

# Weekly POK News Digest

*(A weekly news digest on Pakistan Occupied Kashmir)*

Volume 3 | Issue 19

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No. 1, Development Enclave, Rao Tula Ram Marg  
New Delhi-110 010

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## Political Developments

### **PTI to challenge floor-crossing legislation in 'AJK'**

*Dawn, 8 May 2023*

Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) lawmakers in 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK) constituted a three-member committee to take decisions on the party's course of action vis-à-vis legal and constitutional matters in the ongoing volatile political situation in the territory. Comprising former senior minister Khawaja Farooq Ahmed, former law minister Sardar Faheem Akhtar Rabbani, and former adviser on information Chaudhry Rafique Nayyar, the committee announced it would challenge a clandestinely promulgated ordinance by the Chaudhry Anwarul Haq-led government to 'legitimize lotacracry' in the state. Legal experts said that, unlike Pakistan where Article 63-A of the Constitution provided a comprehensive procedure regarding the defection of an assembly member, the issue of floor-crossings was dealt with in 'AJK' by subordinate legislation. If a person elected as MLA as a nominee of a political party withdraws himself from that political party he shall stand disqualified from being an MLA from the date of such withdrawal for the remaining period of his term unless he is re-elected in a by-election held after his disqualification, reads section 31 (3) of the 'AJK' Elections Act, 2020. The next subsection carries the same penalty for an independent candidate after he joins any political party after he is elected MLA.

According to the amended law, which was given retrospective effect from 24 June 2020, the disqualification shall take effect only after the MLA 'joins some other party' after withdrawing himself from the party on whose ticket he had returned. After his election on 20 April as the new leader of the house, Mr Haq in his maiden speech on the floor of the house declared that he had contested the election for prime minister's office as an independent candidate (rather than a PTI nominee) with the support of PPP, PML-N and his fellows in the forward bloc. Political observers thought that since the PTI forward bloc had defied party policy by joining forces with PPP and PML-N, its members were afraid of losing their seats under section 31 (3) of 'AJK' Elections Act, 2020 which was why it had been amended with retrospective effect.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1751516/pti-to-challenge-floor-crossing-legislation-in-ajk>

### **S. Jaishankar's Remarks**

*The Nation, 8 May 2023*

Indian External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar's remarks at the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) forum and during speaking to the media regarding Pakistan were unbecoming of a diplomat and only show that New Delhi is more interested in catering to its domestic audience instead of giving the normalization of relations a chance. No bilateral breakthroughs were expected between Pakistan and India at the SCO foreign ministers' conclave in Goa, but more

optimistic observers were hoping that personal interactions between both states' top diplomats would at least break the ice and pave the way for dialogue. The decision to attend the meet was the right one as it signaled that Pakistan is very much interested in interacting with states in its larger neighborhood, and also frustrated plans by certain actors to isolate this country. The SCO is not the platform to bring up bilateral disputes, and Mr. Jaishankar's remarks regarding 'cross-border terror' made sure that no bilateral encounters occurred on the sidelines of the event. It appears that FM Bilawal Bhutto's advice that terrorism should not be weaponized for diplomatic point-scoring fell on deaf ears because Mr. Jaishankar followed up his remarks with even more unsavory statements to the Indian media.

It was quite apparent that Mr. Jaishankar was speaking as the spokesman for the BJP instead of the Indian government. Islamabad has time and again exhibited patience, grace, and maturity in the face of such rhetoric emanating from India, and this was another opportunity to at least carve up some space for improving ties that were thrown away. There seems to be a sustained effort on the Indian side to thwart any overtures for normalizing relations. This explains why the Indian political establishment keeps harping on Pakistan's alleged role in promoting militancy, despite Indian officials themselves admitting that infiltration across the LoC has

decreased. With the SCO leaders' summit being held in India in July, Islamabad will have a better idea of what to expect, and the hope is that New Delhi can learn to be a more mature and graceful host.

