills with South Korea and Japan, its two closest regional in the region.

In a statement the US 7th Fleet said the *USS Ronald Reagan* aircraft carrier and two U.S. destroyers would take part in the drill alongside South Korean Navy vessels.

The exercise, slated for October 16 to 26 in the Sea of Japan and the Yellow Sea, would promote "communications, interoperability, and partnership," the statement added. The move will likely rile Pyongyang which had previously warned against any upcoming joint exercises.

Escalating tension

"If US imperialists and the South Korean puppets ignite a nuclear war of aggression against us, it would only advance their own demise," the state-run *KCNA* news agency said.

There has been a flurry of U.S. military hardware movement around the Korean peninsula in recent days.

On Friday, the nuclear-powered *USS Michigan* submarine arrived at South Korea's southern port of Busan, according to Yonhap news agency, just days after another nuclear-powered submarine — the *USS Tuscon* — left after a five day visit.

Earlier this week the U.S. flew two supersonic heavy bombers over the Korean peninsula, staging the first night-time joint aviation exercises with Japan and South Korea. That mission came 17 days after four US F-35B stealth fighter jets and two B-1Bs flew over the peninsula.

President Donald Trump has engaged in an increasingly escalating war of words with North Korean strongman Kim Jong-Un, trading insults amid rising tensions between the two nuclear-armed rivals.

Options weighed

On Tuesday Trump discussed "a range of options" with his national security team to respond to North Korea's recent missile and nuclear tests.

It came days after he said that diplomatic efforts with North Korea have consistently failed, adding that "only one thing will work".

The North's missile and nuclear capabilities have made significant progress under Kim, who on Saturday told party officials that the country's atomic weapons were a "treasured sword" to protect

it from aggression.

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India to build more roads on China border

The Ministry of Defence has decided to significantly enhance infrastructure along the Sino-Indian border including near Doklam, where the militaries of both sides were engaged in a two-month standoff.

The decision was taken at the Army's commanders conference from October 9 to 15 which extensively deliberated on the recent face-off with China, besides analysing all possible security challenges on the northern border, according to official sources.

Bolstering capabilities

"It has been decided that there would be a concerted heft towards road construction activities in this sector. To that end four passes to Niti, Lipulekh, Thangla1 and Tsangchokla have been decided to be connected by 2020 on priority," Director General Staff Duties (DGSD) Vijay Singh told reporters here on Friday.

He said the commanders also examined organisational changes of some of the formations to enhance existing capability, indicating that the Army leadership was looking at bolstering its current operational preparedness.

Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman also addressed the conference and lauded the swift and effective response of the Army in dealing with external and internal threats.

The Minister emphasised "the need to guard against inimical forces", he said.

Integration of services

Referring to the government's 'Make in India' programme, Ms. Sitharaman also stressed on the urgent need to become self-reliant in the defence sector.

"She emphasised on jointness and integration by all services for emerging challenges," the DGSD said.

Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Bipin Rawat said the Army will have to be prepared for "all eventualities at all times" and therefore utmost priority has to be given to procurement of arms, ammunition and equipment.

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India to speak up at Bahamas meeting

India will strongly articulate the need to strengthen counter terrorism measures and prevent radicalisation of youth through information and communication technology (ICT) at the Commonwealth Law Ministers Meeting that begins on Monday in the islands of the Bahamas.

Law Minister Ravi Shankar, who will represent India at the meeting, said, "In particular, I would like to highlight that the promotion of terrorists is a phenomenon of which India has been a victim. From across the border, they come and create problems."

The international community needs to stand strongly against them, he said.

Terrorism in any form, whatever be the reason, is bad for the human race, the Minister added.

Addressing the issue of using ICT and social media platforms to recruit terrorists and radicalise youth is also part of the agenda. "Radicalisation slips into terrorism and we need to keep a close watch on the use of technology," said Mr. Prasad.

Face-off in UN

Like the September face-off at the United Nations General Assembly, India and Pakistan could once again spar here as well — Pakistan is also a member of the Commonwealth.

Cyber crimes, climate change, the practice of child marriage, and the need for effective laws, to deal with these issues are also important items on the agenda.

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Strike a balance on Rohingya, says SC

The government said “questions pertaining to deportation of illegal immigrants is essentially an executive function.”

It maintained that “questions regarding illegal migrants need to be examined keeping in mind diplomatic considerations, internal security situations, demographic changes in the country and such other administrative and diplomatic factors which are better left to policy making by the executives.”

“We know what to do... if Your Lordships say anything, it will have international ramifications. No such contingency has arrived so far,” Mr. Mehta submitted. “Make sure no such contingency arrives, in case of which petitioners [Rohingya] can come [to SC],” the Bench observed at one point.

Mr. Mehta continued to protest against the Bench mentioning anything in its order which may give the impression that a direction is being passed by the Supreme Court to the government regarding deportation.

He objected even when the court attempted to record in its order that the case is ‘sub judice’ or even tried to mention that the “government is sensitive to the problem.”

The Additional Solicitor General urged the court, at this point, to plainly record a line in its order that “Mr. Nariman says in case of contingency, he will approach the court.”

The Bench agreed even as the Chief Justice remarked that this was as an ‘extraordinary situation’ and an ‘issue of great magnitude’ in which the state has a pivotal role.

Chief Justice Misra pointed out that the Constitution is a protector of human rights, especially of children, women, the sick, the infirm and the innocent.

“By ‘innocent’ we mean the (Rohingya) children and women who know nothing about what is happening. As a constitutional court we cannot be oblivious of this fact, the state should also not be oblivious,” Chief Justice Misra observed.

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Indian Naval Ships Satpura and Kadmatt visit Sasebo, Japan**Indian Naval Ships Satpura and Kadmatt visit Sasebo, Japan**

In pursuance of India's Act East Policy and demonstration of India's commitment to peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific Region, Indian Naval Ships Satpura and Kadmatt are visiting Sasebo, Japan from 12th to 15th October 2017. The visit of these ships is part the Indian Government's initiatives to strengthen the long standing, mutually supportive and strong relationship between Japan and India. This historic relationship spans across the entire spectrum of engagement between both countries – cultural, spiritual, economic and security.

The visiting Indian Naval ships will engage with the JMSDF in formal calls, as also professional, social and sporting interactions. After completion of the harbour phase, the ships will take part in Passage Exercise (PASSEX) with the Murusame Class destroyer, JS Kirisame.

Since the first 'Navy to Navy Staff Talks' between the two nations in November 2008, naval ties have reached new heights with bilateral and multilateral exercises and enhanced cooperation in information sharing, meteorology and oceanography, disaster management and military training. The defence and security interaction between both countries has since expanded to encompass a Defence Policy Dialogue and a Maritime Affairs Dialogue.

Regular bilateral and multilateral maritime exercises have been the foundation for strong naval relations. The erstwhile Japan – India Maritime Exercise (JIMEX) led to Japan participating in the 'MALABAR' exercise (a tripartite naval exercise between India, the US and Japan) since 2014. JMSDF Ships Izumo and Sazanami participated in the recently concluded edition of ExMALABAR off Chennai. Both navies have participated in each other's International Fleet Reviews (IFR) by deputing ships and high level delegations – while INS Sahyadri participated in the IFR at Yokosuka in October 2015, JS Matsuyuki participated in the IFR at Visakhapatnam in February 2016.

The Indian Navy and JMSDF also have strong bilateral defence training cooperation, including at very senior levels. Further, in order to enhance interoperability and understanding, seminars and short term exchange programs are conducted regularly in both countries with participation from both navies. This exchange has expanded to

sporting interaction in the form of JMSDF participation in the annual international Admiral's Cup Regatta at the Indian Naval Academy for the first time in 2016. India looks forward to continued participation from the JMSDF and an invitation has been extended for the 2017 edition as well.

Both navies look forward to enhanced cooperation in the fields of military technology, white shipping, training, intelligence sharing, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief and exchange of subject matter experts in various fields. With relations between both countries at an all time high and more avenues under consideration, the future looks promising with safer sea lanes and highly modernised navies helping in fulfilling each other's obligations.

DKS/AC

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Army dispels mis-apprehension regarding**Army dispels mis-apprehension regarding
status of service units of Indian Army**

1. During the Army Commanders Conference the issue of services being non-combatants was discussed. Some personnel from Army Service Corps (ASC) have expressed apprehensions that since they are non-combatants they should not be considered for posting to field areas. It is highlighted that Army in its Affidavit in Supreme Court has mentioned the following:-

(a) To boost strength essential in Line of Control, Low Intensity Conflict, Counter Insurgency and Counter Terrorist environment a number of Officers, JCOs and Other Ranks from Combat Support Arms and logistic units are posted on tenure basis in infantry (Counter Insurgency/ Counter Terrorist units). This also provides much necessary operational experience to these Officers, JCOs and Other Ranks. It is submitted that their performance in such roles has been noteworthy.

(b) Army performs its role in war and peace as a whole and not in isolated compartments. Each Arm/ Service has designated role and function.

(c) Combat Arms/ Combat Support Arms/ Services are operational entities of Army which has clear and defined roles with charter of duties. Further, without diluting the role played by Services in maintaining logistic support to Combat Arms during operations it has been the consistent stand of the Army during litigation that Commanding Officers (COs) of ASC, Ordnance and Electronics and Mechanical Engineers (EME) are not required to largely remain in contact with front line forces where major combat may take place during operations. Therefore, ages of Command of Services could be higher than those of arms, where COs are expected to move forward in the combat zone, where their physical efficiency becomes relevant. It was never in dispute that all arms and services are combatants. Hence, at no stage has the Army referred to Services Units being non-combatant Units.

2. In addition Chief of Army Staff on assuming the appointment had mentioned that he would consider all arms and services at par and they would get their dues that they deserve. Some aberrations, if these are being perceived by any particular arm or service are being addressed during the Conference. The anguish amongst some personnel on discrimination in their status, needs to be put to rest and the COAS has assured that necessary corrections, where needed will be addressed.

Col Aman Anand

PRO (Army)

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Between disarmament and deterrence

For the second time in the last decade, the Nobel Committee awarded its [annual peace prize](#) to the laudable goal of nuclear disarmament. This year's recipient, the [International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons](#) (ICAN), has worked tirelessly to raise awareness of nuclear dangers. The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons they helped birth at the United Nations reflects the ambition of many states to rid the world of nuclear weapons. This should be an exciting time for disarmament supporters.

But civil society actors and governments concerned about disarmament should not be tempted to rest on the laurels of this achievement. If they are to make further progress, they must also focus on practical steps to reduce the risks of nuclear weapons being used. Without such work, the prohibition treaty risks becoming merely a moral victory, rather than contributing to concrete steps towards a world without nuclear weapons.

The Nobel Committee's choice reflects an awarding of ambition. As much as the prohibition treaty creates a legal basis for proscribing nuclear weapons among adhering states, it hasn't actually banned such weapons. Nuclear arsenals exist and will continue to exist for years to come. The treaty establishes no new mechanisms to encourage states with nuclear weapons to dismantle them. Instead, it seeks to delegitimise nuclear weapons as tools of statecraft on the grounds of indiscriminate humanitarian effects. Ironically, the Nobel Committee essentially rewarded the same ambition just eight years ago, [when it gave the prize to former U.S. President Barack Obama](#) for offering a vision of a world without nuclear weapons. These days, that vision seems especially remote.

Since 2009, when Mr. Obama won the prize, nuclear dangers have increased, as have nuclear arsenals in several states. It is rare to pick up a newspaper or browse Twitter without encountering hair-raising threats traded between Washington and Pyongyang, or between New Delhi and Islamabad. The nuclear prohibition movement has no doubt gained momentum thanks to the fear inspired by the idea of Kim Jong-un or Donald Trump with his finger poised over the nuclear launch button. But neither the advent of a nuclear prohibition treaty, nor the increase in nuclear dangers seems to have diminished the belief in nuclear deterrence by officials and many experts from the states possessing such weapons.

Without nuclear weapons, some argue, there would be more violence, not less. Great power wars not seen since 1945 could return, with catastrophic consequences. Regional wars could increase in frequency and lethality. It is little surprise that many of the states opposed to the prohibition treaty are located in Europe and East Asia, regions whose politics continue to be shaped by the trauma and outcome of the Second World War.

For states facing nuclear threats in particular, the logic of nuclear deterrence remains seductive. It is hardly surprising, for example, that opinion polls consistently show more than 60% of South Korean citizens supporting the idea of acquiring nuclear weapons in order to counter the growing nuclear threat from North Korea.

It is such international security problems that the current ban movement and the nuclear prohibition treaty have trouble addressing. States facing potentially existential threats find few alternatives to nuclear deterrence.

Many states will join the treaty in the hope that it will stigmatise nuclear weapons and shame nuclear weapon possessors into eventual nuclear disarmament. But many states will reject the treaty and continue to hope that nuclear weapons and alliances backed by them will guarantee

their security.

Indeed, states with nuclear weapons are now engaged in efforts to modernise their arsenals to be useful for decades to come. The U.S., for instance, is considering building smaller nuclear weapons to target buried facilities. Pakistan has tested nuclear weapons that could be deployed on the battlefield. Russia may be developing new, intermediate-range missiles in contravention of an arms control treaty with the U.S. India is deploying nuclear weapons on new submarines. China is fielding new long-range missiles with multiple nuclear warheads. North Korea is racing to test and field a scary array of nuclear missiles. None of the weapons possessors seems particularly concerned with the stigma created by the prohibition treaty.

For international civil society actors who support the objective of disarmament, this situation presents an uncomfortable choice. They can seek to increase the number of states that join the prohibition treaty, with the knowledge that the treaty itself is unlikely to produce disarmament. Or they can work to reduce sources of nuclear danger, with the knowledge that such efforts, in many ways, legitimise nuclear deterrence.

Though it is notionally possible to work both angles, in reality the prohibition and nuclear disarmament camps are so divided that it is difficult to find credible middle ground. As in all matters of faith — and, increasingly, politics — theological arguments about nuclear weapons tend to further divide rather than bridge these camps. But there are useful means to push both sides towards a safer world.

In states possessing nuclear weapons, civil society actors can challenge the most expansive and dangerous ideas that extend nuclear deterrence objectives to absurd ends. Sharp analysis can highlight the magical thinking offered by many nuclear weapons advocates to paper over flaws in logic or distract from improbable assumptions. It is useful to foster debate that forces policymakers to justify their investment in nuclear weapons. In such debates, it is possible to question whether expenditures on weapons that can't be used might instead have higher returns if directed towards ventures that create alternative means of international leverage or suasion — economic or international political power.

In states desiring to prohibit nuclear weapons, civil society actors can encourage actions and policies that aim to mitigate security threats that drive demand for nuclear weapons. One such important threat is further proliferation. Strengthening international institutions and mechanisms that prevent proliferation and enhance the credible peaceful uses of nuclear technology is a critical enabler of disarmament.

Success in expanding the middle ground between nuclear disarmament and nuclear deterrence will require the same ambition and idealism that drove the conclusion of the nuclear prohibition treaty. It will require innovation and perseverance to identify and promote mechanisms to reduce risks of nuclear use. And it will require building trust that states and civil society actors on either side of the debate share the objective of mutual security.

Maybe in the future, states, multilateral institutions and civil society actors who join such efforts will be recognised by the Nobel Committee for tangible achievements to reduce nuclear dangers.

Toby Dalton is co-director, Carnegie Nuclear Policy Programme, Washington, DC

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

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Iran-U.S. relations: On dangerous footing

By [refusing to certify the Iran nuclear deal](#), which curbed its nuclear programme in return for lifting global sanctions, U.S. President Donald Trump has put the two-year-old pact on dangerous footing. Under American law, the administration has to certify that Iran is technically in compliance with the deal that was struck between Iran and six other world powers, including the U.S., every 90 days. All other signatories, as well as the UN, insist that Iran is fully complying. But Mr. Trump, who had during his election campaign [threatened to tear up the deal](#) and as President continued to call it the “worst agreement in American diplomatic history”, disavowed it days before the next certification was due. From its early days, his administration has taken a hawkish line towards Iran, imposing new sanctions on its missile programmes and joining hands with its regional rivals in West Asia. But even as he withdrew certification, he did not scrap the deal. Instead, he passed the buck to U.S. lawmakers. The Republican-controlled Congress now has 60 days to decide whether sanctions should be reimposed. It is unlikely to do anything radical in the near term as any sweeping legislation would require bipartisan support in the Senate. Nonetheless, the damage Mr. Trump’s decision has done to the agreement and to American diplomacy in general is huge. He appears to be driven by political calculations rather than a realistic assessment of the agreement, which, by its own standards, is working.

With the withdrawal from the certification, Mr. Trump has put the final nail in the coffin of an Iran-U.S. reset that had appeared possible during the Obama days. Now the threat of sanctions will hang over the nuclear deal. This is a boon for hardliners in Iran, who have suffered a political setback in recent years. The deal became possible only because the reformists and moderates rallied behind President Hassan Rouhani’s agenda, despite strong opposition from the Iranian deep state. Even Mr. Rouhani, who promised a solution to the nuclear crisis, got the deal done and won re-election this year, will now find it difficult to mobilise public opinion behind the agreement in the light of continued U.S. hostility. The larger question is, what kind of example is the U.S. setting for the global non-proliferation regime? The Iran deal, despite its shortcomings, was a shining example of the capacity of world powers to come together and sort out a complex issue diplomatically. It assumed greater significance given the recent wars and chaos in West Asia. It should have set a model in addressing other nuclear crises. Instead, by going after Iran even though it complies with the agreement, the U.S. is damaging its own reputation.

Rajasthan’s ordinance shields the corrupt, threatens the media and whistle-blowers

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The emerging blocs in the Afghan Great Game

While unveiling its long-awaited Afghanistan strategy, the US embraced India and dropped Pakistan as its ally. Broadly speaking, it occurred against the backdrop of the formation of a tripartite alliance of Russia, China and Pakistan. Donald Trump's move can further push Pakistan towards Russia and its "iron brother" China, and away from the US. Also, the two blocs differ in their approaches towards Afghanistan, and the destiny of this war-ravaged country is aligned with the interests of these states. So in this prevailing geopolitical quagmire and hostile environment, will terrorism scale down and will Afghanistan progress in terms of peace and stability?

The US and its allies have spent a tremendous amount of dollars, shed their soldiers' blood, even used a munition popularly called "Mother Of All Bombs" in order to eradicate terrorists but to no avail. It seems that the US' Afghan approach is not the right one. Besides, the interests of many rival states clash in this unfortunate land, further breeding terrorism.

The growing domestic political conflicts and the consecutive shock waves in Kabul have taken a toll on Afghanistan's fragile security. The Afghan government is engaged in the centre while the Islamic State (IS) and the Taliban are booming in the periphery.

The Taliban and the IS are two regional rivals in Afghanistan. They are competing for power, influence and territory. Although a big number of Taliban militants defected to the IS, yet the Taliban remains the most prominent and strongest terrorist organization in the country.

