

## INDEX

**Join Guerriers Group**  
**Hemant Yadav @ 97023 41616**

<b><u>Serial No</u></b>	<b><u>Topic</u></b>	<b><u>Page Number</u></b>
1	Reasons for the Plight of Indian Farmers and Options to Redress the Challenge	1-5
2	INSTC- BIGGEST SHOCK TO CHINA & PAKISTAN	6
3	Highlights of NITI Aayog Governing Council's Meet: 23 April 2017	7-8
4	US-NORTH KOREAN RELATIONS- AT PIT'S BOTTOM	9-11
5	Reasons for Massive Casualties of CRPF Personnel in Sukma Attack by Naxals	12-14
6	US-NORTH KOREAN RELATIONS- AT PIT'S BOTTOM	15-17
7	India's Significant Step Towards Propagation of 'Space Diplomacy'	18
8	Nepal Yet Another Constitutional Crisis	19-20
9	OBOR: an Imperative for China to Salvage its Economy	21-23
10	What Makes WannaCry a Deadly Ransomware?	24-26
11	Options for Israel-Palestine Conflict Resolution	27-32
12	ASIA-AFRICA GROWTH CORRIDOR - INDIA IN INTERNATIONAL ARENA	33-34
13	Military and Socio-Economic Significance of Dhola-Sadiya Bridge	35-36
14	A Detailed Account of Commander Kulbhushan Jadhav's Case	37-38
15	Options for Israel-Palestine Conflict Resolution	39-44
16	Triple Talaq: Present Status	45-46
17	Implications of India and Pakistan Becoming Permanent Members of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)	47-49
18	Reasons for the Qatar Diplomatic Crisis and its Implications for India	50-52
19	Important Aspects Related to Presidential Elections in India	53-55
20	FOXY NEIGHBOUR OF INDIA	56
21	Reasons for the Recent Intensification of Demand for Gorkhaland	57-60
22	PM Modi's US Visit – an Exercise to Reset Ties with Trump Administration	61-63
23	CUBA – IN THE FIRING LINE OF TRUMP	64
24	Suggested Proactive Measures by India to Deal with China's Threat	65-67
25	ISLAMIC STATE - DOWNFALL OF THE CALIPHATE	68-69
26	SINO-INDIA-PAK RELATIONS – AXIS OF DISCORD	70-71
27	Indo-Israel Relationship on a New High	72-74

### **1) Reasons for the Plight of Indian Farmers and Options to Redress the Challenge**

#### **Introduction**

The human skull carrying farmers from the state of Tamil Nadu have been agitating at Jantar Mantar, New Delhi for over a month now.

The demands of the farmers include waiver of nationalized bank loans, constitution of Cauvery Management Board and drought relief of Rs 40,000 crore to tide over their immediate distressful situation arising out of third consecutive drought in the region.

Two days ago, people from different walks of life from the State, including farmers, students and general public, launched a blood signature campaign to express solidarity with the farmers.

The dismal state in which the Indian farmers find themselves today may be attributed to the shift of focus of the successive governments from the agriculture sector, since the green revolution of 1960s, to the higher revenue generating and thus more lucrative service and industrial sectors.

Hence, progressively there was a decline in capital formation in the agro sector, the policy makers resorted to inadequate expenditure on irrigation and extension services in rural areas, and a dearth of cheap institutional credit, resulted in a slowdown of agricultural growth and heightened livelihood insecurity for a substantial proportion of those dependent on agriculture.

### **Distressful Plight of Indian Farmers**

It may be noted that 65% of the total workforce in India belongs to the agriculture sector, which contributes about 15% to the country's \$2 trillion economy.

The most important reason for the distressful plight of the Indian farmers is that 80% of them are small and marginal farmers, who are dependent for their survival on less than five acres of land. Nearly, 50% of rural households and 36% of the total households in India belong to this category.

India with its diverse land mass is also subjected to diverse furies of nature. It is estimated that 70% of the country's arable land is prone to drought, 12% to floods, and 8% to cyclones.

The employment of outdated agriculture practices on limited land holdings, which inhibits experimentation for progressive and revolutionary farming, has resulted in agriculture productivity levels to become stagnant over the previous few decades.

NITI Aayog recently highlighted that the agricultural sector in India is 28 years behind its time.

Furthermore, the workforce employed in the farming sector, constitutes of uneducated, unskilled labour, who have not empowered themselves with any other alternative skill set. Hence, they have very restricted options to earn their livelihood.

The world today is discussing its transition from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which aim to end poverty and hunger and promote sustainable development. In the prevalent milieu, the small farmers hold the key to success of the said global goals.

### **Historical Perspective**

Farmers in India have been at the receiving end from times immemorial. Historical records relating to frustration, revolts and high mortality rates among farmers in India, particularly cash crop farmers, date back to the 18<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

**The Izaredari System** was introduced by Warren Hasting, the then Governor of East India Company in 1773. Wherein, Izaredars were appointed by the East India Company to collect revenue from the peasants and farmers.

The revenue collectors (Thekedars) who were further deputed by the Izaredars adopted extremely harsh methods to execute their task.

Later, in 1799, Lord Cornwallis introduced **the Permanent Settlement System**, in which the Zamidars were made the permanent owners and landlords, who could keep 11% of the total produce for themselves and pay the balance 89% to the Company.

The actual cultivators were reduced to tenants and were deprived of all rights over the land that they physically tilled.

Permanent settlement fixed the revenue for 10 years. Irrespective of the vagaries of weather or any calamities, the peasants had to pay up the Landlords, who treated them worst then slaves.

Naxalism is actually an outcome of the harassment faced by the peasants at the hands of their landlords. Their extreme state of deprivation compelled them to take up arms against the landlords.

**The Deccan Riots of 1875-1877** were an outcome of high land taxes of 1870s, which were payable in cash, regardless of the effects of frequent famines on farm output or productivity, combined with colonial protection of usury, money lenders and landowner rights.



In the present times, especially in India, the policy of liberalization and removal of trade barriers between countries have created the farm crisis, for the following reasons:

- A shift from 'food first to trade first' and 'farmer first to corporate first' has discouraged farmers and restricted growth of Agriculture sector.
- The cost of agricultural production has increased immensely because of high reliance on chemicals, heavy dependence on mechanized farming and the deregulation of the input sector, like, sale of seeds, pesticides, fertilizers and now even diesel.
- Deregulation of markets and lack of effective price regulation of the farm produce, has led to a mockery of poor farmers, who are given ridiculously low prices for their farm commodities.
- The present agriculture policies, at least on the paper, suggest alternatives to boost the agro-sector, e.g. establishment of agro-processing industry and promotion of agri-businesses by way of providing subsidies. However, these subsidies are being enjoyed by already prosperous individuals in the field, like those who own cold storages, transport and allied ancillary services. These subsidies do not reach the small/ marginal farmers who actually need them.

### **Major Reasons for Farmer Suicides**

According to the National Crime Records Bureau, as many as 5,650 cases of farmers' suicide are recorded in India annually. Out of the said figure, more than half are recorded from Maharashtra alone.

The states of Madhya Pradesh, Telangana, Chhattisgarh and Karnataka also record large number of farmer suicides. In India, farmer suicides account for 11.2% of the overall suicides committed.

Let us look at the major reasons that push the farmers to take this extreme step:

**Non-availability of institutionalized credit facilities and high rates of interests:** It is highly cumbersome for a farmer to get institutionalized loan because of the elaborate paperwork requirements and guarantees required to be furnished.

Also, the rate of interest at which the farm loans are disbursed is 14 per cent, while the rate of savings today earns a meager 5.75 per cent rate of interest.

What is highly provocative is that the consumer loans for purchase of luxuries are available at around 10 percent of interest.

**Heavy debts on farmers:** Since, the small/ marginal farmers are unable to obtain institutionalized loans, they resort to taking loan from the unorganized sector through moneylenders to meet their domestic and agro related express requirements.

The rates of interest charged by the moneylenders are anything in the range of 24 to 60 percent per annum; depending upon how urgent or inescapable is the need of the farmer.

Invariably, the farmers are unable to pay up such high interest rate and are often seen harassed by the goons of the moneylender. In such extreme cases the farmer is left with no other option but 'cancel his captivity'.

**Inadequacies in implementation of safety nets:** Successive governments have been incapable of effectively implementing social welfare schemes appropriately.

Government schemes to safeguard the bare necessities of the underprivileged such as running of fair price shops (FPS), various forms of food for work schemes and correct regulation of public distribution system has been grossly inadequate in the country.

**Delayed and ridiculously meager compensation** for the crops damage caused due to natural calamities is never enough for the farmers to pay their debts and also have adequate capital for sowing of the next crop.

**Minimum Support Price (MSP) does not support the increased inflation:** The farmers, who sell their farm produce to the private buyers (middle men) designated by the Food Corporation of India (FCI) are routinely duped, harassed and paid inadequate compensation.

Many times the private buyers hold the farmers to ransom by threatening them that they will not pick up their perishable items, which are "supposedly" not meeting the quality tests being conducted at times by corrupt officials of FCI.

So, this 'coterie of thugs' is able to undervalue the farmer's produce, mostly even below the official Minimum Support Price announced by the government.

The middle-man in turn sells the produce at the government procurement centers and pick up undeserving profits, which should have rightfully gone to the farmers.

**Disproportionate increase in the cost of agriculture inputs:** The relative increase in the cost of agriculture inputs like seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, diesel, etc is not commensurate with the annual increase of minimum support price announced by the government.

The reducing scale of crop productivity and diminishing land holdings, coupled with high input costs has progressively declined the profit margins of the farmer. Consequently, their basic sustenance has become a major challenge.

**Unpredictable weather conditions:** The weather conditions have become extremely erratic and unpredictable owing to climate change.

The cumulative crop losses force the farmers to take loan from multiple unethical sources. This vicious cycle leads them into an abyss of unmanageable debt.

They are then haunted by the moneylenders, their own growing domestic demands and the need for more money to sow next crop.

**Reduced land holdings:** A successive property division, leading to very small land holdings, has made agriculture unviable as a profession. The small landowners still continue to cultivate low-value conventional crops, which makes their farming unsustainable.

**Inappropriate land use and cropping pattern:** Large scale cultivation of conventional subsistence crops, like wheat and rice has resulted in creating a surplus, which affects its price negatively.

Since the input cost of conventional crops is high, the yield per acre is more or less stagnant; the profit margin has over the period declined. Besides, this cropping pattern erodes fertility of soil, reduces resistance to diseases and extensive rice cultivation has very adversely affected the underground water table.

Similarly, the input cost of cash crops, like tea and coffee is extremely high as compared to the value of India commodities in the world market, which has made its cultivation unviable. A number of tea gardens in the NE have shutdown or are at the verge of shutting down, rendering a huge selectively skilled workforce jobless.

### **Remedial Measures**

**Re-examining the National Policy for Farmers (NPF):** The government has recently set up an expert committee to scrutinize the functioning of the NPF (which was established 08 years now), so as to identify and address the specific reasons for farmer's suicides.

**Re-examining the basis of working out MSP:** At present the Minimum Support Price (MSP) is decided every year by the 'Commission on Agricultural Costs and Prices'.

Recently, government has announced that it would re-examine the basis of working out the MSP, so that it allows risk free farming and cuts losses.

**Disaster relief:** A total of Rs 61,291 crore has been earmarked for 2015-20 to provide relief to the States which may be hit by various natural and manmade disasters.

**Introduction of National Agricultural Insurance Schemes:** On 13 January 2016, the Cabinet had approved the 'Prime Minister Crop Insurance Scheme'.

This insurance scheme for farmers provides insurance coverage and financial support to farmers in the event of failure of any of the notified crops as a result of natural calamities, pests and diseases and protects them against crop failures owing to successive droughts.

The farmers are required to pay premiums of as little as 1.5 percent of the value of their crops, allowing them to reclaim their full value in case of natural damage.

However, this scheme has not found much favor with the farmers.

Biodiversity, through crop rotation must be the basis of production to reduce vulnerability to climate and markets.

**Encourage farmers to adopt low cost organic farming** based on cost-effective technology with most suitable crop patterns and indigenous pest management practices.



**Integrated Pest Management (IPM):** Farmers need to be sensitized regarding this effort that can be organized at the regional agriculture university level so that the crop of neighboring farmers, not using pesticides, does not get damaged.

**Government/ NGOs with a vision of eco-friendly sustainable development** should guide the farmers to make the efficient use of water, electricity, pesticide and other inputs.

**Government could provide community implements and machinery** at panchayat / block level so that small and marginal farmers can also use mechanized techniques of farming at lesser cost to improve productivity.

**Institutionalized Credit System** e.g. Jan Dhan Yojana and MUDRA banks must be simplified and farmers be made aware of their rights and governments' initiatives in this regard.

**Moneylenders charging the farmer's exorbitant** rate of interest must be identified and punished for running such a racket.

**The role of commission agents, traders and intermediaries should be minimized** to facilitate the farmers to fetch maximum price of their produce. Governments' initiative pertaining to e-Mandi must be effectively implemented on ground.

**Strongest punitive action** should be taken against suppliers of spurious seeds and manufactures of spurious pesticides.

Gram Panchayats should evolve a mechanism to identify the indebted and suicide prone farmers and help them to overcome the crisis.

**Personal Accident Insurance Scheme** covers Kisan Credit Card Holders, to provide relief in an eventuality of an accident.

**To sustain the family of the deceased**, all the financial help should be provided as 'Fixed Deposit' in the bank, with quarterly payment of interest.

#### **Recent Government Initiatives**

The agriculture ministry in consultation with the Niti Aayog has identified a set of nine marketing reforms to ensure remunerative prices to farmers for their produce by reducing the role of middlemen.

These measures are likely to be in place by July 2017 and are considered to be one of the key steps of the government to live up to its promise of doubling farmers' income by 2022.

The noteworthy reform measures that have been identified include:

- Integration of market to e-NAM (National Agriculture Market) within the shortest possible time so that the farmers have multiple options to sell their produce at competitive prices without the involvement of any middleman. The proposed NAM framework envisages integration of 585 major regulated mandis across the country for real-time electronic auctioning of the commodities along with integrated assaying, weighing, storage and payment systems.
- In order to encourage agro-forestry, which has a huge potential for supplementing the income from agriculture, farmers will be exempted from felling of trees grown on their private land.
- Relaxing of transit regulations will help movement of timber from one part of the country to the other and reduce dependence on imported timber to meet the huge demand for wood in the country.
- Government is working towards creating a unified market platform where any licensed trader can buy the farmers produce online. The license will be required to be obtained by the trader from the Director of Agricultural marketing. The advantages of the unified trading license will be that the trader will be able to purchase the notified commodities in all the notified markets of the state with a single license. The same will save time, bring about quality control through a transparent regulatory mechanism.
- Furthermore, there will be a single-point levy of market fee, so as to simplify the procedures and make trade of commodities less cumbersome.
- The National Agricultural Policy 2000 envisages an active participation of the private sector in agriculture. The same can give a real fillip to the agro-sector by conducting research and introducing improved technologies, provision credit through cooperatives and self-help groups, create infrastructure (for seeds, fertilizers & pesticides), transportation and processing services, warehousing and cold storage facilities to

prevent rotting of food grains, help with all other extension services, carry out contract farming, direct marketing and setting up of private markets to allow accelerated technology transfer, capital inflow and create an assured market for crop production.

### **Conclusion**

It is very unfortunate that the nation as a whole has failed to appropriately strengthen the hands that feed us. The farmers live in a state of unprecedented deprivation and most deaths are due to lack of adequate medical facilities or starvation or physical and mental agony.

The government must not adopt a myopic approach to address this very serious challenge by simply doling out relief packages for farmers and waiving off bank loans to tide over immediate problems.

The government needs to look at the holistic picture and adopt policies that are in the long term interest of farmers, e.g. interlinking of rivers for irrigation and mitigating flood disasters, skill development of the workforce, better regulated marketing system and employment of technology and private players to qualitatively boost the output and make the Indian agriculture sector globally competitive.





## 2) INSTC- BIGGEST SHOCK TO CHINA & PAKISTAN

### Introduction

India and Russia are strategic partners for many decades, even during the Cold War era. After the independence of India, when the western world alienated India, USSR stood with us to build a modern India through Five Year plans of industrial and agricultural infrastructural development. To cement our friendship, both the great nations have entered into a unique partnership which could give a face-lift to the entire region giving our traditional enemy countries sleepless nights. Both nations have inched closer to making the "International North South Transportation Corridor (INSTC)" a reality - connecting India with Russia and Europe via Iran - a dry run of container movement via the green corridor (smooth customs facilitation) may be conducted soon, marking the 70th anniversary of Indo-Russian diplomatic ties this month. This joint venture could be a slap on the faces of China and Pakistan, whose CPEC is a similar ambitious project which passed through POK, a disputed territory between India and Pakistan.

### How INSTC will benefit both Nations

INSTC will substantially reduce time taken and cost for transport of goods between India and Eurasia, once fully functional and increase economic activities between India and the resource-rich Russia as well as markets of Europe.

INSTC is a land-and sea-based 7,200-km long network comprising rail, road and water routes that are aimed at reducing costs and travel time for freight transport in a bid to boost trade between Russia, Iran, Central Asia, India and Europe. The network is expected to provide faster and more efficient trade connectivity between Europe and Southeast Asia.

A study, conducted by the Federation of Freight Forwarders' Associations in India, showed that INSTC will be 30% cheaper and 40% shorter than the existing routes.

### Present Status

INSTC has moved closer to implementation after India decided to join international customs convention TIR following cabinet approval. The modalities of making INSTC functional was discussed at a multi-stakeholder meeting recently, people familiar with the developments reported. INSTC is one of corridors that Delhi is working on as part of connectivity initiatives parallel to China's 'One Belt One Road' strategy.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi might visit Astrakhan entry point of INSTC in Russia during his June trip to St Petersburg for International Economic Forum. India and Russia celebrates 70 years of diplomatic ties on April 13 and a series of events and visits are planned through the year 2017.

Last October, Russia's JSC RZD Logistics, Iran Railways, Azerbaijan Railways and logistics company ADY Express organized the first test shipment on the INSTC. The train left Mumbai on September 22 and arrived in Russia's Kaluga Region on October 12. The transit time was 23 days. India and Russia currently use maritime routes for freight transport at the moment, with goods reaching their destination in about 40 days.

with industrial radiators were sent by sea from Mumbai to the Iranian port of Bandar Abbas, then transported by rail to Iran's Rasht station and from there delivered by road to Astara (Azerbaijan), reloaded on the railway and finally delivered to the destination in Russia.

Earlier, dry runs on two routes of INSTC were conducted in 2014, the first from Mumbai to Baku via Bandar Abbas and the second from Mumbai to Astrakhan via Bandar Abbas, Tehran and Bandar Anzali. Chabahar port in Iran once functional and connected to the Iranian Railway network will also be part of INSTC.

### Shock for China and Pakistan

China and Pakistan are building CPEC for many years now. Pakistan has provided its Gwadar Port to China and it is supposed to be used for Commercial and Military use as well. China is investing heavily on CPEC, as per estimates China will invest approx 45 Billion Dollars on CPEC. China was also trying to open the old 'Silk Route' to ensure its reach to Middle-Asian and European Countries.

### Conclusion

With this historic joint venture by India and Russia, China's all hopes of gaining supremacy in Asia, will be dashed forever. India will gain a safe route to Central Asian and European countries. Also India will be able to

reach Afghanistan via Iran. It will help India to encircle Pakistan from 3 fronts. China's huge investment in CPEC seems to be in a big jeopardy now.

### **3) Highlights of NITI Aayog Governing Council's Meet: 23 April 2017**

#### **Introduction**

The National Institution for Transforming India (NITI) Aayog was established on 01 January 2015 and replaced the Planning Commission of India, which was abolished after 65 years of its functioning.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi chaired a crucial meeting of NITI Aayog's Governing Council on 23 April 2017.

The meeting was attended by chief ministers of all the states, whom the PM addressed as 'The Team India'.

The vice-chairman of NITI Aayog, Arvind Panagariya presented the 15-year Vision Document, comprising the seven-year strategy document and the three-year action plan (2017-18 to 2019-20).

In order to give stability to the funding estimates of both the Centre and states, the three-year action plan will be aligned with the 14th Finance Commission award period.

Since its establishment, there have been two earlier meetings of the Governing Council of NITI Aayog, which were held on 08 February 2015 and 15 July 2015.

#### **Salient Features of the NITI Aayog**

NITI Aayog or the National Institution for Transforming India is an institution of the Government of India, which is responsible for formulating economic policy recommendations for the central, state and union territory governments of India.

NITI Aayog serves as a 'Think Tank' of the Government and provides Centre and states with relevant strategic and technical advice across the spectrum of key elements of policy.

The states have the liberty to tailor their plans to suit their needs under more than 40 centrally sponsored schemes.

Hence, unlike the erstwhile Planning Commission, the NITI Aayog has adopted a 'Bottom Up' approach, where decisions are being taken at the local level and then endorsed at the Central level.

#### **Organizational Structure**

- **Chairperson:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi
- **Vice Chairman:** Arvind Panagariya
- **Governing Council:** CM's (States) & Lieutenant Governors (Union Territories).
- **Regional Councils:** Formed on need-basis, incorporates CM's & Lt Governors of the region.
- **CEO:** Appointed by PM for fixed tenure. Presently, it is Mr Amitabh Kant
- **Secretariat:** Appointed by nomination.
- **Part-Time Members:** Max 2, Rotational, from relevant institutions.
- **Ex-officio Members:** Max 4 from council of ministers, nominated by PM.
- **Special Invitees:** Experts, specialists, practitioners with domain knowledge.

#### **Objectives**

- Foster cooperative federalism through structured support initiatives and mechanisms with the states on a continuous basis, recognizing that strong states make a strong nation.
- Develop mechanisms to formulate credible plans at the village level and aggregate these progressively at higher levels of government.
- Pay special attention to the sections of our society that may be at risk of not benefitting adequately from economic progress.
- Design strategic and long term policy and programme frameworks and initiatives, and monitor their progress and their efficacy. The lessons learnt through monitoring and feedback will be used for making innovative improvements, including necessary mid-course corrections.
- Provide advice and encourage partnerships between key stakeholders and national and international like-minded Think Tanks, as well as educational and policy research institutions.



- Create a knowledge, innovation and entrepreneurial support system through a collaborative community of national and international experts, practitioners and other partners.
- Offer a platform for resolution of inter-sectoral and inter-departmental issues in order to accelerate the implementation of the development agenda.
- Maintain a state-of-the-art Resource Centre, be a repository of research on good governance and best practices in sustainable and equitable development as well as help their dissemination to stake-holders.
- Actively monitor and evaluate the implementation of programmes and initiatives, including the identification of the needed resources so as to strengthen the probability of success and scope of delivery.
- Focus on technology up gradation and capacity building for implementation of programmes and initiatives.
- Undertake other activities as may be necessary in order to further the execution of the national development agenda, and the objectives mentioned above.

#### **Highlights of NITI Aayog Governing Council's Meet: 23 April 2017**

NITI Aayog Vice Chairman Arvind Panagariya presented a draft of the 'Three Year Action Agenda' for the nation's development. The draft includes 300 specific action points that have been identified in consultation with the states and these action points cover all the important sectors.

The Vice Chairman further informed the Governing Council that besides the 'Action Agenda', a 'Seven Year Strategy' and a '15-year Long Term Vision' will replace the erstwhile Five-Year Plans for the nation's planning framework. Incidentally, the 12th Five-Year Plan ended on 31 March 2017.

NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant outlined the initiatives taken so far in areas like agriculture, poverty elimination, health, education, digital payments, disinvestment, coastal zone, and island development.

He highlighted that the NITI Aayog is working very closely with the states to improve basic services and infrastructure, especially in districts and regions which require specific attention.

Union Revenue Secretary Hasmukh Adhia made a presentation on the GST, explaining the benefits of the indirect tax collection system and the way forward. He also urged the Chief Ministers of states to expedite the legislation of State GST Bills.

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, who has said to have 'revolutionized' agriculture in his state, made a presentation on doubling farmers' income by focusing on irrigation, technology generation and dissemination, and policy and market reforms.

#### **PM Modi during his address highlighted the following points:**

- Advised states to use Govt e-Marketplace to reduce corruption, increase transparency in govt procurement.
- Asked the states to put in place, without any delay the legislative arrangements at state-level for GST to meet the July 01 deadline for country wide implementation of GST.
- Reminded the states that with liberal use of technologies such as BHIM, Aadhaar, etc, significant savings for the states will accrue.
- PM asked NITI Aayog to prepare roadmap for better utilization of funds available with the states to enhance forest and tree cover and conservation and management of wildlife through mineral and Compensatory Aforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA).
- PM asked states to speed up capital expenditure and put in dedicated efforts for infrastructure creation.
- PM said that through NITI Aayog, the views of chief ministers on key matters such as Centrally Sponsored Schemes, Swachh Bharat, Skill Development and Digital Payments will be taken on board.

## **4) US-NORTH KOREAN RELATIONS- AT PIT'S BOTTOM**

### **Introduction**

North Korea and United States have a checkered past and relations were hostile. The fissures had developed primarily during the infamous 'Korean War', during which the U.S. Air Force bombed and destroyed parts of North Korea leaving,20% of its population dead. During the past few years relations have been largely defined by North Korea's five tests of nuclear devices coupled with its development of delivery systems, ie, Long Range Missiles. It's ongoing threats to strike the United States and South Korea with nuclear weapons and conventional forces, was a major source of disharmony in the area. During his presidency, George Bush referred to North Korea as part of "The Axis of Evil" because of the potential threat of its nuclear capabilities.

As the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States of America have no formal diplomatic relations, Sweden (European Union member state) acts as the envoy of United States in North Korea for consular matters. Since the Korean War, the United States has maintained a strong military presence in South Korea, a friendly capitalist nation.

According to 'Gallup's annual World Affairs survey', only 9% of Americans have a favorable view of North Korea, while 87% of Americans have a negative view. According to a BBC World Service Poll-2014, only 4% of Americans view North Korea's influence positively with 90% expressing a negative view, one of the most negative perceptions of North Korea in the world.

### **How US- North Korean Relationship got spoiled?**

From January 1958 to 1991, the United States reportedly held nuclear weapons due to its diplomatic and military influence, in South Korea for possible use against North Korea, peaking in number at some 950 warheads in 1967. Reports establish that these have since been removed but it has never confirmed by any independent 3rd party organization such as IAEA. The U.S. still maintains "the continuation of the extended deterrent offered by the U.S. nuclear umbrella".