<https://www.nation.com.pk/08-May-2023/s-jaishankar-s-remarks>

### **Pakistan strongly, and unequivocally supports Kashmiris' just cause**

*Pakistan Observer, 8 May 2023*

Pakistan has reiterated its stand that negotiations with India are not possible till the reversal of the 5 August 2019 unilateral actions by the Modi-led 'fascist Indian regime.' According to a report released by Kashmir Media Service, Pakistan has been strongly and unequivocally supporting the Kashmiris' just cause and has remained the strongest voice in the world for the Kashmiris' right to self-determination. It said Bilawal Bhutto Zardari addressing a news conference after addressing the meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation's Council (SCOC) of Foreign Ministers in Goa, India, has ruled out any change in Pakistan's position on the Jammu and Kashmir dispute. It said Bilawal had said that there would be no dialogue with the Modi regime till the review of 5 August 2019 illegal unilateral actions, 5 August 2019 illegal actions have not only violated international laws and United Nations resolutions but also bilateral agreements. The report said that the All Parties Hurriyat Conference leaders had also welcomed the recent statements of the Pakistani

leadership, saying Pakistan is the real advocate and voice of the oppressed Kashmiris. It said Indian secret agencies are trying to mislead the Kashmiris through false propaganda that Pakistan has bartered away Kashmir. The entire Pakistan is fully standing by the Kashmiri people in their pursuit for freedom, it added. It said Kashmiris' love and attachment to Pakistan is the main driving force behind their freedom struggle, adding Pakistanis and Kashmiri are connected through strong natural, historical, and cultural bonds

<https://pakobserver.net/pakistan-strongly-unequivocally-supporting-kashmiris-just-cause/>

### **Bilawal's bold remarks on Kashmir reflected Kashmiris' true sentiments: APHC-'AJK' leader**

*Pakistan Observer, 8 May 2023*

All Parties Hurriyat Conference 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (APHC-AJK) chapter leader Altaf Hussain Wani has appreciated foreign minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari for his effective articulation of Pakistan's principled stance on Kashmir in India. Wani in a statement issued in Islamabad said that Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's bold remarks on Kashmir reflected the true sentiments of the Kashmiri people who have been struggling for their just right to self-determination. He said that the foreign minister not only adopted a firm stand on the key issues of conflict between India and Pakistan but also highlighted the centrality of the Kashmir dispute and his country's demand that New Delhi should revoke

all the illegal actions it had taken on and after 5th August 2019. He said Pakistan has clearly stated that before the resumption of talks, India must review the unilateral decision the 'fascist Indian government' took in brazen violation of the United Nations Security Council resolutions.

Wani asserted that the Government of Pakistan has made a wise and right decision of not resuming talks with India until New Delhi takes back its 5th August decision. The APHC leader also took a strong exception to Indian foreign minister Jaishankar's undiplomatic outburst against Pakistan and its foreign minister Bilawal Bhutto and termed his uncouth remarks as deeply reflective of his coarse mind and bad ethos. Meanwhile, Another APHC leader Syed Faiz Naqshbandi in a statement in Islamabad also lauded the statement of Bilawal Bhutto Zardari for his clear and loud statement on 'Indian occupied Jammu and Kashmir' (IOJK) on the soil of India.

<https://pakobserver.net/bilawals-bold-remarks-on-kashmir-reflected-kashmiris-true-sentiments-wani/>

### **Modi regime going to demolish properties of 190 more Kashmiris**

*Pakistan Observer, 10 May 2023*

To bring the demographic change in 'Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir' (IIOJK), on a fast track, the Modi regime, as an initial step, has prepared a list of more than 190 more Kashmiris whose properties will be demolished on the charges of siding with the ongoing freedom movement.

Earlier, the regime demolished the properties in South Kashmir while properties of several others were attached; however, now it is planning to bulldoze the properties of the Kashmiri youth after branding them, militants or over-ground workers. The names of 193 people whose properties are listed to be demolished also include those who surrendered under a package introduced by Omar Abdullah as chief minister of the 'occupied territory.' The regime is also planning to seal down the accounts of these people. Moreover, the regime has also decided to take action 'against all those who have sympathy with militancy in any form or shape,' Indian media reported. Going one step further, the Modi government will also take action against the properties owned by the relatives of those actively involved in militancy. The regime has also decided to take action against government employees who are involved in pro-freedom activities. Nearly one dozen more government employees including top officials have been profiled for termination.