From the geopolitical perspective, a need for switching the alliance was felt in the region quite early. For example, a crack in the Pakistan-US relationship occurred in 2011 when the US, in a special raid, killed Osama bin Laden in Abbottabad and, later, 27 Pakistani soldiers. In response, Pakistan closed its border and cut supply lines to international forces in Afghanistan.

Similarly, China was already not happy with the growing influence of the US in the region. Besides Xinjiang, China also does not want the IS to expand its "Caliphate" to Pakistan since China has invested in Pakistan, for example in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor.

On the other hand, Russia's growing interest in Afghanistan cannot be ignored. Moscow is already engaged with the Taliban to keep the IS from sneaking into Russia. Iran followed suit.

Thanks to the IS-K (the Islamic State of Khorasan), the three countries have been brought closer. With the IS appearing in Afghanistan, Russia and China expressed their concern about the looming threat close to their borders.

A trilateral process of the three nuclear powers, Russia, China and Pakistan, was initiated last year in order to deal with the Taliban. But the process was vehemently opposed by Kabul, Washington and New Delhi since they were not taken into consideration. The reason appears to be that these countries are suspicious of the US having injected the IS into the region in order to achieve its interests and to counter China and a resurgent Russia. However, by excluding these important states, the emerging axis is less likely to bear fruit in dealing with terrorism. A shift could occur in the Taliban's policy in prioritizing enemies, though.

The IS-K is a grave menace to the region. Its geographical position is strategically important. To expand its Caliphate to South Asia, they have established strongholds in Nangarhar, Kunar and Nuristan, the eastern part of Afghanistan and a gateway to the rest of South Asia. And in the north, it is operating predominantly in Kunduz, Baghlan, Jowzjan and now in Badakhshan province, from where it can easily infiltrate central Asia and China.

Pakistan was infuriated when US President Trump asked India to deepen its economic relations with Afghanistan. Pakistan interprets India's engagement in Afghanistan as a direct threat to Pakistan. This is a misconception caused by the lack of trust between the two countries. "Pakistan should not object to our relationship with India. We assure that Kabul-New Delhi relations will not harm Islamabad," said Omar Zakhilwal, the Afghan ambassador to Pakistan.

In October, a mega trade and investment show was held in New Delhi. The US-sponsored event aimed at better regional integration and a strengthening of the economic nexus between India and Afghanistan. For Pakistan, this means the weakening of its economic leverage over Afghanistan.

All the versions of "The Great Game" will result in sheer loss to the players. Any bilateral or trilateral pacts with terrorists is a zero-sum game. Therefore, a win-win approach should be sought in order to tackle this challenge honestly. Terrorism is one of the most challenging phenomena the region has seen. No terrorist group has a proper hierarchy in Afghanistan. Even the jihadists are not loyal to their sponsors because at the end of the day they are foot soldiers who fight, and they know nothing other than waging jihad against infidels, including, sometimes, their allies.

The more cooperation there is among states, the better the prospects of stability in the region. However, in the long term, to curb terrorism in Afghanistan, a bottom-up approach is required; this means reaching out to the Afghan social structure, where the genesis of terrorism lies.

Irfan Yar is an international relations analyst specializing in counter-terrorism.

This is part of the Young Asian Writers series, a Mint initiative to bring young voices from different Asian countries to the fore. Comments are welcome at theirview@livemint.com

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Cybersecurity starts at the top

Every time a major corporate cybersecurity breach occurs, the response looks pretty much the same: Cry “Havoc!” and call in the cyber first responders to close the breach. But by the time an executive or two stands before a few government committees, proffering some explanation and pledging to beef up security protocols, people—including the hackers—have largely moved on. And with each breach, the cycle accelerates: People either dismiss the threat—it probably won’t happen to them—or accept it as an unavoidable pitfall of modern life.

The truth is that the threat posed by cybersecurity breaches is both acute and avoidable. The key to mitigating it is to understand that cybersecurity isn’t simply a technology issue; it is also an urgent strategic issue that should be at the top of the agenda for every board and management team. After all, from Yahoo! to Equifax, data breaches have often been rooted in internal forces of human error, carelessness, or even maliciousness.

Already, the scale and speed of attacks is massive. It has now emerged that the 2013 Yahoo! data breach affected all three billion accounts. In May, the WannaCry ransomworm attack affected dozens of the UK’s National Health Service trusts, and spread globally at lightning speed.

The recently revealed Equifax data breach—which occurred during two months when the company had a patch to a known security vulnerability, but hadn’t applied it—gave the hackers access to 145.5 million consumers’ personal and sensitive data. According to testimony provided by now-former Equifax chief executive officer Richard F. Smith to the US Congress, the breach reflected the negligence of one individual in the information technology (IT) department.

The risks are only growing. The UK’s National Cyber Security Centre, founded last year, has already responded to nearly 600 significant incidents. The department’s director recently predicted that our first “category one cyber-incident” would occur in the next few years.

One problem is that many organizations simply don’t have cybersecurity on their radar. They believe they are too small to be a target, or that such breaches are limited to the tech and finance sectors. But, just recently, the US fast-food chain Sonic —not exactly a tech giant—revealed that a malware attack on some of its drive-in outlets may have allowed hackers to secure customers’ credit card information.

The fact is that many types of companies use, if not depend on, technology. And they collect many types of data, about everything from customers and employees to distribution systems and transactions. Consumers often don’t comprehend the extent of companies’ data collection, failing to understand even the basics of the “cookies” being used when they surf the web. According to a March 2017 report by the Pew Research Centre, many Americans, for example, “are unclear about some key cybersecurity topics, terms, and concepts”.

Of course, consumers must be informed and vigilant about their own data. But even those who are, find that if they want to engage fully in modern life, they have little choice but to hand over personal data to organizations in both the private and public sectors, from utility and finance companies to hospitals and tax authorities.

With automation, this trend will only accelerate, with people counting on technology to do everything from ordering groceries to turning on the lights and even locking the doors. The power this gives to the likes of Google and Amazon, not to mention an ever-growing array of start-ups, is obvious. What is not obvious is that consumers can rely on companies’ knowledge and duty of care to protect the information they collect.

No company can afford a laissez-faire attitude about cybersecurity. Yet even tech companies took some time to recognize the extent of their technical responsibilities, including the need for a C-level executive to manage their technology needs. Not long ago, such companies often maintained a “helpdesk” mindset: Just make sure people could use the product and have someone to call if something went wrong.

But, with data breaches proliferating, often with business-critical consequences, there is no excuse for such inertia. Such breaches can cripple companies both operationally and financially, owing to the direct theft of funds or intellectual property and the cost of plugging the security hole or paying punitive fines. They can also diminish a company’s reputation and credibility among investors, business partners, and communities, even in cases when the breach is minor and doesn’t compromise sensitive information.

While board members do not all have to be technology experts, they do need to keep up with the state of their company’s technology, including how well secured it is. A board’s risk committee can conduct in-depth reviews. But regular status updates to the full board, like those for other crucial issues affecting the business, are also needed.

In today’s world, no organization—public or private, commercial or non-profit—has an excuse not to be supremely vigilant and proactive about securing their data and systems. It is not enough to meet legal requirements, which don’t keep up with technological change. Instead, those requirements should be viewed as a starting point for a much more robust, closely monitored, and effectively adapted system that truly protects the data on which our societies and economies increasingly depend.

Data breaches are not a fact of modern life. They are an artefact of modern indifference.

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Lucy P. Marcus is chief executive officer of Marcus Venture Consulting.

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Pakistan's uncertain road

Pakistan appears to be in the throes of interesting transitions. The NA 120 Lahore by-election result saw Pakistan Muslim League (PML-Nawaz) hold on to its bastion, albeit with a much reduced victory margin, enabling ousted PM Nawaz Sharif to sustain the narrative of being wronged by a biased judiciary.

Despite counsel from his own family to stay away, tending to his ailing wife in London, Nawaz decided to return and face the expected indictment before National Accountability (NAB) Courts on old corruption cases. Potential disunity within the party influenced his decision. His younger brother, Shahbaz and his son, Hamza have long suppressed their ambition to ascend to greater political responsibility. A disgruntled former interior minister with professed links to the army, Chaudhry Nisar Ali, has been sniping at the margins. PM Shahid Khaqan Abbasi is singing the right tunes for now but could switch loyalties to suit the military establishment.

The senate, where the People's Party (PPP) still has a numerical edge, passed by a slender majority of one vote an amendment in the Election Reforms Bill, 2017: It did away with the "sadiq" (honest) and "ameen" (truthful) disqualifying clauses in Section 5 of the Political Parties Order (PPO). This enabled Nawaz Sharif to be elected PML(N) chief again.

Though [Imran Khan](#) benefited politically due to his relentless pursuit of the Panama papers' case, his Pakistan Tehrik-e- Insaaf (PTI) has a long way to go before it can challenge the strong feudal and kinship ("biradari") hold of the PML(N) in Punjab. Winning sizeably in Punjab would be crucial to Imran's prime ministerial quest in 2018. However, Chief Justice Saqib Nasir's observations while hearing PML(N) politician, Hanif Abbasi's petition seeking Imran's disqualification for concealing facts behind purchase of his Bani Gala property, indicate he too could meet a similar fate.

With Jamaat ud Daawa (JuD) threatening to contest all seats in its Milli Muslim League (MML) incarnation, Punjab could have a fractured mandate. The planned mainstreaming of MML seems to be an effort by JuD's army/ISI handlers to embed radical Islamic groups in politics. Partly reflecting the army's exhaustion with political parties like PML(N), PPP and PTI, the tactic offers an opportunity to invest a non-lethal role and an umbrella of legitimacy, not least because of the JuD's professed anti-sectarian record in domestic conflict, while not abjuring the option of its proxy instrument loyally executing lethal attacks externally when needed.

Whether the 2018 elections can be held on time remains an open question as delimitation of constituencies based on the new census figures will pose complex administrative and political challenges, especially from Mohajirs in Karachi.

On the military front, Army Chief General Qamar Bajwa struck a measured note in his Defence of Pakistan Day speech (September 6), reiterating known positions of the deep state. Emphasising again that Pakistan had borne the brunt of terrorist reprisals, he asked "the world to do more". He said he was not seeking "aid but respect and trust". He mentioned alleged repression in Kashmir but urged India to "prioritise political and diplomatic solutions". The army could end terrorism but "monopoly over violence should be the prerogative of the state only".

Elsewhere, Bajwa denied instigating the judiciary to disqualify Nawaz Sharif. He professed the army's support for democracy. In what seems a healthy precedent, he called in members of the Defence Committees of the Senate and National Assembly for an interactive discussion. The Punjab government was prevailed upon to contend before the Lahore High Court that keeping Hafiz Saeed under detention was still necessary.

However, all does not seem comfortable within the army. In his latest military reshuffle, Bajwa has moved Lt. Gen Aamir Riaz, GOC XII Corps, Quetta to IV Corps, Lahore. Perceived by some PML (N) politicians to be anti-Bajwa and pro-Imran, Riaz's placement could be to oversee events in a politically turbulent Punjab, building up to the 2018 elections. Lt Gen Asim Saleem Bajwa, former Chief Raheel Sharif's "pet" at the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) makes a comeback as the new Southern Command head and GOC, XII Corps, Quetta. The Lahore Corps Commander, Sadiq Ali goes to the backwater post of DG, Arms in GHQ. Expressing his pique at not being considered for a corps command, Lt. Gen Rizwan Akhtar, former director general, ISI, currently in the sinecure National Defence University post, put in a request for premature retirement. Lt. Gen Sarfaraz Sattar, erstwhile defence attaché in India, promoted and posted as corps commander, II Corps, Multan only in December last year goes as DG, Strategic Plans Division (SPD). Sattar will be the senior-most lieutenant general after Bajwa retires in November 2019.

Civil-military tensions flared up again as interior minister, Ahsan Iqbal was prevented by Pakistan Rangers from entering the accountability court trying Nawaz. After he raised a hue and cry, the Rangers withdrew their entire security deployment outside Parliament. Corps commanders went into a seven-hour huddle on October 3, ostensibly for a security situation review and an appraisal of Bajwa's latest Afghanistan visit, even as the civilians decided to question the army about the Rangers' deployment. DG, ISPR Maj Gen Asif Ghafoor laboured hard in a long press conference to explain away this glitch, without convincing anyone.

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“Exercise INDRA - 2017: Indo-Russia Joint Exercise”**“Exercise INDRA - 2017: Indo-Russia Joint Exercise”****First Ever International Tri Service Exercise**

Giving the Indo-Russian defence cooperation a major boost, Exercise INDRA-2017, the first ever Tri Services Joint Exercise between Indian and Russian Armed Forces will be conducted in the Eastern Military District of Russia from 19 to 29 Oct 2017. Exercise INDRA in its previous nine avatars has been conducted as a single service exercise alternately between the two countries. The year 2017 marks a major milestone as this Exercise has been upgraded to involve all the three Services of the Armed Forces (Army, Navy & Air Force), which further accentuates the importance of Joint Services in the present world environment.

Exercise INDRA-2017 will be conducted at the 249th Combined Army Range Sergeevskiy and in the Sea of Japan near Vladivostok. The Indian contingent will comprise of 350 personnel from Army, 80 from Air Force, two IL 76 aircraft and one Frigate and Corvette each from the Navy. The Russian Federation Armed Forces will be represented by approximately 1000 troops of the 5th Army, Marines and Ships of Pacific Fleet and aircraft from Eastern Military District.

Addressing the Indian Contingent today, Lt Gen Satish Dua, UYSM, SM, VSM, CISC reminded them of the importance of the upcoming Exercise which will provide an opportunity to the armed forces of both countries to train in counter terrorism operations in a multinational scenario in a joint tri service environment. The scope of the Exercise includes professional interactions, establishment of joint command and control structures between the Indian & Russian forces and elimination of terrorist threat in a multinational environment under the UN mandate.

Exercise INDRA-2017 will strengthen mutual confidence, inter-operability and enable sharing of best practices between both the armed forces. It will be a landmark event in the history of Indo-Russian defence cooperation.

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Rohingya crisis worse than Syria's, says UN

Big tragedy: William Lacy Swing, Director-General, International Organisation for Migration, with Sarat Dash, Chief of Mission, Bangladesh, on the Tamru border. Suvojit Bagchi

The Rohingya refugee crisis is worse than the exodus from Syria, William Lacy Swing, Director-General of the UN's International Organisation for Migration (IOM), says.

The Rohingya exodus from southwest Myanmar to southeast Bangladesh is "man-made" and "needs a political solution", Mr. Swing said here on Monday.

He said the international community should treat the refugee influx as "a top priority" so that the problem was resolved quickly and refugees were able to go back to their country.

Mr. Swing, a career diplomat from the U.S., visited the Tamru border in Bandarban district in southeast Bangladesh, where thousands of Rohingya are stranded on no man's land between Bangladesh and Myanmar.

Talking to *The Hindu* after the border visit, he said: "This [Rohingya exodus] clearly is the one that has seen faster pace than any other. In terms of numbers of people — I don't think that anytime recently we have that many people crossing the border in a small period of time between four to five weeks," the IOM chief said, in reply to a question if the exodus was growing at a rate faster than it was in Syria in 2013.

Terrible atrocities

According to the Bangladesh government, between August 25 and October 11, a total of 5,36,000 Rohingya Muslims from Rakhine State in southwest Myanmar crossed over to southeast Bangladesh.

Many of them told this correspondent that their family members were killed and houses set on fire "by the Myanmar Army, local police and the ethnic community of Rakhine".

International humanitarian agencies, such as the IOM, vetted the recent refugee figure of the Bangladesh government's Refugee, Relief and Repatriation Commission.

"It [building pressure on Myanmar] has to be given top priority so that there [remains] a possibility of [the refugees] resuming their lives and returning to their livelihood and homes, which they have lost," Mr. Swing said. But, meanwhile, humanitarian relief should continue, he added.

"We are going back to our [IOM] headquarters in Geneva to take part in the pledging [for humanitarian aid] on October 23," Mr. Swing said.

The fund that the humanitarian agencies need to deal with the crisis is to the tune of \$450 million till March 2018.

Mr. Swing said they need to continue dialogue with the donors and the international community to support the people.

END

More check-posts to come up on Bangladesh border

Trucks waiting at the Petrapole ICP in Bengal. Debasish Bhaduri

The Home Ministry will move a Cabinet note to construct seven integrated check-posts (ICPs) along the Bangladesh border to give a fillip to trade and business with the neighbouring country.

In all, 13 such check-posts have been planned, seven of them along the Bangladesh border.

The project was envisaged in 2007. A separate body — the Land Port Authority of India (LPAI) — was constituted in 2011 to boost trade via the land border points.

A senior Home Ministry official said the Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC) was studying the proposal estimated to cost Rs. 5,000 crore. “Once the EFC gives the green signal, the proposal will be sent to the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) for final clearance,” the official said.

Several facilities

The ICPs planned along the Bangladesh border are at Hili, Changrabandha, Ghojadanga, Mahadipur and Fulbari in West Bengal, Kawripuchhuah in Mizoram and Sutarkandi in Assam.

Eventually, 19 ICPs are expected to come up along the Bangladesh border. Besides the seven in West Bengal, three will be in Assam, two in Meghalaya and seven in Tripura.

An ICP has several facilities such as passenger terminal building, currency exchange counter, Internet hubs, cargo process building, cargo inspection sheds, warehouse, cold storage, quarantine laboratory, clearing agents, banks, vehicle scanners, isolation bay, parking and cafeteria.

Avoidable delays

Five ICPs — at Attari in Punjab (along the Pakistan border), Petrapole in West Bengal (Bangladesh border), Akhaura in Tripura (Bangladesh), Raxaul in Bihar (Nepal) and Jogbani in Bihar (Nepal) — are already functional.

“ICPs help put in place a system to secure the country’s borders against hostile elements. It also facilitates trade and commerce and boosts revenue,” said the official.

The official said currently various departments work in silos. “There are many vehicles waiting to cross over to Bangladesh or waiting to enter India that are stuck for over 20 days due to lack of clearance from customs or immigration authorities.

An ICP would help eliminate such unnecessary delays,” said the official.

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A possible link between Pyongyang and Doklam

“I told Rex Tillerson, our wonderful secretary of state, that he is wasting his time trying to negotiate with Little Rocket Man...Save your energy Rex, we’ll do what has to be done!” tweeted US President Donald Trump about his secretary of state’s claims that the US has direct communication channels with North Korea.

With North Korean leader Kim Jong-un having previously referred to Trump as a “dotard”, not only is the level of conversation at a new low, but the prospect of a war is a little too close for comfort. Can we expect some damage control from China?

As mentioned in a previous column, it is against China’s interest to have an unstable nuclear power in its backyard, especially one that is consciously adopting a belligerent attitude towards its large western neighbour. Kim’s uncle and cousin, both considered close to China, have been assassinated. Kim’s missile tests have given the US a pretext to set up the Terminal High-Altitude Area Defence (THAAD) missile defence system in South Korea, giving it an asymmetric advantage over China. With North Korea averaging two missile tests a month since February, it is no longer in China’s interest to play cat-and-mouse while North Korea does its dirty work with respect to the US.

