



# INDIA AND SOUTH ASIA: FEBRUARY 2019 DOSSIER

This issue deals with the Pulwama terrorist attack in Kashmir along with some self-critical Indian assessments. The role of opposition parties and regional parties is analysed for the 2019 General Elections in India and also the return of Sheila Dixit to Delhi politics. This issue also discusses the plight of Dalits in Karnataka. Economic developments in India focus on women's labour participation. The issue covers the foreign engagement of India with Argentina, Saudi Arabia and South Korea, which are more economic than strategic. Finally discussions by experts on India and Pakistan during Prof. Happyman Jacob's book presentation are covered here, along with the issue of recent retaliations between India and Pakistan.

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## Part I India - Domestic developments

Indian politics are in full swing, shortly before the official announcement of the election dates. The election campaign, only due most probably in March, has already begun. Dr. Klaus Voll writes that the elections will be hard and most bitterly fought event. The ruling BJP/NDA combine will try to defend its majority, although most probably at least reduced, whereas the ensemble of opposition parties will try to topple the government and throw up an alternative. The analysis also includes the return of Sheila Dikshit into active politics as Delhi Congress President and on of interests and strategies of regional parties in preparation for the 17<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha 2019 elections. A brief observation of the marginalised social group— the Dalits in Karnataka puts to rest the fact that discriminations based on caste is there to remain.

Dr. Voll begins this part by focusing on the brutal terror attack at Pulwama and the options left for India to react against Pakistan sponsored terrorism.

### Pulwama: Repercussions for Kashmir and beyond

In India, analysts expect negative effects for the crisis-ridden state of Jammu & Kashmir, caused by the retreat of the Americans from Afghanistan. It is feared that the *Taliban* could send increasing number of '*Jihadi*'-fighters to the Kashmir Valley.

The recent suicide attack by the *Jaish-e-Muhaammed* (JeH) in Pulwama, for the first time after 15 years and the use of IED's after ten years, signal, according to experts, a strategic change by the *Inter State Services Intelligence* (ISI).

Besides this, the forces directed against India find "*a highly charged, alienated and radicalized youth in the Kashmir-Valley, which is vulnerable to influence from events around the world.*"

The tragic terror attack should not lead to a vilification of the citizens of Kashmir. Besides, experts also argue that '*partisan politics should be avoided*', which found its expression in the support by the Congress of the government in this case.

This attack with the highest casualties of security forces puts the Modi government under pressure. *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh* (RSS)-leader Bhagwat Mohan demands a "*tit for tat*" reaction.

In the meantime, the *Ministry of External Affairs* (MEA) appealed to the international community, to declare Masood Azhar from JeH as a designated terrorist by the UN, indirectly also criticizing China's questionable role, since it has blocked such resolutions in the past. Pakistan moves under the diplomatic protection of China.

Aakar Patel, head of *Amnesty International* in India, opines that India has three options: 1. The demonstration of force. 2. An external party, USA, China or the UN could bring Pakistan to reason and convince it through negotiations. 3. India itself should convince Pakistan through negotiations.

It will be more difficult, to develop a military answer "*which is part of a calibrated matrix and not a knee-jerk reaction. The renunciation of the Most Favourite Nation status of Pakistan brings nothing. We have to remember, that these are two nuclear states.*"

The experienced journalist Tavleen Singh argues, "*that this attack means a not-declared war.*"

It is high time, that the question of Kashmir, the relations with Pakistan and the effects on Kashmir caused by the developments in Afghanistan will be more intensively discussed by a wider Indian public with its existing expertise after the *Lok Sabha* election.

#### *Pulwama: Self-critical Indian assessments*

Increasingly, several Indian experts regard the situation in J&K self-critically after the attack in Pulwama.

The former admiral Arun Prakash emphasizes, that questions of national security have been neglected in the past. *"It lacks intelligence analyses, inter-agency coordination and a national security doctrine."* Shyam Saran, a former Foreign Secretary of India, shares this opinion.