In January 1957 the U. S National Security Council considered the stock piling of nuclear weapons in South Korea, on President Eisenhower's instruction. However, paragraph 13(d) of the 'Korean Armistice Agreement' mandated that both sides should not introduce new types of weapons into South Korea, so preventing the introduction of nuclear weapons and missiles in the area. The U.S. decided to unilaterally abrogate paragraph 13(d), breaking the Armistice Agreement, despite concerns by United Nations allies. At a June 21,1957, meeting of the Armistice Commission, U.S. informed the North Korean representatives that the US no longer considered itself bound by paragraph 13(d) of the armistice. In January 1958 nuclear armed 'Honest John Missile system' and 280 mm Nuclear Cannons were deployed in South Korea. An year later, US added nuclear armed 'Matador Cruise Missiles' with the range to reach China and the Soviet Union, to its stockpile in South Korea.

North Korea denounced the abrogation of paragraph 13(d) as an attempt to wreck the armistice agreement and turn Korea into a U.S. atomic warfare zone. At the UN General Assembly in November 1957, the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia condemned the decision of the 'United Nations Command' to introduce nuclear weapons into Korea.

North Korea responded militarily by digging massive underground fortifications, and forwarded deployment of its conventional forces for a possible counterattack against the United States forces stationed in South Korea. In 1963, North Korea asked the Soviet Union for help in developing nuclear weapons, but was refused. However, instead the Soviet Union agreed to help North Korea to develop a peaceful nuclear energy program, including the training of nuclear scientists. China though, formally rejected North Korean requests for developing own nuclear weapons, covertly helped their nuclear weapon program. Incidentally North Korea joined the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT) as a non-nuclear weapons state in 1985, and North and South Korean



talks begun in 1990 resulting in a '1992 Denuclearization Statement'. However, US reconnaissance photos in early 1993, led the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to demand special inspection of the North Korea's nuclear facilities, which prompted Kim Il Sung's March 1993 announcement of North Korea's withdrawal from the NPT. On May 11, 1993 UN Security Council urged North Korea to cooperate with the IAEA and to implement the 1992 North-South Denuclearization Statement. It also urged all member states to encourage North Korea to respond positively to this resolution and to facilitate a solution for the nuclear issue. US-North Korea talks began in June 1993 but with lack of clarity and purpose in implementing an agreement, North Koreans unloaded the core of a major nuclear reactor, which could have provided enough raw materials for several nuclear weapons. With tensions high, 'Kim Il Sung' invited former U.S. President Jimmy Carter to act as an intermediary. Carter accepted the invitation, but could only act as a private citizen not a government representative. Carter managed to bring the two states to the negotiating table.

The negotiators successfully reached the 'U.S.-North Korea Agreed Framework' in October 1994. The highlights were:-

- North Korea agreed to freeze its existing plutonium enrichment program, to be monitored by the IAEA;
- Both sides agreed to cooperate to replace North Korea's graphite-moderated reactors with Light Water Reactor (LWR) power plants, to be financed and supplied by an international consortium (later identified as Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) by a target date of 2003;
- The United States and North Korea agreed to work together to store safely the spent fuel from the five-megawatt reactor and dispose of it in a safe manner that does not involve reprocessing in North Korea;
- The United States agreed to provide shipments of heavy fuel oil to provide energy in the mean time;
- The two sides agreed to move toward full normalization of political and economic relations;
- Both sides agreed to work together for peace and security on a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula.
- Both sides agreed to work together to strengthen the international nuclear non-proliferation regime.

However the Agreement was flawed:-

There was no specific schedule made for reciprocal moves, and the United States was granted a very long time to fulfill its obligations to replace the dangerous graphite-moderated reactors with LWRs. Furthermore, no organization was chosen to monitor compliance, to supervise implementation or to make mid-course adjustments that might become necessary. Finally, other interested nations, like South Korea, China, and Japan, were not included in the negotiations. Soon after the agreement was signed, U.S. Congress control changed to the Republican Party who did not support the agreement. Some Republican Senators were strongly against the agreement

In accordance with the terms of the Agreed Framework, North Korea decided to freeze its nuclear program and cooperate with United States and IAEA verification efforts, and in January 1995 the U.S. relaxed economic sanctions against North Korea. However, in 1996 KEDO's first director, 'Stephen Bosworth' commented "The Agreed Framework was a political orphan within two weeks after its signature".

In January 1995, as called for in the Agreed Framework, the United States and North Korea negotiated a method to safely store the spent fuel from the five-megawatt reactor. According to this method, U.S. and North Korean operators would work together to can the spent fuel and store the canisters in the spent fuel pond. Actual canning began in 1995. In April 2000, canning of all accessible spent fuel rods and rod fragments was declared complete.

North Korea agreed to accept the decisions of KEDO, the financier and supplier of the LWRs, with respect to provision of the reactors. International funding for the LWR replacement power plants had to be sought. Formal invitations to bid were not issued until 1998, by which time the delays were infuriating North Korea. In May 1998, North Korea warned it would restart nuclear research if the U.S. could not install the LWR. KEDO subsequently identified Sinpo, as the LWR project site, and a formal ground breaking was held on the site on August 21, 1997. In December 1999, KEDO and South Korea Electric Power Corporation (KEPCO) signed the contract permitting full scale construction of the LWRs, but significant spending on the LWR project did not commence until 2000.

Soon the relationship between South and North Korea deteriorated and all nuclear related projects suffered and got stalled.

### **Present Scenario**

Following the April 3, 2017 American missile strike in Syria in response to Bashar's chemical weapon attack on civilians, tensions had mounted as U.S. 'President Trump' weighed further military options against North Korea's ballistic missile program. In the second week of April 2017, global media outlets erroneously reported that the Aircraft Carrier USS Carl Vinson, had been deployed to the Sea of Japan heading towards North Korea, as a result of confusion created by a "miscommunication" between the "Pentagon and the White House." A premature announcement on April 8 from the Navy led to a "glitch-ridden sequence of events". On April 17 North Korea's deputy President accused the United States of "turning the Korean peninsula into "the world's biggest hotspot" and the North Korean government stated "its readiness to declare war on the United States if North Korean forces were to be attacked." In reality on April 18, the War Ship USS Carl Vinson and its escorts were 3,500 miles from Korea engaged in scheduled joint exercises with Australia in the Indian Ocean.

Meanwhile an incident further created a further spark in the US- North Korea relations. An American citizen by the name of Tony Kim, also known by the local name of 'Kim Sang-duk', was detained while attempting to leave North Korea through Pyongyang Airport.

### **Conclusion**

Defying warnings from the US and China, North Korea has test-fired a ballistic missile on 29 April, 2017. US military officials said the missile was likely a medium-range weapon and appears to have broken up within minutes of the launch from the 'Pukchang region north of Pyongyang'. It was a show of repeated launching failures.

President Donald Trump tweeted:

“North Korea disrespected the wishes of China & its highly respected President when it launched, though unsuccessfully, a missile today. Bad!”

South Korea's Foreign Ministry went even further saying Pyongyang was 'playing with fire' and warned of tougher sanctions. The spokesperson went on to say that South Korea would 'accelerate measures to improve deterrence with the combined South Korea-US defensive posture' in order to protect its citizens.

The 'USS Carl Vinson Aircraft Carrier Group' is heading towards the waters off the Korean peninsula where it will join the 'USS Michigan', a nuclear submarine in a show of force.

World powers are mulling further sanctions on the isolated nation, but previous rounds have done too little to deter North Korea Premier 'Kim Jong Un's nuclear ambitions.



## **5) Reasons for Massive Casualties of CRPF Personnel in Sukma Attack by Naxals**

### **Introduction**

In one of the most deadly attacks by the Maoist rebels since the Dantewada attack of 06 April 2010, a group of 300 Naxals' attacked a party of 99 CRPF personnel deployed to oversee road construction through the Maoist stronghold of Sukma in Chhattisgarh on 24 April 2017.

The fire fight that lasted for over an hour resulted in a total of 25 CRPF personnel losing their precious lives and many were grievously injured. It was reported that the Naxals too suffered some casualties, but their numbers could not be ascertained.

In a similarly executed attack in the same area on 11 March 2017, a CRPF party was ambushed by Naxals and they lost 12 jawans.

Considering that the Naxals were able to carry out two major attacks with impunity over the previous two months inflicting a total of 37 casualties, the situation in the Sukma area has definitely assumed an alarming dimension.

### **Reasons for Such an Unprecedented Attack by Naxals**

The Maoist movement had started off from Naxalbari, in West Bengal as a peasants' movement against the oppression by their rich landlords, with the tacit support of Chinese communist leader, Mao Zedong in 1967. Hence, the Naxals are also referred to as the Mao-ist.

The movement however, soon lost its steam, but during the previous two to three decades, Naxalism has shown a major revival and has spread in some form across three fourth of the total districts of the country.

The primary reasons for the same stems from a governance deficit in these far flung regions, which is exhibited in the form of poor infrastructure development in the area, corrupt practices by the governing authorities, lack of opportunities and employment, exploitation of the under privileged and huge disparity between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots'.

In the more recent times, the Naxals have become highly organized, better equipped and trained and have been voluntarily given space by the locals to become a law unto themselves; they collect taxes, issue binding dictats, hold kangaroo courts of justice and provide social security to the locals by acting like modern day 'Robin-hoods'.

Hence, the clout of the Naxal leaders in their areas of operation/influence is immense. The Naxals thrive on the support system provided to them by the locals in the area and any kind of threat that can restrict their control and power over their designated turf meets with extreme retaliation.

Construction of roads through the heart of Naxal dominated area is the major threat to Maoism (more than any other threat) because it will reduce the travelling time and provide easy accessibility to the local population to facilities like, hospitals, schools, Block Development offices, etc.

If the local population of these areas become more aware of their rights, has access to basic amenities and is put wise on the actions being taken by the government to mitigate their problems, the Naxals will lose their clout and will be rendered irrelevant.

Besides, better approach roads will also reduce the response time of the security forces to act on actionable intelligence against Naxals.

Moreover, the Naxals are now fighting a losing battle in the area. Statistics show that, the attrition ratio has improved from 1:1 to 1:3.5, which means that for a loss of one jawan, 3.5 naxals are being killed. This is the most favorable ratio in the last 15-20 years.

The recent unprecedented attacks by naxals are being seen as their last ditch effort to remain relevant in the region which has traditionally been their stronghold.

### **Reasons for Massive Casualties of CRPF Personnel**

The CRPF is employed for prolonged periods of time in anti-insurgency operations all across India. Therefore, fatigue, complacency and at times lethargy sets in, which results in lowering of guard, not following laid down drills and procedures, which obviously results in unwarranted casualties.

Secondly, the lessons were not adequately learnt from the previous ambush that happened just a month ago in the same area. The CRPF officials should have carried out an in-house brain storming, pin-pointed accountability, identified grey areas, plugged the loopholes and corrective measures so taken should have been disseminated to the lowest level in the form of revised SOPs.

Thirdly, it emerges that there was a complete intelligence failure. Since, the attack was carried out by such a large group of Naxals, their build up and presence should have been easily detected by an active, alert and efficient intelligence network.

Besides, it also indicates that gathering of human-intelligence through local sources was totally defunct. In guerrilla warfare, local population have to be at the centre of gravity and trust building with them is an important cardinal for success of counter-insurgency operations. In the present case, the tribals openly came out to support the Naxals.

Fourthly, the selection of ambush site and the way the jawans were trapped, suggest that the level of preparedness and information gathered by the Maoist was of a high order. They even used AK-47 rifles in the attack and in the previous ambush had planted IEDs at tactically appropriate locations to maximise casualties.

Considering the high level of expertise exhibited by the Naxals during both the recent attacks on CRPF, it may be reasonable to examine an upsurge in extraneous support, if any, perhaps by China, to revive the Naxal movement.

Lastly, we were taught during training that mistakes committed in insurgency affected areas come back wrapped in tri-colour. The insurgents study the pattern of movement of troops and are always on the lookout for weak spots.

This CRPF party had taken a break to have food under a tree without adequately securing the area and positioning sentries to dominate the areas overseeing their position. Hence, the negligence proved fatal to those unfortunate souls.

### **Conclusion**

It is extremely sad to see the brave hearts losing their lives at the prime of their youth, leaving behind young wives, old parents and children who will be deprived of a father forever.

I hope that the government and the security forces take adequate proactive actions to ensure that the insurgents are on the beat and we fight a more coordinated battle from a position of strength.

### **Pertinent Questions Pertaining to Tackling Naxalism**

Q1. Sir, what do these naxal actually want? What are their demands from the government?

A1. Their demands are not directly from the government. They believe in Maoist ideology, which is equal rights for all, no discrimination and equitable distribution of resources irrespective of which strata of society you come from, no ownership rights over resources, there should be no one rich or poor, they are against centralization, acquisition of resources by government that may infringe upon their natural habitat and alter their traditional way of life. They are looking for safeguarding tribal rights to prevent exploitation by the 'high and mighty', land reforms and better employment opportunities for all.

Q2. Why do these naxal ambush only government officers or CRPF personnel?

A2. The naxals find the security forces as a government's tool to suppress their voice of dissent. The naxal leaders cash on the anti-establishment sentiments by highlighting to the simple tribals, as to how the security forces is curbing and violating their human rights.



There is a need for a change in guard and approach to fight naxalism. We must be as harsh to tackle the naxals with an iron hand, as sensitive we are in ensuring no collateral damage takes place. The local government and administration will have to take visible steps to win over the civilians in a systematic and graduated manner by reaching out to them and addressing their genuine aspirations.

Q3. Sir, such shameful incidents happened many times, why doesn't Indian government take strict action such as aerial search with modern equipment and full power to finish naxalism from the areas? What do you think needs to be done to tackle the situation?

A3. Modern arms/ equipment, like UAVs for aerial reconnaissance, lighter communication equipment, thermal imaging devices, etc are available but not in adequate numbers to cater for the vast expanse over which insurgency has spread in our country.

Also, the naxals operate in highly inhospitable terrain, which has thick forest cover and is not easily accessible. Hence, the efficacy of the said hi-tech equipment in such hostile conditions becomes a suspect.

Besides, a weapon is only as potent as the capability of the man behind the weapon. Perhaps training, motivation and IQ level of troops also has a lot to do with their performance in the face of adversities.

Furthermore, it is very difficult to differentiate between the naxals and the tribals. Since, the naxals are intimately supported by the tribals they merge and blend in the ambient eco-system.

In most attacks by the naxals, like in the recent one where 300-400 naxals were mustered up, it clearly shows that the local tribals were definitely involved; all 300 could not have been militant cadres.

Therefore, the solution is not going to come from just killing naxals at a large scale. If we actually go all out and do that, we will surely reduce the population of the country by at least one fourth.

To my mind, the only way out is to identify and eliminate the naxal leadership, cut them off from their support base by managing local population better and go all out to develop infrastructure in these areas, even if it takes deployment of additional troops to provide security.

The naxals usually have their camps on inter-state borders so that the state forces are unable to trace them after an incident. Thus, a central organization like the National Counter Terrorism Centre (NCTC), be quickly put in place for better intelligence gathering, sharing and dissemination for quick responses.

It must be ensured that the troops deployed on the ground are proactive and not reactive. Battle hardened retired army officers with insurgency experience could be laterally inducted into the para-military forces to make use of their expertise.

The local administration and troops deployed on the ground must create such an aura that the local population views them as their saviors and well wishers.

The above efforts will go a long way to eliminate naxalism. Andhra Pradesh was able to do that without the use of excessive force; we must take their model and extend it to other naxal affected states.

Q4. Sir do you think it is time we deployed army in that area? Also, what would be the after effects if such a decision is made?

A4. Army must never be employed in policing duties. It will surely be at the expense of their primary task of guarding the territorial integrity of the nation against external aggression. Besides, giving the armed forces extensive authority and power for maintaining law and order within the country may result in occasional use of excessive force against the local population causing collateral damage, perhaps may also induce corrupt practices owing to absolute power and erode their respectability as the ultimate sentinel and the last bastion of national security.

The state forces and the central reserve forces are required to be appropriately recruited, adequately trained and suitably equipped to manage internal security issues, which is their primary task.

Q4. Why should we not use army to support the police forces, after all they are better trained and equipped, since CRPF is suffering so many casualties?

A5. The personnel of the army are neither recruited from Mars, nor is their training outsourced to Venus. By using army extensively in aid to civil authorities, we will reduce their efficacy in their primary role.

Most civilian think that army has no work except during war and are a liability during peace time. Unfortunately, they are not aware that to keep the huge inventory of hi-tech weapons, equipment and transport

on road and keep the troops in battle worthy shape, the armed forces has to work overtime. It has to be prepared at all times to face all eventualities.

In case we do not give them adequate time to ensure battle worthiness and confuse the roles of military and par-military forces, we will neither be fit to fight insurgency, nor be prepared to appropriately respond to an external aggression.

Ideally, the state force that are most suitably placed, or the central reserve forces that are meant for this task be adequately trained, equipped and motivated to face the growing challenge of insurgency.

## **6) US-NORTH KOREAN RELATIONS- AT PIT'S BOTTOM**

### **Introduction**

North Korea and United States have a checkered past and relations were hostile. The fissures had developed primarily during the infamous 'Korean War', during which the U.S. Air Force bombed and destroyed parts of North Korea leaving, 20% of its population dead. During the past few years relations have been largely defined by North Korea's five tests of nuclear devices coupled with its development of delivery systems, ie, Long Range Missiles. It's ongoing threats to strike the United States and South Korea with nuclear weapons and conventional forces, was a major source of disharmony in the area. During his presidency, George Bush referred to North Korea as part of "The Axis of Evil" because of the potential threat of its nuclear capabilities.

As the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States of America have no formal diplomatic relations, Sweden (European Union member state) acts as the envoy of United States in North Korea for consular matters. Since the Korean War, the United States has maintained a strong military presence in South Korea, a friendly capitalist nation.

According to 'Gallup's annual World Affairs survey', only 9% of Americans have a favorable view of North Korea, while 87% of Americans have a negative view. According to a BBC World Service Poll-2014, only 4% of Americans view North Korea's influence positively with 90% expressing a negative view, one of the most negative perceptions of North Korea in the world.

### **How US- North Korean Relationship got spoiled?**

From January 1958 to 1991, the United States reportedly held nuclear weapons due to its diplomatic and military influence, in South Korea for possible use against North Korea, peaking in number at some 950 warheads in 1967. Reports establish that these have since been removed but it has never confirmed by any independent 3rd party organization such as IAEA. The U.S. still maintains "the continuation of the extended deterrent offered by the U.S. nuclear umbrella".

In January 1957 the U. S National Security Council considered the stock piling of nuclear weapons in South Korea, on President Eisenhower's instruction. However, paragraph 13(d) of the 'Korean Armistice Agreement' mandated that both sides should not introduce new types of weapons into South Korea, so preventing the introduction of nuclear weapons and missiles in the area. The U.S. decided to unilaterally abrogate paragraph 13(d), breaking the Armistice Agreement, despite concerns by United Nations allies. At a June 21, 1957, meeting of the Armistice Commission, U.S. informed the North Korean representatives that the US no longer considered itself bound by paragraph 13(d) of the armistice. In January 1958 nuclear armed 'Honest John Missile system' and 280 mm Nuclear Cannons were deployed in South Korea. An year later, US added nuclear armed 'Matador Cruise Missiles' with the range to reach China and the Soviet Union, to its stockpile in South Korea.

North Korea denounced the abrogation of paragraph 13(d) as an attempt to wreck the armistice agreement and turn Korea into a U.S. atomic warfare zone. At the UN General Assembly in November 1957, the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia condemned the decision of the 'United Nations Command' to introduce nuclear weapons



into Korea. North Korea responded militarily by digging massive underground fortifications, and forwarded deployment of its conventional forces for a possible counterattack against the United States forces stationed in South Korea. In 1963, North Korea asked the Soviet Union for help in developing nuclear weapons, but was refused. However, instead the Soviet Union agreed to help North Korea to develop a peaceful nuclear energy program, including the training of nuclear scientists. China though, formally rejected North Korean requests for developing own nuclear weapons, covertly helped their nuclear weapon program. Incidentally North Korea joined the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT) as a non-nuclear weapons state in 1985, and North and South Korean talks begun in 1990 resulting in a '1992 Denuclearization Statement'. However, US reconnaissance photos in early 1993 led the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to demand special inspection of the North Korea's nuclear facilities, which prompted Kim Il Sung's March 1993 announcement of North Korea's withdrawal from the NPT. On May 11, 1993 UN Security Council urged North Korea to cooperate with the IAEA and to implement the 1992 North-South Denuclearization Statement. It also urged all member states to encourage North Korea to respond positively to this resolution and to facilitate a solution for the nuclear issue.

US-North Korea talks began in June 1993 but with lack of clarity and purpose in implementing an agreement, North Koreans unloaded the core of a major nuclear reactor, which could have provided enough raw material for several nuclear weapons. With tensions high, 'Kim Il Sung' invited former U.S. President Jimmy Carter to act as an intermediary. Carter accepted the invitation, but could only act as a private citizen not a government representative. Carter managed to bring the two states to the negotiating table.

The negotiators successfully reached the 'U.S.-North Korea Agreed Framework' in October 1994. The high lights were:-

- North Korea agreed to freeze its existing plutonium enrichment program, to be monitored by the IAEA;
- Both sides agreed to cooperate to replace North Korea's graphite-moderated reactors with Light Water Reactor (LWR) power plants, to be financed and supplied by an international consortium (later identified as Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) by a target date of 2003;
- The United States and North Korea agreed to work together to store safely the spent fuel from the five-megawatt reactor and dispose of it in a safe manner that does not involve reprocessing in North Korea;
- The United States agreed to provide shipments of heavy fuel oil to provide energy in the mean time;
- The two sides agreed to move toward full normalization of political and economic relations;
- Both sides agreed to work together for peace and security on a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula.
- Both sides agreed to work together to strengthen the international nuclear non-proliferation regime.

However the Agreement was flawed:-

There was no specific schedule made for reciprocal moves, and the United States was granted a very long time to fulfill its obligations to replace the dangerous graphite-moderated reactors with LWRs. Furthermore, no organization was chosen to monitor compliance, to supervise implementation or to make mid-course adjustments that might become necessary. Finally, other interested nations, like South Korea, China, and Japan, were not included in the negotiations. Soon after the agreement was signed, U.S. Congress control changed to the Republican Party who did not support the agreement. Some Republican Senators were strongly against the agreement

In accordance with the terms of the Agreed Framework, North Korea decided to freeze its nuclear program and cooperate with United States and IAEA verification efforts, and in January 1995 the U.S. relaxed economic sanctions against North Korea. However, in 1996 KEDO's first director, 'Stephen Bosworth' commented "The Agreed Framework was a political orphan within two weeks after its signature".

In January 1995, as called for in the Agreed Framework, the United States and North Korea negotiated a method to safely store the spent fuel from the five-megawatt reactor. According to this method, U.S. and North Korean operators would work together to can the spent fuel and store the canisters in the spent fuel pond. Actual canning began in 1995. In April 2000, canning of all accessible spent fuel rods and rod fragments was declared complete.

North Korea agreed to accept the decisions of KEDO, the financier and supplier of the LWRs, with respect to provision of the reactors. International funding for the LWR replacement power plants had to be sought. Formal invitations to bid were not issued until 1998, by which time the delays were infuriating North Korea. In May 1998, North Korea warned it would restart nuclear research if the U.S. could not install the LWR. KEDO subsequently identified Sinpo, as the LWR project site, and a formal ground breaking was held on the site on August 21, 1997. In December 1999, KEDO and South Korea Electric Power Corporation (KEPCO) signed the contract permitting full scale construction of the LWRs, but significant spending on the LWR project did not commence until 2000.

Soon the relationship between South and North Korea deteriorated and all nuclear related projects suffered and got stalled.

### **Present Scenario**

Following the April 3, 2017 American missile strike in Syria in response to Basher's chemical weapon attack on civilians, tensions had mounted as U.S. 'President Trump' weighed further military options against North Korea's ballistic missile program. In the second week of April 2017, global media outlets erroneously reported that the Aircraft Carrier USS Carl Vinson, had been deployed to the Sea of Japan heading towards North Korea, as a result of confusion created by a "miscommunication" between the "Pentagon and the White House." A premature announcement on April 8 from the Navy led to a "glitch-ridden sequence of events". On April 17 North Korea's deputy President accused the United States of "turning the Korean peninsula into "the world's biggest hotspot" and the North Korean government stated "its readiness to declare war on the United States if North Korean forces were to be attacked." In reality on April 18, the War Ship USS Carl Vinson and its escorts were 3,500 miles from Korea engaged in scheduled joint exercises with Australia in the Indian Ocean.

Meanwhile an incident further created a further spark in the US- North Korea relations. An American citizen by the name of Tony Kim, also known by the local name of 'Kim Sang-duk', was detained while attempting to leave North Korea through Pyongyang Airport.

### **Conclusion**

Defying warnings from the US and China, North Korea has test-fired a ballistic missile on 29 April, 2017. US military officials said the missile was likely a medium-range weapon and appears to have broken up within minutes of the launch from the 'Pukchang region north of Pyongyang'. It was a show of repeated launching failures.

President Donald Trump tweeted:

“North Korea disrespected the wishes of China & its highly respected President when it launched, though unsuccessfully, a missile today. Bad!”

South Korea's Foreign Ministry went even further saying Pyongyang was 'playing with fire' and warned of tougher sanctions. The spokesperson went on to say that South Korea would 'accelerate measures to improve deterrence with the combined South Korea-US defensive posture' in order to protect its citizens.

The 'USS Carl Vinson Aircraft Carrier Group' is heading towards the waters off the Korean peninsula where it will join the 'USS Michigan', a nuclear submarine in a show of force.

World powers are mulling further sanctions on the isolated nation, but previous rounds have done too little to deter North Korea Premier 'Kim Jong UN's nuclear ambitions.



## **7) India's Significant Step Towards Propagation of 'Space Diplomacy'**

### **Introduction**

India, on 05 May 2017, opened a new frontier of 'space diplomacy' by literally gifting the SAARC nations with a South Asia Satellite (GSAT-9).

The idea of a satellite to serve the needs of SAARC member nations was mooted by PM Narendra Modi during the 18th SAARC summit held in Nepal in 2014.