The Chinese dream sold by President Xi Jinping envisages the rise of China to the high table of nations. In this context, North Korea is not merely a threat. It also represents China’s “Pearl Harbour moment”— an opportunity to solve a pressing world problem and receive the widespread appreciation that would establish it as a moral force for good, complementing the material bases of its power. Everything points to the fact that getting rid of Kim without eliminating North Korea as a buffer state against the US is in China’s highest interest. Why then, despite calls in the mainstream Chinese press to reconsider the equation with North Korea, is China seemingly paralysed?

The main reason is that it is powerless to take on a nuclear-armed state possessed of the will to use its arsenal to protect itself. It is also hampered by the high-octane rhetoric from the US president that makes it an open question as to which is the rogue state in this face-off.

Some observers ask if Trump’s seemingly uncontrolled responses are part of a well thought strategy to create unpredictability and fear. To be fair, we must extend the same benefit of doubt to Kim’s actions as well. Trump’s no-holds-barred communication may strengthen his hold in his core base of supporters, but a growing section of the Republican caucus is beginning to ascribe his actions to a lingering childishness. Kim’s belligerence too may seem like a logical response to US’ long history of attempting to attack, assassinate, or otherwise emasculate its enemies—episodes in Cuba and Iraq come to mind. Yet one cannot ignore the psychological instability that is as much a part of Kim’s actions as his calculated chutzpah. We seem to be hostage to the idiosyncrasies of two leaders whose personalities are feeding off each other to bring the world to the nuclear precipice. As if this problem were not enough, Xi has opened a new front with respect to India in Doklam, and, with no apparent cause, Trump has refused to certify the Iran nuclear deal. Again, we ask, is there some method to this madness?

Xi’s stranglehold on power in a country facing stressful economic transformations is based on drumming up nationalistic fervour along with a war on corruption. With limited possibilities in North Korea, the face-saving strategy in the run-up to the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, where Xi is expected to consolidate power by waiving the rule which limits the term of office of a Chinese president, is expansionist action on other fronts. Once we understand China’s limitations vis-à-vis North Korea, the diversionary role of Doklam (and other such

missions) in Xi's strategy becomes clear. Trump's actions on Iran may well stem from the same desire to deflect interest from his lack of options in North Korea.

While India's swift response to China's Doklam incursion deserves plaudits, given the underlying incentives, one should assume the provocations will continue. As two neighbouring great powers, India and China can expect to remain in a relationship of simultaneous conflict and cooperation. Both sides should not let historical disputes come in the way of exploring win-win possibilities in other avenues. Ideally, India should leave most of the political and economic costs of containing China to the US and its immediate allies (as indicated by Trump's recent about-face on Pakistan, getting too close to the US would allow it to play India and Pakistan against each other). Hence, the recent renewal of disputes is an undesirable irritation. India would do well to aggressively negotiate with China using its importance as a source of demand for Chinese goods (India has a \$51 billion trade deficit with China) to minimize border skirmishes.

And yet, one wonders if the Indian government's need to demonstrate its newly discovered "strength" since 2014 prevents it from taking steps that would defuse tensions. The refusal to speak to the Hurriyat in Kashmir, the chest-thumping on "surgical strikes", the non-participation in the meeting on China's "One Belt One Road" project over objections to the passage of the economic corridor through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir indicate, in my view, an unnecessary intransigence. With little to show on the economy, in India as in the world, the primacy of domestic power struggles over international relations constitutes a new and deadly prisoners' dilemma.

Rohit Prasad is a professor at MDI Gurgaon, and author of Blood Red River. Game Sutra is a fortnightly column based on game theory.

With inputs from Nikash Pandey, student at MDI Gurgaon.

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India's balancing act on Rohingya crisis

As you read this, the Rohingya exodus from Myanmar's Rakhine state to neighbouring Bangladesh could touch 600,000. It has stretched Bangladesh, but raised its profile from a country in need of humanitarian assistance to freely offering it. It is far from India's profile in this instance.

As you know through a series of articulated positions by those in the government of India, Rohingyas constitute a threat to the national security of India. Not Bangladesh, but India, where an estimated 40,000 Rohingyas, mostly Muslim, have already sought refuge under United Nations' auspices, after they escaped earlier atrocities in Myanmar. The matter is in court, and even without that intervention already colours India's policy—that of treading lightly with Myanmar.

The government of India has been battling it out in the Supreme Court with lawyers representing Rohingya petitioners. The government maintains its right to deport Rohingyas who may cross the border into India since the latest wave of violence and exodus broke in late August. On 3 October, a Supreme Court bench questioned that right. A subsequent hearing scheduled for 13 October has been deferred to 21 November, but not before a three-judge bench delivered a lecture on the need to balance national security and human rights. "Children and women do not know anything about it," the court maintained. "As a constitutional court, we cannot be oblivious to it. We expect that the executive will not be oblivious to it."

The executive is obligated to policy, so the government of India's position is unlikely to change in a month. It is unlikely to change even if the court directs the government to stop deportation of Rohingyas. Government will find a way to circumvent it. That will make human rights practitioners see red, but a policy of convenience, for better and worse, will continue to trump a petition of conscience. It will be what-should-happen versus what-will-happen.

The geopolitical and geo-economic argument to India's Myanmar-Rohingya response, and India's related Bangladesh response, bears repetition.

Myanmar, and particularly the Sagaing area bordering India and its neighbouring Rakhine is a crucial link for India's hydrocarbon and trade ambitions that seek to connect north-east Indian states to Sittwe port in Rakhine province through road, railways and fuel pipelines. This is a trade and investment bulwark as much as an intended corollary, to throw a counter to China's influence in that region and country. This has led India's policy since the days of a Congress-led centre turned its back on the then darling of democrats, Aung San Suu Kyi, to embrace Myanmar's generals. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led centre has merely tightened that embrace, now ironically with Suu Kyi, the leading light of Myanmar's politics.

While the link with Myanmar could certainly light up India's North-East, the fullest expression of regional networking will come when India liberally uses Bangladeshi territory for movement of people as well as goods from that country and Myanmar, bringing bounty to eastern India through hubs in West Bengal. The relationship between India and Bangladesh has grown rapidly since Sheikh Hasina became Bangladesh's prime minister in 2009. Bilateral trade has since more than doubled, and diplomatic relations in the Modi years since May 2014 have been highlighted by a series of positives, from exchanging of exclaves to further curtailing of sanctuary for anti-India rebels in Bangladesh.

The relationship is now buffeted by the Rohingya crisis, which India has kept at arm's length by keeping up a narrative of Rohingya-related militancy to prevent an influx.

In July 2013, explosions rocked the Buddhist temple complex in Bodh Gaya. The narrative

reminds us of the media widely quoting confessions offered up by arrested Islamist militants—as offered to media—that the atrocity was planned to avenge the killings of Muslim Rohingyas in Myanmar.

Rohingyas came up for discussion in Parliament in March 2016, with a question in the Lok Sabha as to whether passports were issued to “Myanmarese Rohingya Muslims” to traffic them to Saudi Arabia and points beyond as ready recruits for the Islamic State, among other groups.

Yes, the home ministry replied. “In January 2016, the security agencies ... busted a module involved in arranging fake/fraudulently obtained Indian travel documents for Bangladeshis/Rohingyas and arranging visas of West Asia countries. So far, 13 persons have been arrested. As per initial information, the module has linkages with certain terror outfits operating from Pakistan.”

This narrative will win. India will occasionally send relief, as it first did in mid-September, airlifting 50 tonnes of relief supplies to Chittagong, the entrepot for Rohingya relief, to assuage both international opinion and Bangladesh’s irritation at being left to fend largely for itself. Indeed, in some quarters in Bangladesh, India’s relatively scant aid is seen more as *goru maira joota daan*, a colloquialism that translates as killing someone’s cow and then gifting the person shoes made from its skin.

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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INDRA-2017**INDRA-2017**

India and Russia have had longstanding military and diplomatic ties and to preserve these bonds of cooperation, India and Russia undertake annual military exercise INDRA. This milestone in military cooperation of the two nations epitomizes their strong and resilient relations. INDRA-2017 is the first tri-service bilateral exercise between the two countries.

On 18 Oct 2017, Indian contingent flew in IL-76 aircraft of the Indian Air Force to Vladivostok comprising of Army and Air Force personnel. The contingent, led by the Task Force Commander, Maj Gen ND Prasad was accorded a warm welcome by Commander of the Fifth Army of Russian Eastern Military District, Maj Gen Kutuzov.

On 19 Oct 2017, two indigenously built Indian Naval ships INS Satpura and INS Kadmatt arrived at Vladivostok Port and were given a traditional ceremonial welcome. Rear Admiral Anatoliy Zelinsky, Deputy Commander, Pacific Fleet of the Russian Navy was present on the occasion.

Earlier in the day, the delegation led by Maj Gen ND Prasad, Task Force Commander called on Mr Alexey Litvinov, the acting Mayor of Vladivostok. Maj Gen ND Prasad thanked the Mayor for the extremely warm welcome accorded to the Indian contingent and expressed the hope that the exercise would lead to increased mutual cooperation between the two countries. Also, the Naval Component Commander Rear Admiral Biswajit Dasgupta interacted with Admiral Sergei Avakyants, Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Pacific Fleet in a warm and cordial atmosphere.

An observer delegation led by Lt Gen JS Negi along with Air Vice Marshal VR Chaudhari and Rear Admiral V Sreenivas visited the 249 Sergeyvsky Training Ranges where a major part of the Army and Air Force component of tri-service exercise INDRA-2017 will be conducted. The delegation was briefed on the overall conduct of the exercise, after which they visited the camp where the contingent was being accommodated.

INDRA-2017 will serve towards strengthening mutual confidence and interoperability as well as sharing of the best practices between the armed forces of both the countries. The joint tri-service exercise will be a demonstration of the increasing commitment of both nations to address common challenges across the full spectrum of operations.

MJPS/RP**END**

Darjeeling deadlock: On elusive peace

The 104-day shutdown in the Darjeeling hills called by the Gorkha Janmukti Morcha (GJM) may have been [lifted in late September](#), but peace remains elusive. A host of factors is responsible for this, not least the sparring between the Centre and the West Bengal government over who should determine the next steps. That they are not on the same page was evident in the way the deployment of troops in the region was handled. On October 15, the Union Home Ministry wrote to the State government that it was [calling back 10 of the 15 companies](#) of the Central Armed Police Forces posted in the hills. In response, two days later Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee moved the Calcutta High Court and [got a stay](#). What is more worrying is that the situation on the ground remains tense and fluid. GJM chief [Bimal Gurung is on the run](#). While the announcement to end the shutdown had come from him after the Centre appealed to protesters and offered to talk, the State government has raided his properties, lodged several cases against him, including for misappropriation of funds and triggering violence. It has issued an arrest warrant against Mr. Gurung and declared him a “proclaimed offender”. In an attempt to exploit differences within the GJM, the State government propped up rebel Gorkha leader Binoy Tamang, naming him chief of a new board of administrators to head the Gorkhaland Territorial Administration, which had been set up in 2012 as a semi-autonomous body. Mr. Tamang’s elevation has divided GJM followers. Ms. Banerjee has also been holding all-party meetings — the next one is to be on November 21 in Darjeeling — to arrive at a solution, with the GJM represented by the rebel faction.

With peace yet to be restored fully, the Central and State governments need to urgently sink their differences, hold tripartite talks and meaningfully empower the GTA. The economy of the Darjeeling hills has taken a severe hit with both the tea and tourism industries having suffered huge losses and struggling to chart a way out. The tea industry, for example, lost almost all its second flush crop, with losses estimated at 400 crore and counting. With uncertainty prevailing in the hills and winter setting in, there is anxiety over whether the gardens will be ready for the premium first flush crop which is harvested between February and April. Tourists have begun to trickle back, but the peak season is over. With the West Bengal government looking to be in no mood to talk to Mr. Gurung, the political crisis is far from over. It was Ms. Banerjee’s initial statement that Bengali would be made compulsory in the State, including in the hills, that revived the Gorkhaland stir. She later retracted it — but securing the peace will take a more conciliatory attitude by all stakeholders — the Centre, the State government and the GJM factions.

Rajasthan’s ordinance shields the corrupt, threatens the media and whistle-blowers

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1TS Ship Visit JAKARTA, INDONESIA**1TS Ship Visit JAKARTA, INDONESIA**

IN Ships Tir, Sujata, Shardul, and ICGS Sarathi are visiting Jakarta, Indonesia from 18 to 22 Oct 17. The visit is aimed to expose the trainees to the conduct of *IN* warship in foreign waters, port familiarisation and foster bridges of friendship between the two countries. The ships belong to the First Training Squadron of the Indian Navy functioning under the Southern Naval Command, headquartered at Kochi and comprises six indigenously built ships, namely, Indian Naval Ships Tir, Sujata, Shardul, Indian Coast Guard Ship Sarathi and two Sail Training Ships, viz. INS Sudarshini and INS Tarangini.

The visit of the ships coincides with the visit of Vice Admiral AR Karve, AVSM, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief (FOC-in-C), Southern Naval Command, which is the Training Command of the Indian Navy. On 18 Oct, The Admiral called on Vice Admiral ADE Taufiq R, Vice Chief of Staff, Indonesian Navy and discussed matters of mutual interest to both the countries. The Commanding officers of the Indian ships called on the Naval area commander, Jakarta.

Executive Branch trainee officers, after completing ab-initio training at the Indian Naval Academy, where they earn a B Tech degree, join the First Training Squadron for intensive Practical Sea Training of 24 weeks designed to enable them get their 'Sea Legs'. The Sea Trainees are taught seamanship, basic navigation, ship handling, boat work, engineering aspects besides exposure to the rigours of life at sea. The curriculum also includes sail training onboard the Sail Training Ship, where the trainees are exposed to the elements and get to grip with the art of sailing and rope work. On successful completion of this phase, the trainees are appointed to various ships of the Indian Navy and Coast Guard for the Afloat Training Phase and Seamanship Board. At the First Training Squadron, the *IN* also trains officers from friendly foreign countries.

The Indian Navy has imparted training to international trainees for more than four decades, wherein approximately 13500 personnel from over 40 countries have been trained. Presently **seven** officers from Indonesia are undergoing various Ab-initio to advanced courses at SNC. The Command has gained the reputation of being the finest training destination by maintaining focussed approach to provide high quality training and by constant adaptation to evolving tactics and technologies.

The Training Squadron is helmed by Captain DJ Revar, Senior Officer First Training

Squadron, who is also Commanding Officer INS Tir. He has under him, a team of highly motivated officers and sailors to assist him in conduct of the sea training.

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Trump's decision strengthens the hands of hardliners in Iran

As political roller coasters go, there is none as steep and unpredictable as the one shared by the United States and Iran. Consider how the relationship has changed in the past three years. A consortium of nations, including the US, had come to an agreement on Iran's nuclear status in 2015 that put the country's rogue programme on hold for eight years. The newly elected Iranian president, Hassan Rouhani, came to power strongly supporting better relations with the West and had offered to continue negotiations on the future of the agreement.

But the new US president, Donald Trump, came to power expressing strong reservations about the nuclear deal and Iran in general. Last week Mr Trump, overruling his own cabinet and ignoring most of Washington's strategic community, refused to certify that Iran was in compliance with the terms of the agreement. This has now opened the door for the US Congress to impose even more stringent sanctions against Iran if it wishes. Mr Trump has called for the other countries that negotiated the deal to make it more stringent and more dependent on Iran changing its support for insurgencies and terror groups. Iran has publicly rejected the idea.

The US president's decision was flawed at a number of levels. By ripping apart an existing agreement, Mr Trump has ensured there is no incentive for Iran to consider further negotiations as he has signalled the US will not honour such texts in any case. At a time when a moderate like Mr Rouhani had come to power, the arbitrariness of the act only strengthens the hands of hardliners in Iran who believe developing a nuclear arsenal is the country's best security bet.

The timing of his announcement could not be worse. Iran's geopolitical standing could not be better. The Islamic State's collapse has meant Iranian-backed regimes are now dominant in Iraq and Syria. Tehran's bitterest opponent, Saudi Arabia, is on the back foot as its famed oil power has been defanged by shale oil and gas and the violent civil war within the Sunni world. There is little incentive for Iran to stop its more unsavoury actions when things are going so well. The US president has torn apart a source of stability in the world system without offering a clear alternative. While Iran is hardly a saint in the international system, it can only be hoped that saner minds will prevail elsewhere in Washington and put any further sanctions on hold.

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Decoding Xi's road map for China

Delegates participating in the twice-a-decade conference of the Communist Party of China (CPC) are poring over President Xi Jinping's marathon opening address on Wednesday, especially his emphasis on the "principal contradiction" facing China.

An explainer published by the state news agency Xinhua has tried to decode the hidden meaning behind the "principal contradiction," purposefully highlighted by President Xi.

"Principle contradiction" is not an "obscure piece of political jargon," but a central part of the "dialectical materialism" through which Marxists interpret the world, the commentary observes.

"Contradictions — or dynamic opposing forces — are omnipresent in society and drive social change. The 'principal contradiction' is what defines a society. By identifying and solving it, society develops peacefully. Left unsolved, it can lead to chaos and eventually, as Marx predicted, to revolution," it adds.

An inaccurate reading of the "principle contradiction" can lead to disastrous consequences. China faced "prolonged social turmoil" after the party wrongly diagnosed "proletariat versus bourgeoisie" or an irreconcilable class war between the working people and the affluent as the "principle contradiction" during the late Mao-era.

But in 1981, the CPC changed its assessment of the "principal contradiction," which led to structural market economic reforms, leading to near 10% expansion of the Chinese economy for the next 30 years.

Today's scenario

The situation has changed yet again. Pointing to the dawn of a "new era," Mr. Xi has stressed that the principle contradiction was now "between unbalanced and inadequate development and the people's ever-growing needs for a better life."

The commentary explains that aspirations among many Chinese have spiralled. Many Chinese are now seeking an education at Oxford or Cambridge, a vacation in California, or a villa in Sydney.

'Inability to satisfy'

"This demand for a better life overseas is derived from an inability to satisfy these desires at home. The very highest level of education is not available or in acute short supply. There are long waiting lists in the very best hospitals. Tourist sites are crowded and services there have hardly advanced at the same pace as people's expectations."

Chinese regions have also developed unevenly. Besides, the gap in personal wealth is a major concern.

"The country's three richest men — two Internet gurus and one property magnate are each worth more than \$30 billion. Meanwhile, millions of people struggle to get by on less than a dollar a day," the report observes.

The fulfilment of aspirations for equitable growth, a cleaner environment, a richer cultural life, and a secure external environment identified by the current "principle contradiction," will guide policy

formulation in the coming decades.

During his address, President Xi pointed to the twin centenary goals — making China a moderately prosperous country by 2021, leading to the emergence of an advanced socialist nation by 2049 when the

People's Republic of China (PRC) was established.