<https://pakobserver.net/modi-regime-going-to-demolish-properties-of-190-more-kashmiris/>

### **Pakistan slams India's decision on G20 meetings**

*The Express Tribune, 11 May 2023*

Pakistan has strongly protested India's decision to hold G-20 meetings in the UN-recognised disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir later this month, and urged New Delhi not to misuse its

position as chair of the body of the world's largest economies to 'advance its national agenda.' These 'stage-managed events are designed to project a false normalcy in occupied Jammu and Kashmir,' Ambassador Munir Akram told a meeting of the Group of 77, which now has 134 members and is the UN's biggest intergovernmental group of emerging countries. India currently holds the rotating year-long presidency of the G20 and is set to host a leaders' summit in New Delhi in early September. In this regard, a meeting was convened to have India's UN Ambassador Ruchira Kamboj's viewpoint about the agenda of a series of meetings leading up to the summit, which included G20 and Youth 20 meetings in Srinagar and in Leh, in the neighboring region of Ladakh. In this context, Akram said, Pakistan is obliged to register its strong protest at India's decision to hold one or more G20 meetings in the UN-recognised disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir, which 'India occupies' in contravention of UN Security Council resolutions. Instead of inviting G20 delegations, Akram added, India should accede to the request of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, and the dozen or more human rights Special Rapporteurs, and invite them to 'occupied Kashmir', provide them unhindered access to the territory and its people and thus enable them to observe and report on the reality of the massive oppression there.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2416227/pakistan-slams-indias-decision-on-g20-meetings>

## APHC 'AJK' team meets Bilawal

*Business Recorder, 12 May 2023*

A delegation of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference-'Azad Kashmir' (APHC-AJK) chapter headed by its convenor, Mahmood Ahmed Sagar called on the foreign minister at the Foreign Office. Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari reassured Pakistan's continued political, moral, and diplomatic support to the people of 'occupied Kashmir', who are victims of India's 'illegal occupation' for decades. The foreign minister told the delegation that during his visit to India, he reiterated Pakistan's principled stance on the Kashmir issue. He said that the international community should take notice of the human rights violations in 'occupied Kashmir', which is under the 'illegal occupation' of India. The APHC-'AJK' leaders thanked the government of Pakistan and the foreign minister for their unwavering support to the people of Kashmir.

<https://www.brecorder.com/news/40241552/aphc-ajk-team-meets-bilawal>

## Anti-India rally held in Rawalakot

*Pakistan Observer, 14 May 2023*

Protest sit-ins, rallies, and demonstrations are going on across 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK) under the auspices of Pasban-e-Hurriyat Jammu and Kashmir against the proposed G-20 meetings hosted by India in 'Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir' (IIOJK). The eleventh protest program was

organized in Rawalakot, the headquarters of the Poonch district, to appeal to the G-20 countries to boycott the proposed meetings in the 'occupied territory.' The protesters who took out a protest march were carrying banners and placards and also raised slogans in favor of the 'Kashmir freedom struggle', martyrs, and resistance leaders. While addressing the participants of the rally, Pasban-e-Hurriyat Chairman, Uzair Ahmad Ghazali, said India has no legal and moral justification to hold meetings of G-20 in the disputed Jammu and Kashmir because the Kashmiri people have never accepted its 'illegal occupation' of their motherland. He claimed by holding the G-20 meetings, India wants to prove to the world that the situation in the territory is normal. Usman Ali Hashim, Vice Chairman of the organization, addressing the occasion claimed that according to the United Nations, the holding of G-20 meetings by an 'aggressor' country in a disputed territory is illegal. He urged Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Indonesia, and China to boycott the meetings in 'occupied Kashmir' and show their respect for human values.