The satellite, aimed at helping regional countries to boost their telecommunication and broadcasting services, has been built at a cost of around Rs 235 crore, which has been entirely funded by India.

GSAT-9 is a space-based platform that would cost the participating nations to the tune of \$1,500m for developing ground infrastructure and ancillaries services.

Sri Lanka, Maldives, Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan have already endorsed for utilizing the services of the SAARC satellite. Afghanistan is yet to pledge its commitment, while Pakistan had opted out of the program.

### **Details Regarding the Satellite**

The South Asia Satellite weighs 2,230 kilograms and is carrying 12 top-of-the-line communication transponders in the Ku band, which India's neighbours can use to improve their communications services.

Each country will get access to at least one transponder, but they will have to develop their own ground infrastructure.

PM Modi, at the time of launch of the satellite, called for a video conference with the heads of the South Asian nations of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka. The participating nations anticipate a Rs 10,000-crore benefit from the satellite's 12-year lifespan.

Finally, amidst much fanfare, the GSLV-F09, carrying the South Asia Satellite (GSAT-9), was launched from the Second Launch Pad (SLP) at Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota on 5th May 2017 at 04:57 PM IST.

### **Benefits from the Satellite**

The launch of GSAT-9 is being seen as a major stride by India in the emerging domain of space diplomacy. As PM Modi put it, the satellite represents a "new form of regional cooperation."

One of the most significant benefits to India will be in terms of offsetting China's growing influence in the region accruing out of 'infrastructure diplomacy' that it has systematically indulged in to dominate and intimidate India.

The satellite has the capability to provide secure hotlines among the participating nations. Such foolproof, crucial communication link between the nations, especially in the times of natural disasters or other unforeseen national crises will ensure prompt response from the neighbors.

South Asia is the world's most populous region and is prone to tropical cyclones, heat waves, earthquakes, tsunamis, landslides and floods. GSAT-9 will help these nations to accurately predict weather and be forewarned of natural disasters.

The satellite will also help countries in mapping terrain and natural resources.

Besides the above, the satellite will provide important services to India's neighbors in telecommunication and broadcasting areas such as television, direct-to-home (DTH) services, education, telemedicine and disaster management support to mitigate losses.

### **Pakistan's Concerns**

Pakistan had opted out of the program raising concerns of security and mission scope of the satellite. Pakistan feared that the satellite could allow India to have a ready access and secure key data on Pakistan's sensitive information database infrastructure.

Pakistan has its own space programme under its Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO).

In June 2015, SUPARCO proposed a joint monetary and technical venture with the development of the satellite. ISRO chairman A. S. Kiran Kumar announced that India and Pakistan will collaborate on developing the SAARC satellite with SUPARCO performing technical engineering under ISRO's guidance.

However, after a deliberate debate on 20 September 2015, the officials from India and Pakistan could not arrive at a consensus over the ownership and control of the satellite and hence on 02 October 2015, India announced that it has decided to go ahead with building the satellite, without Pakistan's consent.

## **8) Nepal Yet Another Constitutional Crisis**

### **Introduction**

Nepal is back in the centre stage among world news makers, again for all the negative reasons. With radical political changes sweeping Nepal, the country has set a record of sorts, by moving two impeachment motions within six months- the first, in October 2016, against Lokmanya Singh Karki, head of the anti- corruption body, Commission of Inquiry into Abuse of Authority and, over the weekend, against Sushila Karki, Nepal's first woman Chief Justice.

CJ Sushila Karki had just five weeks to go before retirement. Both she and Lokmanya Singh Karki, who are not related, belong to the town of Biratnagar in eastern Nepal.

### **Political and Constitutional Turmoil**

Under the Nepal's constitution, a motion of impeachment moved by not less than one- fourth of the total membership of the House leads to the suspension of the person holding constitutional position. The notice will then be referred to Parliament's Impeachment Committee, which will scrutinize the charges and make its recommendations to the House. No time limit specified for its final disposal.

The interesting fact is, Lokmanya Singh Karki never got a chance to respond to the charges against him, as a Supreme Court Bench led by Chief Justice Sushila Karki held that he was not qualified for the post in a trial that ran almost parallel.

On Oct 20, 2016, Kathmandu was agog with speculation that Lokman Singh Karki was about to begin anti-corruption proceedings against top Maoist and Communist Party of Nepal - Unified Marxist Leninist ( CPN-UML) leaders, including Maoist Chief and Prime Minister Pusha Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda'.As a well thought over clever counter move,157 MPs belonging to the two parties moved against Lokmanya Singh after office hours, filing an impeachment motion that put him under immediate suspension.

The political drama, in its next stage found Chief Justice Karki in a similar situation.240 MPs from the ruling coalition of the Nepali Congress and the Maoist Party submitted an impeachment notice to the Parliament Secretariat alleging absence of "judicial conduct" on the Chief Justice's part, and accusing her of encroaching into the domain of the executive and unabashed 'Judicial Activism'.

This impeachment move followed a strong rumor that CJ, who had annulled the appointment by the Cabinet of Jay Bahadur Chand as Inspector General of Police, was about to order the elevation of Deputy Inspector General of Police Nabaraj Silwal - who had challenged Chand's appointment to the top post. There was also speculation that Congress leader Sher Bahadur Deuba, who had criticized the court's order, would be punished for contempt of court, as the case had come for final hearing.

### **"Bhag Banda" (Quota system)**



Unfortunately all constitutional posts in Nepal are vulnerable to impeachment as the prestige of these authoritarian posts was diluted by the prevailing political scenario. Soon after Nepal went through radical political changes in 2006, its constitution was replaced by an interim one, requiring even sitting judges of Supreme Court to take oath afresh. A system of Parliamentary hearings was introduced, but there were no structural checks to ensure the committee to ensure the Committee action in a bipartisan manner. In consequence, those hopeful of appointment as judges felt a need to please parties or leaders in the committee.

The same practice was followed in appointments to other constitutional bodies and Ambassadorial positions. Over the years, these constitutional bodies, including judiciary, have come to be packed with party partisans- something that is known as "Bhag Banda", or appointments under a quota system, based on the parties' strength in the Parliament. The system was institutionalized further in March 2012, when Supreme Court Chief Justice Khil Raj Regmi took over as Chairman of the Council of Ministers, and collaborated with 4 major parties to form the government.

As we follow the events culminating in the impeachment move of CJ Karki, it is worth noting that two months ago, more than 300 members of the Bar resigned, alleging lack of fairness and nepotism in the appointment of 80 judges by CJ, to newly formed High Courts.

### **Conclusion**

Soon after CJ's suspension, and the elevation of the senior- most judge, Gopal Parajuli as Officiating CJ, there was frantic speculation that UML party which had come out in Karki's support, would move an impeachment motion against Parajuli as well. The party under the leadership of former PM KP Oli had decided to fight the government on the streets and Parliament to defend former CJ Karki. To make matters worse, on 01 May 2017, the third largest part in the Nepalese Parliament - Rashtriya Prajatantra Party (RPP) pulled out of Nepal's ruling coalition over the impeachment motion moved against CJ Sushila Karki. Its exit follows resignation of another Deputy Prime Minister (Kamal Thgapa) and Nepali Congress leader Bimalendra Nidhi from the government.

It's a sordid situation for the Himalayan nation as the already unstable politics is made extra chaotic by notorious political 'Bhag Banda'.

## 9) OBOR: an Imperative for China to Salvage its Economy

### Introduction

The **One Belt, One Road (OBOR)** is a development project, which was unveiled by the Chinese leader Xi Jinping in September-October 2013.

The proposal is aimed to enhance connectivity between People's Republic of China and the rest of Eurasia. The project consists of two major components, one being land based called the **Silk Road Economic Belt (SREB)** and the other is through the ocean, called the **Maritime Silk Road (MSR)**.

The initiative calls for the integration of the region into a cohesive economic area through building infrastructure, increasing cultural exchanges, and broadening trade. Moreover, the proposal underlines China's desire to carve out a bigger role for itself in the global affairs.

China will be hosting a two day Belt and Road Forum (BRF) on 14-15 May 2017 to facilitate high-level delegations talks among leaders, including 29 Heads of State, on OBOR.

Heads of state of 29 countries including Russia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Nepal (joined OBOR initiative two days ago) will attend the Forum in Beijing, China. In a surprise move, even United States has decided to attend the Forum.

India happens to be the only South Asian country, besides Bhutan, that has not joined in this ambitious connectivity project.

India has decided to boycott the Forum on principle as it opposes the OBOR leg, called the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) that runs through the Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK), which is a disputed territory.

### Salient Features of the One Belt One Road Project

**Scope of Project:** Will cover 60 countries across Asia-Europe-up to East Africa.

**Anticipated Cumulative Investment over an Indefinite Timeline:** Between US\$4 trillion to US\$8 trillion.

**The Silk Road Economic Belt:** Will include countries situated on the original Silk Road through Central Asia, West Asia, the Middle East, and Europe. The major routes that defined the erstwhile Silk Route include:

- **Northern Route:** It started at Chang'an (now called Xi'an), an ancient capital of China, passed through the breakaway provinces of erstwhile USSR and ended at the Caspian Sea/ Black Sea.
- **Southern Route:** Also called the Karakoram route was mainly a single route running from China through the Karakoram Mountains, where it persists in modern times as the international paved road connecting Pakistan and China as the Karakoram Highway. It passed through northern Pakistan, over the Hindu Kush



Mountains, and into Afghanistan, rejoining the northern route near Merv, Turkmenistan. Then, passing through Iran and Mesopotamia, it reached North Africa.

- **South Western Route:** This route followed the Ganges/Brahmaputra Delta, passing through northern Burma, into modern Bangladesh and further to Thailand and Java.

**The New Silk Route:** The **New Eurasian Land Bridge**, which is railway connectivity from China to Central Europe through Kazakhstan, Mongolia and Eastern Europe going up to Russia. This route, which was planned for implementation in 1990, is also referred to as the "New Silk Road".

In 2008 the railway line was further extended to connect the cities of Ürümqi in China's Xinjiang Province to Almaty and Astana in Kazakhstan.

In October 2008 the first Trans-Eurasia logistics train reached Hamburg in Germany from Xiangtan, China and since July 2011 the line is being extensively used by freight service that connects Chongqing, China with Duisburg, Germany. The same has cut travel time for cargo from about 36 days by container ship to just 13 days by freight train.

On 15 February 2016, the first train dispatched under the OBOR scheme arrived from eastern Zhejiang Province of China to Tehran, the Iranian capital. Now plans are underway to extend the route past Tehran, through Istanbul, the capital city of Turkey into Europe.

In January 2017, the service sent its first train to London. The network additionally connects to Madrid, Spain and Milan, Italy.

**The Maritime Silk Road:** This initiative, also known as the "21st Century Maritime Silk Road", is a complementary initiative aimed at investing and fostering collaboration in Southeast Asia, Oceania, and North Africa, through several contiguous bodies of water, i.e. the South China Sea, the South Pacific Ocean, and the wider Indian Ocean area.

#### **Funding of the OBOR**

The Chinese premier, Xi Jinping in November 2014 announced a plan to create \$40 billion development fund, which would help finance China's plans to develop the New Silk Road and the Maritime Silk Road.

China has demonstrated perceptive business acumen by investing in businesses rather than lending money to countries for various projects, e.g. the Karot Hydropower Station, 50 kilometers from Islamabad the capital of Pakistan is the first investment project of the Silk Road Fund, and is not a part of the much larger CPEC investment.

Similarly, China has accelerated its drive to draw Africa into the Maritime Silk Road by speedy construction of a modern standard-gauge rail link between Nairobi and Mombasa.

Clearly, such development projects provide China with an avenue for investment and the recipient country benefits from the infrastructure being developed by China over there. Hence, it is a win-win situation for both the partners and in the bargain the Silk Route initiative is getting automatically executed.

#### **OBOR: an Imperative for China to Salvage its Economy**

China's economy is majorly export driven and its growth story was riding high on the manufacture and export of goods. Due to the global economic meltdown the demand for products manufactured by China has significantly reduced.

However, due to the nature of its economic growth model, China has created a problem of serious overcapacity in many of its industries.

The major reasons for creation of this overcapacity was China's enduring emphasis on heavy industries over the past two decades and inability of the government to read the market trends correctly.

Thus, the falling exports, sluggish economic growth, both globally and at home, industrial overcapacity and an obvious need for China to structurally transform its economic cardinals, has sent the Chinese decision makers into an overdrive mode to accelerate the Belt & Road Concept initiative.

The Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) that it is making in various infrastructure projects is helping to revive the flagging Chinese economy.

China has already invested billions of dollars in several South Asian countries like Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan to improve their basic infrastructure. In an official report by China, between 2014 and 2016, its businesses signed projects worth \$ 304.9 billion in belt and road countries.

It is believed that China hopes to sign more than 50 agreements on transportation, energy and communications projects during the OBOR Forum scheduled to be held on 14-15 May 2017.

In fact, China has emerged as one of the fastest-growing sources of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) into India, in terms of various rail and metro projects that are underway. China has risen from 28th rank in 2014 and 35th in 2011 to the 17th largest investor in India in 2016.

The foreign investment in infrastructure, which is also being termed as “infrastructure diplomacy” by China, has important military implications besides helping China in its trade regime.

One Belt One Road is believed to be a way to extend Chinese influence in order to fight for regional leadership in Asia.

### **Implications for India**

India has rightly shown its indignation by refusing to attend the Forum. We are all aware that the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) extends from Kashgar in China’s Xinxiang to the Gwadar port in Balochistan and runs through POK, which is highly objectionable to India.

The CPEC provides Pakistan with extensive and modern infrastructure and serves China to not only invest in Pakistan, but also intimidate India by going ahead with this project audaciously.

Chinese merchant vessels carrying goods need not to take the long route to skirt around the India peninsula, as it gets an easy access to a port of Arabian Sea, which brings a bonanza of commercial and strategic benefits to China.

Thus, India will have to stand its ground on the issue, maybe it needs to garner global support against the construction of the CPEC in POK or perhaps even resort to unethical means to foment trouble in POK/ Balochistan and continue to contest the execution of CPEC.

### **Constraints Attached with CPEC**

The CPEC project is being seriously opposed by not only India, but also the population of Gilgit-Baltistan and Balochistan, who are fighting for their independence. Frequent disruptions at both the ends of CPEC may restrict its free and optimum utilization by China, which is spending \$57 billion on its construction.

Moreover, Pakistan is said to be paying through its nose in terms of interest to China for the infrastructure projects coming along CPEC. The same will further retard Pakistan’s economic position.

Lastly, increasing number of Chinese enterprises are acquiring stakes in Pakistan’s economy, and as the government takes out more and more loans from Chinese state-owned banks for balance of payments support, the space to negotiate and protect their own interests will diminish.

Hence, a stage may come when China will start dictating terms to Pakistan.

### **Conclusion**

The One Belt One Road is clearly an initiative by China to reach out to the prospective buyers of its products and allow its industry to function at full capacity, thereby giving a fillip to its flagging economy.

The strategic aim also stands out vividly that outlines China’s desire to emerge as a regional leader.

India at this stage does find itself isolated from other South Asian nations and dominated by China from all directions, but its stance is highly justified.





## 10) What Makes WannaCry a Deadly Ransomware?

### Introduction

A ransom ware by the name of Winery stormed through the web as the biggest ever cyber attack in Internet history on 12 May 2017.

The WannaCry ransom ware attack crippled UK's National Health Service, a large telecom in Spain, and other businesses and institutions around the world. The epicenter of the attack happens to be Europe.

The ransomware has already infected more than 200,000 systems across 150 countries, including China, Japan, South Korea, Germany and Britain.

The WannaCry hackers leveraged a leaked NSA-created Windows OS hacking technique, called Eternal Blue, which created the worst epidemic of malicious encryption yet to be seen.

### How does WannaCry Ransomware Work?

This said ransomware is normally seen to be contained within an attachment to an email that deceives the victim to be something innocent.

Once the link in that spam email is clicked, it activates macros in the malicious document, which encrypts the hard drive, making it impossible to access or retrieve anything stored on there, such as photographs, documents, music, etc.

The infected computer denies access, and instead displays a message that demands the equivalent of around \$300 (approx Rs 19,000) in bit coin (virtual currency) as ransom to restore the encrypted hard drive. It is believed that WannaCry has so far earned around \$55,000 from its internet-shaking attack.

### About Ransomware

Ransomware is a sophisticated piece of malware that blocks the victim's access to his/her files, and the only way to regain access to the files is to pay a ransom.

The first ransomware in history emerged in 1989. It was called the AIDS Trojan, which spread via floppy disks and involved sending \$189 to a post office box in Panama to pay the ransom.

The appearance of Bitcoin and evolution of encryption algorithms has revolutionized ransomware from a minor threat to a full-fledged money-making racket.

### **Types of Ransomware are as follows:**

- **Encryptor Ransomware:** These ransomwares use advanced encryption algorithms to block system files and demands payment to provide the victim with the key that can decrypt the blocked content.
- **Locker Ransomware:** These ransom wares locks the victim out of the operating system without encrypting them and makes it impossible for the victim to access the desktop and any apps or files from that computer without the payment of ransom.
- **Master Boot Record (MBR) Locker:** These ransomwares lock the MBR, which is that section of a PC's hard drive that enables the operating system to boot up. Hence, the boot process cannot complete as usual and prompts a ransom note to be displayed on the screen.

### **What Makes WannaCry a Deadly Ransomware?**

The WannaCry ransom ware is an encryptor ransom ware. The cyber security community agrees that crypto-ransom ware is the most prominent and worrisome cyber threat of the moment.

In the crypto-ransom ware, the attacker creates a key pair in which he can function both, the public key contained in the malware, as well as the corresponding private key (outside the malware). The public key allows the malware to perform trapdoor one-way operations on the victim's computer that only the attacker can undo.

### **The WannaCry ransomware has the following key features:**

- It has unbreakable encryption, which means that it is not possible to decrypt the files without the key.
- Can encrypt all kinds of files, including documents, pictures, videos, audio files, etc stored in a PC.
- Scrambles the file names, so that it is not possible to know which data was affected.
- It adds a different extension to the files, so as to signal a specific type of ransomware strain and hence makes it difficult to decipher.
- Ransom payment is demanded in Bit coins because this crypto-currency cannot be tracked by cyber security researchers or law enforcements agencies.
- In order to exert psychological pressure on the victim, the ransom payments has a time-limit, going beyond the deadline may mean that the ransom could increase or the data will be destroyed and lost forever.
- It uses a complex set of evasion techniques to go undetected by traditional antivirus.
- The ransom ware has the capability to automatically spread across a local network.
- It can scan the user's PC, and locate a certain vulnerability to targeted it.
- Lastly, it can extract data from the affected computer (usernames, passwords, email addresses, etc) and send it to a server controlled by cyber criminals.

### **Protection against Ransom ware**

- Do not store important data only on the PC. Ensure to have backups in the form of external hard drive and in the cloud.
- Do not keep the applications like, Drop box/Google Drive/One Drive/etc turned on by default. Open them once a day, to sync your data, and close them once this is done.
- Ensure that the operating system and the software in use are up to date, including the latest security updates.
- Use a guest account with limited privileges, rather than an administrator account on the PC.
- Turn off macros in the Microsoft Office suite – Word, Excel, PowerPoint, etc, in the browser.
- Users of Windows XP, Windows Server 2003 and Windows 8 can defend against the ransomware by downloading the 'new patch' from Windows.
- Remove the following plug-ins from the browsers: Adobe Flash, Adobe Reader, Java and Silverlight and set an alert for the browser to ask, as and when the said plug-ins are required to be activated.
- Adjust browser's security and privacy settings for increased protection.
- Remove outdated plug-ins and add-ons from the browsers. Keep only the ones in routine use and keep them updated to the latest version.
- Use an ad-blocker to avoid the threat of potentially malicious ads.
- Never open spam emails or emails from unknown senders.



- Never download attachments from spam emails or suspicious emails.
- Never click links in spam emails or suspicious emails.
- Use a reliable, paid antivirus product that includes an automatic update module and a real-time scanner.
- Filter internet traffic so as to inherently provide a proactive anti-ransomware protection. The same can be achieved by using Virtual Private Network (VPN), used to regulate Internet traffic and secure it through encrypted connections and communication.

### **Affect of WannaCry Ransom ware in India**

The affect of WannaCry ransom ware in India has been negligible. It is said that about 45,000 computer systems in India have been affected in all.

Sporadic attacks were reported from the cities of Ahmadabad, Vadodara, Chennai and Kolkata.

Gujarat government has reported around 120 incidents across the state, but it has not materially affected the functioning of the government.

In Kerala, computers in panchayat offices in Wayanad and Pathanamthitta districts were affected and the staff found the Word and MS Office files inaccessible.

In Oragadam, Tamil Nadu, factory of alliance partners Renault & Nissan had a slight disruption on May 13<sup>th</sup>, when the attack had affected production of 1,200 vehicles. The work restarted normally by May 15<sup>th</sup>.

An important aspect with regards to ransom ware threat in India is that around 59 per cent of Indians and majority of medium/small size companies use pirated software. Besides, there is no legal provision that makes reporting of a cyber-breach compulsory for corporate firms.

Hence, considering the large scale use of pirated software in the country, it may be reasonably predicted that India could potentially have been affected more adversely than it is emerging.

### **Actions by the Government**

Advisories were issued by the government to Banks, government departments and corporate houses to exercise caution and reinforce online security.

The RBI also issued instructions to all banks to operationalise their ATMs only after software updates are installed.

Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) has come out with a list of do's and don'ts on how to protect systems and networks from the global ransom ware attack

### **Conclusion**

The experts have been able to discover the existence of a “kill switch”, which the ransom ware hackers had built into their code, designed to reach out to a unique web address and disable its encryption payload if it makes a successful connection.



## 11) Options for Israel-Palestine Conflict Resolution

### Introduction

The US President Donald Trump wrapped up his two-day visit to Israel and the Occupied Territories on 22-23 May 2017. He met with the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas during his visit and offered his mediation to broker peace.

The Palestinians across the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip staged protests during his visit. They also called for solidarity with the thousands of Palestinian prisoners in Israel jails who were on their sixth week of a hunger strike.

The protestors also showed their anger against Trump's portrayal of the Palestinian faction Hamas, which governs the Gaza Strip, as a "terrorist" group.

He further added fuel to fire by saying that a coalition of partners would have to be formed to combat "extremism", mentioning by name Hamas, along with the Lebanese Shia group Hezbollah and Iran.

Trump also antagonized the Israelis by signing over \$350 billion (of which 109 billion is in arms sales alone) deals with Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia does not recognize the state of Israel and the two nations do not have diplomatic relations.

President Trump did not discuss any substantive peace plan during his much anticipated visit and hence, his trip to the Middle East can be termed as only high on symbolism and quite low on substance.

There have been numerous attempts in the past also by various world leaders and countries to usher in the ever eluding peace in the region.

In the succeeding paragraphs we will try and understand the dynamics of the Israel-Palestine issue.

### Historical Perspective

The ongoing conflict between the Jews and the Palestinians dates back to the mid of 20th century. Besides the broader issue of territorial dominance, the other areas of dispute have been mutual recognition as entities,



border delineation, safety and security of people, water rights, control of Jerusalem, Israeli settlements in occupied territory, Palestinian freedom of movement and human rights issues.

Historically, the Syria-Palestina region, as the historians called it, is the area between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River was given the name of Palestine by the Romans in 2 century CE.

The Ottoman Empire ruled the complete greater Syrian region from 1517 to 1917.

World War I witnessed the defeat and dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, under which most Arab countries had lived for centuries and which had served as some kind of a protection against European rule.

Geographically, Syria consisted of a number of Ottoman Vilayets (administrative divisions), currently comprising Jordan, Israel/Palestine, Lebanon and Syria. After the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire, new national identities, citizenship and social class came to coexist.

The Allied Powers, who took control over the region after the World War, drew a boundary roughly halfway across Syria from east to west, dividing the Syrian rectangle into two parts.

The southern part, called Palestine, was assigned to Great Britain; the northern part, called Syria and Lebanon, was assigned to France.

Hence, the divisions were made without giving any relevance to ethnicity and religion. The same is actually at the root of the present day Middle East problem.

### **Events Leading up to the Creation of Israel**

As has been mentioned above, the British mandate over Palestine was established at the end of WW-I.

The region during this period had Jews, Christians and Arabs and irrespective of their ethnicity, they came to be known as Palestinians. At that stage Jewish ownership of Palestinian land was only 7.04%.

Large scale Jewish immigration from abroad, especially from European nations to this region took place during this period. The Jews thronged the region to escape the era of the Holocaust.

The Holocaust was the systematic, bureaucratic, state-sponsored persecution and murder of six million Jews by the Nazi regime and its collaborators between 1941 and 1944.

Between 1948 and 1951, almost 700,000 Jews immigrated to Israel, including 136,000 Jewish displaced persons from Europe.

In November 1947, United Nations General Assembly passed a Partition Plan for the division of Palestine into an Arab and a Jewish state, with Jerusalem and its surrounding areas as a common entity under a special international regime. In this partition plan Gaza strip and West Bank were a part of the Arab state.

While, the Jewish leaders accepted the plan, the Arab League rejected the plan of partition and threatened with military action.

On 14 May 1948, Israel declared its independence within the boundary delineated in the UN Partition Plan.

### **Armed Conflicts between Arabs and Israel**

#### **Arab-Israel War: 1948**

The combined Arab forces of Syria, Jordan and Egypt attacked the newly formed nation of Israel in 1948.

The outcome of the war was that certain areas originally designated for the Arabs like the Jordanian region of West Bank, and Jericho were captured by Israel.

Later, in 1950 Jordan captured West Bank back from Israel. After the 1948 war, the control of Gaza Strip went to Egypt.

Jerusalem is the most holy place for Jews, Muslims and Christians, as it is the birth place of all these three religions. Israel also attacked East Jerusalem in 1956 and captured it and hence, the whole of Jerusalem (East and West), came under Israel's governance for the first time in modern history.

Since, all the above mentioned territories were originally allotted to the Arabs under the UN Partition Plan; most countries call these as Israeli occupied territories.

#### **Arab-Israel War: 1967 (also called the 'Six Day War')**

In the 'Six Day War' in 1967, Israel once again recaptured both West Bank and Gaza Strip from Jordan and Egypt respectively.