“His [President Xi's] two-stage development strategy spans 30 years, with the objective of making China a “great modern socialist country,” the commentary observed.

Ning Jizhe, a Vice Chairman of the National Development and Reforms Commission (NDRC), China's top planning body, pointed to a mammoth Greater Bay Area plan that would help achieve the “centenary goals”.

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The limits of China's influence over North Korea

Friends in the 1950s: A picture of Mao Zedong and North Korea's leader Kim Il-sung on the Hekou Bridge which links the two countries. APEugene Hoshiko

North Korea and China share a long, porous border, several millennia of history and deep ideological roots. Tens, and possibly hundreds, of thousands of Chinese soldiers, including Mao Zedong's son, died to save North Korea from obliteration during the Korean War, and China is essentially Pyongyang's economic lifeline, responsible for most of its trade and oil.

However, their relationship is less about friendship or political bonds than a deep and mutually uneasy dependency. Nominally allies, the neighbours operate in a near constant state of tension, a mix of ancient distrust and dislike and the grating knowledge that they are inextricably tangled up with each other, however much they might chafe against it.

This matters because if China is not the solution to the nuclear crisis, then outsiders long sold on the idea must recalibrate their efforts as the North approaches a viable arsenal of nuclear-tipped missiles capable of reaching the U.S. mainland, something the CIA chief this week estimated as only a matter of months away.

China's disdain

One clue about how Chinese see the North can be seen in two widespread nicknames for Kim Jong-un — Kim Fatty The Third and Kim Fat Fat Fat.

A growing disdain among the public is reflected in China's willingness to permit criticism of the North in the press, and to allow tougher sanctions at the UN Beijing has suspended coal, iron ore, seafood and textiles from the North.

Still, nothing China has done offsets its underlying fear that too much external pressure could collapse the government in Pyongyang. The nightmare scenario for Beijing is North Korean refugees flooding into its northeast after Seoul takes power in Pyongyang and U.S. and South Korean troops occupy lands that were once considered a buffer zone.

One way to gauge Pyongyang's feelings for Beijing is to consider that Kim Jong-un has yet to visit his only major ally, a country that accounts for 90% of North Korean trade, since taking power in December 2011.

Since communication at the highest levels has now virtually disappeared, Mr. Kim feels little need to pay attention when Beijing calls on him to stop testing nukes and missiles.

In fact, North Korea has seemingly sought to humiliate Beijing by timing some of its missile tests for major global summits in China.

It can be argued that the North Korea-China relationship never really recovered from Beijing's decision in 1992 to establish formal diplomatic relations with Seoul.

But a big part of North Korea's "profound sense of mistrust" and "long-term effort to resist China's influence" stems from the 1950-53 Korean War, according to James Person, a Korea expert at the Wilson Center think tank in Washington. The war is often seen as the backbone of the countries' alliance, he said, but the North blamed the failure to conquer the South on Beijing, which had seized control of field operations after the near-annihilation of North Korean forces.

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Social media trends to help monitor security

Social media trends and data analytics will be used for the first time in monitoring security at the country's airports, and nuclear and aerospace installations. The Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), tasked to secure these important assets, has created a maiden 'media lab' and social media monitoring control room — the Pattern Research For Institutional Social Media (PRISM) analytics — at its base in Arakkonam near Chennai.

A special team of CISF agents has been trained in tracking social media trends, collate them and dish them out as vital pieces of "actionable intelligence" to various airports and other vital units. Platforms like Twitter, FaceBook, YouTube and Flickr will be used to check any suspicious and sabotage-like activity against the assets.

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Donald Trump's Iran folly and India's dilemma

On 13 October, US President Donald Trump, in a much-anticipated move, declared Iran a “rogue regime”, a sponsor of terrorism, and an aggressor in the Middle East. Although none of this relates to the hard-negotiated Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) on Iran's nuclear programme, Trump announced that he would no longer certify—as mandated by the US congress' Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act (Inara)—that Tehran was in compliance of the deal. In doing so, Trump may have set the stage for war with Iran and for further nuclear weapons proliferation in the Middle East and North-East Asia. Trump's pronouncement also has major implications for India.

Trump's populist speech ignored International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) reports, which have consistently noted that Iran has been in compliance of its JCPOA obligations. He also disregarded pleas of his own cabinet as well as other parties to the JCPOA, particularly the European allies, who were also involved in the painstaking negotiations with Iran. Instead, the speech was primarily aimed at appeasing his domestic base and allies like Israel and Saudi Arabia. This is evident from the emphasis on “the regime's destabilizing activity and support for terrorist proxies in the region”, “financing of terror”, and “proliferation of missiles and weapons that threaten its neighbours”. Although all of these are of concern to Washington, it is not clear how abandoning the deal would compel Tehran to alter its behaviour in the region.

Yet, despite the shrill tone of Trump's declaration to decertify Iran, he stopped well short of pulling out of the JCPOA—for now. Trump's speech was, at best, an effort to preserve the JCPOA for the present but also threaten its future. Instead, he warned a Trump-weary, Republican-dominated congress that he would terminate the deal if it did not address the JCPOA's “sunset clause”, which concludes the deal around 2030, as well as restrictions on Iran's missile programme. Worse, Trump imposed unilateral sanctions against Iran's elite Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps, the first time that the US has imposed sanctions against the armed forces of another country. This myopic and dangerous move is likely to instigate Iran's force to step up its activities, particularly in Syria.

Against this backdrop, the US congress has three options. First, it could ignore Trump's decertification. Given that the IAEA is authorized to regularly report on Iran's compliance, the congress could simply accept these reports in lieu of certification by the Trump administration. This move, however, would render Inara ineffective. Second, the congress could insist that the administration has to justify with much more evidence its decision to decertify. At present, the administration has offered mere innuendos and argued that Iran “is not living up to the spirit of the deal”, implying that it is in compliance with the letter of the deal. Any intransigence on the part of the White House might compel the congress to block other items put forward before it by the administration. A third possibility is that the congress, which has never been very fond of the JCPOA to begin with, might actually take up the administration's call to either sanction Iran again or to agree that the deal should be renegotiated. Given the differences within various congress factions and the difficulty of renegotiating a complex multi-party deal, this is the least likely option.

Clearly then Trump's decertification move is unlikely to have any significant impact on either Iran's missile programme or its behaviour in the region. Unilateral sanctions have never forced any country to change course. Besides, by disengaging with the deal Washington is also leaving the path open for its European allies as well as Russia and China to benefit from the peace dividend via trade and sale of equipment, such as civilian aircraft.

On the other hand, Trump's move to renege on the JCPOA will also send a clear signal to North Korea to both step up its nuclear and missile programmes and also treat any US offer of negotiations or an agreement with the deepest of suspicions. Pyongyang has been wary of US

deals, given its experience with the poorly executed 1994 framework agreement and the fate of Libya's Muammar Gaddafi after he willingly gave up his nuclear programme. The Iran decertification move will merely offer yet another excuse for North Korea's regime to ensure its security by building up its nuclear arsenal.

For India, the revival of the US-Iran spat is likely to have geopolitical and geo-economics repercussions. As the second largest importer of crude from Iran, India will be haunted by the spectre of having to drastically reduce its supplies again, just as it was forced to in the pre-JCPOA period.

Similarly, despite the warm speech by US secretary of state Rex Tillerson on the eve of his maiden official visit to New Delhi, hailing India as a key partner in the Indo-Pacific, renewed tensions between Washington and Tehran might also cast a shadow on the burgeoning Indo-US relations. While both countries will seek to manage their differences, as evident from the absence of any reference to Iran in Tillerson's speech, it may still dampen the otherwise sunny prospects. Moreover, how India responds to Trump's virtual call to arms against Iran will also have an impact on New Delhi's relations with Israel and Saudi Arabia. Clearly, Trump's myopic and dangerous move against Iran imposes an additional burden not only on bilateral Indo-US relations but also India's Link West policy in general and the Chabahar project in particular. The price of Trump's folly might prove exorbitant for India.

W.P.S. Sidhu is professor at New York University's Center for Global Affairs and associate fellow at the Geneva Centre for Security Policy. Comments are welcome at views@livemint.com

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Pakistan's economic dependence on China is dangerous

Something is rotten in the state of Pakistan's external finances. One would think that Pakistan, the home of the flagship project of China's trillion dollar Belt Road Initiative, would have an overflowing external account. It is early days yet, but so far the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor's economic consequences have been disastrous. The World Bank recently warned Pakistan it would face an external financing crisis next year. It noted the country would need \$17 billion to cover a rising current account deficit and debt payments. The State Bank of Pakistan, the country's central bank, had sounded a note of alarm earlier when the current account deficit for the 2016-17 fiscal year unexpectedly jumped 149% from the previous year – from less than \$5 billion to over \$12 billion.

There is little evidence of Chinese munificence in Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves and trade figures. Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves have fallen to \$13.8 billion in September, the lowest since 2013. And partly because its improving connectivity with China is resulting in a flood of imports, its trade deficit has widened dramatically. While China is by far the largest source of foreign direct investment in the country, this is less impressive when one realises Pakistan attracted a total of \$2 billion in FDI last year. While an improvement on the previous year, it is less than half of what the country used to attract even five or six years ago. At a time the world is flush with cheap capital and the Pakistan economy is growing at over five per cent a year, the lack of foreign investment is more than a bit surprising. Even China's \$ 800 million plus investment flows are hardly eye-popping.

There are a number of reasons for Pakistan's financial condition. It has long depended on the foreign exchange earned from remittances, flows which have halved as the Persian Gulf economies slow down. The restrictions of some Gulf states on Pakistani migrant labour is also part of the story. But what may be most telling is the lack of serious attempts to attract foreign capital. Pakistan's establishment seems to have concluded that the CPEC will provide for all of their economic needs and that, therefore, they need not actually do the hard work of reforming their economy. For example, to save the Pakistani rupee from crashing, the country has twice run to China this year alone and borrowed \$ 1.4 billion. The question is how long Beijing is prepared to be so generous or what price will it extract in return.

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New interlocutor is known as a dove

On a mission: Former IB Director Dineshwar Sharma with Finance Minister Arun Jaitley PTI

Former Intelligence Bureau (IB) chief Dineshwar Sharma, who was appointed as the government's special representative to carry forward a dialogue with all sections of the people in Jammu and Kashmir, has said that he would ensure that "normalcy returns to the State as soon as possible."

Speaking to *The Hindu*, soon after his name was announced at a press conference by Home Minister Rajnath Singh, Mr. Sharma said he was approached by the Centre two days ago. A top government source said Mr. Sharma was chosen as he is known to have "moderate views and is committed to dialogue."

"I hope I can rise to the expectations of the people of India. Would like to see that normalcy returns to State as soon as possible," Mr. Sharma said.

Crucial meeting

The source said that on October 17, National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval, Home Secretary Rajiv Gauba, Director, IB, Rajiv Jain and other senior officials met J&K Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti at her Akbar Road residence in Delhi to discuss a new political process in the State.

"The officials went over three previous processes of dialogue held in the Valley — the roundtable discussion by former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, the talks held by former Home Minister P.Chidambaram and the report of the three interlocutors appointed in 2010," said the source. The committee discussed various names. "It was felt that a politician may be too public a figure. The name of a top official of a key investigating agency was also considered. They finally decided on tried, tested and trusted Dineshwar Sharma," the source said.

Asked if Kashmiris would be apprehensive of opening up to a retired police officer who has also been the intelligence chief, Mr. Sharma said, "I have been interacting with all kinds of people when I was in IB... it never occurred [to me] that people are scared to talk to me."

Official sources that there was no restriction on talking to separatists.

Mr. Sharma, a 1979-batch IPS officer of the Kerala cadre, was appointed as Director, IB, in December 2014 for a fixed two-year term. Post- retirement, he was appointed as an interlocutor for talks with Assam-based insurgent groups in June. He also heads a committee to restructure the Home Ministry.

The Centre was keen on giving an extension to Mr. Sharma as IB chief, but he turned down the offer. Mr. Sharma has worked with Mr. Doval when the latter was IB chief. He headed the Subsidiary Intelligence Bureau of Uttar Pradesh when Home Minister Rajnath Singh was the Chief Minister.

(With inputs from

Suhasini Haidar)

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Dialogue is open to all, says Mehbooba

The Centre's move to appoint an interlocutor for Jammu and Kashmir on Monday was welcomed by all mainstream political parties in the Valley, but separatists remained muted to the dialogue offer "awaiting a formal invitation."

Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti, whose party pledged to initiate a dialogue with the Hurriyat under the 'Agenda of Alliance' agreed to by the BJP, said: "A political process was necessary. I hope stakeholders in Kashmir take up the opportunity, move a step ahead and enter the dialogue process. It is open to all with no conditions on any side."

"The representative (former IB director Dineshwar Sharma) has credibility and was involved in the dialogue process in the North-East for a long time," Ms. Mufti said.

Welcoming the initiative, former Chief Minister and National Conference working president Omar Abdullah said, "The acceptance of the political nature of the Kashmir issue is a resounding defeat for those who could only see use of force as a solution."

Congress unimpressed

J&K Pradesh Congress Committee president G.A. Mir said his party "won't welcome the move until the Centre names the stakeholders and makes the road map for dialogue public." Parties like the CPI (M), the Peoples Democratic Front and the Democratic Party Nationalist welcomed the move.

Sources in the separatist camp said there would be "a joint stand" and "a formal response" to the Centre's move. "...However, neither has there been any formal invite nor a move in this direction so far. No one knows the contours," a separatist leader told *The Hindu* .

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Centre's envoy to hold talks on J&K

In his speech on August 15, Mr. Modi had said that problems in the State could be solved “neither by bullet, nor by abuses but by embracing the people.”

Before the Centre's announcement of his appointment, Mr. Sharma met Mr Modi on Monday afternoon. He met Mr. Singh later in the evening.

Speaking of his recent four-day visit to Kashmir, Mr. Singh said he met 87 delegations. “All of them were clear that the process of dialogue should begin in the Valley,” he said. When reminded about similar initiatives in the past that did not lead to any results, Mr. Singh said, “Please take it from me that whatever we do, we will do with *saaf neeyat aur neeti* (good intentions and clear policy).”

Asked about the report of the earlier group of interlocutors gathering dust in the Home Ministry, Mr Singh said, “You cannot pre-judge that this initiative will not be successful. Our announcement shows how serious we are about initiating dialogue.” The Minister said the special representative would initiate sustained interactions and dialogue to understand the legitimate aspirations of people, especially the youth, and try to fulfil them, he said.

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On a different trajectory: on Naxalbari movement

Half a century after the [Naxalbari movement arrived like a Spring Thunder over India](#), questions are beginning to arise as to whether the spark that gave rise to it is in danger of being extinguished. Independent India had previously experienced armed peasant movements, including the Telangana armed struggle and the Tebhaga movement (in Bengal), but the Naxalbari movement seemed to follow a different trajectory.

It was ignited by a small group of Bengal revolutionaries (all members of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) formed in 1964) who felt disillusioned with the so-called embourgeoisement of the party which had only recently split from the CPI on the ground it had turned revisionist. Breaking away from the CPI(M), this faction received almost instant endorsement from the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) under Mao. This was followed by a few cadres visiting China to receive the benediction of the CCP. In course of time some of the cadres went to China for training.

It was in April 1969 that the movement took formal shape, with the coming into existence of the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) under the leadership of Charu Mazumdar. It initially had a mesmeric effect, enthusing sections of the rural population as well as some semi-urban and urban elements mainly in the States of West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala. The Chinese Communists were keen that the new Naxalbari movement should follow the Chinese model of revolution relying on the peasantry, establishing base areas in the countryside and using the countryside to encircle and finally capture the cities. As the movement progressed, it became obvious that the Indian Marxist-Leninist revolutionaries preferred the Ho Chi Minh model to that of Mao. The CPI(ML), hence, consisted of both rural and semi-urban elements. In the early years, and till the 1990s, a number of recruits to the movement came from the urban intelligentsia.

Naxalbari at 50

From the beginning, the movement, which included many well-known ideologues, suffered from a series of splits. Several leaders from Bengal and Andhra Pradesh thereafter set up their separate parties. A high degree of ideological motivation, however, helped the movement to survive despite the several splits. The ideological motivation could be sustained through the several hundred revolutionary journals in different languages published during the period.

The splintering of the movement subsided to some extent after Muppala Lakshmana Rao, aka Ganapathy, took charge in the early 1990s. Following this, the movement witnessed a degree of consolidation with the Communist Party of India (Maoist) formally coming into existence in the first decade of this century with the merger of several existing factions. Nevertheless, several smaller Marxist-Leninist parties and groups survive to this day.

The main strength of the CPI (Maoist) has been its organisational structure. It has a Central Committee headed by Ganapathy. It possesses a powerful military wing headed by Nambala Keshav Rao aka Basavaraj — the Central Military Commission (CMC). Members of key committees, and especially the Central Committee, are geographically distributed, thus ensuring a degree of cohesion across the party. The hierarchical organisational structure consists of regional bureaux, zonal committees and area committees. Some of the area and zonal committees such as the Dandakaranya Special Zonal Committee, the Andhra-Odisha Border Special Zonal Committee and the North Telangana Special Zonal Committee have been more active than others.

Over a dozen States have been, or are, affected by Naxalite activity to varying degrees. The most affected States are Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Odisha. Naxalite or Maoist violence is mainly concentrated at present in pockets such as Abujmahad and Narayanpur districts, Bastar,

Dantewada and Sukma, all in Chhattisgarh. Areas of Odisha are also increasingly affected today by Naxalite violence. Considerable potential for Naxalite violence exists in Bihar, pockets in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, Maharashtra and the tri-junction of Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. The movement's leaders are in constant search of new areas to expand their activities and to secure fresh recruits.

The village where it began

Maoist actions and scale of violence have steadily come down in recent years, and more so since 2010. The presence of over 100 battalions of Central paramilitary forces aided by State police forces has had a sobering effect on the movement. It has not, however, prevented Naxalites from carrying out a few spectacular attacks during this same period. One of the deadliest attacks took place in April 2010, involving the massacre of 76 Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel in Dantewada.

There have been other serious attacks as well, notwithstanding the overall decline in the tenor of the movement. This year, there have been at least two major attacks. One took place in March this year, leading to the killing of 12 CRPF personnel, members of a road opening party. In April this year, the Maoists carried out an even more daring attack on a CRPF patrol in Sukma district killing 25 personnel. On more than one occasion between 2010 and 2017, the Maoists were to demonstrate their penchant for large-scale attacks — in one instance ambushing a group of Congress leaders during electioneering (May 2013 in Chhattisgarh). At least 27 people, including former Union Minister V.C. Shukla, died.

In official circles, Maoist success is often attributed to the failure of police personnel to observe 'Standard Operating Procedures' and also to the failure of intelligence. This, however, ignores the intrinsic capacity of the Maoists to carry out ambushes, their skill in employing improvised explosive devices, and their capacity to resort to ingenious weaponry such as arrow bombs. It also underestimates the ability of the highly trained battalions of the People's Liberation Guerrilla Army, who constitute the vanguard of the movement. They are well-armed and adept in the use of both orthodox and unorthodox weapons. Their skill is often evident in the so-called 'liberated zones' in the Naxalite heartland.