<https://pakobserver.net/anti-india-rally-held-in-rawalakot/>

## Economic Developments

### **GB has the potential to develop into a major tourist destination: Iman Khan**

*DailyK2, 8 May 2023*

The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman Imran Khan met with the

Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) Assembly Cabinet members along with the GB Chief Minister Khalid Khurshid. The PTI government welfare programs, organisational issues in GB, and the nation's general political climate were also discussed on this occasion. Imran Khan lauded the government for maintaining the supremacy of the constitution, the rule of law, and the role played by the people of GB in the true freedom movement taking place in the country. He also stated that the people of GB wholeheartedly backed the continuing campaign for real freedom. He stated that one of our main priorities is to complete the infrastructure construction and development of GB and emphasized that GB may become a global tourism hub thanks to significant measures that have been made during the PTI federal government's rule. The process of creating a new GB will be restarted if the PTI federal government is established. The Chief Minister of GB Khalid Khurshid spoke on this occasion and stated that Imran Khan has full support from the people of GB as well as the rest of the nation. He said that the people of GB, the local elected officials, and the administration all share Imran Khan's aspiration for genuine freedom.

<https://www.dailyk2.com/Post/14000>

### **Release of funds would solve 'AJK' Problems: 'AJK' PM**

*Daily Times, 9 May 2023*

The Prime Minister of 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK), Chaudhry Anwar

ul Haq said the release of more than 9 billion rupees by the federal government would help address the financial problems of the region in addition to early completion of developmental projects. He said to a media delegation that the release of funds would pave the way for development and added that financial stability was necessary for running the affairs of the state. The wheel of development which was stopped, has started moving again, the PM said, adding that providing relief to the people was the first and foremost priority of his government. He said all available resources would be utilized to improve the living standards of the people. The PM said tax money being collected from the public would be spent on their development.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/1091385/release-of-funds-would-solve-ajk-problems-ajk-pm/>

### **Settlement of water dispute with India: Govt to provide 153 million against court fees**

*Business Recorder, 12 May 2023*

The government has decided to provide 153 million for payment of court cases fee for the settlement of the dispute with India under the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT). The decision to this effect was taken by the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet by approving the technical supplementary grant (TSG) in favor of the Ministry of Water Resources. The ECC meeting was informed by the Ministry of Water that the IWT 1960,



provides a mechanism for sharing of waters of the Indus System of rivers between India and Pakistan. The Treaty gives India rights over the waters of the three Eastern Rivers (Ravi, Chenab, and Beas) and Pakistan over the western rivers (Indus, Jehlum, Chenab). The treaty also allows India to use the waters of the western rivers for irrigation of a specified area and non-consumptive use like navigation, drinking water, and power generation but such uses are subject to limitations on design, construction, and operation.

Pakistan and India disagree on the interpretation of certain provisions of the treaty governing the design of run-of-river hydroelectric plants. In this regard, there exists an ongoing dispute about two Indian hydroelectric plants namely, Kishenganga (330MW) and Ratle (850 MW) in Jehlum and Chenab basins respectively. Both plants violate various design parameters of the treaty including those relating to bondage, intake, sediment outlets, spillway, and freeboard. As per provisions of the treaty for settlement of the dispute, formal proceedings of the Court of Arbitration (CoA) in parallel with the Neutral Expert have commenced the first hearing of the CoA and the neutral experts were held on 27-28 January and 27-28 February 2023 respectively at the peace palace in the Hague, the Netherlands. The meeting was further told that the expenditure to be incurred includes payment of a fee of the CoA, a fee for the neutral expert's proceedings, and the fee of Pakistan's external legal team for the case. The ECC was further

informed that out of the total budget of 821 million, an amount of 653 million has been utilized, thereby, leaving a balance of 167 million, and against the available balance, the external legal team has raised invoices of \$1.079 million and Great Britain Pound (GBP) 6,386, which are pending with the office of Pakistan Commission of Indus Waters, since 6 April 2023 due to non-availability of funds. As per the letters of engagement with the external legal team, the invoices are to be paid within 60 days of their generation. Based on prevailing exchange rates, the Pak rupee equivalent of the required amount becomes around 320 million.