Immediately after the 1967 war, Israel proposed to return some territories captured during the war to buy peace, like the Golan Heights to Syria, the Sinai Peninsula to Egypt and most of the West Bank to Jordan. However, the Arab community rejected the proposal.

Later, in 1979, Egypt signed a Peace Treaty with Israel on the conditions of providing autonomy to the Palestinians and the return of Sinai Peninsula back to Egypt.

In this agreement Gaza Strip was not mentioned and it remained in the control of Israel.

As a part of the Peace Treaty, a 100 meters wide buffer zone between Egypt and Gaza (as it remained the south western part of Israel), called the Philadephi Corridor was to be left.

This corridor was barricaded by Israel after the 2000 Palestinian uprising. This is the famous barricade underneath which Hamas (Palestinian Militant wing) has built tunnels to smuggle in arms and ammunition for launching attacks on Israel.

### **Significance of Gaza Strip**

Gaza Strip is 25 miles by 7 miles rectangular strip of coastal land wedged between the Mediterranean Sea and Israel (shares a 51 km border). To its South West it shares an 11 km border with Egypt.

It saw a huge influx of refugee population from the Israeli mandated area after the 1948 Arab Israel war. The population on the Gaza Strip is 99% Sunni Muslims and the rest are Christians, Armenians and others.

It is the world's most densely populated area (1.5 million in 146 square miles).

The Gaza coastline on the Levant Basin sits atop of 1.3 trillion cubic feet of natural gas. Hence, the exploration of Gaza's natural resources by Israel makes its occupation significant to them. Palestinians working in these industrial zones are treated as slaves by big corporations exploring the natural resources.

Israel has restricted the use Mediterranean Sea up to only 2 nautical miles and has imposed blockade across the Egypt border to prevent military hardware from coming into Gaza. This also is a guise to isolate the Palestinian population and suppress their voices.

A concept called the 'Economic Hit man' is also a reason for the world community to be not so forceful in asking Israel to vacate the occupied territories. This concept enunciates that big international companies and corporations that are exploring the natural resources and building and often dismantling infrastructure in the occupied territories are stronger than the governments of their respective countries.

Lastly, Israel has no strategic depth against an attack launched by the combined Arab forces. West Bank and East Jerusalem extends right up to the water obstacle of Jordan River, giving Israel adequate strategic depth and protection to its East and Gaza Strip provide Israel a buffer towards Egypt, up to the strategic Sinai Peninsula.

### **Significance of Sinai Peninsula**

The significance of Sinai Peninsula is that whosoever occupies it holds the key to the Suez Canal that connects the Mediterranean Sea to the Red Sea and further, the India Ocean. Hence, Egypt took it back from Israel who had captured it during the 1967 Arab-Israel war, in exchange of signing a peace treaty with Israel.

Egypt forces during the war were unable to move up quickly and deploy across the Suez Canal as some of the bridges over it were destroyed by Israeli air force.

The strategic significance of Gaza Strip is that, if Israel loses the Gaza Strip, to Palestine, Egypt will get adequate time for build up of its forces and also room for man oeuvre in collaboration with the Hamas to wage a war against Israel.

### **Emergence of Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO)**

An organization by the name of **Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)** was formed at Cairo, Egypt to highlight the causes of Palestinian people in 1964.

Its popularity grew under the leadership of Yasser Arafat towards nationalistic orientation.

In 1974 the organization was recognized as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people by the Arab states and the same year it was granted the status of a national liberation movement by UN. This UN resolution was rejected by Israel.

The popular Palestinian uprisings against Israel's illegal occupation of Gaza Strip and West Bank, called the first and the second 'Intifadas' (1987 to 1993) and the proclamation of the State of Palestine by the PLO in 1988 lead to giving the movement greater legitimacy.



### **Creation of Palestinian National Authority (PNA)**

The first significant peace agreement between Palestine and Israel took place in Oslo, Norway in 1993, called the Oslo Accord.

As per the Oslo Accord, Israel agreed to pull out its forces from Gaza Strip and West Bank. The governance of these areas was to be progressively handed over to an interim organization called the Palestinian National Authority (PNA).

This form of governance was allowed to function during an interim period of five years, pending a decision on the final status of the occupied territories.

However, the final status agreement on Palestine is still undecided in spite of pressure from various countries and UN to resolve the issue and repeated dialogues between PNA and Israel, like at Camp David in 2005.

Though as per the Oslo Accord, the Palestine National Authority (PNA) was given certain limited rights in the areas of Gaza and West Bank, like, practicing its culture/ education, ID cards issuance and distribution of land and water by Israel.

However, Israel continues to have military and civil movement control over the Palestinians in these areas and does not allow free exercise of political activities.

PNA local elections were held in 2005 (organized by its President Yasser Arafat before his death) and Mahmoud Abbas, of Fatah party won the elections and became the first President of PNA with 62% majority.

In 2012 Palestine was accorded non member observer status by the UN Assembly, thus, completely recognizing its right to self determination.

### **Islamic Militant Group of Palestine- ' Hamas'**

In 1987, as a part of the armed uprising against Israeli occupation of Gaza and West Bank, a militant group came into existence, called the Hamas.

Hamas rejects any peace negotiations with Israel and believe in creating a Palestinian state on the model of Iran (that also explains Iranian support to Hamas, though they have a Sunni orientation, while Iran has a Shia majority).

Iran is an Islamic republic and similarly, Hamas want Palestine to be an Islamic state as it existed before Second World War, i.e. without the presence of Israel.

Hamas also has a public face where it conducts humanitarian and welfare activities, including education. Its militant leaders operate from Lebanon, which had a huge influx of refugees during the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, after the occupation of West Bank by Israel.

Lebanon, also has its own militant faction called the Hezbollah, who are fighting a civil sectarian war against the Christian population of Lebanon and also supports the Palestinian right to self determination and its Hamas Group.

Besides the support of Lebanon and Syria, Hamas is also being supported by Iran and the Muslim Brotherhood party, which had also briefly come into power in Egypt.

### **Internal Politics of Palestine National Authority (PNA)**

The first Presidential elections of PNA were held in 2005. Mahoud Abbas of the Fatah Party won the elections.

Presidential elections were required to be held again after the expiry of four year term in 2009, however, it kept getting postponed because of a conflict over power sharing between the Fatah and Hamas.

The ideological difference between the moderate Fatah, who want to abide by the Oslo Agreement to bring peace to the region, and the hardliner Hamas, who do not want to negotiate with Israel, is actually the root cause of dispute.

In 2006, Hamas won the Legislative Council elections, held in Gaza and they refused to take orders from the PNA, Fatah President, Mahoud Abbas.

During this period of uncertainty, in 2009, a Hamas leader Aziz al Divik was promoted from the chair of Speaker of Legislative Council of PNA to become the interim president of PNA, till elections were held in Gaza.

In 2010 local elections were held only for West Bank which the Palestinian leaders of Gaza do not accept. Hence, there are two power centres within the Israeli occupied Palestine, West Bank is Fatah ruled, while Gaza Strip is controlled by Hamas.

The division of governance between the parties had effectively resulted in the collapse of bipartisan governance of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA).

In 2014, elections were held in the Gaza Strip and a Palestinian "national consensus" Government, headed by Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah and composed of both Fatah and Hamas, was formed.

### **Blockade of Gaza Strip and Unprecedented Offensive by Israel from 12 Jun to 26 Aug 2014**

The reason for the situation to get escalated was that three Israeli teenagers were kidnapped and later found murdered near Hebron.

In retaliation, anti-Palestinian riots erupted, in which a teenager was murdered for revenge and that is when the situation assumed disproportionate dimensions.

The total losses were estimated to be 2143 Palestinians; 66 Israeli soldiers and 05 civilians. A total of 17000 homes were completely destroyed and 30000 were partially destroyed in Gaza. The cost of reconstruction was estimated at \$ 7.8 billion, which is three times the GDP of Gaza.

A total of 32 tunnels were destroyed by Israel, which were being used for supply of military hardware and other humanitarian assistance from Egypt and other Arab supporters. It was estimated to be bringing in \$700 million into Gaza's economy through goods and services.

Finally, a ceasefire between Hamas and Israel was announced on 26 Aug 2014. However, there have been frequent incidents of ceasefire violations ever since.

### **Peace Negotiations**

The official negotiations are mediated by an international contingent known as the Quartet on the Middle East (the Quartet) represented by a special envoy, which consists of the United States, Russia, the European Union, and the United Nations.

The Arab League is another important actor, which has proposed an alternative peace plan. Egypt, a founding member of the Arab League, has historically been a key participant.

After Hamas's electoral victory in 2006, the Quartet (United States, Russia, United Nations, and European Union) laid a condition for all future foreign assistance to the Palestinian Authority (PA) on the firm commitment of the government to non-violence, recognition of the State of Israel, and acceptance of previous agreements.

However, Hamas rejected these demands, which resulted in the Quartet's suspension of its foreign assistance program, and the imposition of economic sanctions by Israeli.

A year later, following Hamas's seizure of power in the Gaza Strip in June 2007, the territory officially recognized as the Palestinian National Authority was split between Fatah in the West Bank, and Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

However, in 2014, a Palestinian Unity Government, composed of both Fatah and Hamas, was formed.

### **One-State and Two-State Solution to the Conflict**

These are the two broad ways being proposed as a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The "one-state solution" proposes to merge Israel, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip into a single democratic country. However, it may result in Arab Muslims outnumbering Jewish population and could end Israel as a Jewish state.

The "two-state solution" would basically create an independent Israel and Palestine, with a separate Jewish and Palestinian state.

The reason why this proposal is finding greater acceptance is that neither side can get what it wants in a joined state, the only possible solution that can satisfy everyone involves separating Palestinians and Israelis.

The two-state solution is one that fulfils the national aspirations of Israelis and Palestinians.

However, there are certain sticking points in the solution. The most significant issue being that, Israel claims the entire city of Jerusalem as its united capital, while Palestinians claim East Jerusalem as the capital of its future Palestinian state.



France spearheaded the two-state proposal and defined, along with its European partners in a number of conclusions of the Foreign Affairs Council of ministers of the European Union since 2009, the parameters that should govern the two-state proposal:

- These include, borders to be based on the 1967 lines with equivalent land swaps;
- Security arrangements preserving the sovereignty of the Palestinian State and ensuring the security of Israel;
- A just, fair and agreed solution to the refugee problem;
- An arrangement making Jerusalem the capital of the two states.

On 02 February 2016, France announced to convene an international conference to broker the peace talks between Israel and Palestine for a two-state solution.

### **Paris Middle East Peace Conference**

French led effort, called the Paris Middle East Conference, to kick-start discussions on a two-state solution between Palestinians and Israelis got under way in mid January 2017.

Representatives from 70 countries and 20 organizations attended the Conference. However, no representatives from either the Palestinian Authority or Israeli government were present at the "Conference for Peace in the Middle East".

The peace talks were rendered futile because of the hard-line stand adopted by both sides.

Palestinians fiercely object to the Israeli settlement activity in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem, a territory that it wants for a future state. The settlements, home to about 600,000 Israelis, are considered illegal under international law, though Israel disputes this.

Israel on the other hand pointed out that Palestinian incitement and violence, and a refusal to accept Israel as a Jewish state, are the key obstacles to peace.

### **How can President Trump Intervene to Bring Peace?**

President Trump inked arms sales and economic investment deals with Saudi monarchy and charted a new course for US anti-terrorism and foreign policy with a speech to leaders from 50 Muslim countries during his recent visit to Saudi Arabia.

He appears to have been able to strike the right cords with the Sunni Arab states, including Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan. Together with those countries, he could exert diplomatic pressure on the Palestinians into making concessions on certain issues.

United States also provides \$440 million per year in foreign aid to the Palestinians. By offering to increase that aid, possibly combined with an economic incentives package, could provide him with the leverage to ask Palestinians to be more accommodating.

Similarly, President Trump could also offer to increase US military aid to Israel from its standard level of nearly \$4 billion a year and compel Israel to make certain concessions towards accepting the peace proposal.

As a last option, Trump can also move the US embassy to Jerusalem (as promised by him during Presidential elections), but such a move would require large concessions to the Palestinians to avoid regional turmoil.

### **Conclusion**

The reasons for peace to elude the region are primarily, mutual distrust, significant disagreements over basic issues, reciprocal scepticism about the other side's commitment to upholding obligations in an eventual agreement.

However, a majority of Jews see the Palestinians' demand for an independent state as just, and feel that Israel can agree to the establishment of such a state.

Furthermore, majority of Palestinians and Israelis in the West Bank and Gaza Strip have expressed a preference for a two-state solution, which they feel can co-exist.

Therefore, creating a suitable environment to broker a peace deal at this juncture may well serve as a turning point in the history of the region.

---



## 12) ASIA-AFRICA GROWTH CORRIDOR - INDIA IN INTERNATIONAL ARENA

### **Introduction**

While China was celebrating the launching of its ambitious "*One Belt, One Road*(OBOR), as its flag ship project of this century, India quietly made the pitch for developing an Asia- Africa Growth Corridor with the partnership of Japan. As India, Japan also is not humored by the aggressive attempts made by China to throne itself, as the supreme power in Asia. On May 24, both the nations together presented a "Vision Document" for the project at Gandhinagar, capital of Gujarat. The project envisaged to propel growth and investment in Africa, by curtailing the ever- increasing presence of the Chinese on the African continent. Further development of this project will be decided when our PM Modi and his Japanese counterpart Shinzo Abe meet later this year.

### **AAGC( Asia- Africa Growth Corridor) in a nut- shell**

The AAGC is an attempt to create a "free and open Indo- Pacific Region "by rediscovering ancient sea routes and creating new sea corridors that will link the African continent with India and countries in South- Asia and South- East Asia. The project stake holders hope the sea corridors will be low-cost and have "less carbon footprint" when compared to a land corridor. For instance, in the blue print of AAGC there is a plan to connect ports in Jamnagar (Gujarat) with Djibouti in the Gulf of Eden. Similarly ports of Mombasa and Zanzibar will be connected to ports near Madurai, and Kolkata will be linked to Sittwe port in Myanmar. With this intention



India will focus to build ports under the Sagarmala Programme. Apart from building ports to develop sea corridors, the AAGC also proposes to construct robust institutional, industrial and transport infrastructure in growth poles among countries in Asia and Africa. The whole emphasis will be to enable economies of these two continents to further integrate and collectively evolve as a globally competitive economic bloc.

Japan's contribution to this ambitious project is to provide state-of-the-art technology and its tremendous ability to build quality infrastructure, while India will bring in its expertise of working in Africa. Both national governments are expected to invite the private sector companies to play big role by coming together to form joint-ventures, consortiums to take up infrastructure, power generation or Agribusiness projects in Africa.

This proposal for AAGC, was first mooted in the joint declaration issued by both Prime Ministers in Nov 2016.

### **AAGC- Vision Document**

A 30 Page booklet, AAGC vision document was unveiled by the Indian and Japanese governments at the African Developmental Bank (AfDB ) annual general meeting held at Gandhinagar. In the first phase of the project the Corridor attempts to link Africa with India and countries in South-Asia including Bangladesh, Myanmar, Cambodia and Laos.

Apart from India and Japan, South Africa, Mozambique, Indonesia, Singapore and Australia send their representatives for the consultation process. China is supposed to be invited to join the project since the Jakarta based ERIA ( Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia) Director General Anita Prakash stated that all ASIAN ( including China) are supposed to be stake holders to AAGC.

### **OBOR versus AAGC**

OBOR(One Belt,One Road) is operating on the " government- funded model" whereas AAGC intends to have a collective consortium of private companies.

Unlike OBOR which entails development of a land corridor, incurring multi billion dollars investment, AAGC is essentially a sea- corridor incurring moderate cost of construction. AAGC is being presented as a "distinct initiative" borne out of a process of mutual consultation, which would be profitable and bankable where as OBOR lacks transparency and collective decision making.AAGC, as the name implies focuses on the centrality and growth of people of Africa rather than excessive emphasis on trade and economic relations alone.

### **Chinese presence in Africa**

China is the major consumer of African goods, accounting for 27% of Africa's total global exports. China also is a leader in green-field investment in Africa. In 2015-16 China invested a whopping USD 38.4 billion( 24% of green-field investments) whereas India during this period only invested USD 2.2 Billion( only 1.3%).India and Japan expect to become major players to boost the African economy in the near future and outsmart China by the formulation of AAGC.

### **Future Aspirations of AAGC**

AfDB President Akinwumi Adelina welcomed the initiative taken by India and Japan to create this sea corridor. More studies will be undertaken to list the current demands and challenges of economic, socio-cultural and political partnership pertaining to AAGC. It will bring out the existing challenges and barriers to this project and will make recommendations to the governments in Africa, South Asia, South East Asia, East Asia and Oceania.

### **Conclusion**

Africa is an unexplored huge potential market and AAGC if implemented, can bring inclusive growth in both these great continents. When our PM, Modi meets Japanese PM, Abe on the sidelines of G20 meet at Hamburg ( Germany) in July or when India hosts Japanese PM in September, more clarity will be given to the draft blue print of AAGC. It's nice to see that India is in the roll along the path of growth and development.

### **13) Military and Socio-Economic Significance of Dhola-Sadiya Bridge**

#### **Introduction**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Dhola-Sadiya Bridge across river Lohit on 26 May 2017. It happens to be India's longest bridge, with a span of 9.15 km and connects Dhola village in Assam with Sadiya town in Arunachal Pradesh.

Rivers Lohit, Dibang and Siang join up to form the Brahmaputra downstream of the site of this bridge. The Dhola- Sadiya is the only bridge over River Brahmaputra after the Kaliabhomora Bridge near Tejpur in Assam, which is nearly 375 km downstream from Dhola.

Sadiya is the birthplace of India's prominent ballad singer, late Bhupen Hazarika. The Dhola-Sadiya Bridge has been named after him as the Bhupen Hazarika Setu.

The travel time from Dhola Gaon to Sadiya Islampur Tiniali through the existing Parsuram Kund Bridge was nearly eight hours, while through ferry service it used to take 4.5 hours. However, the Dhola-Sadiya Bridge connectivity will make the journey possible in just 30 minutes, reducing travel time by four hours.

#### **Specifications of The Dhola-Sadiya Bridge**

- The construction of three-lane , 9.15 kilometres long Dhola Sadiya Bridge commenced in 2011.



- The total length of the Dhola-Sadiya bridge project, including the approach roads on each side, is 28.5 km.
- The Bridge has been constructed on BOT (build, operate, transfer) annuity basis at a total cost of Rs 2,056 crore, as part of the Arunachal Package of Roads and Highways under the Ministry's Special Accelerated Road Development Programme for North East (SARDP-NE).
- It is earthquake-proof and has seismic buffers in all its 182 piers.
- The Bridge classification of this bridge is 60 tonnes, i.e. it is capable to withstand the weight of Indian Main Battle **tanks, like Arjun and T-90.**

### **Socio-economic Significance of Dhola-Sadiya Bridge**

- The Dhola-Sadiya Bridge will enhance all weather connectivity between upper Assam and eastern parts of Arunachal Pradesh. Earlier, crossing of Brahmaputra at this location was possible only by ferry and that too during the day light hours. The monsoons invariably created a flood situation every year and movement across became completely 'no-go'.
- The bridge will also reduce the distance from Rupai on NH-37 in Assam to Meka/Roing on NH-52 in Arunachal Pradesh by 165km, cutting down on travel time from the current six hours to just one hour.
- Consequently, it is envisaged that the reduction in distance will help to save petrol and diesel worth Rs 10 lakh a day.
- The enhanced connectivity to remote and backward areas in the interiors will give a major boost to the overall economic development of the areas north of Brahmaputra in upper Assam and Arunachal Pradesh. Availability of opportunities in these backward areas will go a long way to control insurgency, e.g. Bodo insurgency.
- Also, the militant factions like ULFA and Khaplang faction of National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) used to take advantage of poor connectivity by moving to safe hideouts in Arunachal Pradesh after carrying out strikes in Assam. Intelligence gathering and speed of response of the security forces will considerably improve, resulting in tightening of the noose around the insurgents.
- The region has a plethora of natural resources like hydro-potential, oil and gas, coal, limestone, bamboo and forest wealth. The improved road connectivity will facilitate numerous hydro power projects coming up in the states and also generate employment and promote economic well being for the people.
- Towards this end, PM Modi launched a Scheme for Agro-Marine Processing and Development of Agro-Processing (SAMPADA) to promote food processing. He promised to make the North-East the economic hub of "new India".
- Furthermore, a two-lane trans-Arunachal highway is under construction, besides upgrading another World War-II vintage road and four projects are underway to widen roads across Arunachal Pradesh.
- Presently, there is no civilian airport in Arunachal Pradesh. By using this bridge connectivity, the people from this area will be able to reach the nearest railhead at Tinsukia and airport at Dibrugarh in a much faster timeframe.
- Lastly, the bridge will increase industrial investments with better border trade between the Northeast and South Asian countries.

### **Military Significance of Dhola-Sadiya Bridge**

- China claims Arunachal Pradesh as its own, and refers to it as "southern Tibet". It is highly sensitive to India's any promotional activity in this sector for the simple reason that Tawang, in Arunachal Pradesh happens to be one of the most significant centres of Tibetan Buddhism.
- Hence, the centre of gravity of its control over Tibet lies in controlling the activities in Twang sector.
- India had lost this sector to China during the 1962 war. However, China had declared a unilateral ceasefire and withdrew its troops from the captured areas of this sector. The primary reason for the same was that during winters South Tibet Himalaya becomes very inhospitable and disables Chinese troops to hold any of its part in Arunachal Pradesh.
- Thus, Arunachal Pradesh is strategically important to India as it provides a natural Himalayan boundary that protects India from China.

- At present, there is no existing bridge in the region that is strong enough to allow the movement of tanks to Tinsukia, from where troops usually enter Arunachal. Availability of this Class 60 Bridge, located less than 100km from the Chinese border, will for the first time ever, allow the induction of Main Battle Tanks and other heavy equipment into Arunachal Pradesh.
- The bridge will enhance India's defense preparedness as it will facilitate swift and all weather movement of troops and warlike stores in convoys from Assam to the posts along the India-China border in Arunachal Pradesh.
- China, has been improving its military infrastructure along the border in Tibet with a string of new railway lines, roads and at least five new airports. It is believed that India was so much on the defensive after the 1962 debacle, that it did not improve its connectivity in the region for the fear of China using it against India during the next Indo-China war.
- However, times have changed and today India stands much more confident to face China's threat. India has already raised two mountain divisions and is going ahead with raising a strike corps to beef up its defences against China.
- Hence, improving 'military infrastructure' to maintain these force level in the region warrants greater investments in developing road and rail links.

### **Conclusion**

The Dhola-Sadiya Bridge will play a significant role in easy and early mobilisation of requisite force levels to the Indo-China borders to protect our territorial integrity, as also to prevent China from arm twisting India, being at an advantageous position.

Notwithstanding, India's initiatives to improve the infrastructure in the North East, there is still a lot of ground to be covered to match up with the level of military infrastructure developed by China along the Indo-Tibetan border.

## **14) A Detailed Account of Commander Kulbhushan Jadhav's Case**

### **Introduction**

Commander Kulbhushan Jadhav, an ex-Indian Navy officer was abducted by Pakistan from Iran, where he owned a cargo business and had been working out of Bandar Abbas and Chabahar ports.

Cdr Jadhav had joined NDA in 1987 and was commissioned into the engineering branch of the Indian Navy in 1991. After completion of 14 years of service, he took premature retirement and established a small business in Chabahar in Iran.

It has been reliably learnt that the Sunni group, Jaish ul-Adl kidnapped Jadhav from the Iran-Pakistan border and handed him over to the Pakistan authorities.

Pakistan fabricated his documents and arrested him on the charges of spying and espionage. However, Indian government has maintained that he has no links with the government since his retirement.

Jadhav's trial lasted three and a half months and the charges he was convicted for included spying for India, waging war against Pakistan, sponsoring terrorism, and destabilising the state.



He was tried by a military court and on 10 April 2017, Jadhav was sentenced to death by a Field General Court Martial (FGCM) in Pakistan. He was given 40 days to appeal for clemency before the “Court of Appeal”.

### **Pakistan’s Version**

The version of the Pakistan government regarding the case is that, Cdr Yadav, who had made an illegal entry into Pakistan via Iran with a nefarious intent, was arrested on 03 March 2016 inside Balochistan in Mashkel near the border region of Chaman.

Pakistan feels that India through its external intelligence agency, Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) is indulging in subversive activities from Chabahar by providing covert moral and military support to the Baluch struggle for freedom.

It may be pertinent to mention here that India has an investment of \$235 million (Rs 150 crore) for phase two of Chabahar, which includes, \$150 million Line of Credit (LoC) from the EXIM Bank for development of port complex and \$85 million to be allotted later following contract between the two sides for supply of equipment to develop two berths in the port complex.

Furthermore, India’s presence in the strategically located Iranian port of Chabahar is its gateway to the landlocked Afghanistan and beyond to Europe and Russia through the North-South Corridor being constructed through an agreement signed between, India, Iran and Russia in the year 2000.

Pakistan stated that Jadhav entered Chabahar with a visa stamped on a fake passport in 2003, where he got a new identity of Hussain Mubarak Patel, born in 30 August 1968, from Maharashtra, India.

Pakistani security forces reported that Jadhav was arrested during a counterintelligence raid conducted by them and portrayed him as a serving officer in the Indian Navy and asserted that he was commissioned into the RAW. They believed him to be involved in subversive activities in Balochistan and Karachi. Jadhav was shifted to Islamabad for further interrogation, where, as per them it was revealed that he was in contact with Baloch separatists and terrorists and was fuelling sectarian violence in the province and the country.

The interrogation report also alleged that he was imparting naval combat training to the Baloch separatists, in an attempt to target the ports of Gwadar and Karachi, with an overall aim to destabilise the country.

The interrogators further brought out that Jadhav also disclosed the presence of other Indian intelligence operatives in the southern metropolis of Karachi and based on his information, hundreds of undercover operative had been arrested.

India got to know regarding the arrest only when Jadhav's video confession was made public during the joint conference held by the army and the government.