The forgotten war

The decline in the rate of Maoist successes — in the past year the numbers of those killed by the Maoists was hardly 20% of that in 2010 — and the relative success of the security forces, seems to have induced some rethinking in Maoist circles. There is growing demand today for a change in approach, and for a new direction.

The spirit of Naxalbari was predicated on a mixture of intellectual fervour and armed struggle methodology. Over the years, the concept of capturing the cities by mobilising the countryside has lost much of its steam. Far fewer recruits to the Maoist cause also came from the urban areas, especially the intellectual class. By the turn of the century, the movement had become increasingly militarised, more adept at so-called military actions and hardly retaining any of its intellectual élan.

Leaders like Ganapathy, who has remained General Secretary of the CPI (Maoist) since its inception, were more influenced by the past. They seemed out of step with the current genre of violent revolutionaries, who make up the bulk of the cadres today. Younger elements favour not only newer tactics but also a change of guard, viz. seeking a new leader more experienced in employing militaristic techniques. The demand for a churn has been growing louder in recent months.

All indications, hence, are that as perceptions of a Maoist decline intensify, the CPI (Maoist) would move away from the previous traditional line and embark on a more violent path. This would be under a new leadership more attuned to such policies and techniques. A strong possibility exists that Ganapathy may be replaced by the present chief of the CMC. The CMC is in direct charge of guerrilla type violent activities of the party. With the change of guard, the ideological content of the movement is bound to decline still further. The link with Naxalbari and the Naxalbari spirit threatens to snap as a result. The CPI (Maoist), bereft of ideology, could then drift towards becoming like any other militant or terror group active in different parts of the country. This could have graver consequences for the country since the CPI (Maoist) has a much wider base than any other militant outfit.

M.K. Narayanan is a former National Security Advisor and a former Governor of West Bengal

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Law And Immunity

How to police a cyber space that has acquired the instincts of Frankenstein's monster? In pursuit of answers, an expert committee submitted an interim report to the Union Home Ministry a couple of weeks ago. The recommended amendments to the Indian Penal Code (IPC) are noteworthy for two reasons. One, they bring within the ambit of IPC (through amendments to Sections 153 and 505) any visual, audio, video, verbal or written communication, transmitted or retransmitted through any telecommunication service, device or computer. They propose that any speech that is disparaging, offensive, indecent, abusive, hate, gravely threatening - and so interpreted - be criminalised.

It is possible to discern in the government's move the continuance of a relatively consistent narrative that seeks conformity and compliance. Section 66A of the IT Act may have been struck down in the Shreya Singhal case but this is its new, more astute avatar with a better operating legal-ware. It seeks to add yet another speech-control legislation to the plethora of existing penal codes: Sections 295A, 124A, 153A, 505 that target acts ranging from malicious, to seditious, to disruptive of public order or morality, to violent, to plain mischievous. None of these provisions preclude speech on social media. One wonders, then, why is there a move by the government to acquire more punitive powers?

The wonderment grows when we are to peruse the social media cases that have been considered "repugnant to public order and morality". Pankaj Mishra, a CRPF jawan, was arrested last week in Jorhat for questioning the home minister and the prime minister over service conditions. A BSF trooper, Tej Bahadur Yadav, was dismissed from service for using social media to complain about food served to jawans. Prabhat Singh, a Bastar-based journalist, was arrested for an offensive Whatsapp message. Film-maker Shirish Kunder had an FIR registered against him over his tweets criticising the BJP's decision to appoint Yogi Adityanath as UP chief minister. A medical practitioner was arrested in March in Jhabua, Madhya Pradesh, on charges of hurting religious sentiments by posting a picture of a sadhu buying meat. A Jadavpur University professor and his neighbour were arrested for allegedly circulating a cartoon that lampooned [Mamata Banerjee](#). This list is quite extensive and spans various governments' dubious records on free speech.

In each of these cases, one or the other pretext of public order, morality, derogatory speech, slander and defamation was used to outlaw advocacy, mirth, caricature and the worst of all crimes, dissent. To add to law-keepers' selective, politically motivated ire is not just what it cherry-picks but also what it ignores. It chooses to turn a deaf ear to posts, threats and tweets that are deeply offensive, obscene, misogynistic and violently communal. It chooses to remain unmoved by any civic or national imperative when the target of vicious trolling are journalists, film-makers, authors, writers, painters, common people who are just doing their jobs as citizens. It even chooses to use an ordinance, as in Rajasthan, to outlaw the investigation into the conduct of judicial or political power.

It is nobody's case that the freedom of speech is an absolute freedom. But our constitutional commitment to free speech demands that it cannot be suppressed unless the situations created by allowing the freedom are pressing and the community interest is endangered. And this "danger" cannot be remote, hypothetical, or stemming from a poor appetite for mirth and scorn. It should have, as the Supreme Court said in Shreya Singhal, a proximate and direct nexus with the expression, quite like the equivalent of a "spark in a powder keg".

The trade-off between free speech and public order/morality has never hurt political dispensations. In fact, the more controlled speech is, the greater has been the immunity and impunity of political power. The proposition that more law would lead to more order becomes a recipe for more

moralised political control, more paternalism and more statism. We need to remember that free speech preconditions the realisation of many of our claims and entitlements. Less of it translates into less democracy in general.

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Dineshwar Sharma as J&K interlocutor can build on the gains achieved in recent times

Security forces can encounter militants, not engage with people and adversaries the way politicians do. In that sense, the Centre's decisions to appoint an interlocutor, albeit not a politician, for dialogue with all stakeholders in Kashmir is a positive step.

Votaries of dialogue had for long sought a blend of a military and political approach to the Kashmir imbroglio. The move half meets the call but is well-timed. Kashmir hasn't returned to normalcy. It's experiencing nevertheless a relative calm that can be strengthened by reaching out to alienated groups and formations.

It's not clear whether the Hurriyat will be a port of call for former IB chief [Dineshwar Sharma, the interlocutor](#). The possibility isn't ruled out, what with Home Minister Rajnath Singh leaving the decision to him.

In fact, J&K police chief Shesh Paul Vaid had the other day made out a case for a political initiative to build on the security force's success in taking out 160 militants this year. A repeat of a Burhan Wani kind of trigger, he had feared, could negate the gains of the past months.

Among those eliminated were Abu Dujana and Bashir Lashkari of the LeT. People turned out for their funerals, but there was no outrage of the kind that followed Wani's death.

The dip in stone-pelting is attributed to the NIA probe against the Hurriyat operatives accused of funding mobs. In reality that's just one factor in the counter-militancy story in which the police has been a key protagonist.

But from where should the peace overture start and how? As Mr Vaid suggested, the Opposition should refrain from eulogising stone-pelters as freedom fighters. His allusion was to Farooq Abdullah's response to the prime minister exhorting the Kashmiri youth to choose between "terrorism and tourism".

At the same time, the Centre and the PDP-BJP regime in J&K would be well advised to vigorously implement pro-people elements in their common agenda of governance. That will build the ambience for talks by strengthening a peace that's still tenuous.

Besides, the Centre, through its points-person, should attempt at an understanding with pro-India parties like the National Conference and the Congress to not be expedient on issues requiring political consensus. Much of that will also depend on the Centre's own sincerity on having all stakeholders on board.

For their part, the Opposition too should, in the interest of Kashmir and the country, lead from the front — rather than being led by popular sentiments. Only a united polity can repair the political and emotional chasm in Kashmir.

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Centre appoints Shri Dineshwar Sharma as its Representative in J&K**Centre appoints Shri Dineshwar Sharma as its Representative in J&K**

In a major development, the Centre today appointed Shri Dineshwar Sharma, former Director of Intelligence Bureau, as the Representative of Government of India to initiate and carry forward a dialogue with the elected representatives, various organizations and concerned individuals in the State of Jammu and Kashmir.

Shri Sharma will initiate a sustained interaction and dialogue to understand the legitimate aspirations of the wide cross sections of society, particularly the youth in Jammu and Kashmir and communicate them to the State Government and the Centre.

The move comes in the wake of various steps taken by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi to address the needs of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. It may be recalled that during his visit to Srinagar on November 7, 2015, the Prime Minister had announced a package of Rs 80,068 Crores for the overall development of the State. He has also met the leaders of political parties from time to time and received suggestions with regard to the issue of peace and development in J&K.

In continuation of this process, in his address to the nation on 15th August this year, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi had mentioned that, "Neither by bullet, nor by abuses but by embracing we can solve the problem of Kashmir".

Subsequently, Union Home Minister Shri Rajnath Singh has also visited J&K from September 9-12, 2017 and met a large number of delegations from wide spectrum of the society.

Shri Dineshwar Sharma is a Retired IPS officer from 1979 Batch of Kerala Cadre. During his distinguished career, he has served in J&K, Kerala, Uttar Pradesh, Nagaland and Manipur and as Additional Director and Special Director in the Intelligence Bureau in the Headquarters. He has in-depth understanding of security related matters and considerable knowledge and experience of issues relating to Jammu and Kashmir.

KSD/NK/PK

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IAF show scorches Lucknow-Agra highway

The Indian Air Force put up a spectacular show on the Lucknow-Agra highway on Tuesday as 16 of its frontline aircraft conducted elaborate landing drills on a designated airstrip built on the expressway.

The landing and touchdown exercises were held on the 3-km airstrip built on the expressway near Bangarmau in Unnao, between Lucknow and Kanpur.

The IAF's fighter class aircraft, Sukhoi-30, Mirage-2000 and Jaguar enthralled the crowd with their speed and touchdown manoeuvres. The key feature of the event, however, was the debut of the advanced turbo-prop military transport vehicle, the C-130J Super Hercules, on the highway. This was also the first time that the Jaguar participated in a highway landing exercise.

The C-130J Super Hercules, which is of U.S. origin, is utilised for special operations and relief work during HADR (Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief) operations in times of humanitarian crisis. They supply relief material during calamities such as floods and earthquakes, while also being used for evacuation.

The day's exercise started with a short landing by the massive C-130, which on its landing roll loaded off Garud commandos for ground operations.

On disembarking from the C-130, the commandos took up position on either side of the airstrip to cordon it off for the fighter operations.

Two sets of three Mirages, five Sukhois and three Jaguars, then carried out touch and go manoeuvres on the expressway. The over two-hour long performance was capped by another short landing by the C-130 as it returned to extricate the Garud commandos.

Alternative airstrip

The military has said the exercise was aimed at checking feasibility of expressways being used as alternative airstrips in case of dire emergencies or non-availability of runway for any reason.

“Over the past few years, the IAF has been increasing its efforts to utilise certain straight stretches of National Highways for emergency landings. Such highway stretches are planned to be used in emergencies, if an active airport is not available for some reason. These operations increase the flexibility in the use of Air Power,” a defence spokesperson said.

This is not the first time the IAF aircraft have landed on a highway. In May 2015, fighter aircraft landed on the Yamuna Expressway for the first time, followed by an elaborate ‘touch-and-go’ and low-pass manoeuvres of take-offs and landings by six IAF fighter planes — three Mirages and three Sukhois — last November when the expressway was inaugurated by the Akhilesh Yadav government.

Several countries like Germany, Sweden, South Korea, Taiwan, Finland, Switzerland, Poland, Singapore, Czechoslovakia and Pakistan have dedicated stretches on their highways and expressways for aircraft to land and take off in emergencies or warlike events, the military said.

“This operation has majorly boosted IAF's capability to undertake unhindered operations even during non-availability of standard runways. It has demonstrated the expert flying skills of its fighter and transport aircrew, and the capability of its ground crew in activating such expressway airstrips

on short notice,” the spokesperson said.

The IAF plans such exercises on highway stretches in other parts of India. At 302-km, the Lucknow-Agra Expressway is the longest six-lane highway in the country. The highway cuts short the distance between the state capital and the land of the Taj Mahal, while also reducing journey time to Delhi.

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Technology to help ITBP battle cold

The government is looking at a proposal for 50 temperature-controlled posts along the India-China border for ITBP jawans, who now guard the Himalayan heights in sub-zero temperatures, Home Minister Rajnath Singh said here on Tuesday.

Addressing the jawans on the foundation day of the force, the Minister announced a slew of measures to boost the capabilities of the force. These included the construction of 25 border roads in Arunachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh.

There are 176 posts along the India-China border, from Karakoram Pass in Ladakh to Jachep La in Arunachal Pradesh.

The ITBP showcased its maiden mechanised column of power vehicles and machines, along with its agile Para commandos.

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Promises to keep

The Centre's decision, at long last, to begin a political dialogue in Jammu & Kashmir is a step in the right direction. The appointment of an interlocutor to begin a "sustained dialogue" shows that the [Narendra Modi](#) government, earlier determined that there could be no talks so long as terrorism continued, has now realised that the situation in the state cannot be improved through force and firepower alone. Last year, as teenaged stone-pelters clashed daily with security forces on the streets, the government remained unmoved by the deaths and pellet gun blindings. But other than a daily body count on both sides, that approach did nothing to improve the situation. Terrorism, infiltration and militancy have continued despite the steady elimination of commanders and foot-soldiers of the Hizbul Mujahideen, Lashkar e Taiba and Jaish. There is no reason why containment of militancy or terrorism cannot go side by side with talks.

But for any dialogue to enjoy credibility in Kashmir, the minimum requirement is that the Centre must engage with the Hurriyat and its top leadership. So far there is no clear indication that the government plans to be inclusive of the separatists, against many of whom, separately, the National Investigation Agency has initiated investigations for alleged hawala operations and moneylaundering. Even the elected politicians of the Valley are clear that any process in Kashmir is set up for failure unless the separatist leadership is included in it. Talks with "all stakeholders" is what the BJP had agreed to in its "agenda for the alliance" with the PDP ahead of the formation of a coalition government in the state. And this is a promise that should be kept.

That the government appointed a former intelligence official to lead its first big initiative on Kashmir has been a bit of a dampener. A senior politician as the interlocutor would have given more confidence in Kashmir that the outreach was genuine, and carried more weight. But the appointment of Dineshwar Sharma, a former IB chief, may yet prove to be a boon. A low-profile interlocutor from whom expectations are low could well pull off big outcomes. Here, though, what is on the table will be as important as who will be seated around it. The term "legitimate aspirations", which Union Home Minister [Rajnath Singh](#) has used, is an indication of what the talks could be about. But the term can be as flexible as the government wishes. It would be best if the interlocutor goes in prepared for the maximum range of "legitimate", and without preconditions.

A hardline BJP government is paradoxically better placed than any Congress government to take a more liberal approach to talks. The timing of the initiative, ahead of two state elections, both important for the BJP, shows the government is prepared to take some political risk on the Kashmir front. This, by itself, is an encouraging sign.

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Talk is good: on initiating dialogue within Jammu and Kashmir

The Centre's announcement of an interlocutor to [initiate dialogue within Jammu and Kashmir](#) is a welcome step that has the potential to arrest the dangerous drift in the Valley since the death of Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed in January 2016. The appointment of Dineshwar Sharma, a former Director of the Intelligence Bureau, as a "special representative" also signals a willingness on the part of the BJP-led NDA government at the Centre to walk back from some of its hardened positions: this comes three years after Home Minister Rajnath Singh had called such an exercise "non-productive". Every interlocutor appointed for Kashmir by New Delhi has come to the task in trying circumstances, but none more so than Mr. Sharma. While his appointment allows Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti to check off an item (to facilitate and initiate dialogue with "all internal stakeholders") on the Agenda of Alliance, the binding document of her People's Democratic Party's coalition with the BJP, making such a dialogue meaningful will be a challenging task. For one, there needs to be more clarity from the Centre on the latitude available to Mr. Sharma to confer with individuals and groups in J&K. The recent raids by the National Investigation Agency, among many pro-active measures against separatists, could influence any outreach to Hurriyat leaders, for example. The Hurriyat, without doubt, stands very isolated, but the interlocutor will have to broadbase his schedule significantly to have any chance of winning the interest of civil society in the Valley.

Dialogue is open to all: Mehbooba Mufti

Mr. Sharma also comes to the Kashmir Valley too long after Ms. Mufti assumed the Chief Minister's post in April 2016, since when she has struggled to hold the reins of power as assuredly as her father did. It also comes too long after the stone-pelting protests and the security forces' indiscriminate use of pellet guns after Hizbul Mujahideen 'commander' Burhan Wani's killing hit normal life in the summer of 2016, and subsequently polarised the debate on the next steps. The NDA government has waited more than a year, in which time the valorisation of slain militants has acquired its own momentum and the leadership that protesters heed has become more diffuse. The security situation has deteriorated in other ways too, ranging from militant attacks on Kashmiri policemen to the regular breaches of ceasefire with Pakistan on the border. In fact, the gains of the decade since the 2003 ceasefire have been frittered away. A new generation of youth has taken to militancy since 2013, at least 200 by official estimates. The most poignant evidence of the drift and anxiety in the Valley has been the mystifying allegations of and protests over "braid-chopping". Dialogue is vital. For it to be more than a headline-management exercise, the Central and State governments must rein in the hardliners to enable a genuinely conciliatory environment.

Rajasthan's ordinance shields the corrupt, threatens the media and whistle-blowers

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For the sake of the Indo-Pacific

US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson's visit to New Delhi this week comes at an important moment for both countries and governments. The US-India relationship occupied high priority and visibility during the Obama administration. The Donald Trump administration, too, has shown its commitment to the relationship, hosting Prime Minister [Narendra Modi](#) in Washington DC, earlier this year. Last week, Secretary Tillerson articulated the importance of India and of US-India ties. He spoke of maintaining stability, security and prosperity across the Indo-Pacific region in the coming decades.

The US and India will increasingly need to work together on the political and security challenges across the Indo-Pacific region, from mounting tensions with North Korea, the Rohingya crisis, and India's own standoff with China over Doklam to the lingering challenges in Afghanistan. In a welcome move, the strategic and security partnership between our nations seems set for greater advancement, with the announcement of a ministerial dialogue which will bring Secretary Tillerson and US Secretary of Defense General James Mattis into direct engagement with their Indian counterparts, Sushma Swaraj and Nirmala Sitharaman.

However, as Secretary Tillerson noted in his speech, the geo-economics of the Indo-Pacific are as important as the region's geopolitics. He was blunt in reminding us all about the need to put options on the table in order to encourage private capital and cutting-edge technology to invest in the region. While two-way trade, and investment, between the two countries has increased significantly in the past five years, there is much room to expand the economic partnership.

There is much anticipation about the discussions between India's Commerce Minister Suresh Prabhu and US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer at the US-India Trade Policy Forum, in conjunction with the US-India Commercial Dialogue. These parallel talks place a centrality on economic cooperation, giving both governments an opportunity to talk in a comprehensive manner on some of the outstanding trade issues. First, it is important to note that US-India commercial ties have seen an uptick in recent years with PM Modi's market-oriented reforms. India is currently the US' ninth largest goods trading partner. India is also one of the fastest growing sources of foreign direct investment in the US, at nearly \$11 billion. In a groundbreaking development illustrating growing economic convergence, the US delivered its first shipment of crude oil to the Paradip port a few weeks ago. This will lay the foundation for a burgeoning cooperation in the energy sector.