<https://www.brecorder.com/news/40241654/settlement-of-water-dispute-with-india-govt-to-provide-rs153m-against-court-fees>

### **'AJK' premier calls on Dar second time in a week**

*Dawn, 14 May 2023*

The prime minister of 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK), Anwarul Haq, meet Finance Minister Ishaq Dar for the second time in a week to reach an understanding over thorny issues, including the formation of a new cabinet. The 'AJK' government has struggled to manage its economic matters for the last year, with the previous administration blaming the PML-N-led federal government for depriving the region of its due funds. Recently, a forward bloc of the PTI under Mr. Haq's leadership formed a new government in the 'AJK' with support from the Pakistan Democratic

Movement (PDM) lawmakers. Since the change of government in 'AJK', the finance ministry at the Centre has released 5 billion to the region as a development budget. However, PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif has directed his party in the 'AJK' to refrain from supporting any amendments aimed at increasing the number of cabinet members, something Mr. Haq demands. It has been said that Mr. Haq had been desperate to garner support for the amendment to accommodate all legislative members from PML-N, PPP, and PTI dissidents in the new cabinet. Under the existing law, there could only be 16 ministers besides two advisers and two special assistants. Mr. Dar had been tasked to finalize prospective cabinet members and discuss other issues with Mr. Haq. The PML-N also wants to bring its candidate as the 'AJK' prime minister, a source said, adding that many prospective candidates were in the run for the slot.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1753033/ajk-premier-calls-on-dar-second-time-in-a-week>

### **From Vernacular Urdu Media**

**The people of Kashmir will never allow the sacrifices made by their martyrs to go in vain. Former PM of 'AJK' Atiq Ahmed Khan**

*Urdupoint, 8 May 2023*

Sardar Atiq Ahmed Khan, the former prime minister and president of the All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference held a meeting with the

representatives of the Muslim Conference and leaders of 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK) political parties. The meeting included a thorough discussion on the political climate in 'Azad Kashmir' at the moment, the recent developments in 'occupied Kashmir', and the upcoming G-20 summit in Srinagar. During the meeting, he claimed that the Kashmiri people would never allow the sacrifices made by their martyrs to go in vain. He urged the international community to pay attention to 'Indian atrocities' in 'occupied Jammu and Kashmir' and to pressure India into ending the Kashmir dispute by granting Kashmiris the right to self-determination.

He vehemently denounced the Indian security agencies' harassment of the locals on various unfounded pretexts, saying that India cannot use these measures to put an end to the ongoing independence fight in 'occupied Jammu and Kashmir.' For decades, Kashmiris have had to deal with the fury of over a million Indian forces, he claimed. However, India has recently increased its harassment of locals, including illegal arrests and detentions and 'extrajudicial killings of Kashmiri youths,' all in the name of securing the upcoming G-20 conference. By organising the G-20 conference in the disputed territory, he claimed, India is seeking to mislead the international community to further its 'sinister objectives.'

<https://www.urdupoint.com/pakistan/news/muzaffarabad/kashmir/live-news-3573548.html>

**British lawmakers with Kashmiri ancestry should raise the Kashmir issue in the UK parliament and act as a voice for the voiceless Kashmiris: 'AJK' President**

*Jammu and Kashmir Times, 9 May 2023*

Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry, the president of 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' (AJK), advised British Members of Parliament (MPs) of Kashmiri descent to bring up the Kashmir issue in the United Kingdom (UK) parliament and put pressure on India to halt the 'brutality' and 'savagery' directed against Kashmiris in 'occupied Kashmir.' During a detailed conversation with British MPs Imran Hussain and Tahir Ali, Sultan stressed that the British Kashmiri need to use their political and diplomatic clout to put an immediate stop to bloodshed and violence in the restive region, adding that Britain can play a significant role in resolving the Kashmir issue. Chaudhry described Kashmir as the legacy of the British Empire and claimed that the Kashmir conflict began as soon as Britain departed from the subcontinent after their 200-year rule. The Kashmir issue has persisted ever since he remarked. He claimed that despite 76 years having passed, the unsolved conflict is still on the UN's agenda. He said that it was a chance for the international community, particularly the UK to step in and help to end the protracted conflict in compliance with UNSC resolutions. During the discussion, British MPs denounced India's decision to conduct the G-20

meeting in Srinagar on 22 May and gave the president their assurance that the diaspora community would arrange anti-India demonstrations in Britain on that day to draw attention towards the escalating crisis in 'Indian Occupied Kashmir.'