### **Military Court of Pakistan**

The military court of Pakistan is being proclaimed as a sham or Kangaroo court by various international agencies, because of the following reasons:

- The 21<sup>st</sup> amendment of Constitution of Pakistan has given extra judicial powers to their military courts. It allows the military court to arrest and punish even a civilian who is or claims to belong to any terrorist group or organization that raises arms or wages a war against Pakistan.
- Pakistan army can detain any person suspected to have committed the above said offences for a period of three months without review or the possibility of a habeas petition.
- Pakistan army court martial does not allow the accused access to a civil lawyer. That is why consular access was denied to Cdr Jadav.
- Pakistan army court carries out trial in complete secrecy and no written judgment by the court is made available.
- The personnel convicted by a military court cannot appeal before a civilian court.
- An accused, whether military or civilian, has no remedy against the decision of a court martial, except before a “Court of Appeal” consisting of Chief of Army Staff or officers designated by him.
- The decision of the Court of Appeal is considered final and cannot be contested in any court or any other authority whatsoever.

It is because of the limitless powers vested with the military courts that a lot of human rights violations are taking place in Pakistan. A total of 160 personnel have already been sentenced to death by the military court. Pakistan media has reported that in 90% of the cases the accused confessed to the charges framed by the military court. The same by itself shows that such confessions and 'closed trials' conducted by military courts are a travesty of justice.

### **Royal Snub by ICJ to Pakistan**

India's decision to take Jadhav's case to International Court of Justice (ICJ) was a bold initiative. Wish we had done the same when the mutilated bodies of young Saurabh Kalia and his patrol party were handed over by Pakistan to India.

The ICJ bench observed that the 40 days period for clemency given by Pakistan, which ends in August suggests execution can happen immediately thereafter.

The court further said, "It considers that the mere fact that Mr Jadhav is under a death sentence and might therefore be executed is sufficient to demonstrate the existence of a risk of irreparable prejudice to the rights claimed by India."

In its pronouncement on 18 May 2017, the ICJ in The Hague in Holland stayed Jadhav's execution and asked Pakistan to take all "necessary measures at its disposal" to ensure that Jadhav was not executed pending a final decision by the ICJ.

### **Conclusion**

Pakistan is feeling a regional isolation. It's most prominent neighbours, i.e. Iran, Afghanistan and of course India, are all united to expose Pakistan and highlight before the world community that propagation of terror from Pakistan is the root cause of instability in the region.

In fact even the US President, Donald Trump cold shouldered PM Nawaz Sharif during his recent visit to Saudi Arabia. Trump did not even mention Pakistan when he addressed the devastating effects of terrorism on countries like India, Russia, Australia and the United States.

United States has even proposed to convert its Foreign Military Funding (FMF) programme to Pakistan, from aid to financial loan.

Hence, a rattled Pakistan wants to do some face saving and internationally highlight that India is also fomenting trouble for Pakistan in Baluchistan and Karachi.

Let's hope that in this mindless struggle to show India down, we do not lose the precious life of an innocent veteran.

## **15) Options for Israel-Palestine Conflict Resolution**

### **Introduction**

The US President Donald Trump wrapped up his two-day visit to Israel and the Occupied Territories on 22-23 May 2017. He met with the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas during his visit and offered his mediation to broker peace.

The Palestinians across the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip staged protests during his visit. They also called for solidarity with the thousands of Palestinian prisoners in Israel jails who were on their sixth week of a hunger strike.

The protestors also showed their anger against Trump's portrayal of the Palestinian faction Hamas, which governs the Gaza Strip, as a "terrorist" group.



He further added fuel to fire by saying that a coalition of partners would have to be formed to combat "extremism", mentioning by name Hamas, along with the Lebanese Shia group Hezbollah and Iran.

Trump also antagonized the Israelis by signing over \$350 billion (of which 109 billion is in arms sales alone) deals with Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia does not recognize the state of Israel and the two nations do not have diplomatic relations.

President Trump did not discuss any substantive peace plan during his much anticipated visit and hence, his trip to the Middle East can be termed as only high on symbolism and quite low on substance.

There have been numerous attempts in the past also by various world leaders and countries to usher in the ever eluding peace in the region.

In the succeeding paragraphs we will try and understand the dynamics of the Israel-Palestine issue.

### **Historical Perspective**

The ongoing conflict between the Jews and the Palestinians dates back to the mid of 20th century. Besides the broader issue of territorial dominance, the other areas of dispute have been mutual recognition as entities, border delineation, safety and security of people, water rights, control of Jerusalem, Israeli settlements in occupied territory, Palestinian freedom of movement and human rights issues.

Historically, the Syria-Palestina region, as the historians called it, is the area between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River was given the name of Palestine by the Romans in 2 century CE.

The Ottoman Empire ruled the complete greater Syrian region from 1517 to 1917.

World War I witnessed the defeat and dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, under which most Arab countries had lived for centuries and which had served as some kind of a protection against European rule.

Geographically, Syria consisted of a number of Ottoman Vilayets (administrative divisions), currently comprising Jordan, Israel/Palestine, Lebanon and Syria. After the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire, new national identities, citizenship and social class came to coexist.

The Allied Powers, who took control over the region after the World War, drew a boundary roughly halfway across Syria from east to west, dividing the Syrian rectangle into two parts.

The southern part, called Palestine, was assigned to Great Britain; the northern part, called Syria and Lebanon, was assigned to France.

Hence, the divisions were made without giving any relevance to ethnicity and religion. The same is actually at the root of the present day Middle East problem.

### **Events Leading up to the Creation of Israel**

As has been mentioned above, the British mandate over Palestine was established at the end of WW-I.

The region during this period had Jews, Christians and Arabs and irrespective of their ethnicity, they came to be known as Palestinians. At that stage Jewish ownership of Palestinian land was only 7.04%.

Large scale Jewish immigration from abroad, especially from European nations to this region took place during this period. The Jews thronged the region to escape the era of the Holocaust.

The Holocaust was the systematic, bureaucratic, state-sponsored persecution and murder of six million Jews by the Nazi regime and its collaborators between 1941 and 1944.

Between 1948 and 1951, almost 700,000 Jews immigrated to Israel, including 136,000 Jewish displaced persons from Europe.

In November 1947, United Nations General Assembly passed a Partition Plan for the division of Palestine into an Arab and a Jewish state, with Jerusalem and its surrounding areas as a common entity under a special international regime. In this partition plan Gaza strip and West Bank were a part of the Arab state.

While, the Jewish leaders accepted the plan, the Arab League rejected the plan of partition and threatened with military action.

On 14 May 1948, Israel declared its independence within the boundary delineated in the UN Partition Plan.

### **Armed Conflicts between Arabs and Israel**

#### **Arab-Israel War: 1948**

The combined Arab forces of Syria, Jordan and Egypt attacked the newly formed nation of Israel in 1948.

The outcome of the war was that certain areas originally designated for the Arabs like the Jordanian region of West Bank, and Jericho were captured by Israel.

Later, in 1950 Jordan captured West Bank back from Israel. After the 1948 war, the control of Gaza Strip went to Egypt.

Jerusalem is the most holy place for Jews, Muslims and Christians, as it is the birth place of all these three religions. Israel also attacked East Jerusalem in 1956 and captured it and hence, the whole of Jerusalem (East and West), came under Israel's governance for the first time in modern history.

Since, all the above mentioned territories were originally allotted to the Arabs under the UN Partition Plan; most countries call these as Israeli occupied territories.

### **Arab-Israel War: 1967 (also called the 'Six Day War')**

In the 'Six Day War' in 1967, Israel once again recaptured both West Bank and Gaza Strip from Jordan and Egypt respectively.

Immediately after the 1967 war, Israel proposed to return some territories captured during the war to buy peace, like the Golan Heights to Syria, the Sinai Peninsula to Egypt and most of the West Bank to Jordan. However, the Arab community rejected the proposal.

Later, in 1979, Egypt signed a Peace Treaty with Israel on the conditions of providing autonomy to the Palestinians and the return of Sinai Peninsula back to Egypt.

In this agreement Gaza Strip was not mentioned and it remained in the control of Israel.

As a part of the Peace Treaty, a 100 meters wide buffer zone between Egypt and Gaza (as it remained the south western part of Israel), called the Philadephi Corridor was to be left.

This corridor was barricaded by Israel after the 2000 Palestinian uprising. This is the famous barricade underneath which Hamas (Palestinian Militant wing) has built tunnels to smuggle in arms and ammunition for launching attacks on Israel.

### **Significance of Gaza Strip**

Gaza Strip is 25 miles by 7 miles rectangular strip of coastal land wedged between the Mediterranean Sea and Israel (shares a 51 km border). To its South West it shares an 11 km border with Egypt.

It saw a huge influx of refugee population from the Israeli mandated area after the 1948 Arab Israel war. The population on the Gaza Strip is 99% Sunni Muslims and the rest are Christians, Armenians and others.

It is the world's most densely populated area (1.5 million in 146 square miles).

The Gaza coastline on the Levant Basin sits atop of 1.3 trillion cubic feet of natural gas. Hence, the exploration of Gaza's natural resources by Israel makes its occupation significant to them. Palestinians working in these industrial zones are treated as slaves by big corporations exploring the natural resources.

Israel has restricted the use Mediterranean Sea up to only 2 nautical miles and has imposed blockade across the Egypt border to prevent military hardware from coming into Gaza. This also is a guise to isolate the Palestinian population and suppress their voices.

A concept called the 'Economic Hit man' is also a reason for the world community to be not so forceful in asking Israel to vacate the occupied territories. This concept enunciates that big international companies and corporations that are exploring the natural resources and building and often dismantling infrastructure in the occupied territories are stronger than the governments of their respective countries.

Lastly, Israel has no strategic depth against an attack launched by the combined Arab forces. West Bank and East Jerusalem extends right up to the water obstacle of Jordan River, giving Israel adequate strategic depth and protection to its East and Gaza Strip provide Israel a buffer towards Egypt, up to the strategic Sinai Peninsula.

### **Significance of Sinai Peninsula**

The significance of Sinai Peninsula is that whosoever occupies it holds the key to the Suez Canal that connects the Mediterranean Sea to the Red Sea and further, the India Ocean. Hence, Egypt took it back from Israel who had captured it during the 1967 Arab-Israel war, in exchange of signing a peace treaty with Israel.

Egypt forces during the war were unable to move up quickly and deploy across the Suez Canal as some of the bridges over it were destroyed by Israeli air force.



The strategic significance of Gaza Strip is that, if Israel loses the Gaza Strip, to Palestine, Egypt will get adequate time for buildup of its forces and also room for man oeuvre in collaboration with the Hamas to wage a war against Israel.

### **Emergence of Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)**

An organization by the name of Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) was formed at Cairo, Egypt to highlight the causes of Palestinian people in 1964.

Its popularity grew under the leadership of Yasser Arafat towards nationalistic orientation.

In 1974 the organization was recognized as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people by the Arab states and the same year it was granted the status of a national liberation movement by UN. This UN resolution was rejected by Israel.

The popular Palestinian uprisings against Israel's illegal occupation of Gaza Strip and West Bank, called the first and the second 'Intifadas' (1987 to 1993) and the proclamation of the State of Palestine by the PLO in 1988 lead to giving the movement greater legitimacy.

### **Creation of Palestinian National Authority (PNA)**

The first significant peace agreement between Palestine and Israel took place in Oslo, Norway in 1993, called the Oslo Accord.

As per the Oslo Accord, Israel agreed to pull out its forces from Gaza Strip and West Bank. The governance of these areas was to be progressively handed over to an interim organisation called the Palestinian National Authority (PNA).

This form of governance was allowed to function during an interim period of five years, pending a decision on the final status of the occupied territories.

However, the final status agreement on Palestine is still undecided in spite of pressure from various countries and UN to resolve the issue and repeated dialogues between PNA and Israel, like at Camp David in 2005.

Though as per the Oslo Accord, the Palestine National Authority (PNA) was given certain limited rights in the areas of Gaza and West Bank, like, practicing its culture/ education, ID cards issuance and distribution of land and water by Israel.

However, Israel continues to have military and civil movement control over the Palestinians in these areas and does not allow free exercise of political activities.

PNA local elections were held in 2005 (organized by its President Yasser Arafat before his death) and Mahmoud Abbas, of Fatah party won the elections and became the first President of PNA with 62% majority.

In 2012 Palestine was accorded non member observer status by the UN Assembly, thus, completely recognizing its right to self determination.

### **Islamic Militant Group of Palestine- 'Hamas'**

In 1987, as a part of the armed uprising against Israeli occupation of Gaza and West Bank, a militant group came into existence, called the Hamas.

Hamas rejects any peace negotiations with Israel and believe in creating a Palestinian state on the model of Iran (that also explains Iranian support to Hamas, though they have a Sunni orientation, while Iran has a Shia majority).

Iran is an Islamic republic and similarly, Hamas want Palestine to be an Islamic state as it existed before Second World War, i.e. without the presence of Israel.

Hamas also has a public face where it conducts humanitarian and welfare activities, including education. Its militant leaders operate from Lebanon, which had a huge influx of refugees during the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, after the occupation of West Bank by Israel.

Lebanon, also has its own militant faction called the Hezbollah, who are fighting a civil sectarian war against the Christian population of Lebanon and also supports the Palestinian right to self determination and its Hamas Group.

Besides the support of Lebanon and Syria, Hamas is also being supported by Iran and the Muslim Brotherhood party, which had also briefly come into power in Egypt.

### **Internal Politics of Palestine National Authority (PNA)**

The first Presidential elections of PNA were held in 2005. Mahoud Abbas of the Fatah Party won the elections. Presidential elections were required to be held again after the expiry of four year term in 2009, however, it kept getting postponed because of a conflict over power sharing between the Fatah and Hamas.

The ideological difference between the moderate Fatah, who want to abide by the Oslo Agreement to bring peace to the region, and the hardliner Hamas, who do not want to negotiate with Israel, is actually the root cause of dispute.

In 2006, Hamas won the Legislative Council elections, held in Gaza and they refused to take orders from the PNA, Fatah President, Mahoud Abbas.

During this period of uncertainty, in 2009, a Hamas leader Aziz al Divik was promoted from the chair of Speaker of Legislative Council of PNA to become the interim president of PNA, till elections were held in Gaza.

In 2010 local elections were held only for West Bank which the Palestinian leaders of Gaza do not accept. Hence, there are two power centers within the Israeli occupied Palestine, West Bank is Fatah ruled, while Gaza Strip is controlled by Hamas.

The division of governance between the parties had effectively resulted in the collapse of bipartisan governance of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA).

In 2014, elections were held in the Gaza Strip and a Palestinian "national consensus" Government, headed by Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah and composed of both Fatah and Hamas, was formed.

#### **Blockade of Gaza Strip and Unprecedented Offensive by Israel from 12 Jun to 26 Aug 2014**

The reason for the situation to get escalated was that three Israeli teenagers were kidnapped and later found murdered near Hebron.

In retaliation, anti-Palestinian riots erupted, in which a teenager was murdered for revenge and that is when the situation assumed disproportionate dimensions.

The total losses were estimated to be 2143 Palestinians; 66 Israeli soldiers and 05 civilians. A total of 17000 homes were completely destroyed and 30000 were partially destroyed in Gaza. The cost of reconstruction was estimated at \$ 7.8 billion, which is three times the GDP of Gaza.

A total of 32 tunnels were destroyed by Israel, which were being used for supply of military hardware and other humanitarian assistance from Egypt and other Arab supporters. It was estimated to be bringing in \$700 million into Gaza's economy through goods and services.

Finally, a ceasefire between Hamas and Israel was announced on 26 Aug 2014. However, there have been frequent incidents of ceasefire violations ever since.

#### **Peace Negotiations**

The official negotiations are mediated by an international contingent known as the Quartet on the Middle East (the Quartet) represented by a special envoy, which consists of the United States, Russia, the European Union, and the United Nations.

The Arab League is another important actor, which has proposed an alternative peace plan. Egypt, a founding member of the Arab League, has historically been a key participant.

After Hamas's electoral victory in 2006, the Quartet (United States, Russia, United Nations, and European Union) laid a condition for all future foreign assistance to the Palestinian Authority (PA) on the firm commitment of the government to non-violence, recognition of the State of Israel, and acceptance of previous agreements.

However, Hamas rejected these demands, which resulted in the Quartet's suspension of its foreign assistance program, and the imposition of economic sanctions by Israeli.

A year later, following Hamas's seizure of power in the Gaza Strip in June 2007, the territory officially recognized as the Palestinian National Authority was split between Fatah in the West Bank, and Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

However, in 2014, a Palestinian Unity Government, composed of both Fatah and Hamas, was formed.

#### **One-State and Two-State Solution to the Conflict**

These are the two broad ways being proposed as a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.



The "one-state solution" proposes to merge Israel, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip into a single democratic country. However, it may result in Arab Muslims outnumbering Jewish population and could end Israel as a Jewish state.

The "two-state solution" would basically create an independent Israel and Palestine, with a separate Jewish and Palestinian state.

The reason why this proposal is finding greater acceptance is that neither side can get what it wants in a joined state, the only possible solution that can satisfy everyone involves separating Palestinians and Israelis.

The two-state solution is one that fulfils the national aspirations of Israelis and Palestinians.

However, there are certain sticking points in the solution. The most significant issue being that, Israel claims the entire city of Jerusalem as its united capital, while Palestinians claim East Jerusalem as the capital of its future Palestinian state.

France spearheaded the two-state proposal and defined, along with its European partners in a number of conclusions of the Foreign Affairs Council of ministers of the European Union since 2009, the parameters that should govern the two-state proposal:

- These include, borders to be based on the 1967 lines with equivalent land swaps;
- Security arrangements preserving the sovereignty of the Palestinian State and ensuring the security of Israel;
- A just, fair and agreed solution to the refugee problem;
- An arrangement making Jerusalem the capital of the two states.

On 02 February 2016, France announced to convene an international conference to broker the peace talks between Israel and Palestine for a two-state solution.

### **Paris Middle East Peace Conference**

French led effort, called the Paris Middle East Conference, to kick-start discussions on a two-state solution between Palestinians and Israelis got under way in mid January 2017.

Representatives from 70 countries and 20 organizations attended the Conference. However, no representatives from either the Palestinian Authority or Israeli government were present at the "Conference for Peace in the Middle East".

The peace talks were rendered futile because of the hard-line stand adopted by both sides.

Palestinians fiercely object to the Israeli settlement activity in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem, a territory that it wants for a future state. The settlements, home to about 600,000 Israelis, are considered illegal under international law, though Israel disputes this.

Israel on the other hand pointed out that Palestinian incitement and violence, and a refusal to accept Israel as a Jewish state, are the key obstacles to peace.

### **How can President Trump Intervene to Bring Peace?**

President Trump inked arms sales and economic investment deals with Saudi monarchy and charted a new course for US anti-terrorism and foreign policy with a speech to leaders from 50 Muslim countries during his recent visit to Saudi Arabia.

He appears to have been able to strike the right cords with the Sunni Arab states, including Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan. Together with those countries, he could exert diplomatic pressure on the Palestinians into making concessions on certain issues.

United States also provides \$440 million per year in foreign aid to the Palestinians. By offering to increase that aid, possibly combined with an economic incentives package, could provide him with the leverage to ask Palestinians to be more accommodating.

Similarly, President Trump could also offer to increase US military aid to Israel from its standard level of nearly \$4 billion a year and compel Israel to make certain concessions towards accepting the peace proposal.

As a last option, Trump can also move the US embassy to Jerusalem (as promised by him during Presidential elections), but such a move would require large concessions to the Palestinians to avoid regional turmoil.

### **Conclusion**

The reasons for peace to elude the region are primarily, mutual distrust, significant disagreements over basic issues, reciprocal skepticism about the other side's commitment to upholding obligations in an eventual agreement.

However, a majority of Jews see the Palestinians' demand for an independent state as just, and feel that Israel can agree to the establishment of such a state.

Furthermore, majority of Palestinians and Israelis in the West Bank and Gaza Strip have expressed a preference for a two-state solution, which they feel can co-exist.

Therefore, creating a suitable environment to broker a peace deal at this juncture may well serve as a turning point in the history of the region.



## 16) Triple Talaq: Present Status

### Background

As a follow up blog on the controversial issue, regarding the validity of Triple Talaq, this article deals with the latest fallout in the matter which has been alive since last three months.

The origin of the sensitive court intervention dated back to 16 Oct 2015. The Supreme Court ruled that the Hindu Succession Act, 1956 which was amended in 2005, could not be held to apply retrospectively. In Part 11



of the Order, the two-judge bench referred to injustice towards Muslim women and laid the road for the registration of a PIL separately on the matter. The Court took note of "an important issue of gender discrimination" against Muslim women. "There is no safeguard against arbitrary divorce and second marriage by her husband during currency of the first marriage, resulting in denial of dignity and security to her", the Bench ordered. The SC on an earlier occasion observed that, "practice of polygamy is injurious to public morals and can be superseded by the State as just as practice of 'Sati'.

### **Key Questions before SC**

The major question is whether to review this matter in the light of the Constitution or within the framework of whether triple talaq constitutes an essential religious practice. Taking up the Constitution question will raise the broader question of all practices under several religious laws of marriage and inheritance, a lot of which may be seen as not being strictly in conformity with the Constitution. The SC is well aware that once a Bench decides that a practice seen inside personal law is violative of the Constitution, it opens a 'Pandora's box' for a range of unconventional and apparently other unconstitutional elements from other personal laws to go.

Hence the SC has asked the All India Muslim Personal Law Board on 17 May 2017, if it was possible to include in the 'Nikahnama'(Marriage Contract) a provision enabling Muslim women to say 'NO' to triple talaq. SC asked-" Is it possible to pass a resolution to all 'Qazis' to include this condition (giving right to women to say 'no' to triple talaq).

### **The stand of Centre**

The AG representing the Centre said, the issue was not about majority versus minority, but about men versus women. He argued-" this is an intra-minority tussle between men who have been dominant over ages, have been the breadwinners, and women who have been weak". He further contended that - "Court is the guardian of fundamental rights of our citizens. None of us are ecclesiastical, hence test is on Constitution. As far as the Hindu Laws are concerned practices like Sati, untouchability and Child marriage have been done away with. However the CJI pointed out that this was done by way of legislation and not through any judgment. The AG argued-" the Court cannot say there is no legislation, so we are powerless."

### **Religious Interpretations**

CJI quoted a religious book, in this context and remarked-" Anything "biddat" is sinful. You recite in every Friday prayer that "talaq-e-biddat is a great sin".

Biddat refers to anything which was not originally part of the Quran but was added by scholars who interpreted it. Mr Kapil Sibal, who represented the Muslim personal Law Board argued that only a ' minuscule portion ' of Muslims currently practice triple talaq but challenging its constitutional validity could even lead to a backlash in the community which may seek it as an infringement on its rights. Consequently they would end up supporting practices like polygamy and triple talaq. Meanwhile the influential Muslim organization, Jamiat Ulma-i-Hind has taken a stand at variance with that of All India Muslim Personal Law Board that triple talq is part of the Koran. According to them it is included in the Hadith and both Koran and Hadith are authentic sources of Islamic jurisprudence. It was argued at SC that Verse no- 230 of Chapter Baqra of the Holy Koran has been cited as a reference to triple talaq. Hadith essentially is a compilation of actions, habits etc., of Prophet Mohammed that is taken as a precedent in determining Muslim personal laws.

### **Stand taken by Muslim Community**

AIMPLB told SC on 18 May, 2017 that it would enable Muslim brides to include in the 'Nikahnama' a provision allowing them to say NO to triple Talaq. The Board further announced-" We will send an advisory to all 'Qazis' stating that they should avoid instant triple talaq. However, Senior Counsel Amit Singh Chada appearing for petitioner Shyara Bano told the Bench that " it will still not solve the problems of married Muslim women. They still have to go to court." The AIMPLB had earlier admitted that instant triple talaq is sinful, but come under the ambit of Koran.

However on 30 March 2017, Dar ul Uloom the leading Islamic Seminary , considered one of the most prestigious after Cairo based Al Azhar, issued a 'fatwa' that as part of the nikahnama, it would be 'durust'( proper) to incorporate the condition that the woman will never be given an oral and instantaneous triple talaq. "If it is uttered thrice at one sitting, it would be correct to treat it as one utterance'. or over enhanced Alimony

could be seen as a disincentive for breaking this clause, eg; of Rs 50,000/- may be deemed multiplied 10 times, upto Rs 5,00,000/- in case the condition is violated.

**Conclusion**

Justice Sohail Aijaz Siddique, former Chairman of the National Commission for Minority Educational Institutions, is of the view that-"It is important that the issue gets resolved without allowing for dragging all Muslim practices in the dock and trying to isolate them as violative of the Constitution and good sense".

I hope the volatile issue is amicably settled within the community itself, and the edifice of Indian culture-Religious harmony and tolerance towards all religions' is safe- guarded in letter and spirit.



17) **Implications of India and Pakistan Becoming Permanent Members of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)**

**Introduction**



The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), or the Shanghai Pact, emerged from the organization, 'Shanghai Five' (China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan), which was founded in 1996 after demarcation of China's borders with the four newly formed breakaway states of erstwhile USSR to peacefully resolve the boundary disputes.

This conglomeration was transformed into the today's **Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)** after the induction of Uzbekistan as a new member at the Shanghai Summit in 2001.

Initially, the role of SCO was predominantly to look at the security concerns of the member states, often describing the main threats it confronts as being terrorism, separatism and extremism.

Later the scope of SCO was enlarged to encompass political, cultural, economic, and military cooperation, intelligence sharing and counterterrorism. There have been a number of SCO joint military exercises.

A major joint military exercise called the Peace Mission 2010 was conducted from 09–25 September at Kazakhstan's Matybulak training area, where, over 5,000 personnel from China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan participated in joint planning and operational man oeuvres.

The official working languages of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization are Chinese and Russian.

PM Narendra Modi reached Astana in Kazakhstan to attend the 17th Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Summit on 08 June 2017.

The Summit is significant for India as the heads of all six member states, i.e. China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan will be endorsing full membership for both India and Pakistan during this Meet.

### **Reasons for the Organisation to Come into Being**

Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan are all landlocked states. After the collapse of Soviet Union, these states had to fend for themselves as independent entities.

The Central Asian region is richly endowed with natural resources and vital minerals. Since, the region became landlocked after independence, movement and accessing these resources became difficult.

Trade with these states became dependent on passage through adjoining countries and also on the political dispensation of the regimes in power in those countries.

Consequently, major powers, both regional and farther away, came to compete to secure and possibly control access to these resources. Besides this, many endeavours are also going on to identify and create credible transport routes that pass through friendly countries to improve accessibility.