During this week's US Trade Policy Forum, US and Indian leaders will have an opportunity to generate a constructive dialogue on challenges American businesses encounter as they compete in the Indian market: Market access barriers for medical devices, tariff and non-tariff barriers on ICT products and agricultural goods, and the need for a strong intellectual property framework that benefits innovation and entrepreneurship. On the US side, movement - even incremental - on a totalisation agreement would be a welcome relief for temporary Indian workers and Indian companies from paying an annual social security payment. Just as American companies create jobs in India, Indian companies too are responsible for direct and indirect job creation in a range of sectors, creating innovation labs, extensive nationwide STEM education programmes, and academic partnerships. It would benefit the economic relationship if the US government, in its review of immigration programmes, could reassure job creators about high-skilled workers from around the world who contribute to American businesses' growth and expansion. This contribution enhances the job opportunities for all sorts of American workers and makes the US more competitive.

Secondly, the US-India commercial dialogue and November's Global Entrepreneurship Summit in Hyderabad, will present another opportunity to discuss convergent interests and multilateral issues

- particularly in entrepreneurship, tourism and setting global standards for trade. When PM Modi announced his vision for "Startup India" in early 2016, the buzz reverberated throughout Silicon Valley. Start-ups have the potential to create 3.5 million jobs in India and contribute billions to the economy in the next decade. Indian start-ups are now open to receiving 100 per cent funding from foreign venture capitalists - a recent reform implemented by the government of India. As India continues its economic reforms, Indian and global companies look forward to further improving India's ease of doing business, removing infrastructure bottlenecks, and encouraging entrepreneurship and value creation in Indian businesses.

A recent report predicts dramatic shifts in the global economic order by 2050 - six of the seven largest economies will be emerging economies led by China and India. At the same time, India will need \$4.5 trillion in investment by 2040 for infrastructure and economic growth. In this regard, Secretary Tillerson's remarks pin the arc of the next generation of US-India ties. India's position in a part of the world that contains the most important trade corridors necessitates deeper economic linkage with the US. It is crucial for India to be able to develop its infrastructure, attract capital and cutting-edge technology, grow its economy and advance opportunities for its people. India will only benefit by working with American businesses in order to attract private investment in a way that follows global standards for international development.

The time to act on shared goals and shape the destiny of the Indo-Pacific region will begin this week. A fully realised US-India economic partnership is necessary to accomplish that goal.

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IAF Landing Operations on Agra-Lucknow Expressway

IAF Landing Operations on Agra-Lucknow Expressway

Indian Air Force carried out major landing operations on the Lucknow-Agra Expressway, about 60 km west of Lucknow, today. The series of landings took place close to Bangarmau in Unnao District of Uttar Pradesh, where a 3 km stretch was specially prepared for such operations. The landing operations commenced at around 1015 hrs and continued till about 1200 hrs. A total of sixteen aircraft participated in the operation which comprised IAF's frontline Air Superiority Fighters including the Sukhoi-30, Mirage-2000 and Jaguar fighter aircraft. These aircraft took off from Bareilly, Gwalior and Gorakhpur respectively. In addition, the IAF carried out drills in which Garud Commandos were inserted and extricated for ground operations, by the C-130J Super Hercules transport aircraft which took off from Hindon airbase.

A team of Senior IAF Officials headed by Senior Air Staff Officer HQ CAC, IAF Allahabad Air Marshal AS Butola were present to oversee the operations. While the operation was conducted under the aegis of HQ CAC, Bamrauli Allahabad, Air Force Station Bakshi Ka Talab Station Commander, Gp Capt J Soares and his team, were responsible for the overall control and coordination of the exercise.

On site arrangements were made for a Mobile Air Traffic Control, Radar Control, Meteorological Facility, Aerospace Safety and Security Control. In addition, to deal with any situation, crash, firefighting, rescue and medical teams were positioned. IAF sought assistance from State Government authorities for temporary closure of the expressway and other matters like crowd control, etc. A large number of police personnel were stationed along the stretch to ensure smooth conduct of operations.

The exercise commenced with an impressive short landing by the C-130 which on its landing roll itself started off loading the Garud Commandos and their vehicle in manoeuvre called Combat ERO (Engine Running Offload). Immediately on disembarking from the C-130, the Commandos took up position on either side of the airstrip to cordon it off for the fighter operations. This was followed by two sets of 3-3 Mirages, five SU30s and three Jaguars. All 14 fighter aircraft carried out a roller/touch and go manoeuvre on the expressway. The C-130 then returned for another short landing to extricate the Garud Commandos.

Over the past few years, IAF has been increasing its efforts to utilise certain straight stretches of National Highways for emergency landings. Such highway stretches are planned to be used in emergencies, if an active airport is not available for some reason. These operations increase the flexibility in the use of Air Power. In addition, use of transport aircraft for quick insertion of forces for Human Assistance and Disaster Relief into civil area and Special Forces in case of contingencies has been validated.

IAF had already carried out landings by fighter aircraft for the first time on the Yamuna expressway on 21 May 2015. The stretch of Agra – Lucknow expressway was earlier activated for the first time for IAF operations in November 2016 in which six fighter aircraft of the IAF landed on the expressway. However, in this exercise, IAF included the Jaguar fighter aircraft for the first time. Also for the first time, IAF's C-130J transport aircraft participated in highway landing operations for insertion and extrication of Garud Special Forces. While the operations on 24 October 2017 required the closure of the portion of the expressway for road traffic, through the excellent support of the UP State Government and UPEIDA, once the planned works are completed, such road traffic closure will not be required henceforth. Two diversion roads on either side of the airstrip are near completion. In addition, wire fencing on both sides is also being undertaken to keep the airstrip clear of stray animals. Two parking areas for aircraft at both ends of the airstrip are also nearing completion.

Several countries like Germany, Sweden, South Korea, Taiwan, Finland, Switzerland, Poland, Singapore, Czechoslovakia, Pakistan, etc. have dedicated stretches on their highways and expressways for aircraft to land and take off in emergencies or war like events.

This operation has majorly boosted IAF's capability to undertake unhindered operations even during non-availability of standard runways. It has demonstrated the expert flying skills of its fighter and transport aircrew, and the capability of its ground crew in activating such expressway airstrips on short notice. Such activations of highway stretches all across India are planned to be practised regularly by the IAF in future.

MJPS/NA/GM/PCJ/RP

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Judges cannot decide on troop deployment: Centre

The Centre submitted that its decision was taken after assessing the ground situation.

Judges cannot decide on deployment of troops. It is the fundamental job of the government of the day, and not the judiciary, to decide on the placement of police and armed forces to secure the nation's borders and maintain law and order internally, the Centre told the Supreme Court on Wednesday.

The government's sharp attack was directed at a recent Calcutta High Court order directing the Centre to retain all 15 companies of the Central Armed Police Forces, deployed in the restive districts of Darjeeling and Kalimpong in West Bengal, till October 27 or until further orders. The High Court had countermanded the Centre's directive to withdraw certain companies from the two districts.

Separation of powers

"The [Calcutta High Court's] direction ignores and virtually obliterates the very concept of separation of powers. The maintenance of order and the security of the country, which includes the deployment of police and armed forces, is a fundamental facet of the governance of the country, and is a core governmental function of the executive wing of the State. These matters cannot be the subject matter of judicial review, or adjudication by a court," the petition, filed by advocate S. Wasim A. Qadri and settled by Attorney General K.K. Venugopal, contended.

The Centre mentioned the petition for urgent hearing before a Bench led by Justice J. Chelameswar, who agreed to refer it for listing before an appropriate Bench of the Supreme Court.

The petition said the demands on the Central Police Forces were tremendous. "India has a long border and, in order to effectively prevent cross border infiltration of terrorists, the Central Police Forces are also deployed. Obviously, being a high priority consideration, the thinning of border deployment has serious national security implications," the Centre explained.

Noting that 61 officers of various Central police forces were martyred this year alone, the government pointed to the various high alert theatres like the Valley, the North East and the Red Corridor States affected by naxal extremism which require heightened presence of forces. Even natural disasters and the holding of elections would require the deployment of these forces.

Pressing situations

"It would be the exclusive domain of the Central government to decide on the most efficacious deployment of the limited police personnel and resources, to quell pressing situations, varying in gravity, that simultaneously arise in different parts of the country... There is no yardstick by which the Court could assess the need for deployment of Central Police Forces in different States," the petition said.

Following unrest in the two districts in West Bengal, the Centre had deployed a total of 15 companies of Central Police Forces in June-July 2017. It said the State's own police force has 73403 personnel, followed by 20781 personnel in the State Armed Force, 15612 in Home Guards and two I.R. Battalions, besides the Rapid Action Force, Counter Insurgency Force, Eastern Frontier Rifles (EFR) and 'STRACO'.

The Centre submitted that its decision was taken after assessing the ground situation. The State

government had also concurred.

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Navy to increase watch over Indian Ocean

Sunil Lanba

The Navy is institutionalising an experimental concept of round-the-clock surveillance of critical choke points in the Indian Ocean. The issue was reviewed on Wednesday at the ongoing biannual Naval Commanders Conference chaired by Navy Chief Admiral Sunil Lanba.

“The plan involves deploying mission-ready ships and aircraft along critical sea lanes of communications and choke points. These ships deployed are 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. These deployments are aimed to be maintained 24/7 and round the year with ships being sustained and turned around on station,” a Navy source said.

The new mission-based deployment concept was unveiled in the last Naval Commander’s Conference and was ratified for incremental implementation, in the backdrop of increased Chinese presence in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).

As part of this, at least 12-15 major warships are on round-the-clock surveillance of critical choke points in the IOR, the official added.

Of late, China has increased its presence in Indian Ocean in the name of anti-piracy operations.

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U.S. opposes Iran's 'destabilising' activities

Sushma Swaraj

Visiting U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said here on Wednesday that Washington does not intend to oppose Iran's business with India.

He was addressing a joint press conference with External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj.

"It's not our objective to harm the Iranian people nor is it our objective to interfere with legitimate business activities going on with other businesses in Europe, India or agreements that are in place to promote economic development," he said.

Mr. Tillerson said U.S. opposition to Iran was limited to Tehran's "destabilising activities" in the wider West Asian region and sought help from countries with ties with Iran to push it to stop its regional activities.

Dialogue as a means

Ms. Swaraj also indicated that the U.S. may have to consider dialogue as a means of resolving the North Korean issue, and said, "India's trade relation with North Korea is minimal and the Indian embassy in Pyongyang is very small. But we do have an embassy. I have told Secretary Tillerson that some of your friendly countries should maintain embassies there so that some channels of communication remain open. On many occasions you may have to talk to them to resolve issues through dialogue so at least let one country that you consider friendly maintain its embassy. I think he has understood and appreciated our position to maintain our embassy in Pyongyang," the Minister said.

India and North Korea have maintained diplomatic offices in each other's capitals, though New Delhi recently banned trade of most goods with the country, except in food or medicine.

The discussions also covered the H1B visa issue and Ms. Swaraj noted that some bills pending with the U.S. Congress may harm the skilled professionals of India. "I have again raised the issue because in view of the close India-U.S. ties, skilled professionals of India expect that they should not be harmed," she said, explaining that India has engaged both the Congress and the White House to prevent any negative step on this issue.

It's not our objective to harm the Iranian people or interfere with legitimate business
Rex Tillerson

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Echoes at Doklam

In his address to the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC), Chinese President [Xi Jinping unveiled his vision to make China](#) a great power so that it “leads the world in terms of the composite national strength and international influence.”

The days to the run-up of the much awaited, once-in-a-five-year event saw some symbolic posturing along the India-China border, especially at Doklam. After a lull following the disengagement, the continued presence of Chinese troops in the vicinity of the stand-off site came to light and a wait and watch game ensued. Recently, the Indian Air Force chief, Air Chief Marshal B.S. Dhanoa, expressed hope that Chinese troops who were in the Chumbi valley for their annual summer exercises would move back at the onset of winter. The Army believes that there could be increased transgressions by China at other vulnerable points along the over 4,000km long Line of Actual Control (LAC). This is possible, if Mr. Xi's address is any indication.

While Mr. Xi stressed that China did not “pose a threat to any other country”, he reiterated the centrality of China's territorial integrity and called on the People's Liberation Army (PLA) to go hi-tech, saying that technology is at the core of combat strength.

How this transition unfolds domestically could have a fallout on the border given the tussle between the PLA and Mr. Xi. In the last couple of years, the PLA has been systematically stripped of its power by Mr. Xi, first through the formation of the theatre commands and later in a series of changes in the top leadership. In 2015, Mr. Xi announced reorganisation of the seven military regions into five theatre commands with all three services effectively integrated, which reduced the clout of the PLA generals by bringing the military under stronger grip of the Central Military Commission chaired by him. He has also managed to project the end to the Doklam stand-off to the domestic audience as his victory. As Mr. Xi looks toward consolidating his grip on the Party and the crucial Politburo Standing Committee, it is in his interest to project himself as being firm and decisive in preserving core Chinese national interests.

The life of Xi

However, based on past instances, Beijing has used local disputes to establish a permanent presence, it can be argued that the PLA may stay put in the Chumbi valley using Doklam as a ruse. The 2012 stand-off with the Philippines over the Scarborough Shoal is an example. Therefore, will there be a repeat of the SCS sort of situation on Indian borders? In fact this is exactly what India has attempted to prevent.

The Indian Army's unusual assertiveness in stopping PLA personnel from extending a road from their side into the Doklam tri-junction was as much out of necessity as other considerations. India had no option but to prevent the change of status quo by preventing the PLA from drastically altering the balance at the strategic location.

As events in the SCS show, the cost of non-intervention is extremely high. With China's rapid land reclamation and subsequent militarisation, there are now new facts on the ground for Beijing to enforce its claims. In fact, in his Beijing speech, Mr. Xi took credit for the reclamations by saying that “construction on islands and reefs in the South China Sea has seen steady progress” and added a note of caution that while China did not seek global hegemony, “no one should expect China to swallow anything that undermines its interests”. Through a process of normalisation, it is only a matter of time before it is accepted as a fact.

In that context, even given the bilateral tensions that came with the Doklam stand-off, not

responding was never an option. Standing its ground was, in fact, the least escalatory move that New Delhi could have made, given that the cost of intervention at a later stage is disproportionately higher and the risk of confrontation even so.

Adding to this are other issues of disagreement such as India's refusal to be a part of Beijing's grand plans with the Belt and Road Initiative, citing sovereignty issues apart from deepening engagement with the U.S., and a jostling for space in the Indian Ocean Region. The stalemate has been generally viewed as a victory for India and China would not want to be perceived to be weak by other countries in the region.

So, it is highly likely that China will test India in other areas. But one thing is certain. The ground status along the LAC has changed forever. How this will affect the contours of future boundary talks is still not clear. As Mr. Xi rolls out his grand vision, the ramifications could be much wider and far beyond the borders.

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

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Will support Hurriyat on talks, says Jihad Council

More trouble: A file photo of NIA personnel raiding a Hurriyat leader's house in Budgam recently. special arrangement

The United Jihad Council (UJC), a PoK-based conglomerate of militants, said on Thursday that it will support Hurriyat on the dialogue process with New Delhi.

"They [the militants] are with the Kashmir leadership if they start a dialogue process. Since India is not sincere, we have decided to lay down three conditions," UJC chief Syed Salahuddin told a press conference in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK). The three conditions were that India should declare Jammu and Kashmir a disputed territory; acknowledge that there are three parties to the dispute; and accept that Kashmir issue will be resolved in the light of the United Nations resolutions in accordance with the aspirations of the Kashmiris.

Salahuddin, who heads the Hizbul Mujahideen, alleged that India, in the name of dialogue, had always committed fraud. "When there were no options, the youth of Kashmir took to arms. Under the present circumstances, armed struggle remains the only way out as India is eager to change the Muslim demography of J&K."

The statement is significant as the Hurriyat is finding the going tough in the wake of the Centre appointing Dineshwar Sharma as its interlocutor for J&K. Mr. Sharma is visiting Kashmir next week.

NIA raids

Meanwhile, sleuths of the National Investigation Agency (NIA) raided the houses of Salahuddin's sons in central Kashmir's Budgam district on Thursday.

An NIA official said it carried out searches at the house of Shahid Yousuf, who remains in the NIA's custody at Soibugh in central Kashmir. "The NIA seized five mobiles, two hard discs, one laptop, incriminating documents and some electronic devices," said the official. He was sent on a seven-day NIA custody by a court in New Delhi on Wednesday. A police official said the premises of another son of the Hizb chief were also searched.

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India for 'constructive' Rohingya policy

Seeking a 'constructive' approach to dealing with the exodus of the Rohingya, India said on Thursday that the displaced members of the community will have to return to their place of origin in the Rakhine province of Myanmar.

Speaking at a think tank event here, on the prospects of India-Japan cooperation in the Bay of Bengal and Asia-Pacific regions, Foreign Secretary S. Jaishankar highlighted India's regional humanitarian responsibilities and growing convergence with Tokyo.

"The exodus of a large number of people from the Rakhine state to Bangladesh is clearly a matter of concern. Our objective will be to see how they can go back to their place of origin. Clearly that is not easy," he said. "We are talking to Bangladesh and separately engaged with Myanmar and we feel that this is a situation better addressed with practical measures and constructive conversation, rather than doing very strong condemnations and, having checked the condemnation box, moving to the next issue."

He highlighted the need for "a sober, sensitive and locally sensitive approach" in dealing with the humanitarian emergency that the exodus had become.

Regional cooperation

Mr. Jaishankar also brought up the ties between connectivity, regional cooperation and humanitarian response to evolving crises. "One of the areas we want to see in the agenda of BIMSTEC is collaboration on the HADR— that, we would like these member countries to cooperate on humanitarian assistance to disaster situation. In the last three years, Nepal earthquake relief, (India's response to) Yemen civil war, Maldivian water crisis, and even Operation Insaniyat for the Rohingyas are part of cooperation."

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The Kashmir gambit

In September 1960, Jawaharlal Nehru travelled to Pakistan for a visit amid high expectations all around for the resolution of Kashmir. The visit followed the resolution of some major bilateral issues including sharing of Indus waters, and as former High Commissioner to Pakistan T.C.A. Raghavan recounts in his book *The People Next Door*, Nehru and Ayub Khan were going to give the impasse over Jammu and Kashmir a personal push. However, matters came to a full stop after Nehru suggested that the “status quo” at the ceasefire line was the only solution. For Ayub Khan, this was a non-starter, as he felt the ceasefire line would never be accepted by Pakistan given that it had no political or religious underpinnings.