Ajai Shukla, a former military and now security expert, maintains *"that there are no immediate strategic options available for India. The developments in Jammu & Kashmir are also an expression of our own strategic and political failures."*

Besides, questions are posed with regard to the battle readiness of the Indian forces, since there is allegedly only ammunition for ten days in case of a war with Pakistan available.

Professor Happyman Jacob, who knows the *Line of Control* (LoC) and the developments in J&K very well, describes *"the Kashmir-policy as a failure. In 2018, about 200 local youths joined the militants. Since 2014 we witness five times higher cease-fire violations. We are politically unimaginative. There is an intelligence failure. Stopping the flow of the Indus waters is not possible and feasible."*

Jacob maintains that the nexus between China and Pakistan is eroding the capability of New Delhi, to tackle effectively the cross-border terrorism sponsored by Pakistan.

Jacob raises the question of direct talks with China about these terror attacks. *"What would happen, if Pakistan would answer so-called Indian 'surgical strikes', which could lead to a military escalation? Precise air attacks beyond the LoC could also be conducted by Pakistan as an answer. Covert operations in Pakistan are perhaps least costly and the most optimal strategy."*

Jacob also opens the view towards the wider geo-political environment. *The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor* (CPEC) is in his opinion as well an economic but also a geo-political corridor, which contests the Indian dominance in the Indian Ocean and is enabling China in the long term, to dominate the *Strait of Hormuz*. *"Gwadar, as a naval base, poses a direct military threat to India."*

These assessments show, that there is a lack of true self-critical, sober and detailed analyses about the concrete developments in Kashmir, the dealing with Pakistan and China about Pakistan sponsored terrorism and the implicit consequences for the wider geopolitical neighbourhood in Afghanistan and in the Indian Ocean.

The new Indian government will face difficult times, which require a necessary radical assessment of India's role in South Asia and its limited options.

### **Sheila Dikshit back in politics and optimistic**

Sheila Dikshit was 15 years Chief Minister of Delhi and changed substantially the face of this Mega Metropolis with nearly 20 million people.

*"I think in Indian politics, You never really retire",* so Dikshit, after being nominated as Congress President of Delhi. She still enjoys high admiration and a good reputation. She will not tolerate faction fights in the party.

According to recent opinion polls, the Congress in Delhi could win up to five seats, provided it nominates strong candidates, since the *Aam Aadmi Party* (AAP) has relatively inexperienced candidates. Otherwise the BJP might race ahead like in 2014. The eighty years old Dikshit will not be a candidate, but the face of the Congress campaign.

The AAP seeks an alliance with the Congress, not only in Delhi, but also in Haryana, Punjab and Goa. But Dikshit, defeated by her successor as CM, Arvind Kejriwal, is ruling out this categorically, since Kejriwal also alleged corruption under her regime.

Dikshit acknowledges, that environmental issues are a new topic for political parties, given the growing environmental movement in India. Yet, she sees no chance to implement the public financing of parties, like for instance in Germany, which Rajiv Gandhi had got researched in 1984.

*"The problem of unabated migration into the capital region cannot be really stopped, given the relative attractiveness of Delhi for employment and good salaries,"* so Dikshit.

Dikshit considers it as legitimate, that Rahul Gandhi, when offered the office of Prime Ministership in case of a BJP defeat, *"should go for it."*

All in all, she is optimistic about the future of India.

### **Interests + Strategies of regional parties\***

In the forthcoming general elections, regional parties could be a decisive factor. Therefore this article tries to present them in a comprehensive manner and give in the table an overview of the major ones in all the Indian states.

They started to exist predominantly as a phenomenon in the late 1980's in the course of the so-called '*Mandalisation*', e. g. the increasing representation of "*Other Backward Castes*" (OBC's) and "*Dalits*" (Scheduled Castes), but also in the name of sub-nationalist and caste identities. Partly, they have been also a product of the disintegration of the '*socialist*' Janata Dal as well as the increasing Dalit-Identity (Kanshi Ram). But they also represent dominant and economically influential castes in several states.