Hence, in the present regional geo-political context of growing fundamentalism, protectionism and need for projection of joint military power, SCO has assumed a much greater political, economic and military significance.

### **First Ever Expansion of SCO**

India, Iran and Pakistan were admitted as observers at the 2005 Astana Summit. The Tashkent SCO Summit in June 2010 had lifted the moratorium on new membership, paving the way for the expansion of the grouping.

India has subtly indicated its interest in playing a more substantive role in the development of the SCO. It was during the Summit in Ufa, Russia, in July, 2015, that administrative hurdles were cleared to grant membership to India and Pakistan.

India and Pakistan signed the memorandum of obligations on 24 June 2016 at Tashkent, thereby starting the formal process of joining the SCO as full members.

The acceptance process is now complete and India, along with Pakistan will be inducted as permanent members to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) during the ongoing SCO Summit at Kazakhstan.

The inclusion of India and Pakistan into the SCO would mean the addition of another 1.45 billion people which would make the grouping cover around 40 per cent of the global population.

### **Implications for India**

Central Asia is truly an extended neighborhood for India. India's relations with countries in the region, however, have failed to realize the enormous potential for enhancing ties in areas such as security, policy, economy, trade, investment, energy, connectivity, and capacity development.

A major reason for India's inability to exploit this resource rich neighborhood is that India does not share common land-borders with the region. Moreover, Pakistan has flatly refused India land access to Central Asia through its territory.

In order to circumvent this challenge, India signed an agreement with Iran and Afghanistan last year to develop Chabahar Port facility and an associated rail-network at a cost of \$500 million. Besides, India has also prioritized the construction of the International North-South Transport Corridor to connect with Eurasia.

Hence, joining the SCO will give a welcome diplomatic boost to India's efforts to connect with Central Asia.

Another reason for lack of communication with Central Asia has been the infrequent visit of Indian dignitaries to these countries.

India's membership in the SCO will provide renewed opportunities for India's leadership, including prime ministers, to meet with their counterparts from Central Asia, Russia, China, Afghanistan, and others regularly and frequently. India's potential participation in the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) will be an added advantage to make this partnership more fruitful.

India being the third largest economy (\$8 trillion) in PPP terms and seventh largest (\$2.3 trillion) in nominal dollar terms, it's rapidly expanding energy needs will provide a stable and assured market for these countries.

In addition, stalled processes like the agreement on Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) pipeline, signed in December 2015 will get a cogent attention.

India's development experience, particularly in promoting agriculture, small and medium enterprises, pharmaceuticals, and information technology, can be of immense benefit to Central Asian countries.

In terms of tackling terrorism and issues relating to security, which is one of the greatest challenges of the present times, India will have a greater say and can build consensus for effective action in combating terrorism in the region.

Lastly, India's membership in the SCO will further add to the military muscle of the organization and is likely to give a boost to the 'Make in India' campaign, especially in the defense sector, as the breakaway provinces of USSR were a hub for manufacture of defense equipment and weaponry.

### **Implications for Pakistan**

The SCO's permanent membership for Pakistan will pave the way for it to establish close socio-economic ties and improve road connectivity with Central Asia, inviting the business community of both sides to invest in each other's agriculture, mining, pharmaceutical, and manufacturing sectors.

The close proximity of Kyrgyzstan to Pakistan will allow it to avail cheap power supply schemes from that country, which has a plethora of hydroelectric power resources.

Pakistan is already working with Afghanistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan on the CASA-1000 Project to transmit electricity from Central Asia to South Asia.

Conversely, the landlocked Central Asian countries could use the important ports of Karachi, in Sind and Gwadar in Baluchistan, Pakistan for movement of its goods.

The Gwadar port is located near key oil shipping lanes from the Persian Gulf, thus it will provide closest access to the sea to Central Asian Republics for oil and other imports.

The extensive network of roads and rail to carry goods from the Persian Gulf to China and Europe through the Silk Route under the 'One Belt One Road' project has an important segment, called the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), passing through Pakistan.

Pakistan, through a Quadrilateral Traffic in Transit Agreement (QTTA), is already in the process of finalising a deal between Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, China and Kazakhstan to facilitate the transportation of goods and flow of traffic from Central Asia to South Asia and China.

Therefore, in future there could be direct bilateral agreements between Pakistan and these Central Asian countries to expand the existing network of rail and road tracks in Central Asia for smooth transit of goods



across these countries and to provide the economic channel for the scientific-technical, educational and cultural exchanges.

### **Areas of Ambiguity**

India and Pakistan, after being inducted as permanent members, will be participating along with the other six countries, in joint exercises against terrorism under the Tashkent-based RATS (Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure) of SCO.

The same will also include sharing of data about terrorists and terror organizations. The terror outfits like the Jamat ud Dawah (JuD), which happens to be the political wing of the dreaded militant outfit, Lashkar-e-Taiba, is called a charitable organization by Pakistan.

Hence, the efficacy of counter-terrorism cooperation is likely to be colored by individual perceptions.

Further, after the Bombay attack mastermind and JuD's chief Hafiz Saeed was put under house arrest and a crackdown launched on the organization's activities within Pakistan, it emerged with a new name of 'Tehreek Azadi Jammu and Kashmir.'

Pakistan claims that the organization is supporting the aspirations of Kashmiri people, while India calls it interference in the internal affairs of the country. Pakistan is similarly accusing India for its covert role in Baloch militancy.

Another challenge that can be foreseen within SCO is the endorsement of China's OBOR, which India argues impinges upon its sovereignty in the form of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

This corridor is being further linked with Central Asia and will be used by all member states, except India. This tricky matter is being simply brushed under the carpet as of now by all the stake holders.

### **Conclusion**

India's association with the Shanghai Cooperation Organization will immensely help the country to enhance the much desired connectivity with Eurasia and provide a fillip to trade and commerce.

The ambit of SCO also very importantly covers counter-terrorism cooperation and will provide India with a regional platform to strongly air its views and expose Pakistan's dubious designs.

Lastly, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization is also being seen as a means by the Eurasian bloc to establish "balance of power" through the expansion of this regional organizations in a West-dominated world order.

## **18) Reasons for the Qatar Diplomatic Crisis and its Implications for India**

### **Introduction**

Qatar is a small constitutional monarchy in the Middle East, with Sunni ethnic orientation. It is led by the emir of Qatar, Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, whose family has ruled the country for almost two centuries.

Qatar holds the world's fourth-largest oil and natural gas reserves and enjoys the world's highest per-capita income. This enormous wealth is distributed amongst a very small population of 2.2 million people, most of whom are foreign expats.

Qatar is a fairly liberal and cosmopolitan country. Just to highlight this fact, it may be noted that the nation was chosen as the setting for the 2022 World Cup.

In a dramatic development on 05 June 2017, displaying a clear rupture in ties between the Arab countries, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Bahrain, Yemen, and the United Arab Emirates cut off all diplomatic ties, as well all travel and trade relations with Qatar.

The primary reason for this unprecedented action appears to be Qatar's individualistic foreign policy which is not in line with the other fellow Sunni countries of the region, especially the regional Sunni heavy-weight Saudi Arabia.

Though, Qatar has actively participated in the fight against the Shiite Houthi rebels in Yemen and for the ouster of Bashar al-Assad's regime in Syria. Yet, Qatar is also a friendly country with Shiite heavy-weight and arch rival of Saudi Arabia in the region, Iran.

It is known to have been supporting the hardcore militant organizations like the Hezbollah, Hamas and their political wing, the Muslim Brotherhood which is the reason being ascribed by Saudi Arabia and other nations for their action.

### **Events Leading up to the Present Diplomatic Crisis**

Qatar is a member of a regional intergovernmental political and economic union called the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) consisting of the Arab states of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

The Emir of Qatar as a declared foreign policy supported the rebel protesters, during the 'Arab Spring' of 2011, who stood up in arms against the autocratic rulers of various Arab nations, like, Egypt, Libya Tunisia, Syria, etc.

Qatar used its powerful propaganda organ, the state-owned TV network, 'Al-Jazeera' for this purpose.

After the Arab Spring faded and the rebels were replaced by the jihadist, Qatar continued with its divergent foreign policy of supporting these new movements with its media and funds. The fellow Sunni states loathed and feared their approach.

Adding fuel to fire, as the Sunni-Shiite wars intensified, Qatar moved closer to the leading Shiite government in Iran. In the eyes of his fellow Sunnis', the Emir of Qatar's strategy looked more and more like a ploy to bring down their regimes and to expand his own power.

Qatar has also allowed the Afghan Taliban to set up a political office inside the country.

In fact, even during the regime of the former Emir Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, Qatar sought to carve out a unique niche for itself with its policies, such as augmenting relations with Israel and rejecting the wider consensus on many occasions of the regional group of the monarchies, the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC).

In March 2014, a similar crisis had emerged, when the Gulf countries led by Saudi Arabia fell out with Qatar over its backing of the former Egyptian president, Mohamed Morsi, a Brotherhood member.

Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain had that time too recalled their ambassadors from Qatar over the rift.

However, the diplomatic relations resumed eight months later when Qatar forced some Brotherhood members to leave the country.



Saudi Arabia and other Gulf monarchies see the Muslim Brotherhood as a threat to the hereditary rule and accuse Qatar of betraying the "true Salafi path". Salafism is an ultra-conservative movement within Sunni Islam, which advocates a return to the traditions of the "devout ancestors".

Though, Qatar hosts the Middle East's largest US military base, including the headquarters of Central Command's air combat centre, called the Al-Udeid Airbase which is home to 10,000 American troops, the relationship between the two countries has never been very cordial.

United States has accused Qatar of allowing or even encouraging funding of Sunni extremists such as al-Qaida's branch in Syria, once known as the Nusra Front.

It may be noted that the present row comes only two weeks after the US President, Donald Trump's visit to the Middle East, where he sealed major defense contracts with Saudi Arabia worth \$110bn, proposed to set up an anti-extremist institute in Riyadh and urged the Gulf States to build-up an alliance against Iran.

Trump's visit appears to have served as a trigger and his speech seems to have emboldened the main Sunni powers not only to step up their confrontation with Iran and its "proxies" but also to cut off Qatar.

### **Consequences of the Crisis**

Qataris living and working in UAE, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia have been ordered to leave these countries within two weeks.

Qatar has been removed from the Saudi-led coalition fighting the Houthi rebels in Yemen over its alleged support to ISIS and al-Qaeda.

Maldives and the government based in eastern Libya (which rejects its UN-backed rival in Tripoli) also cut ties with Qatar.

Etihad, the Abu Dhabi-based carrier and Emirates the Dubai-based carrier, both suspended all flights to and from Doha starting 06<sup>th</sup> June, forenoon. Egypt announced that its airspace will be closed to all Qatari airplanes. Consequently, Qatar Airways, one of the region's major long-haul carriers, also suspended all its flights to Saudi Arabia.

Saudi Arabia and the remaining three Arab countries blocked Qatar media and closed down Qatar TV, Al-Jazeera's office in their countries.

Kuwait and Oman are the only two Gulf Cooperation Council members remaining with ties to Qatar.

### **Implications for Qatar**

The major source of revenue for Qatar is the export of oil and natural gas. Qatar is a member of the exporters' group, the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and the dispute could undermine the organization's efforts to raise prices by restricting production.

Qatar is the world's biggest supplier of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) and Egypt and UAE are the key recipients. Although Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Egypt and Bahrain have all closed transport links with Qatar, the state can still ship out both LNG and oil to other countries by sea.

The impact of the sanctions resulted in Qatari stock market to tumble and oil prices momentarily rose.

Qatar shares land border only with Saudi Arabia and relies on it for 40 percent of its food products. Hence, long queues were seen outside grocery stores in the capital city of Doha on the day of the crisis. Iran immediately responded by sending food shipments to Qatar.

The closure of border with Saudi Arabia will also block movement of construction materials required for the energy industry and for the preparations for the 2022 football world cup.

More than half of the country's workers come from other countries in the region and as part of the sanctions; they have now been called home, which will create a serious shortage of skilled and unskilled workers in Qatar.

The Qatar government reassured its citizens that it has already taken all necessary steps to ensure that normal life continues, including keeping sea ports open for trade and making sure that air space with countries not involved in the boycott remained open.

Further, the government took a decision that it would not expel the 300,000 Egyptians working in Qatar as a reprisal.

### **Implications for India**

India has robust defense and energy ties with Qatar. India happens to be the third largest export destination for Qatar (behind Japan and South Korea) and ranks at 10th position for Qatar's imports.

The population of Indians living and working in Qatar is estimated to be over 6.5 lakh, out of which three lakh are from Kerala alone. This Indian population in Qatar is almost twice the number of native Qataris in the country.

The de-facto imposition of a food blockade by Saudi Arabia may result in shortage of food supplies in the weeks to come. However, there seems to be no crisis situation emerging as the Qatar government has claimed that it is well prepared for such an eventuality.

The exodus of workers from six Arab countries is being seen as an opportunity for Indian workers, who could fill their places.

Though India does not import any oil from Qatar, it is majorly dependent on it for the supply of natural gas, as 90% of its LNG requirements are being imported from Qatar.

Qatar allayed all fears of disruption of supplies by informing the Indian government that the 8.5 million tonne supply deal with Petro net LNG will continue uninterrupted.

The crisis did affect about six LNG vessels linked to Qatar, which were anchored in the Fujairah zone of UAE, which has barred all vessels coming to or from Qatar using its popular anchorage point off Fujairah.

As a result of air space restrictions imposed on Doha by the above said countries, Indians travelling to and from Qatar may have to re-route their travel to these countries with multiple stops.

Lastly, the diplomatic crisis may affect Indian investments temporarily, e.g. Larsen & Turbo (L&T) in March 2014 had won a QR 2.1 billion road project in Qatar and also it has secured a \$740 million order from Qatar Railways for the design and construction of rail line for Doha Metro project.

On the whole, there will be no major ripple effect of the ongoing diplomatic crisis for India.

### **Conclusion**

In case Qatar gets pressurized by Saudi Arabia and the other Sunni countries to completely come into the Sunni camp, the Shia-Sunni sectarian divide may become even more pronounced.

The positive impact of the same will be that the Islamist fighters from ISIS and other extremists' outfits in the region will be denied overt support from Qatar.



## 19) Important Aspects Related to Presidential Elections in India

### Introduction

The notification for the Presidential elections-2017 was issued by the Election Commission (EC) on 14 June 2017. The term of present incumbent Pranab Mukherjee would come to an end on 24<sup>th</sup> July.

A total of six persons filed their nominations for the presidential poll on the first day and the nomination process would continue till 28<sup>th</sup> of June for the July 17 Presidential election.

The ruling NDA and a few opposition parties aligned with them have intensified efforts to zero in on a “mutually acceptable” presidential candidate. Meanwhile, the leaders of the opposition parties also held their own meeting on 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> June to chalk out their joint strategy and come up with a consensus candidate.

In case both, the NDA and the opposition are unable to arrive at a consensus on a “mutually acceptable” candidate and they field their own separate candidates, then the results of the Presidential elections will be announced on 20 July 2017.

In the succeeding paragraphs, we shall discuss the processes involved in the election of the President of India.

### Basic Information

President of India is the head of the Union Executive and the first citizen of India. Various aspects pertaining to the Union Executive have been dealt with in Articles 52 to 78 in Part V of the Constitution of India.

A Council of Ministers headed by the Prime Minister assists and advises the President in the exercise of his/her functions.

In the election of the President the weight age system is used to bring about parity between the votes of the members of Parliament and the members of the Assemblies (explained ahead).

Article 71 of the Constitution provides that disputes arising out of the election of the President or Vice-President shall be decided by the Supreme Court.

### Eligibility Conditions

#### Conditions as per Article 58

- The candidate should be an Indian citizen.
- Should have completed the age of 35 years.
- Should be qualified for election as a member of the Lok Sabha.
- Should not hold any office of profit under the Union Government or any state government or any local or other authority

#### Condition as per Article 59

The President should not be a member of any house of Union or State legislature.

#### Election Process (Guidelines given in Article 55)

The President of India is elected by an electoral college consisting of:

- Elected members of the two Houses of Parliament and Legislative Assemblies of the States - Article 54
- It includes the national capital territory of Delhi and the Union territory of Pondicherry

It is mandatory that the nomination of a candidate for election to the office of the President is supported by at least 100 electors, i.e. 50 electors as proposers and 50 electors as seconders to the proposers.

Each candidate has to submit a security deposit of Rs 15, 000 in the Reserve Bank of India. The security deposit is liable to be forfeited in case the candidate fails to secure one-sixth of the votes polled.

The President’s election is held in accordance with a system of “**proportional representation by means of a single transferable vote and the voting is held by a secret ballot**”.

The above statement means that, the value of the vote of each MP or MLA will be proportional to the population of the state from where he/she has been elected and secondly, the political parties cannot whip their members to vote for a particular candidate as it is through a secret ballot.

### **System of Calculation for Vote Value**

Vote of each MP and MLA carries a certain value.

#### **Value of Vote for Members of Legislative Assembly (MLAs)**

The value is calculated by dividing the total population of the state by the number of elected members of legislative assembly of that state, which is further divided by 1000.

As of now, the value of each MLA's vote is fixed. The population data of 1971 Census is taken into consideration while calculating the vote value.

#### **Population of the State**

#### **Number of MLAs in the State x 1000**

Working on the above premise the maximum vote value for an MLA is for the state of Uttar Pradesh, i.e. 208, because of its highest population and minimum value of the MLA vote is in Goa, which is 08.

#### **Value of Vote for Members of Parliament (MPs)**

The vote value for the MPs is calculated by dividing the total value of votes of all MLAs of the complete country, divided by the total number of elected MPs in the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha.

#### **Total Value of Votes of all the MLAs of the Country** **Total Number of MPs in Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha**

Working on the above premise, the vote value for each MP is fixed at 708.

### **System of Voting**

The difference between the system of voting for the Presidential elections and the conventional ballot voting is that, rather than giving their vote to a single person, the voters are supposed to mark the candidates in the order of their preference from the list of candidates who are in the race for becoming a President.

In other words, if three candidates, 'A', 'B' and 'C' are in the fray, then the MLA/MP voting for them will mark his/her preference while voting, i.e. the most preferred candidate on top and the least preferred candidate to be marked at the bottom of his/her list, e.g. could mark the name of candidate 'B' as first choice, followed by 'A' and then 'C'.

It is mandatory that the first preference is always marked, otherwise the vote is deemed invalid. However, he/she has the choice to leave the other preferences blank.

### **System of Counting of Votes**

In conventional elections, the MP and/or MLA who gets the maximum votes are elected (called the first past the post). However, in Presidential elections the winner is decided on the basis of a quota criterion, which is obtained by dividing the total number of valid votes by two and adding one to the quotient, i.e.

$$\frac{\text{Total Number of Valid Votes} + 01}{02}$$

Let us understand this with the help of an example:

In case 10 valid votes were cast for the three candidates 'A', 'B' and 'C', the winner will require 06 votes to meet the quota criteria, i.e.

$$\frac{10 + 01}{02}$$

It may be noted that when it comes to counting, only one of the preferences is active at any one given time and it starts with the candidate who is the voter's number one choice.

Hence, the following contingencies may appear:

#### **Contingency-I:**

Candidate 'A' gets 06 votes as 1<sup>st</sup> preference, 'B' gets 02 votes as 1<sup>st</sup> preference and 'C' gets 02 votes as 1<sup>st</sup> preference.

Candidate 'A' will be declared as a clear winner as he/she straightaway meets the quota criteria.

#### **Contingency-II:**



Candidate 'A' gets 05 votes as 1<sup>st</sup> preference, 'B' gets 03 votes as 1<sup>st</sup> preference and 'C' gets 02 votes as 1<sup>st</sup> preference.

In this scenario, candidate 'C' will get eliminated from the race. Those who had opted for candidate 'C', their second preference will now be seen, which will get added to the total first preference votes of the remaining two candidates, depending upon who was their second preference.

In case after carrying out this exercise, candidate 'A' completes its mandatory quota, he/she will become the President, if not, then the process of eliminating the candidates with the lowest number of 1<sup>st</sup> preference votes and adding his/her second preference votes to the other candidates will be repeated, till such time a clear winner emerges, who meets the quota criteria.

### **Terms and Conditions for Presidents' Office**

The oath of office to the President is administered by the Chief Justice of India and in his absence, by the senior most judge of the Supreme Court available.

An election should be held to fill the vacancy of Presidential post before the expiration of President's term - Article 62(1).

The President holds office for a five year term from the date on which he/she enters the office.

President can resign at any time by addressing the resignation letter to the Vice-President of India.

When a vacancy occurs in the President's office due to his/her death, resignation or removal or otherwise, the Vice-president acts as the President until a new President is elected. In case the office of Vice- President is also vacant, the Chief Justice of India or if his office is also vacant, the senior most Judge of the Supreme Court, acts as the President.

An election to fill such vacancy should be held within six months from the date of occurrence of such vacancy.

A person is eligible for re-election to Presidential office.

### **Procedure for Impeachment of President**

President may be impeached from his office for violation of the Constitution - Article 61

The impeachment charges may be initiated by either Lok Sabha or Rajya Sabha and it should be signed by at least 1/4<sup>th</sup> members.

Regarding the charges, a 14 days' notice needs to be given to the President.

The resolution of the charges for impeachment of the President should be passed by a majority of 2/3rd of the total membership of the house.

Subsequently, the charges are investigated in the other House of the Parliament.

If the resolution is passed in this House also with a 2/3<sup>rd</sup> majority, then the President stands removed from his office from the date on which the bill is so passed.

Impeachment is a quasi-judicial procedure in the Parliament in which:

(a) The nominated members of either House of Parliament can participate in the impeachment of the President (though they do not participate in his election);

(b) The elected members of the legislative assemblies of states and the Union Territories of Delhi and Puducherry do not participate in the impeachment of the President (though they participate in his election).

No President has so far been impeached.

### **Conclusion**

A few names that are doing the rounds in the discussions amongst the Opposition leaders for Presidential candidature are, Lok Sabha speaker Meira Kumar, JD(U) MP Sharad Yadav, NCP supremo Sharad Pawar and Gopalkrishna Gandhi, ex-Governor and grandson of Mahatma Gandhi. Among these probable candidates, Gandhi is the frontrunner.

The ruling BJP seems to be averse to accepting Gopalkrishna Gandhi as a choice. So, it appears that they will field their own candidate. BJP is considering the names of Lok Sabha Speaker Sumitra Mahajan, Jharkhand Governor Draupadi Murmu and External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj.

The name of External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj has emerged as the lead contender to become NDA's candidate to succeed Pranab Mukherjee as the next President of India.

Like always, this seems to be a master stroke by BJP, as a seven-time MP and three-time MLA, Swaraj has been in public life for decades and building up a consensus over her suitability for the post may not be difficult.

## 20) FOXY NEIGHBOUR OF INDIA

### Introduction

Sher Bahadur Deuba inherits a politically and demographically divided Nepal as the Prime Minister of the 11 year old Himalayan Republic. Deep rifts exist between the "dark-skinned" Madhesis and the "fair-skinned" upper caste Bahun- Chettris" of Kathmandu Valley, with whom New Delhi has been doing business, since it bailed out King Tribhuvan in 1950. India had supported the Jan 2006 Andolan against the monarchy- which forced the King Gyanendra to hand over power to the people's government. Madhesis are 19.3 % of Nepal's 28.5 million population and out of these, half of Madhesis live in the Terai region. India had supported the 135 days blockade they mounted from October 2015 to February 2016, to demand their democratic rights of fair representation in Parliament and other state organs, on the basis of population or the one- man -one - vote principle. Forty Five people died in the agitation and all of Nepal, especially the Terai region, suffered terrible hardships as essential supplies grew scarce.

### Chinese Alliance to checkmate India

Kathmandu reacted in an unpredictable manner surprising India. The elite led by, then UML Prime Minister KP Oli approached China during the blockade and allowed the Chinese dragon to expand its strong wings to engulf the whole of Nepal, which is strategically situated as a buffer state between India and China.

KP Oli openly wooed China to discourage India from supporting the Madhesis in their struggle for parity with other Nepalese. He back -tracked from the promise given by the previous PM, GP Koirala that the Nepal's Constitution would guarantee the Madhesis, Tharus, Janjatis and others, the same rights as the people of the "hills" who have traditionally exercised power. The declaration of the Constitution in September 2015 triggered the Madhesis agitation.

The then Finance Minister Kamal Thapa promised the Chinese in March 2016 that Nepal would allow them to open another Consulate in the picturesque hill town of Pokhara. Beijing had already tempted Prime Minister Oli by offering him Nepali consulates in Lhasa and Guangzhou. Oli also agreed to open two more branches of the 'People's Bank of China' in Nepal's Terai region, over and above its Lumbini Branch. In this region, China is already helping Nepal to revamp the birth place of Lord Buddha and turn it into a grand tourist spot. As part of the package offered to Nepal the '*Chinese Northwest Civil Aviation Airport Construction Group*' is building the 'Gautham Buddha International Airport' in Bhairahawa. China's intention was to win over the Nepalese people permanently and freeze the goodwill traditionally enjoyed by India. Nepal was the only Hindu Nation in the world till the Maoists declared a rebellion to de-throne the king and establish a people's government.

Oli's honeymoon with China received a set- back, when Pushpa Kamal Dahal or 'Prachanda' took over as PM. Though he was a hardcore Maoist, he put the Chinese bank projects on hold. Perhaps, it was because Prachanda was covertly helped by India in 2005 in his bad times, when the Communist leader was hunted by King Gyanendra. He was staying underground in the neighbourhoods of Delhi and Noida. However in the game of politics there are no permanent bed partners. Prachanda was seen leaning on to China again. Prachanda's deputy Prime Minister Krishna Bahadur Mahara flew to Beijing to sign on the Belt and Road initiative. For the first



time, Nepal agreed to have allied military exercises with Chinese Red Army. Chinese were pouring money into Nepal, announcing projects everywhere, including in our sensitive border region of Terai.

### **Conclusion**

Deuba's ascension to the PM's chair last week, for the fourth time in his political career, again has been a game changer for India. 'The political musical chair' game orchestrated by India, made sure that a pro-Indian Prime Minister had taken over the reins of the Himalayan nation. The strong rumour in Kathmandu that India pulled strings in the back stage for this political upheaval seems to have some truth. Delhi hopes that Deuba, an able Nepali Congress leader will amend the constitution on the provisional boundary question as the Madhesis have long demanded, and keep the advance of red dragon at bay in Nepal.