Will find permanent solution to Kashmir problem: Rajnath

Forty years later, as Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee and then Manmohan Singh started a similar conversation with Pakistan’s Pervez Musharraf. The four-step formula, as their version of the talks from 2000-2008 was called, came around to the idea that eventually “borders cannot be redrawn”. As Musharraf wrote in his memoirs, and the Prime Minister’s special envoy Satinder Lambah outlined in a speech in 2014, the “out of the box” solution on Kashmir would require greater freedoms and interactions for Kashmiris on both sides of the Line of Control (LoC), leading to a lasting peace. The cross-LoC bus, which allowed Indian Kashmiris and Pakistani Kashmiris to visit each other, seemed the logical first step forward. On the Indian side, the period saw a greater level of engagement between New Delhi and Srinagar, and of the mainstream with separatist thought, even including an abortive attempt for talks with the militant group, Hizbul Mujahideen, in 2000.

In 2017, the landscape in Kashmir seems far removed from a decade ago and certainly from half a century ago. But as the government begins another attempt to tackle the Kashmir issue with the appointment of an interlocutor, [former Intelligence Bureau Director Dineshwar Sharma](#) this week, it is clear that some things have not changed. To begin with, the move acknowledges that the solution of the problems in J&K lies in the realm of politics, and not security. Home Minister Rajnath Singh’s announcement was preceded by [statements from Army Chief General Bipin Rawat](#) and police officers in Kashmir that even with all the gains made on the military and counter-insurgency front, a political solution is needed, and urgently.

Second, the open mandate to speak to all parties implicitly indicates that the government is willing to speak to separatists for a “sustained dialogue”, a considerable turn from the hardline policy of the Modi government thus far. That the government is now aligning closer to the policy of its predecessors indicates that the Centre could also consider talks with Pakistan, as outlined in the Agenda of Alliance document of the PDP-BJP coalition in J&K. Mr. Sharma’s success in reaching out to all stakeholders in the Valley depends on confidence in the Modi government’s seriousness in a long-lasting dialogue process in the State, with a view to effecting an enduring peace — one envisaged but not achieved by so many earlier governments.

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

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Look beyond Af-Pak

Coming after an excellent address to the Centre for Strategic and International Studies in Washington DC on US-India relations, described by a DC think-tank official as a "love letter" to India, US Secretary of State Rex W. Tillerson's visit attracted greater attention. The sentiment in the Donald Trump administration about US-India relations has been generally positive and upbeat. The president had a very cordial meeting with Prime Minister [Narendra Modi](#) in June. His South Asia policy speech on August 21, coming three days after the Camp David deliberations with his cabinet colleagues, was full of statements that were music to Indian ears.

In that speech, President Trump came down heavily on Pakistan, warning that it has "much to gain" from partnering with the US in Afghanistan, but "much to lose by continuing to harbour criminals and terrorists". "We have been paying Pakistan billions and billions of dollars at the same time they are housing the very terrorists that we are fighting. But that will have to change, and that will change immediately. No partnership can survive a country's harbouring of militants and terrorists who target US service members and officials. It is time for Pakistan to demonstrate its commitment to civilisation, order, and to peace", he thundered in his typical aggressive fashion.

In his CSIS address, Tillerson turned attention primarily to the Indo-Pacific region. It became clear from his address that the US wants India to play a significant role in the affairs of this region. "As we look to the next 100 years, it is vital that the Indo-Pacific, a region so central to our shared history, continued to be free and open", he said. "When our militaries conduct joint exercises, we send a powerful message as to our commitment to protecting the global commons and defending our people. This year's Malabar exercise was our most complex to date, the largest vessels from American, Indian and Japanese navies demonstrated their power together in the Indian Ocean for the first time, setting a clear example of the combined strength of the three Indo-Pacific democracies".

For India, the repeated use of the phrase "Indo-Pacific" by Tillerson marks a shift in the US position. Until now the phrase in vogue has been "Asia-Pacific". At some point, people like Admiral Harry B. Harris of the Pacific Command started using the phrase "Indo Asia Pacific". But things have changed after PM Modi's visit to Washington in June this year. The phrase "Indo-Pacific" found place in the joint statement issued by President Trump and PM Modi. Ever since, the phrase has been used in at least six US State Department briefings. It implies that the US acknowledges the centrality of the Indian Ocean to global peace and security.

India has great ambitions in the Indian Ocean region. It realises the potential that the Indian Ocean offers to it, economically and strategically. India's Act East policy involves strengthening its engagement in the Indian Ocean region. India enjoys certain advantages in the region because of its centuries-old civilisational and cultural linkages with a number of countries. The Indian Ocean Conference that is co-hosted by countries in the region like Sri Lanka, Singapore and India is steadily emerging as a forum for engagement of stakeholder countries. This forum can help restore balance in the region.

However, the US seems to be looking at India's role in the Indian Ocean region as a counter-balance to China. Tillerson, in his CSIS address, wanted India to be a "partner" with the US so that together they can be "standing firm in defence of a rules-based order to promote sovereign countries unhindered access to the planet's shared spaces, be they on land, at sea, or in cyberspace". He actually surpassed the conventional red line by directly accusing China of "less responsible" behaviour.

"China, while rising alongside India, has done so less responsibly, at times undermining the

international rules-based order, even as countries like India operate within a framework that protects other nations' sovereignty. China's provocative actions in the South China Sea directly challenge the international law and norms that the United States and India both stand for. The United States seeks constructive relations with China, but we will not shrink from China's challenges to the rules-based order and where China subverts the sovereignty of neighbouring countries and disadvantages the US and our friends". These are rather strong words coming from the Secretary of State.

For India, its regional role involves managing relations with all the countries, including China, while at the same time adhering to basic principles like rule of law and freedom of navigation etc. Its regional ambitions are propelled by its security concerns on one hand and its trade and commerce imperatives on the other. Essentially, under PM Modi, India has come out of its shell of reticence and is proactively engaging in regional and global affairs.

Of equal importance to India is the US's South Asia policy. India wishes to see greater consistency in action in the region. When President Trump spoke about South Asia in August, he had harsh things to say to Pakistan. Is that enough? In the last 15 years every American President has done so in varying degrees. Even a moderate like Obama described Pakistan as a "disastrously dysfunctional country". The Bush administration had threatened to bomb it "back to the stone age".

But rhetoric was not followed up with action. Pakistan got billions, not bombs. More importantly, the South Asia policy for the US leadership is actually only Af-Pak policy. This has to change. The South Asia policy needs to anchor around not just Pakistan and Afghanistan, but also India. India's views and sentiments need to amply reflect in it.

The State Department has a job in hand. US military divides Af-Pak and India into Centcom and Pacom respectively. The State Department has to bring both under one South Asia policy.

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The Tillerson tone

The two-day visit to India by the US Secretary of State, Rex Tillerson, could mark the beginning of a new political conversation between India and the United States rooted in strategic realism and promises to narrow down long-standing regional differences on Pakistan and China. Few were willing to bet that the Trump Administration would move towards a potentially decisive break from US regional policy that was tilted traditionally in favour of Pakistan and China. But some of its many critics in Washington have begun to admit, if cautiously, that the Trump Administration has hit some right notes on its India policy.

Of course, it is a work in progress, and there will be hurdles - to begin with, Tillerson may not last long enough in the State Department and Trump could well change his mind on India. But for Delhi, there could be an opportunity at hand with the US to rework the geopolitics of the Subcontinent and, more broadly, the Indo-Pacific.

It is true that Trump and his team have only built on the big ideas about India that have been around in Washington for nearly two decades. Their achievement, if the Tillerson tone is indeed taken forward, could lie in cutting through much of the clutter in American policy about southern Asia. Washington, for example, has long been aware that sanctuaries of terror in Pakistan are the principal source of destabilisation in the Subcontinent.

The US has also watched warily the growing assertion of Chinese power but seemed incapable of responding vigorously. In the last few weeks, the Trump Administration has come out swinging against Pakistan's support for terrorism and laid out a critique of China's regional policies. Delhi, which welcomed these statements from Washington, had an opportunity this week to hear first-hand from Tillerson on the Administration's approach to Pakistan and China - Tillerson seemed ready to walk the talk on Pakistan's support for terror and China's quest for regional hegemony. He also reaffirmed a strong commitment to back India's leading role in the Indo-Pacific.

On its part, Delhi has moved a long way from the intense suspicion that greeted President George Bush's offer to end India's nuclear isolation. During 2005-08, Delhi had torn itself debating if Bush's offer was an opportunity or a trap. Prime Minister [Narendra Modi](#) may have contributed towards mainstreaming the idea that partnering America is in India's interest. Delhi is also comfortable enough to publicly express differences with America, for example on North Korea. This new self-assurance augurs well for taking forward India's engagement with America through the many inevitable twists and turns that they are likely to encounter in the coming years.

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Hon'ble Raksha Mantri Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman, Addresses Naval Commanders' Conference

Hon'ble Raksha Mantri Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman, Addresses Naval Commanders' Conference

Hon'ble Raksha Mantri Shrimati Nirmala Sitharaman addressed the Naval Leadership this morning during the ongoing Naval Commanders' Conference (24-27 Oct 17) being held at New Delhi. This is the second edition of this year's bi-annual Naval Commanders' Conference.

At the very outset, the Hon'ble Raksha Mantri complimented all personnel of the Indian Navy for securing the maritime interests of the nation. Taking note of the recent developments in our maritime neighbourhood, she emphasised the need for the Indian Navy to be strong at sea, and be ever ready and vigilant to counter any challenges in the maritime domain.

The Hon'ble Raksha Mantri acknowledged the high operational tempo maintained by the Navy in the last one year through regular deployment of ships, submarines and aircraft from the South China Sea and Sea of Japan in the East to the Persian Gulf and the Atlantic Ocean in the West and the shores of Australia in the South including the focused efforts to deter piracy attempts off the Gulf of Aden. Participation in a number of bilateral exercises and the unprecedented success of the Exercise MALABAR with the US and the Japanese Navy earlier this year were lauded by the Raksha Mantri.

Recognising the lead taken by Indian Navy in indigenisation and self-reliance, the Hon'ble Raksha Mantri stated that it is the collective responsibility of Service Headquarters, the Ministry and the Industry to promote a more vibrant ecosystem percolating down to the MSMEs, to encourage development of equipment and systems in India and to reduce import dependence in the Defence sector.

She took note of the critical capability shortfalls that the Navy is facing in ship-borne multi-role helicopters, conventional submarines and mine counter measure vessels, which need urgent redressal to maintain the combat edge of the Navy. The Hon'ble Raksha Mantri assured the Commanders' that these issues were being given due impetus and efforts were in hand to mitigate these shortcomings at the earliest.

The Hon'ble Raksha Mantri also commended the efforts of the Navy to constructively engage with the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) littorals to build their capacities and enhance their capabilities. She also mentioned the initiatives taken by the Indian Navy to impart practical training for naval personnel from IOR littoral nations on a regular basis. Institutionalising a full-fledged regional-forum to help find collective solutions to matters maritime in the IOR and facilitate projection of India's and Indian Navy's strategic and operational vision to a wider regional and global audience through the 'Goa Maritime Conclave' to be held early next month was also praised by the Hon'ble Minister. She further stated that MILAN 2018 at Port Blair early next year would be an excellent forum to get the littoral Navies on a common platform to discuss regional maritime issues and security challenges.

Concluding her address the Hon'ble Raksha Mantri stated that ***maritime interests of a nation have a vital relationship with its economic growth and these shall be protected at all costs by ensuring a strong and credible Indian Navy.***

The four-day long Naval Commanders' Conference is in its third day of deliberations wherein the top-level leadership of Navy is reviewing major operational, training and administrative activities undertaken in the last six months. The conference also reviewed IN's readiness to deploy over the entire range of missions in the maritime domain (the new Mission-based Deployment Concept).

Act or we will, U.S. tells Pakistan

The Trump administration has firmly told Pakistan that if it fails to take “decisive” action against terror groups, it will “adjust” its tactics and strategies to achieve the objective in a “different way.”

Secretary of State Rex Tillerson has told Pakistan that it must take action against terrorist groups and dismantle their safe havens on its soil, a State Department spokesperson told PTI, a day after Mr. Tillerson concluded his maiden trip to Afghanistan, Pakistan and India.

“We have communicated our expectations to Pakistan numerous times that they must take decisive action against terrorist groups based within their own borders,” the spokesperson said.

At a news conference in Geneva, his last stop on his overseas tour, Mr. Tillerson said the U.S. had “a very healthy exchange of information on terrorists, which is what we really hope to achieve with Pakistan.”

Blunt message

He said the message to Pakistan was: “Here’s what we need for Pakistan to do. We’re asking you to do this; we’re not demanding anything. You’re a sovereign country. You’ll decide what you want to do, but understand this is what we think is necessary. And if you don’t want to do that, don’t feel you can do it, we’ll adjust our tactics and our strategies to achieve the same objective [in] a different way.”

Mr. Tillerson said that he would not characterise his direct discussions with the Pakistani leadership as lecturing at all.

‘Open exchange’

“It was a very good and open exchange. In fact, we probably listened 80 per cent of the time and we talked 20 per cent. And it was important to me, because I have not engaged with Pakistani leadership previously. And, so my objective was to listen a lot, to hear their perspective,” he said.

“We put our points forward. We put our expectations forward in no uncertain terms. There has been significant engagement prior to my visit, and there will be further engagement in the future, as we work through how we want to exchange information and achieve the objective of eliminating these terrorist organisations, wherever they may be located,” Mr. Tillerson said.

He described his communication with the Pakistani leadership as very frank and very candid.

“There’s nothing to be achieved by lecturing, but we should be very clear about expectations and what we’re asking. And either people will step up and meet those expectations or they won’t. We are going to chart our course consistent with what Pakistan not just says they do but what they actually do,” he said.

Based on conditions

Noting that the future course of action would be based on conditions on the ground, he said the entire South Asia strategy is a conditions-based strategy.

Pakistan Foreign Minister Khawaja Asif in a meeting on Thursday with the National Assembly Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs said that Pakistan will neither surrender to the U.S. nor

compromise on its sovereignty.

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India, France to boost defence ties

Strategic partnership: Nirmala Sitharaman with her French counterpart, Florence Parly, in New Delhi. V. Sudershan

India and France on Friday decided to expand military cooperation in the strategically key Indo-Pacific region, besides resolving to ramp up the overall defence and security ties.

Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and her French counterpart, Florence Parly, held extensive talks covering a variety of issues, including the regional security situation, joint development of defence platforms and expansion of military-to-military ties.

At their delegation-level talks, the two sides also agreed to expand counter-terror cooperation, and said a lot more could be done in the maritime sphere, particularly in the Indo-Pacific region, where China was trying to expand its footprint, official sources said. Ms. Parly described her interaction with Ms. Sitharaman as “excellent”.

The sources said the French side explored the possibility of a follow-on order of additional Rafale fighter jets being placed by India.

India had signed a Rs. 58,000-crore deal with France for the supply of 36 Rafale jets last year and the IAF was pitching for procuring another fleet of 36.

In a statement, the Defence Ministry said the Ministers reviewed ongoing initiatives to strengthen bilateral defence cooperation further as a key pillar of the strategic partnership between the two countries.

Maritime security

“Recognising the growing significance of maritime security in the Indo-Pacific and the need for greater maritime domain awareness, India and France will further expand information sharing arrangements,” it said.

It is Ms. Parly’s first visit to India as Defence Minister and her trip is expected to lay the ground for French President Emmanuel Macron’s upcoming trip.

“A range of measures to expand military to military ties were agreed upon,” the Defence Ministry said.

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Reign of King Xi

In another time, the announcement that the Communist Party of China has enshrined President Xi Jinping's political doctrine and his name in its Constitution would have been called a coronation. World leaders have scrambled to hail the move, led by US President Donald Trump who called it an "extraordinary elevation". Few, though, appear to have fully understood what the new development portends for China, and the world.

President Xi's ideology - which will now be taught, alongside that of [Mao Zedong](#), to school-children, like a socialist variation on religious instruction - represents a profound ideological rupture at the heart of China's ruling party. Xi's "Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era" may sound a lot like "Socialism with Chinese characteristics", the guiding mantra coined by Deng Xiaoping, leader of China from 1978 to 1989.

But where Deng sought to marry capitalist economics with a socialist state apparatus, Xi voices the concern of neo-Maoists who believe "socialism with Chinese characteristics" was not socialism at all. Even though Deng's policies raised hundreds of millions out of poverty, neo-Maoists believed it bred a decadent society, where income disparities rose to unacceptable levels, workers were exploited, and corruption flourished. Proclaimed "core leader", and thus elevated to the same stature as Mao and Deng, Xi speaks to these concerns, promising to create a society where collective interests will be secured. In this sense, Xi's rise is not dissimilar to that of populist leaders elsewhere in the world who have triumphed on the back of the manifest failures of capitalism.

Ever since Deng's retirement, the Communist Party of China has been seeking to address the problems of legitimacy his policies created. In 2012, then-President Hu Jintao at the 18th Party Congress said the post-Deng party was "bravely promoting the implementation of basic theoretical innovation" to address "new thinking, new views and new arguments closely connected to the support and development of socialism with Chinese characteristics." Xi today pursues this through what he calls the "China dream" - described in The People's Daily as early as 2002 as the pursuit of "spiritual power to realise the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation." Xi's spiritual renewal has come in the form of an anti-corruption campaign - adroitly used to remove rivals and consolidate power - and the fuelling of nationalism through military adventure on China's policies.

In essence, Xi promises not just prosperity, but greatness. As the scholar Simone van Nieuwenhuizen has perceptively pointed out, he "is not fostering a cult of personality, but a cult of the Party". For the rest of the world, this could be reason to worry: A Party that does not found its legitimacy on prosperity, after all, is one that is likely to seek it through nationalism-driven geopolitical adventure.

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All the roads that lead to Kabul

The optics could not have been more significant. Just a day after U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson was in Kabul and on the day he landed in New Delhi, Afghan President [Ashraf Ghani was hosted by India](#). As Mr. Tillerson chided Pakistan for not doing enough against terrorists operating from its soil, Mr. Ghani in New Delhi was underlining that the time had come for Islamabad to make a choice between abandoning state sponsorship of terrorism and facing the consequences. It was as perfect a piece of diplomatic choreography as it could get, aimed at sending a message to Pakistan that regional equations are shifting in a direction which will only isolate Islamabad if immediate corrective measures are not taken.

A day in Delhi for Ghani and Tillerson

Mr. Ghani's visit came at a time when the Trump administration's South Asia policy has underscored India's centrality in the 'Af-Pak' theatre. As Washington plans to increase its military footprint in Afghanistan, it is tightening the screws on Pakistan for supporting terrorism as an instrument of state policy. Both Washington and Kabul now view New Delhi as a player with considerable leverage over the evolving regional dynamic.

A central feature of the [Trump administration's new Afghanistan policy](#) is an outreach to India. "We appreciate India's important contributions to stability in Afghanistan, but India makes billions of dollars in trade with the U.S. and we want them to help us more with Afghanistan, especially in the area of economic assistance and development," Mr. Trump had said in August while outlining his new South Asia policy.

Indo-Afghan trade: Castles in the air?