<http://jammukashmirtimes.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Resize-of-front-2.jpg>

**Parliamentary delegations should be sent abroad for diplomatic advocacy on behalf of 'occupied Kashmir:' Shaukat Javed Mir**

*UrduPoint, 10 May 2023*

Shaukat Javed Mir, the central deputy secretary of information for the Pakistan People's Party in 'Azad Kashmir', has expressed alarm about India's plans to bring Israel into 'occupied Jammu and Kashmir' in a manner akin to the East India Company invasion of India. He claimed that a parliamentary delegation should travel abroad to promote the Kashmir cause on behalf of the people of 'occupied Kashmir.' Mir claimed that by traveling to Indian Territory and obfuscating the startling realities, Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari had used his right and position to not only advocate for the Kashmiri people but he also exposed India on their soil. He claimed that Bilawal followed in the footsteps of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Benazir Bhutto, who turned the Kashmir dispute into a global nuclear flashpoint.

<https://www.urduPoint.com/pakistan/news/muzaffarabad/kashmir/live-news-3576886.html>

## **GB CM Khalid Khurshid has been detained**

*Daily Pakistan, 11 May 2023*

Khalid Khurshid, the chief minister of Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), was given a house arrest warrant for sheltering Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leaders. The PTI leaders had taken refuge in GB House thanks to the chief minister, who was thereafter put under house arrest. A police and ranger contingent has been stationed outside the residence of GB CM, which has been designated as a sub-jail. It was said that although the CM was not subject to strict action as a result of his position, it was decided to monitor his future actions. They insisted that while the Interior Ministry would consider the CM's request if he wanted to travel to GB for official business, however, he would not be allowed to engage in any activities in Islamabad.

<https://dailypakistan.com.pk/11-May-2023/1579339>

## **Two days before Asim Munir's appointment, Imran Khan issued a long march order to prevent him from becoming the army chief: Tanvir Ilyas**

*UrduPoint, 14 May 2023*

The former prime minister of 'Azad Kashmir' and PTI leader, Sardar Tanveer Ilyas has accused Imran Khan of proposing that Asim Munir should not be allowed to become army chief and that Imran Khan declared a long march two days before Asim's appointment to prevent it. Imran Khan

called for a long march two days before the Army Chief Nomination, according to Ilyas was all part of a larger plan. In a party meeting, Imran Khan reportedly remarked it was now essential to promote the anti-army narrative. He added that even if the army decided to remain impartial in the ongoing political and constitutional crisis, Imran Khan is still defaming the army and its leadership. Ilyas said that the latest attacks on military institutions were carried out by sleeper cells with Imran Khan's assistance. He claimed that Imran Khan is promoting young people's emotions against the military in addition to bestowing titles to army officers like Mir Jafar and Mir Sadiq. Imran Khan, he continued, is willing to do anything for political gain and exploits people for that purpose. He asserts that Imran Khan is assaulting national institutions in a manner that is only consistent with an adversary, and he rejects Khan's blatant criticism of government entities, especially the army.

<https://www.urduPoint.com/pakistan/news/islamabad/important-news/live-news-3581581.html>

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**Compiled by**  
Mohd. Usman Bhatti

**Edited By**  
Dr. Smruti S Pattanaik

## **Disclaimer**

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**MANOHAR PARRIKAR INSTITUTE FOR DEFENCE STUDIES AND ANALYSES**

No. 1, Development Enclave, Rao Tula Ram Marg  
New Delhi-110 010

Telephone: 91-11-26717983; Fax: 91-11-26154191

Website: [www.idsa.in](http://www.idsa.in); Email: [pokdigest@gmail.com](mailto:pokdigest@gmail.com)