## **21) Reasons for the Recent Intensification of Demand for Gorkhaland**

### **Introduction**

The demand for **Gorkhaland** stems from the linguistic and cultural differences between the Bengalis' and the people of Indian Gorkha ethnic origin inhabiting the Northern part of West Bengal.

The people of the Darjeeling Hills demand that taking into consideration the ethno-linguistic-cultural sentiments of the locals, who speak Nepali or Gorkhali language and desire to be identified as Indian Gorkhas, a separate state, to be called the Gorkhaland, be carved out of West Bengal.

There have been two mass movements for the demand of Gorkhaland, first one started in 1986 and continued till 1988 under the Gorkha National Liberation Front and the second movement, which is presently going on started in 2007 under the banner of Gorkha Janmukti Morcha.

### **Historical Perspective**

The present day area of the Darjeeling Hills formed a part of the kingdom of the Chogyal (ruler) of Sikkim. The Gorkhas of Nepal were perpetually at war with the Chogyal of Sikkim. In 1780 the Gorkhas invaded Sikkim and captured most part of it, which included Darjeeling and Siliguri.

By the beginning of the 19th century, they had overrun Sikkim as far eastward as the Teesta River and had conquered and annexed the Terai region.

Meanwhile, the British East India Company arrived at the scene and in the Anglo-Gorkha war of 1814, it defeated the Gorkhas.

Consequently, the Treaty of Sugauli was signed in 1815, according to which, Nepal had to cede all those territories that the Gorkhas had annexed from the Chogyal of Sikkim to the British East India Company (i.e. the area between Mechi River and Teesta River).

The British East India Company, in the year 1817, reinstated the Chogyal of Sikkim, restored all the tracts of land between the Mechi River and the Teesta River to the Chogyal and guaranteed his sovereignty through the Treaty of Titalia.

However, in 1835 the hill of Darjeeling, including an enclave of 138 square miles (360 km<sup>2</sup>), was given away to the British East India Company by Sikkim.

Later, in 1964 the area of Bengal Dooars, which was originally under the Cooch Behar state and had been annexed by Bhutan in the second half of the eighteenth century, along with the passes leading into the hills of Bhutan and Kalimpong were also ceded to the British by Bhutan.

Hence, the Darjeeling District assumed its present shape and size in 1866.

### **Pre-independence Era**

The demand for a separate administrative unit in Darjeeling has existed since 1907, when the Hill-men's Association of Darjeeling submitted a memorandum to the British Minto-Morley Reforms demanding a separate administrative setup.

Similar demand was raised by the Hill-men's Association before the Simon Commission in 1929 and subsequently the demand was made for the same on various other occasions before the other appropriate authorities.

### **Post-independence Era**

The demand for a separate identity for the Indian Gorkha ethnic group and economic freedom for the community was forcefully voiced for the first time in Independent India by the political party of N.B. Gurung, the President of Akhil Bharatiya Gorkha League (ABGL) in 1952.

He met the then Prime Minister of India, Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, in Kalimpong and submitted a memorandum demanding the separation from Bengal.

Once again in 1980, Indra Bahadur Rai, the President of the Pranta Parishad of Darjeeling wrote to the then Prime Minister of India Indira Gandhi, expressing the need to form a new state in Darjeeling.

### **Violent Movement by Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF)**

In 1986 a movement led by Subhash Ghisingh, the founder of Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF) for a separate state of Gorkhaland commenced. Subhash Ghisingh was an ex-army soldier and a poet. Also, he was the one, who coined the term **Gorkhaland** for the new state.

The violent agitations that began under the banner of Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF) engulfed the complete area of Darjeeling, Siliguri Terai and Dooars. As per the official records more than 1200 people lost their lives.

Finally, in 1988 the West Bengal government headed by the then chief minister Jyoti Basu relented and agreed to set up the Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council (DGHC), an autonomous body under the concept of a 'state within a state'.

The establishment of DGHC quelled the anger amongst the Gorkha people and the Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council was able to effectively administer the Darjeeling Hills for 23 years with a fair degree of autonomy.

### **Resentment over Sixth Schedule Tribal Council**

Trouble once again brewed, when the West Bengal government decided not to hold the fourth DGHC elections, which were due in 2004, and instead made Subhash Ghisingh the sole caretaker of the DGHC till a new Sixth Schedule Tribal Council was established.

The Memorandum of Settlement (MoS) of the Sixth Schedule Tribal Council in Darjeeling Hills was signed on 06 December 2005 by Subhash Ghisingh with the state and the central government.

The MoS was considered as a deadly weapon against the Gorkhaland state movement and also for any other future demand of the Gorkhas in Darjeeling, as it explicitly says: "This in principal Memorandum of Settlement is the full and final settlement of the Darjeeling Hill Areas issue and no further demands in this regard would be entertained."

It was a smart move by the government, which saw an opportunity to implement its "divide-and-rule" policy through the Council. The Sixth Schedule Tribal Council declared just 20% of the total population that lives in the Darjeeling Hills as tribal, i.e. Limboos and the Tamangs, who were notified as tribal, while the Rais and the Gurungs (two other potential tribal status obtainers) were left out of this status.

Resultantly, the former councillors of DGHC felt disenchanted and cheated by the government. Amongst them, Bimal Gurung, who was once the trusted aide of Ghisingh, decided to break away from the GNLF.

He was able to quickly capitalize on the growing resentment that charged the public sentiments to overthrow Ghisingh from the seat of power. He founded the Gorkha Janmukti Morcha (GJM) in 2007 and once again revived the demand for a separate state of Gorkhaland.

### **Gorkhaland- a Prominent Election Card of Political Parties**

The support for Gorkhaland has been one of the major election promises by political parties, especially the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

It had announced ahead of the 2009 general elections that if it wins the elections, it would create two smaller states, i.e. Telangana and Gorkhaland.

In an effort to strengthen its position before the May 2014 general elections, the Congress Working Committee unanimously passed a resolution to recommend the formation of a separate Telangana state from Andhra



Pradesh on 30 July 2013. Instantly, it stroked the demands for statehood for Gorkhaland in West Bengal and Bodoland in Assam.

Similarly, during the West Bengal assembly election (2011) campaign, Mamata Banerjee had promised that the issue of Gorkhaland would be resolved and would take concrete steps that would bring closure to the Gorkhaland movement.

### **Establishment of Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA)**

The Trinamool Congress (TMC), led by the Chief Minister of West Bengal, Mamata Banerjee signed the Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) for the formation of a Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA), a semi-autonomous administrative body for the Darjeeling Hills on 18 July 2011.

The West Bengal Legislative Assembly passed a bill for the creation of GTA on 02 September 2011. A gazette notification was issued by the state government for the GTA Act on 14 March 2012.

Present autonomous GTA covers three hill subdivisions of Darjeeling, Kurseong and Mirik, and some areas of Siliguri subdivision and the whole of Kalimpong district.

The elections of the GTA were held on 29 July 2012 and the GJM candidates won from 17 constituencies and the rest 28 seats unopposed.

### **Revival of Gorkhaland Movement**

It may be noted that the Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA) has no legislative powers, which means that the people of the region have no control over laws being framed for their governance.

Turning a new leaf to this endless saga, Bimal Gurung resigned from the Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA) on 30 July 2013.

The reason that he cited for his resignation was that there was undue interference from the West Bengal government in the discharge of his functions as the chief of GTA and he once again renewed the agitation for Gorkhaland.

Another major reason for the GJM to intensifying its agitation for Gorkhaland is that during the May 2017 municipality elections, the TMC won and opened accounts in the civic bodies in Mirik Notified Area Authority, Darjeeling, Kurseong and Kalimpong.

The above said development is a first of its kind for any political party from the plains in many years. Hence, GJM feels threatened of the rising popularity of TMC in the Hills.

### **Explicit Reasons for the Recent Agitation**

Nepali was recognised as one of the official languages of India in 1992 and has been recognised as an official language in the hills of Bengal, since 1961.

On 16 May 2017, the Education Minister of West Bengal, Partha Chatterjee, announced that Bengali should be a compulsory subject from Class 1 to 10 in the state.

In fact, what added fuel to fire was that during her visit to Darjeeling Hills in the first week of June, West Bengal Chief Minister, Mamata Banerjee had announced in a public meeting at Mirik, that a special audit of the Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA) would be held to unearth financial irregularities that Gorkha Janmukti Morcha (GJM) leaders had allegedly indulged in when they were in power.

The GJM President Bimal Gurung led protest rallies in the Hills from 05 June to 08 June 2017, to highlight their opposition to the state's decision and demanded that there should be a cabinet resolution stating that Bengali will not be compulsory in Darjeeling.

During these protests two agitators died in police firing and the GJM leaders called for an indefinite bandh. Essential commodities ran in short supply and a lot of tourists got stuck for want of transportation to exit Darjeeling.

Later, when the situation went completely out of hand, a cabinet meeting was called for at Raj Bhavan in Darjeeling on 08<sup>th</sup> June, where the chief minister clarified that Bengali will be an optional subject in the Hills.

However, Gurung and other GJM leaders refused to relent and scaled up the agitation to the old demand for a separate Gorkhaland state. Army was called after the agitation went beyond the control of the state administration.

Consequently, Bengal government withdrew security cover of GJM chief Bimal Gurung. GJM office at Darjeeling was raided on 15<sup>th</sup> June and police seized weapons, cash and radio sets from there. Also, the house of Binay Tamang, assistant general secretary of GJM was raided and Vikram Rai, son of Amar Rai who is a GJM MLA from Darjeeling was arrested.

Gorkha Janmukti Morcha (GJM) supporters retaliated with violent force and in the clashes that broke out, one civilian was killed and 36 security personnel, including an Indian Reserve Battalion (IRB) officer, were injured on 16 June 2017. GJM leaders claimed that three of their members had also died in the clashes.

### **My Take on the Issue**

I would say that the recent upsurge of violent clashes has a lot to do with 'vote bank politics'. At the macro level, it is the buffering period for the Panchayat elections which will be held next year, followed by general election in 2019. While at the micro level, it is the spade work being done by the stake holders for the elections for Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA), which are due in July.

It may be highlighted here, that around 30% of West Bengal's electorate are Muslims, which earlier backed the Left parties. A reversal was seen during the 2016 assembly elections of West Bengal, when they had voted for the Trinamool Congress.

Another important factor is that BJP is fast making inroads into WB and is looking to emerge as the principal opposition party in West Bengal, ousting the Communist Party of India (Marxist) and the Congress.

Also, the GJM is being supported by the ruling NDA government, which is alarmed at the growing popularity of the Trinamool Congress of Mamata Banerjee in the Hills and unrest at this juncture is likely to eclipse this popularity.

BJP is looking to consolidate Hindu votes in the state, while Mamta Banerjee's Trinamool Congress party is continuing to maintain its complete hold on Muslim voters and hence can afford to act tough on the Gorkhaland issue.

The Trinamool Congress, Congress Party and the Communist Party are opposed to the creation of a separate state of Gorkhaland. BJP finds itself in a 'Catch-22' situation, as it has been an ally of the GJM since 2007 and does not want to be seen opposing it, and at the same time it does not want to invite the ire of people in the plains.

Tea and tourism are a major source of revenue for the West Bengal government from the Darjeeling Hills and hence, it does not want to part with it.

The Indian Gorkha population is estimated at one crore and twenty lakhs, out of which only about 20 lakhs are in Darjeeling-Dooars region (Gorkhaland). The limited population inhabiting the region plays an insignificant role in the overall scenario of West Bengal elections and that is the reason why neither the centre nor the state political parties are forthcoming to address the issue seriously.

Let's hope that the centre intervenes effectively to mediate and find a mutually acceptable solution through meaningful dialogue and more young lives are not lost in this mindless turf war.



## 22) **PM Modi's US Visit – an Exercise to Reset Ties with Trump Administration**

### **Introduction**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi proceeded on a three-nation tour to Portugal, USA and the Netherlands on 24 June 2017.

The major aim of his visit was to reset and strengthen strategic partnership with the new US administration. President Donald Trump also views India as a critical partner in promoting stability and security in the Asia Pacific region.

Hence, he rolled out the red carpet and invited PM Modi to attend the first dinner for any foreign dignitary hosted at the White House under this administration.

PM Modi after his official visit to Portugal on 24-25<sup>th</sup> June flew to the US to have his first one-on-one interaction with President Donald Trump.

Finally, on his return journey he visited the Netherlands on 27<sup>th</sup> June for talks with Prime Minister Mark Rutte at The Hague, besides calling on King Willem Alexander.

### **Visit to Portugal: 24-25 June 2017**

He visited Portugal in the first leg of his official visit, where he held talks with the Prime Minister of Portugal, Mr Antonio Costa in Lisbon on 25<sup>th</sup> June.

He also interacted with the 65000 strong Indian communities that lives in Portugal. Incidentally, PM Antonio Costa also happens to be of Indian origin.

India and Portugal announced a joint fund worth four million Euros to bolster research in science and technology. It is highlighted that bilateral trade between the two countries has grown by 17% in the last one year.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Portuguese counterpart Antonio Costa, further cemented bilateral ties by signing eleven agreements including, cooperation in outer space exploration, double taxation avoidance, nanotechnology and sports, among others were signed between.

### **Visit to United States: 25-27 June 2017**

PM Modi addressed the Indian Diaspora and held a meeting with 20 top US CEOs on 25<sup>th</sup> June to hard sell India's status as a prime investment destination. A range of issues from visas, investment and job creation were discussed.

The CEOs round table was attended by Apple chief Tim Cook, Walmart head Doug McMillon, Caterpillar's Jim Umpleby, Google head Sundar Pichai and Microsoft's Satya Nadella.

His meeting with President Donald Trump on 26<sup>th</sup> June lasted for about 20 minutes, after which there was an hour-long meeting of the delegates of the two countries, which was held in the cabinet office of the White House.

The US side was represented by US Vice President Mike Pence, defence secretary James Mattis, secretary of state Rex Tillerson and National Security Adviser Lt Gen. H.R. McMaster. India's NSA Ajit Doval, foreign secretary S. Jaishankar and the Indian ambassador to the US, Navtej Sarna attended the meet.

US President Donald Trump and Prime Minister Narendra Modi delivered a joint statement at the White House at the end of their one-on-one meeting and the delegation-level talks between the two sides.

It may be seen, that there are three major areas of convergence between India and US that both the countries desire to capitalise upon:

- Forging stronger economic ties.
- Congruence in tackling the menace of terrorism.
- India – a strategic partner and a counterweight to contain China's growing military and economic influence in the Asia Pacific region.

### **Forging Stronger Economic Ties**

Presently, the two-way trade in goods and services between the two nations is over \$114 billion.

### **Defense Cooperation**

India, during the past one decade has signed over \$15 billion in defense contracts with the US. In 2014 alone, India imported \$5.9 billion worth of defense equipment from USA, and became the world's single largest importers of defense equipment and weapons from USA.

India concluded contracts worth Rs 28,895 crore (\$4.35 billion) with the US during 2013-14, 2014-15 and 2015-16. USA has become the world's largest supplier of defense equipment to India followed by Russia (Rs 8,374 crore), Israel (Rs 7,605 crore) and France (Rs 1,836 crore).

Major equipment which is in the process of procurement by India from the United States includes, 'M-777' ultra-light howitzers, 'Javelin' anti tank guided missiles, UAVs, C-130-J transport planes, Apache attack & Chinook heavy- lift helicopters, etc.

The US has cleared the sale of 22 unmanned Guardian drones to India at an estimated cost of \$2-3 billion. The deal is being termed as a "game changer".

PM Modi and President Trump announced their intention to 'build on the implementation of the "White Shipping" data sharing arrangement. The agreement allows countries to share data on maritime traffic and domain awareness.

The two leaders also discussed maritime cooperation and the conduct of MALABAR naval exercise. It may be noted that the 2017 trilateral naval exercise in which US-India-Japan will participate would be the "largest maritime exercise ever conducted in the Indian Ocean.

### **Joint**

Seven joint working groups (JWGs), including on jet engines & aircraft carrier technologies, for collaborative projects are underway.

Also, mobile electric hybrid generators & NBC warfare protection gear has been finalized for \$2 million.

US has offered futuristic helicopters and infantry combat vehicles production line to be jointly established in India.

Lockheed-Tata has proposed to manufacture F-16 fighter and Boeing too is looking to set up a manufacturing unit in India under our new aerospace and defense policy.

### **Energy Partnership**

Energy partnership is another important aspect of the economic cooperation. Indian energy companies have signed over \$32 billion in long-term contracts for the export of US produced liquefied natural gas from Louisiana and Maryland.



It is expected that in the coming years, the Indo-US LNG trade will be in excess of \$40 billion.

### **Contribution by Indians**

Nearly four million Indian Americans are in the United States, and more than 166,000 Indian students are studying in the US, contributing \$5 billion in economic activity and supporting an estimated 64,000 American jobs.

In effect, defense trade by itself has supported thousands of American jobs and that is the major reason for the US to show keen interest in facilitating India's defense modernization.

The President's daughter, Ivanka Trump, will be leading the US delegation to Global Entrepreneurship Summit (GES) later this year. GES is a key foreign policy initiative that brings together global entrepreneurs and innovators, and India will be hosting its next edition.

However, there are a few contentious issues that restrict free flow of trade between the two countries, like US wants India to shed its trade and investment barriers, especially in agro-sector.

The issues like infringement of US patent laws and generic drugs sale in US are found by them to be hurting American interests.

India supplies about 40 percent of generic and over-the-counter drugs used in the United States, making it the second-biggest supplier after Canada. Donald Trump feels that Indian pharma companies are giving unfair competition to branded drugs being manufactured by US.

US also consider India to be a difficult place for American companies to do business due to limitations like high tariffs and "inconsistent and non-transparent regulatory practices". GST is being viewed as a major reform by India that will assist in 'ease of doing businesses with India.

### **Congruence in Tackling the Menace of Terrorism**

The US and India are both committed to combat all forms of terrorism and to strengthen their cooperation in areas like terrorist screening, intelligence sharing, measures to deny terrorists' the use of cyber space.

Furthermore, India had also adopted UN sanctions against North Korea in April this year, demonstrating its solidarity with US in sending a strong message to the North Korean regime.

PM Modi met with US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson on 26<sup>th</sup> June and they discussed ways to boost Indo-US strategic ties. The same day US Defence Secretary James Mattis also called on PM Modi.

As a symbolic gesture, hours before the Trump-Modi one-on-one meet in the White House, the US Department of State, designated Syed Salahuddin, the chief of Hizbul Mujahadeen as a global terrorist.

Syed Salahuddin has been responsible for masterminding many terror attacks in India and has vowed to block any peaceful resolution of the Kashmir conflict by dispatching more suicide bombers and turn Kashmir valley into a 'graveyard for Indian forces'.

However, it needs to be understood, that the terrorism affecting the US and that affecting India is completely diverse.

United States is more concerned with terror organizations that are anti West, like the ISIS, al Qaeda, Taliban and lone wolf attacks. While India is plagued by cross border terrorism sponsored by Pakistan to foment trouble and instability in Kashmir.

Pakistan is providing US with the cardinal administrative support to launch and maintain its forces that are deployed in its 'fight against terror' in Afghanistan.

Though, US has been issuing strong statements asking Pakistan to curtail jihadists from using its soil to propagate terrorism and in fact recently President Trump has even proposed to convert its Foreign Military Funding (FMF) programme to Pakistan, from aid to financial loan.

However, its dependence on Pakistan to fight Taliban and Haqqani network in Afghanistan inhibits US from taking strong measures against Pakistan.

Hence, as much that PM Modi may want, it is unreasonable to assume that President Trump would take many serious punitive actions against Pakistan to rein-in cross border terrorism in India.

### **India – as a Counterweight to China's Assertiveness**

Donald Trump has labeled China as a 'currency manipulator', who steals American jobs and illegally manufactures items over which US has a patent right.

He has called for imposing higher tariffs on Chinese goods, initiate litigation against China for stealing American trade secrets and bring trade cases against China at the World Trade Organization (WTO) to force it to cut down its trade subsidies.

Trump has vowed to offset China's labour cost advantage in manufacturing with a combination of tariff and non-tariff barriers.

Besides the economic front, US views China's aspirations to expand its land and maritime territory as a way to enhance its area of influence.

It is seen that China has been quick to assert its dominance wherever US has taken a back seat or shown a lack of interest, especially in the South Pacific region.

Donald Trump's America first policy is slowly turning out to be the biggest misgiving for America as a global power, which is being exploited by China, e.g. US backing out of the Paris Climate agreement gave an opportunity to China to fill-in for US as a crusader against climate change.

Hence, keeping in mind the aggressive stance adopted by China, US will be keen to help India modernize its armed forces and build up capacity to counterweight China's growing military clout.

### **Conclusion**

President Trump remarks that "a strong India is good for the US, both personally and in terms of the strategic partnership", explains the reason for all the courtesies extended to PM Modi during his visit.

The biggest take away from PM Modi's US visit is that he has been able to appropriately reset ties with the Trump administration for furtherance of India's geo-political and economic interests.

## **23) CUBA – IN THE FIRING LINE OF TRUMP**

### **Introduction**

After an interruption of diplomatic relations of 54 long years, in 2014 United States President Barack Obama ended the political wilderness of Cuba by signing a deal with 'Raul Castro', there by softening the US trade embargo. The new agreement eased travels between the two countries and removed Cuba from the list of state sponsors of terrorism. As a result, visits by American tourists to Cuba, jumped by a third in 2016. Cuban Tourism industry got a shot in the arm and the income from tourism had become the main stay of the Cuban economy. Although Americans are just 7% of foreign tourists in Cuba, they are generous tippers and lavish spenders. Cubans who let out their homes on sites like 'AirBnB' have collected nearly \$40 million in revenue since April 2015. On an average they get \$ 2,700 a year, nearly ten times the typical salary of a Cuban.

### **Trump Effect on Cuba**

On 16 June, President Trump, at Manuel Airtime theatre in Miami's Little Havana neighborhood, declared that he was cancelling the "completely one- sided deal with Cuba" made by his predecessor Barack Obama. The new policy, though not very harsh, will still hurt Cuba's fledgling private sector which was almost a non-entity in the previous communist regime. The amended agreement will certainly discourage economic reforms in Cuba and damage Uncle Sam's prestige in Latin America. Trump's main innovation is to make tourism harder, supposedly to deny income to Cuba's Armed Forces, who control majority of the tourism industry in Cuba. As per his new policy, commercial flights and cruises will continue between both the nations. Trump thus hopes to satisfy a die-hard pro- embargo minority without rupturing relations with Cuban Government.

Under Trump's amendments, the independent travelers have to declare that apart from sight-seeing, they have to declare that they have some other mission, like supporting civil society unless they are of Cuban origin. People- to- people visitors will have to join organized tours. Trump also intends to ban transactions by individuals and firms with companies linked to Cuba's Army and Intelligence Services. GAESA, a conglomerate run by the Armed Forces, is covertly controlling, approximately 60% of the Cuban economy. Its holdings include petrol stations, supermarkets, and ports. One of its companies 'Gavita' owns 29000 hotel rooms, managed by American firms. After Trump's orders, tour organizers will steer away their clients from



Army-owned businesses. Cuba's entrepreneurs lobby condemned the move of Trump. They have a very valid argument. "President Trump is undermining the very private sector he claims to support ".The growth of private sector is the main vertebrae of Capitalism.

Ironically Cuba's government has joined Trump in cracking down on the country's emergent capitalism. Even before Trump's announcement, the Cuban government started restricting the opening of new restaurants and licenses to rent out rooms in Havana. A recent session of the legislature reaffirmed the state's control over the economy and its opposition to concentration of private property. Half a century of economic sanctions imposed by US on Cuba had wrecked the economy of Cuba and after US relaxed the sanctions, Cuba had started to prosper.

### **Conclusion**

The American tough attitude may prevail since Mr Castro is stepping down as President, most probably in next February handing over power to ' Miguel Diazg- Canel, Cuban's first Vice- President. The curtains are finally drawn on the sixty years old 'Castro family' rule. Mr Castro's elder brother Fidel Castro led the country's revolution in 1959 and governed Cuba with an iron hand,till 2006.

After Trump turned the heat the Cuban government kept its cool. It maintained that it will continue respectful dialogue and cooperation with US and joint fights against drug-trafficking and terrorism. The other Latin American countries opined that the new embargo against Cuba amounts to Trump's bullying tactics to subjugate freedom of Latin Americans. The attention of the whole world is turned towards Cuba as Trump could spring more surprises to chock the economy of Cuba in the coming soon.

## **24) Suggested Proactive Measures by India to Deal with China's Threat**

### **Introduction**

Indian and Chinese troops have been having a face-off in Doka La general area of Sikkim since 16 June 2017. Reportedly, Chinese troops entered into Indian Territory in the Sikkim sector and jostled with Indian Army personnel guarding the Sino-India frontier, besides destroying two bunkers.

The Indian troops formed a human wall against the Chinese personnel to prevent them from advancing further into the Indian Territory. The incident was also video-graphed by some of them, the clipping of which has gone viral on the social media.

China, on the contrary claims that Indian troops had violated the border and transgressed into its territory. Consequently, China closed the cross-border Nathu La mountain pass, which China and India had re-opened in 2006 and has said that the passage will remain closed until India withdraws its troops.

The closure of Nathu La pass automatically blocked the entry for Indian pilgrims travelling to Kailash Mansarovar.

The reason why this stand-off is significant is that it has taken place in the Sikkim sector, where the border is well settled. The earlier stand-offs between soldiers from the two sides have usually taken place in the western and eastern sectors, where the status of the boundary remains unresolved.

### **Previous History of Military Stand-offs**

China does not accept the Mc Mohan line as the legal delineation between India and China. It says that this was a demarcation agreed upon between erstwhile British Raj and Tibet.

In late 1967, there were two skirmishes between Indian and Chinese forces in Sikkim. The first one was dubbed the "Nathu La incident", and the other the "Chola incident", where exchange of heavy fire took place at the Sikkim outpost.

During the whole conflict Indian losses were 88 killed and 163 wounded, while Chinese casualties were 300 killed and 450 wounded in Nathu La, and 40 in Chola.

Once again, when India granted statehood to Arunachal Pradesh (formerly the North-East Frontier Agency) in February 1987, there was an escalation on the border, resulting in both sides to deploy additional troops in the area, raising tensions and fears of a new border war.