Kabul has wholeheartedly embraced this strategy, with Mr. Ghani terming it a "game-changer" for the region as it "recommends multi-dimensional condition-based approach for the region." In Delhi, he was categorical in attacking Pakistan by suggesting that "sanctuaries are provided, logistics are provided, training is provided, ideological bases are provided." In a remarkable move, he went on to suggest that Afghanistan would restrict Pakistan's access to Central Asia if it is not given access to India through the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project. He referred to the Indo-Afghan air corridor as an effective response to Pakistan's attempt to deny India and Afghanistan any direct access. He also strongly rejected Islamabad's claims that India was using Afghanistan as a base to destabilise Pakistan. He made it clear that there were "no secret agreements" between Kabul and New Delhi.

Mr. Ghani also rejected "Pakistan-managed" efforts to broker peace in his country, and in line with this India too has emphasised that it believes peace efforts in Afghanistan should be "Afghan-led" and "Afghan-controlled". India continues to maintain that renunciation of violence and terror, and closure of state-sponsored safe havens and sanctuaries remain essential for any meaningful progress and lasting peace. Afghanistan had participated in the sixth Quadrilateral Coordination Group meeting along with the U.S., China and Pakistan in Muscat, Oman, on October 16 in an attempt to revive stalled peace talks with the Taliban. National Security Advisor Ajit Doval had gone to Kabul to assess these developments on the same day.

In recent years, India has not shied away from taking a high-profile role in Afghanistan. It remains one of the biggest donors of aid to Afghanistan, having committed \$3.1 billion since 2001. Recently, it announced that it will be working on 116 new development projects in more than 30 areas. India's agenda is to build the capacity of the Afghan state as well as of Afghan security forces, enabling them to fight their own battles more effectively. This is in line with the

requirements of the Afghan government as well as the international community.

New U.S. policy can boost Indo-Afghan security ties: Abdullah Abdullah

Expanding India's development role further and enhancing its security profile with greater military assistance to Afghanistan should be a priority as new strategic opportunities open up in Afghanistan. While the U.S. has its own priorities in the 'Af-Pak' theatre, India's should be able to leverage the present opening to further its interests and regional security. The recent bout of diplomatic activity in the region is a clear signal that India can no longer be treated as a marginal player in Afghanistan. Even Russia wants to keep India in the loop, as was underscored by Moscow's special envoy on Afghanistan Zamir Kabulov's visit to New Delhi for consultations in September.

Mr. Trump's South Asia policy is a remarkable turnaround for Washington which had wanted to keep India out of its 'Af-Pak' policy for long for fear of offending Rawalpindi. India was viewed as part of the problem and now the Trump administration is arguing that India should be viewed as part of a solution to the Afghan imbroglio. This is a welcome change and holds significant implications for India, Afghanistan and the wider region.

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

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Despite Tillerson, US won't abandon Pakistan for India

It has become commonplace to caution American policymakers against irrational exuberance when dealing with India: Keep expectations low (conventional wisdom goes) and you won't be disappointed. In the wake of US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson's visit to New Delhi this week, perhaps the same advice could be directed to India's leadership. Despite warm welcome by Prime Minister [Narendra Modi](#), the pleasantries at Gandhi Smriti, and the promises of "an even brighter future," don't expect a radical change in US policy. There are structural reasons for India to moderate its expectations of what it can realistically expect from the Trump administration, regardless of anything the Secretary of State- or even the President- might say.

There is no new US policy towards Pakistan-and there won't be one soon. On August 21, Trump announced a "change [in] the approach and how to deal with Pakistan. We can no longer be silent," he stated. Ears pricked up in Islamabad and New Delhi alike. But in the two months since the administration's roll-out of its new strategy for South Asia, no significant actions towards Pakistan have been made public. If a sea-change is underway, it is hidden beneath the waves.

This should not be a surprise: So long as the US has troops in neighboring Afghanistan, it will be reliant on Pakistan for logistical support, transit, and-perhaps most importantly-Islamabad's influence with both the Taliban and its affiliated Haqqani Network. With the addition of about 5,000 U.S. troops to the effort in Afghanistan-roughly a 50 percent increase over the baseline at the end of the Obama administration- US exposure will grow rather than recede.

A concrete demonstration was provided just two weeks ago: On October 12, an American woman, her Canadian husband, and their three children were released after five years of Haqqani captivity. Whether this was a conveniently-timed military rescue or a secretly-negotiated operation, it reminds the US of Pakistan's ability to help- and to harm. Afterwards, Tillerson expressed his "deep gratitude to the Government of Pakistan and the Pakistani Army," and posited "a U.S.-Pakistan relationship marked by growing commitments to counterterrorism operations and stronger ties in all other respects."

The US and India don't see eye-to-eye on China. Earlier this month, Tillerson made a major speech contrasting the America's relationships with India and China. "We'll never have the same relationship with China, a non-democratic society," he said, "that we can have with a major democracy" such as India. He criticized China's Belt-and-Road-Initiative (BRI) infrastructure program, and proposed a joint Indo-U.S. effort towards "countering that with alternative financing measures."

But Tillerson said nothing about where the funds for such an ambitious venture might come from. China has pledged \$46 billion for the Pakistan piece of its framework alone. The U.S. administration plans to reduce its foreign affairs budget by 28 percent-a cut that Tillerson fully supports. India is unlikely to spend countless crores for the construction of roads and railways in other nations when it has so many infrastructure needs of its own. Moreover, India has consistently balked at any suggestion of a de facto alliance geared at limiting China's influence. Perhaps this summer's stand-off at Doklam will turn out to be a game-changer? If so, Delhi may remember that the Trump administration-in contrast, for example, to that of Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe-refrained from any statement in support of India throughout its most serious confrontation with China in a quarter-century.

The U.S. and India have different visions for Afghanistan-and for Iran. The Trump administration views Afghanistan as an American project, and sees India's role there in transactional terms. "India makes billions of dollars in trade from the United States," the president said in his August 21

speech, "and we want them to help us more with Afghanistan." But India has already, for its own reasons, supplied about \$3 billion in aid and investment. Much of this assistance is geared towards linking Afghanistan's road network to the Iranian port of Chabahar. India's development of Chabahar Port is perhaps its most noteworthy counter to China's BRI network, and a secure road-rail-harbor connection would enable landlocked Afghanistan to forge trade relationships around the world without transiting Pakistan.

Such connectivity would be good for Afghanistan, good for India, and good for Iran-but that's the hitch: The Trump administration is actively seeking to choke off Iran's global economic activity. On October 13, the president declined to certify a key provision supporting the 2015 nuclear deal forged between the U.S., Iran and six other parties-an agreement he described as "one of the worst and most one-sided transactions the United States has ever entered into." Trump announced several new sanctions, and has been quite clear about his intention to step up economic pressure on Tehran. Any Indian investment in Afghanistan geared towards connectivity with Iran-that is, the lion's share of it- will likely run into a buzz-saw of U.S. opposition.

The visit of Secretary Tillerson will not be the last moment of irrationally high hopes during the current US administration. At some point, there will likely be a presidential visit to India. If the Washington rumor mill is accurate, US Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley may eventually succeed Tillerson and serve as the first Indian-American Secretary of State. At such moments, many commentators will predict a revolution in U.S.-Indian relations. And then-as now-they are likely to be wrong.

But the good news is quieter, and more durable: the relationship between the two nations has grown progressively closer over the past two decades: under three US presidents and three Indian prime ministers, representing the full range of both countries' political spectrums. There will be ups and there will be downs; in international policy, there always are. But the warming trend in Indo-U.S. relations is almost certain to continue-no matter who sits in the White House, or who comes calling at South Block.

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Army finalises plan to modernise weapons

The sources said a fresh RFI (request for information) to procure the LMGs will be issued in the next few days, months after the Defence Ministry scrapped the tender for the 7.62 calibre guns as there was only one vendor left after a series of field trials. The plan is to initially procure around 10,000 LMGs.

The Army has also finalised the specifications for a new 7.62 mm assault rifle. The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC), the Ministry's highest decision-making body on procurement, is expected to give the go-ahead for it.

"The General Service Quality Requirements (GSQR) for the new assault rifle has been finalised. The procurement plan will soon be placed before the DAC for approval," said a senior official, who is part of the acquisition process.

In June, the Army had rejected an assault rifle built by the state-run Rifle Factory, Ishapore, after the guns miserably failed the firing tests. The procurement of assault rifles has witnessed significant delays due to a variety of reasons, including the Army's failure to finalise the specifications for it. The Army needs around 7 lakh 7.62x51 mm assault guns to replace its INSAS rifles.

Single-vendor issue

Around 20 firms responded to an RFI for the rifles in September last year. In June, the Army had kick-started the process to procure around 44,600 carbines, nearly eight months after a tender for it was retracted, also due to a single-vendor situation. Around half a dozen firms, including a few global arms manufacturers, have responded to the RFI.

Army sources said various specifications for the LMGs and battle carbines were tweaked to ensure that the problem of single vendor does not recur. The combined cost of the LMGs, assault rifles and carbines will be in excess of Rs. 40,000 crore, said an official.

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Dialogue as diversion

The use of brutal force to suppress the agitation by Kashmiris has aggravated the law and order situation in Jammu and Kashmir. Lapses in intelligence information about the separatists' activities have not helped. There has been no let-up in militancy in the state. Continuing its muscular approach and in the garb of initiating a "sustained dialogue process" in Kashmir, the Centre has appointed Dineshwar Sharma to plug the loopholes in gathering, analysing and disseminating intelligence information.

There is a lack of quality information on the activities of the militants and encounters between the security forces and militants have remained alarmingly high since Burhan Wani was eliminated. It is not surprising that the activities of militant organisations have increased overtime. Realising this, in his Independence Day address, PM Modi said that the Kashmir problem can be solved only by embracing Kashmir and not by "gaali" or "goli" . But is the noble vision of the prime minister being translated into action and reality?

Even though Jammu and Kashmir has a democratically elected government, law and order in the state has deteriorated. In spite of the heavy deployment of security forces, the state does not seem prepared to contain insurgency and militancy. People have suffered grievous losses mainly because security forces and political administrators have not been able to use intelligence inputs to their advantage.

The intensity of militancy in the state has increased because of the prolonged alienation of the unemployed youth who have been enticed by terrorist organisations, especially the Hizbul Mujahideen and Jaish-e-Mohammed, whose activities are growing by the day. Attempts to demolish the terror infrastructure in the state and across the LoC through surgical strikes have not been successful.

In this backdrop, Dineshwar Sharma's selection as interlocutor is meant to shore up intelligence gathering so that militancy can be effectively suppressed. In view of his expertise in police services, it cannot be said that Sharma is mandated to facilitate "sustained dialogue" to resolve the Kashmir dispute - which is not only a bilateral issue between India and Pakistan but also an integral part of India as per Article 370 of the Constitution of India .

The expectations created by Sharma's appointment are unduly high. Sharma has no experience in dispute resolution and there is clearly a mismatch between his professional expertise and the task that he has been assigned.

The government wants to make a show that it is concerned about solving the longstanding Kashmir dispute. The Centre has also realised that the use of brutal force to suppress Kashmiris' demands for greater autonomy will not work, particularly when the BJP-PDP Agenda of Alliance has not been effectively implemented. But the appointment of a police officer shows that the government still views the Kashmir dispute through the prism of national security and intelligence. The fact, though, is that the problem can only be solved politically. This has been admitted by army chiefs and other security experts who have worked in Jammu and Kashmir.

The Indian government needs to take various stakeholders into confidence, including the army at the border - as well as Pakistan - to solve the issue. Unless that happens, the dialogue process, which the government intends to restart, would merely be a diversionary effort on the Centre's part. This is because the alliance between the BJP and PDP is not functioning and the promises by the two parties have not been fulfilled.

The BJP-led NDA government also has a problem of not reaching out to Pakistan and separatists, both of whom are major stakeholders in the peace process. Former prime ministers [Atal Bihari Vajpayee](#), [Manmohan Singh](#) and former deputy prime minister L.K. Advani met leaders from the Hurriyat Conference, hugged them. But the current dispensation shuns Hurriyat leaders and treats them as Pakistan's proxies. In the meantime, most Hurriyat leaders have been implicated in the hawala scandal. Some have also been jailed. But were these Hurriyat leaders not corrupt for Singh, Vajpayee and Advani? Did the earlier NDA and UPA governments not know of their activities?

Skirmishes on the border have increased and so have encounters between the militants and security forces in the past one year. The PDP-BJP government is unpopular. Many PDP leaders are being attacked. Recently, a senior PDP leader resigned.

There is growing discontent among the Kashmiri youth. At least 42 per cent of them are unemployed. There has been no improvement in the education and employment situation in the state. The central schemes for the youth in Jammu and Kashmir, namely the prime minister's scholarships for poor students from the state and the Udaan scheme for generating employment have not been implemented in letter and spirit. Many Kashmiri students, some of whom are recipients of the PM's special scholarship, have been forced to give up university education because the Union Ministry of Human Resource Development has not released their scholarship money. There has been no worthwhile effort to address pressing issues like human rights violations in the Valley.

Coming back to Sharma's appointment, does he have enough power to talk to different stakeholders in the state? Can he suggest permanent or partial revocation of the AFSPA and PSA? Can he address the socio-economic and human rights violations in the Valley? If not, how can we embrace Kashmiris?

When I was an interlocutor in 2010-11, my team interacted with diverse groups in all the regions of the state and met different political parties to keep them informed about the developments. We also spoke to the RSS and other political parties, which were a part of the all-party delegation that visited Kashmir during the crisis of 2010 .

One thing, though, has been constant: The UPA and NDA governments did not act upon the recommendations of the interlocutors and other committees constituted by the Centre. This points to a lack of sincerity on the part of the political dispensation at the Centre to resolve the issue.

If the NDA government is serious about resolving the problem, it needs to follow what former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee once said about resolving the Kashmir imbroglio within the realm of "kashmiriyat, jamhooriyat and insaniyat." PM Modi has also endorsed this credo but without a visible plan of action.

The Congress and the BJP have often come together to evolve a consensus on vital issues. The resolution of border disputes with Bangladesh by exchanging enclaves is an example. I feel, therefore, that the Indian establishment can resolve the Kashmir dispute provided it pursues the goal earnestly.

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Arming India's response to Xi Jinping thought

The 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (NCCPC) held at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing came to a conclusion last week. The NCCPC is held every five years in the fourth calendar quarter and is technically the apex body of the single party that has ruled China since the Communist revolution in 1949. In recent years, the NCCPC has lasted about a week each time and it is commonly understood that all important decisions are taken before the meeting convenes. The NCCPC is a giant career-defining body that shifts people upwards, laterally or out. Younger members are inducted every five years and older members are retired. The purpose of the NCCPC, at least in the Deng Xiaoping era, was to prevent the concentration of power and to institutionalize succession at different levels of the party. While members to the congress are elected, those making it up the ranks are elevated in an opaque system that most Sinologists are still attempting to decipher.

The 19th congress enshrined President Xi Jinping's political thought into its constitution. As is customary, after a first term each Chinese president comes up with his political philosophy that adds a layer to previous such amendments. Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era gets added to Marxism-Leninism, and Mao Zedong Thought. Deng Xiaoping, Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao had to be content with the less exalted status of originators of "theory". Other than Xi, six leaders have been anointed, five of them new (and all of them old!). They are: Li Keqiang, 62, premier since 2013, Li Zhanshu, 67, head of China's parliament, Wang Yang, 62, executive vice-premier, Wang Huning, 62, director, policy research office, Zhao Leji, 60, head of the powerful anti-corruption agency, and Han Zheng, 63, Shanghai party chief. Prior to the meeting, there had been speculation that Xi would elevate his protégés Chen Miner and Guangdong party secretary Hu Chunhua, both of whom are in their 50s. It is now believed that Xi has appointed sexagenarians so there will be no challengers when the time comes five years later for a potential and unprecedented third term as president.

Using hagiographic terms for an incumbent president, the resolution passed at the congress states that "under the guidance of Xi's thought, the CPC has led the Chinese people of all ethnic groups in a concerted effort to carry out a great struggle, develop a great project, advance a great cause, and realize a great dream, ushering in a new era of socialism with Chinese characteristics". It emphasizes markets for resource allocation but completely disavows any political competition. Open and shut at the same time.

In recent weeks, there has been much commentary on Xi's centralization of authority. He has declared himself "core" leader. He is also the chairman of the Central Military Commission. In this capacity, he replaced three of the four top generals at the congress and appointed several allies as the new leaders of the military. Nearly 90% of the military delegates to the 19th congress were new.

There are likely to be major strategic implications of this centralization of Chinese political and military control for India and the rest of the world. Xi has already called for a major military modernization plan. Xi's reforms are already underway, with seven military regions being remade into five combat commands. The goal is to make units more agile and war-ready. As one example, China has built its second aircraft carrier and a blue-water navy will set sail in coming years. Xi believes he can close the gap on weaponry with Russia in a decade, and with the US by 2050. This weaponization and modernization will likely trigger an arms race in Asia. With Shinz Abe, an ardent nationalist, just having won another term, Japan is likely to remilitarize. Similarly, with the sabre rattling in the Korean peninsula and US President Donald Trump's inconsistent support, South Korea is likely to weaponize as well. An arms race in Asia comes at an inopportune moment for India. India would have preferred to use its expanding resources to distribute prosperity among

its people. It may have no choice but to increase military spending to maintain balance in Asia.

The uncharacteristic exertion of external influence in the South China Sea and beyond is also a new reality in the Xi construct. If you add the political and security implications from the Belt and Road Initiative, then you have a China not merely focused on its own internal trajectory but keenly projecting that in near and far zones. This could call for India's resources to be diverted away from a necessary focus on structural changes to its economy.

India's intelligence apparatus will have to study not only the likely institutional response of the politburo but the specific personalities of Xi and his appointed protégés. Indian intelligence has historically had a tough time penetrating China's opaque strategy; it will be doubly difficult now. India would do well not to get sucked into a mega race with China on military spending or geopolitics. The best bet for India is a combination of focus on the economy to build resources, and a partnership strategy with Japan and Australia in particular, to hedge against a dramatic erosion in relative position.

P.S.: "Mastering others is strength, mastering yourself is true power," said Lao Tzu. "It is man's own mind, not his enemy's, that lures him to evil ways," said the Buddha.

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Visit of Chief of the Air Staff to Vietnam**Visit of Chief of the Air Staff to Vietnam**

Air Chief Marshal Birender Singh Dhanoa, Chief of the Air Staff is on an official visit to Vietnam from 30 Oct 17 to 03 Nov 17.

During his visit, he is scheduled to hold bilateral meeting with top brass of the Vietnam People's Air Force and Air Defence (VPAF) on security challenges in the current geopolitical scenario and explore ways to deepen the defence cooperation further. The main focus of the visit would be on improving bilateral relations, promoting defence ties and evolving steps to further strengthen defence cooperation between the two Air Forces.

The CAS would visit the Headquarters of Vietnam People's Air Force and Air Defence (VPAF) and a few operational air bases as well.

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