However, by the summer of 1987, both sides backed away from the conflict zone.

The term 'LAC' gained legal recognition after the Sino-India border agreements signed in 1993 and in 1996. The 1996 agreement states that no activity shall overstep the Line of Actual Control.

China formally recognized Sikkim as an Indian state in 2003, on the condition that India accepted Tibet Autonomous Region as a part of China. This mutual agreement led to closer Sino-Indian ties, including trade and commerce.

**The Daulat Beg Oldi Incident May 2013:** A three-week standoff between Indian and Chinese troops took place along the Line of Actual Control, 30 km south east of Daulat Beg Oldi in Ladakh region and Aksai Chin.

The matter was finally defused on 05 May 2013. India agreed to destroy some military structures along 250 km stretch near Chumar, which Chinese perceived to be threatening.

Later, in October 2013 both sides signed a Border Defense Cooperation Agreement to ensure that border patrolling does not escalate into a military conflict.

**The Chumar Incident September 2014:** Chumar is an area 300km northeast of Leh, bordering Himachal Pradesh. China has since long been trying to reduce India's dominance in the area.

In the said incident, China commenced construction work of a road, which, as per the border understanding of 2005, should have only started after prior intimation to India.

Indian troops rushed to the site to stop the construction work. Meanwhile, China also called for reinforcement and eventually 1000 strong Chinese force was mobilised that sat 5 km into India territory in eye ball to eye ball contact with Indian troops.

The tension was eventually defused by mediation at the highest level.

**The Demchuk Incident:** Demchuk is the area where LAC ends and IB starts and also the area where Indus River enters into India from China.

The Demchuk incident was considered to be a diversionary ploy played by China, in which it objected to the construction of an irrigation canal by India at Demchuk, about 80 kms from the above stated Chumar site of confrontation.

They dispatched dozens of civilians and nomads to object, and who pitched tents on the Indian side of the LAC. So, it was more of an impasse between the local civilians of both sides of the LAC.

### **Reasons for the Ongoing Stand-off**

The specific reason for the ongoing stand-off happens to be India's objection to China building a road in the Sikkim sector of the border. India alleges that the area in question comes under its jurisdiction, China, on the other hand, claims that the area belongs to China as per the 1890 Sino-British Treaty.

The Indian state of Sikkim is sandwiched between Bhutan to the East, Nepal to the West, and China to the North. The road construction by China in question is a stretch of road near the narrow tri-junction where Sikkim, Bhutan, and China meet.

Meanwhile, Bhutan which does not hold diplomatic ties with China has also entered the fray and asked China to immediately halt its road construction activity and restore the status quo.

**Political Reason:** The timing to rake up this issue, when PM Modi was visiting US to reset ties with Trump administration suggests that it was a demonstration of muscle-flexing by China to intimidate India. The proximity between US and India appears to have rattled China.

Furthermore, in an effort to appear politically correct, China wants to soften-up India's objection to the 'One Belt One Road' initiative on the grounds that China's construction efforts were impeding on India's sovereignty. In this case, China is claiming to be the aggrieved party on the sovereignty issue.

**Strategic Reason:** The road in question is being built at a very close distance from India's most vulnerable geographic choke point, the Siliguri corridor.

The Siliguri corridor forms a chicken's neck and is the primary link between the North-eastern states and the rest of India. Capture of this strategic choke point can cut-off the complete North-eastern region in one stroke.



Hence, it goes without saying that India would aggressively react to checkmate any such Chinese man oeuvre and that's what precisely China wanted at this point in time.

### **China's Larger Strategic Objective**

Incursions from China continue despite protests and meetings by India. The intrusions are well coordinated and show marked interest by the PLA in areas of military significance.

China has highly developed surface and air communication facilities all along the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR), especially, opposite Arunachal Pradesh and is in the process of preparing a dozen more airfields in Tibet.

Indian side on the other hand, is highly under developed with difficult terrain and therefore, builds up, movement and reinforcement of troops will be laborious and time consuming.

Assertive stance of China on the border is an indicator that it wants to stake its territorial claims and also dissuade India from building up infrastructure along the border.

Also, by slowly biting into pieces of Indian Territory through continuous intrusions, the Chinese are observing how India's political leadership and its security forces react to such provocation.

The PLA is training for short and swift conflict preceded by a cyber-offensive. An offensive could involve the use of missiles, anti-satellite weapons, overwhelming firepower and control over the air space. The extent and scale of conflict would depend on Chinese motives and intent.

China's larger strategy is to isolate India and keep it confined to the back waters of South Asia through its policy of establishing a '**string of pearls**' by increasing its influence over all neighbors of India, like, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Maldives, Bhutan and of course with its all-time ally Pakistan.

### **Proactive Measures by India against China's Threat**

India must vigorously pursue its 'Act East Policy' by engaging all SE Asian nations, who have clashing interests with China in the South China Sea.

Similarly, engaging with a heavy weight like Japan in trade and diplomatic ties will serve as an effective counter weight against China's expansionism, especially, when Japan and China are at daggers drawn over their dispute to control Senkaku (Diaoyu) islands in the East China Sea.

Improvement of infrastructure in the Northeast will go a long way to bind the region with the rest of the country, as also, serve for swift deployment of troops during an exigency.

The newly commissioned 9.15-kilometer-long Dhola Sadiya Bridge across the Brahmaputra River, which is designed to carry the weight of 60-ton main battle tanks, connects Arunachal Pradesh with the North-eastern state of Assam has been built with the primary aim of strengthening India's military prowess close to the disputed border with China.

The North East State Roads Investment Project will undertake road up gradation/ construction of a total of 433.4 km for the complete North East at a total cost of Rs.1355.83 crore. Under North East Road Sector Development Scheme (NERSDS), four inter-state neglected road projects have been taken up by Ministry of DoNER for up gradation through National Highway & Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (NHIDCL).

The Indian Railways is also all set to go beyond Assam and cover the rest of the seven sisters by 2020.

Militarily, India needs to improve its force level along the LAC and NE border with China. Towards this end, a new Mountain Corps is being raised to meet this explicit requirement.

In order to appear more assertive and forceful in projecting its footprints, at the tactical level, renewed emphasis must be laid on patrolling and surveillance using satellites, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and battle field surveillance radars.

Deployment of strategic assets, keeping the threat perception in mind, will serve as a serious deterrent and 'a threat in being', e.g. deployment of Agni V.

Last but not the least, considering that China is our largest trading partner, we must continuously engage China into meaningful talks and sincerely Endeavour to resolve the long outstanding border disputes amicably.



---

## 25) ISLAMIC STATE - DOWNFALL OF THE CALIPHATE

### Introduction

The Islamic State stands on the brink of a twin defeat. Mosul, the largest city under its control, has entirely fallen from its grasp, and Kurdish-led forces are advancing into its de facto capital of Raqqa. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights announced that it had confirmed news that Islamic State Supreme leader Abu Bakr al- Baghdadi has been killed in battle. The last sectors of Mosul recaptured by the Iraqi Army lay in shambles as the news announced the death knoll of IS.

Russian Defence Ministry had already announced in June that it might have killed Baghdadi when one of its air strikes hit a gathering of Islamic State commanders meeting place on the outskirts of the Syrian city and head Quarters of Islamic State - Raqqa. Badghdadi was actively present in the eastern Syrian countryside war zone around Deir al-Zor.

Baghdadi's death, who declared a 'Caliphate' governed by Islamic Law, from a mosque in Mosul in 2014 ,would be the biggest blow to the Islamic State, which is trying to defend its last shrinking territory in Syria. The US put up a \$ 25 million reward for his capture, the same amount as it had offered for al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden and his successor Dr. Ayman al-Zawahri. The world can't easily forget the unbelievable dare- devil act of Baghdadi on 4 July 2014,who climbed the pulpit of Mosul's medieval al- Nuri mosque in black clerical garb to announce the restoration Islamic State caliphate. The announcement was followed by an exodus of jihadi volunteers to Raqqa from all over the world to become 'Jung al-Khilafa' or 'soldiers of the caliphate'.

At the heights of its power , Islamic State ruled over millions of people in territory running from northern Syria through towns and villages along the Tigris and Euphrates river valleys to the outskirts of the Iraqi capital Bagdad.



## **Future of Middle East - Post Islamic State**

The Islamic State's territorial setbacks have introduced new questions about the basic future of the Middle East. The United States Can't withdraw from the Middle East easily.

The defeat of the Islamic State as a "state" will leave two serious questions facing the United States. The first is: Who will fill the spaces from which the jihadi group is driven out? There is a clear effort by the new Iran-Hezbollah-Shiite militia-Russia coalition to reply: "We will."

That is an answer the United States will obviously, reject. Such a development would cement an anti-American coalition in place, threaten Jordan and Israel, and leave Iran the dominant power in the region. To reject this challenge verbally would be a joke, however; it must be resisted on the ground, through the use of force by a coalition that must be built and led by the United States.

The conflict in Syria has destroyed any possibility of an easy formula for putting that country back together, but in the present scenario, one can envision a discussion with Russia - how US interests and theirs, can be accommodated while bringing the violence down to a level that allows many refugees to return home. But that discussion will achieve nothing unless American power first gains Russian respect and the Russians come to realize that compromise is necessary.

Even in the best-case scenario, with the Islamic State defeated and losing its control over a "state," it may continue to exist as a terrorist group — and in any event al Qaeda and other jihadi groups will not disappear. So the second question is: How do the US proceed against Sunni jihadi radical groups who continue to plot against the United States? It should be clear that Shiite domination of the region will help fuel these Sunni groups and assist in their recruiting at home and in distant Sunni lands. And the perception of American acquiescence or complicity in that domination will help make the United States a larger target.

These apprehensions lead to an unwelcome conclusion — The defeat of the Islamic State will not end US involvement in the Middle East conflicts and may, in fact, lead it to further increased involvement. There will be no repeat of the Iraq wars, with vast American armies on the ground, but there will be a need for a long continuation of the sort of commitment we see today: perhaps 5,000 troops in Iraq, 1,000 in Syria, 1,000 to 2,000 in Jordan, and many more in the 6th Fleet and in bases in the region from which the United States can exert power.

As long as Iran tries to dominate the entire region and Sunni jihadi groups target the United States, the defeat of the Islamic State changes- but does not diminish-America's stake in Middle East power politics.

For most of the United States' allies in the Middle East, the war against the Islamic State never was the primary concern. Even as Western nations decreed this struggle a universal priority, these nations largely humored Washington, echoed its alarm, joined its international coalition and looked the other way. Almost from the start, their gaze was fixed on the wars after the war against the Islamic State.

For Turkey, what mattered was the fight against Kurds, and for Kurds a self-determination struggle; for Saudi Arabia and Iran, their regional contest took priority; within the Sunni Arab world, competition between the more Islamist (Qatar and Turkey) and the less so (Egypt and the United Arab Emirates) was viewed as existential; among Iraqis, a sectarian and ethnic race for post-conflict spoils had pride of place. The counter-Islamic State campaign always served as an imperfect cover for regional conflicts and contradictions. With the Islamic State increasingly in the rearview mirror, these will be laid bare.

When the dust settles, US will confront a Middle East struggling with familiar demons. It will also face its own familiar dilemma: How deeply should it get involved? Allies will plead for it to leap into the fray. They know Washington's current predilections and will cater to them, dressing up raw power plays in more appealing garb. President Donald Trump's administration is preoccupied with countering terrorism, combating Iran, and - no less important - doing whatever former President Barack Obama did not. That's how America's allies will frame their respective pursuits.

There is evidence already. Saudi Arabia and the UAE presented their war in Yemen as pushback against Tehran and their attempt to bring Qatar to heel as an anti-Iranian and anti-terrorist gambit. Syria's Kurds, fearful of being jettisoned by Washington once their utility in the anti-Islamic State fight is exhausted, champion themselves as long-term bulwarks against Iranian influence and Turkish-inspired Islamism — while Ankara

pains those same Kurds with a broad terrorist brush. Egypt masquerades its indiscriminate intolerance of all Islamists as a holy battle against terrorism.

### **Conclusion**

All concerned nations assert that the particular brand of U.S. activism they crave contrasts with Obama's alleged passivity, which they bemoan. They know their target audience. They play to it. The Trump administration will be tempted to take sides and take the plunge, but it would be a losing bet.

The optimal way to secure U.S. interests in a post-Islamic State world is to abstain from joining any coalition which may intensify conflicts over which it has little ultimate say. If US fails to play its cards well, that would unleash the very chaos and sectarianism from which the terrorist group was born and on which it thrives. It is to de-escalate proxy wars, broker a Saudi-Qatari deal, press for an end to the Yemen war, stick to a measured stance toward political Islam, and lower tensions between Saudi Arabia and Iran — indeed, for that matter, between the United States and Iran.

---

## **26) SINO-INDIA-PAK RELATIONS – AXIS OF DISCORD**

### **Introduction**

China and Pakistan, two neighbor nations of India, one - a formidable most populated nation and the other-separated young brother, now turned foe. Both these nations are envious about the tremendous growth and development of their betenoire, India. Hence both these nations, joining hands to enhance their economic and military strength, is not a healthy trend and it is a serious cause of concern to us.

In mid-May this year, Beijing unveiled its plans for a \$1.3 trillion 'Belt and Road Initiative' and then the 'One Belt and One Road (OBOR) initiative'. It's flagship project will be the 'China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)', a \$46 Billion investment, that will connect Kashgar in Xinxiang to Gwadar in Pakistan on the Arabian Sea and also prop up the failing Pakistani economy. It's a most annoying project for India since it's the formalization of Chinese presence in Northern parts of the territory of Jammu & Kashmir, as the CPEC will pass through POK, a disputed territory between India and Pakistan. Hence India boycotted the grand ceremony to formally inaugurate OBOR which was attended by over 28 heads of states and 60 top officials whose countries form part of these network of roads, rails and sea routes connecting the Eurasian and African land mass to China. The deep strategic ties between Beijing and Islamabad have for decades been a matter of concern to New Delhi. Until now China's focus has been to position Pakistan as a counterweight to a rising India which could Challenge its hegemonic agenda.

### **Bone of Contention between India and China.**



Though the annual trade between both nations is booming to the tune of \$ 70 Billion, being in China's favor too, Beijing openly blocked India's move to add Masoor Azhar leader of the Pakistan- based Jaish-e-Mohammed terror group and a perpetrator of attacks on India, to the United Nation's proscribed terrorist list.

The second direct confrontation by China was Beijing's 'veto' of India's desire to join the Nuclear Suppliers Group( NSG) by insisting that Pakistan too must get it, even though most members of NSG see Pakistan as a threat to their anti-proliferation efforts. It's clear to them that Pakistan's entry to the NSG would legitimize its nuclear programme that observers say is ' China's nuclear programme in Pakistan '.

As another major concern to India, over the past decade, China has become the most trusted supplier of Arms and weapons to Pakistan. Formidable weapons such as the Chinese-Pakistani FC-1 planes, ZDK-03 AWACS planes, Zulficar class frigates and two- layered land- based surface-to-air missile systems HQ-7 and HQ-16, could potentially be used by Pakistan against India.

Another debatable strategic scenario being discussed in the corridors of power is, the possibility of China presenting a two- front- war crisis along its land borders. That is, the possibility of a combined China- Pakistan front if India were to militarily retaliate against another major Pakistan- sponsored terror attack. As a matter of fact our forces are inadequately equipped for a two frontal attack from our enemies. Our IAF Chief Air Marshal Dhanoa remarked- "our numbers are not adequate to fully execute an air campaign in a two - front scenario."

The reasons lie between India's tediously long Defense procurement process, the previous corruption scandals over Defense purchases and the hasty desire of the Modi government for self-reliance through 'Make in India". Also China's growing-reach in the Indian Ocean region, by establishing naval bases around India ( as part of its 'string of pearls' strategy) has caused alarm in recent years.

The OBOR initiative of China also could be a disguise to checkmate Indian Navy effectively in Indian Ocean region. Beijing plans to build ports that double up as military bases ( like Djibouti and Gwadar) for its war ships and submarines, both for force protection and to guard its vulnerable maritime supply routes from the gulf region via the Straits of Malacca to Eastern China.

### **How to checkmate China?**

The remedial measures open for India are:-

Speed up defense purchases for the IAF Army and Navy as recommended by the forces, and formulate the Strike Corps planned for Sikkim as early as possible. At any cost India should prevent another Himalayan blunder. India also should enhance bilateral defense ties with countries like Vietnam and Japan who have been unhesitant to look China in the eye.

### **Conclusion**

It's heartening to see that New Delhi has taken stock of the regional power equations correctly. As a counter to the growing economic clout of China in Asia, India has decided to hitch itself with Japan, which too is flush with funds and unwilling to join PBOR network, with both countries looking set to invest in Iran's port town of Chabahar to counter Gwadar in Pakistan next door, apart from gaining access to Afghanistan. In addition, Japanese funds for upgrading India's own infrastructure within and initiatives with India's immediate neighbor



## 27) Indo-Israel Relationship on a New High

### Introduction

Prime Minister Narendra Modi reached Israel for a three day official visit on 04<sup>th</sup> July 2017. He happens to be the first Indian prime minister to visit Israel, ever since India recognized Israel as an independent state in 1950. The primary reason for maintaining distance with Israel was that India wanted to keep the oil exporting Arab community humored and continues even till date to principally support the Palestinians' right to self-determination.

Besides, perhaps the political masters of the time felt that building a close relationship with the Jewish State of Israel may antagonize India's large Muslim population.

The end of the Cold War and the subsequent changing landscape of Middle East politics provided India with powerful incentives, especially in terms of procurement of state of art military equipment to change its conventional approach.

### Contours of Indo-Israel Relationship

India recognized Israel in 1950 and allowed Israel to maintain a consulate in Mumbai to facilitate the voluntary immigration of thousands of Indian Jews to Israel.



During the next four decades, India publicly kept a distance with Israel for the reasons stated above. It was only in 1992 that India established full diplomatic ties with Israel.

The period from late 1980's saw a great deal of bilateral activities between the two countries. Thousands of Indians have been travelling to Israel for special courses and training sponsored by the government of India in agricultural technology and community development.

Israel openly supported India for the first time during the Kargil conflict with Pakistan in 1999, when Israel supplied India with weapons and humanitarian aid.

Also, during the devastating earthquake in 2001, Israel dispatched its emergency response delegation to India for two weeks to provide humanitarian relief and treatment for the victims.

The Indo-Israel relationship, in the ensuing years further blossomed and India soon became one of Israel's largest trading partners.

The primary areas of convergence included security, agriculture and water desalination. Incidentally, Israel happens to be India's third largest arms supplier (at estimated value of \$1 billion).

The bilateral trade between Israel and India amounted to \$4.13 billion during 2016. Israel exported \$1.15 billion worth of goods to India during 2016, amounting to 2.5% of Israel's total exports for the year.

### **Major Areas of Convergence**

#### **Defense Cooperation**

Defense hardware procurement from Israel mainly commenced after India proceeded to implement its perspective planning of modernizing its armed forces in the beginning of this decade.

In 2011, critical procurements were made, like the four advanced Israeli Phalcon AWACS planes (airborne warning and control systems) which are capable of detecting hostile aircraft, cruise missiles and other incoming aerial threat far before ground-based radars and also, a thousand X-95 Assault Rifles for use by commando units in counterinsurgency operations were procured.

During the next two years many other state of art pieces of equipment were requisitioned from Israel, like the Sword Fish ground radar trackers, precision-guided artillery, different types of missiles, two more AWACS units and long-range anti-missile defense batteries for deployment aboard Indian naval ships.

November 10<sup>th</sup>, 2014 marked a milestone in Indo-Israel defense cooperation, when the long-range surface-to-air Barak-8 missile system, which was jointly developed by India's DRDO and Israel's Aerospace Industries, was tested in Israel. This missile, which has costed the Indian government approximately \$1.4 billion, can be launched from land and naval ships.

It is interesting to note that after PM Modi assumed power, in 2014 alone, Israel exported \$662 million worth of Israeli weapons and defense items to India. This export number is greater than the total Israeli exports to India during the previous three years combined.

Further, in order to check the efficacy of the Barak-8 long-range surface-to-air missile, it was test fired multiple times, on 30<sup>th</sup> December 2015 and 30<sup>th</sup> June 2016 from aboard Indian warship INS Kolkata and again on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2016 at the Chandipur research and development base in Odisha, on the Bay of Bengal.

Giving a boost to the 'Make in India' campaign, Indian firm Reliance Defense and Israeli firm Rafael Advanced Defense Systems signed an agreement worth \$10 billion on March 30, 2016 to cooperatively produce air-to-air missiles, various missile defense systems, and surveillance balloons for the Indian military. This undertaking is projected to provide employment for 3,000 Indians at a facility in Madhya Pradesh.

Indian officials signed defense contracts worth a combined \$1.4 billion with Israeli Aerospace Industries (IAI) during the historic visit of Israeli President Reuven Rivlin to India on 16 November 2016.

The contracts include purchase of two more Phalcon/IL-76 Airborne Early Warning and Control Systems (AWACS), valued at \$1 billion, as well as 10 additional Heron TP UAV drones, valued at \$400 million.

The Indian Navy launched a new, Israeli-developed Integrated under Water Harbor Defense and Surveillance System (IUHDSS), in February 2017. The system will enhance the security of above and below-water vehicles operated by the Indian Navy in the Mumbai Naval Harbor.

India and Israel reached a deal worth approximately \$1 billion for India to purchase 8,356 Spike anti-tank guided missiles and 321 missile launchers developed by Israeli Rafael Advanced Defense Systems Ltd in October 2014.

However, the contract got deferred due to costs and vendor issues. During the recent visit of PM Modi to Israel, this contract was reactivated after due negotiations.

In April 2017, India signed a contract worth about \$2 billion to procure anti-tank missiles and advanced air defense systems from Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI).

In May 2017, IAI secured another contract for \$630 million to supply Barak-8 missiles to the Indian Navy. Both deals also involve technology transfer and production in India.

The Indian military successfully tested the Israeli-made Surface-to-air Python and Derby missile system (SPYDER) on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2017. Python and Derby missile system has a range of 15 km and is meant for low-altitude missile strikes.

Indian security firm Punj Lloyd and Israel Weapons Industries collaborated to form the Punj Lloyd Raksha Systems, or PLR, in May 2017.

This joint venture aims to target the supply of carbine, assault rifle, sniper rifle and light machine guns for armed forces, paramilitary forces and state police. This firm is the first private small-arms manufacturer in India to produce equipment for both local and export use.

### **Joint Military Training**

On 10<sup>th</sup> May 2017, three warships from the Indian navy, namely, INS Mumbai, the INS Trishul, and the INS Aditya docked in the port of Haifa to participate in a naval drill with the Israeli navy. This is the eighth time that Indian ships have docked at an Israeli port, the first being in 2000.

Pilots from India joined pilots from Israel, the United States, Germany, France, Italy, and Poland in June 2017 for the “2017 Blue Flag Exercise”, the largest aerial training exercise to ever take place in Israel.

### **Cooperation in the Field of Space**

The head of Israel's space research program, Colonel Avi Hareven, and the head of the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO), Dr. K. Kasturirangan, signed an agreement on space cooperation between the two countries in November 2002.

During the recent visit of PM Modi, the Israel Space Agency and the Indian Space Research Organization signed an agreement to foster partnership in the development of electric propulsion systems for small satellites, and creating systems to accurately measure the extreme conditions of outer space.

Also a collaborative agreement was also signed during PM Modi's visit to Israel between the Asher Space Research Institute and the Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology to establish joint study and research exchange programs.

### **Cooperation in the Field of Agriculture**

Agricultural cooperation between the two countries has been flourishing for a decade now. Cooperation in this field commenced with the establishment of Centers of Excellence in a number of Indian states since 2009. More such Centers of Excellence have been envisaged to be set up.

The most interesting collaboration between Israel and India in the agriculture sphere is the Olive Plantation Initiative in Rajasthan.

Also, a number of states, the most recent example being Punjab, are keen to seek Israeli assistance in drip irrigation. Irrespective of the political affiliation of the party in power, states have welcomed such cooperation.

### **Improvement in People-to-People Contact**

PM Modi has effectively used the tool of soft power, i.e. greater people-to-people contact, and greater state-to-state diplomacy to further relations with various countries.

India has been focusing on this aspect, and since 2015 efforts have been made to attract more Israeli tourists, especially those of Indian origin.



Similarly, the number of tourists from India to Israel has also witnessed an increase. In 2016, over 40,000 Indians visited Israel. The planned increase in the number of flights will give a further spurt to tourism exchanges.

Moreover, education exchanges between both sides are steadily rising. Presently, one-tenth of foreign students in Israel are from India.

### **Major Takeaways from the Visit**

The visit of PM Modi to Israel has been a resounding success and has infused a new energy into the Indo-Israel relationship.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Israeli Premier Benjamin Netanyahu upgraded the current bilateral relationship to a "strategic partnership," and agreed that "strong measures must be taken against terrorists, terror organizations, their networks and all those who encourage, support and finance terrorism, or provide sanctuary to terrorists and terror groups."

Netanyahu said that the India-Israel relationship today could be described as "I-square T-square", i.e. "Indian Talent and Israeli Technology."

India and Israel signed seven agreements in the fields of water, agriculture, and space, including a \$40 million joint fund for research and development in innovation.

Modi held a meeting with CEOs of various companies and agreements worth about \$4.3 billion were signed between the participating companies. It is proposed to take the current bilateral trade of about \$4-5 billion to \$20 billion in the next five years.

PM Modi remarked during the meeting that the high-tech Israeli companies produce robotic waterless cleaners for solar panels and portable desalination units, which could help India, solve its water and energy crises.

Israeli officials and their Indian counterparts signed an agreement to create the India Israel Innovation Initiative Fund (I4F) on 05<sup>th</sup> July 2017, and the two countries pledged \$4 million per year each to I4F over a five-year period.

### **Conclusion**

PM Modi has displayed shrewd diplomacy by being able to effectively delink India's relationship with Israel from certain tricky issues like India's stand on Palestinian self-determination and joint development of Chabahar port by India and Iran, Israel's enemy number one.

The warmth in the relationship was there for display by both the prime ministers, there was in fact an overdose of hugs and black slapping.

Concluding his visit, Modi bid farewell and thanked the people and Government of Israel for their hospitality via a Twitter post in Hebrew and English and Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu reciprocated by posting a message on Twitter in Hindi.