In many states, regional parties are in power. This holds especially true in Tamil Nadu where AIADMK and DMK alternatively come to power, the *Telugu Desam Party* (TDP) in Andhra Pradesh, the *Shiv Sena* in Maharashtra albeit in alliance with the BJP, the *Telangana Rashtriya Samiti* (TRS) in Telangana, the *Jharkhand Mukti Morcha* (JMM) in Jharkhand, the *Biju Janata Dal* (BJD) in Odisha, the *Trinamool Congress* (TMC) in West Bengal, the *Janata Dal-United* (JD-U) in Bihar, the *Bahujan Samaj Party* (BSP) and *Samajwadi Party* (SP) in Uttar Pradesh, besides a plethora of governing smaller parties in India's North East as well to a lesser degree in *Jammu & Kashmir* (J&K).

One of the reasons for the rise of regional parties is that the Congress and also the BJP have only been “*national parties with a limited reach*”. This situation changed substantially with the rise to power of the BJP since 2014 at the central level and the countrywide with the decline of Congress.

The BJP is expanding systematically its organization throughout the country and leads or is a partner in nearly twenty state governments. It even accepts coalitions as a junior partner of smaller state parties, like for instance in 2018 in Meghalaya. Its long-term aim is to become the strongest force one day in these states.

Basically, political parties in India are dependent on strong leadership figures, sometimes nearly in the style of ‘*war lords*’, who often lead political dynasties, which derive their legitimacy from identification with the region, with certain castes or caste-combinations, but also from certain ideological rudiments of the socialist tradition respectively from mythological and historic symbols.

By nature, regional parties are easier in danger to lose their political existence than national parties, because the loss of power for more than one legislature period can lead to financial problems and organizationally weakening.

Inner party democracy with true discussions is extremely rare in Indian parties. Before the Modi era, the BJP showed elements of inner-party democracy and frank debates to a certain degree, to a lesser degree the Communists, whereas the Congress depended too much on its “*High Command*” culture although there are quite a lot of interesting and well-informed personalities in this party.

Therefore, regional parties are more in danger, to lose their ideological and programmatic identity or to be not capable, to renew themselves to an extent like national parties, since the latter have a bigger pool of experts and political talents.

#### *Strategies of regional parties*

Some of the regional parties are also the result of “*anti-Congressism*”, which manifested itself in elections in 1967, 1977–1979, 1989, 1996/97. Originally, “*anti-Congressism*” resulted from several traditions of the socialist movement (Mannohar Lohia, Acharya Narendra Dev, Madhu Limaye etc.), which substantially reduced during the last two decades, also as a result of the physical end of this generation and the effects of ‘*Mandalisation*’.

An all-embracing aim of regional parties is, to keep at bay in their states the Congress and the BJP or even block their entry. A typical example is the *Biju Janata Dal* (BJD) in Odisha, which propagates an equi-distance to both the national parties. Such a position permits more own space and negotiating power vis-à-vis the central government.

Regional parties are not interested to have a too powerful party with an absolute majority at the helm in the centre, like the Congress between 1984 till 1989 or now the BJP since 2014. True to their federal character and limited to a single state, irrespective of attempts to expand their territorial influence, these parties advocate a true ‘*cooperative federalism*’.

#### *National versus regional parties*

National parties don’t feel too good with regional parties in such a complex multi-ethnic and multi-party state like India.

The BJP, originally made politically acceptable by ex-defence minister George Fernandes in 1996 and 1998, had to concede under the Atal Bihari Vajpayee led NDA-governments between 1998 – 2004, not to pursue its major demands for the construction of a Ram-Temple, establishment of uniform civil code and abolition of Article 370. Hence BJP was not allowed, by the alliance partners who were mostly the regional parties, to fully play the card of '*Hindutva*' with its various connotations and enforcing '*Hindu majoritarianism*', which is far more the case under the current government.

### *Perspectives*

It has to be seen, how the regional parties will perform in the forthcoming *Lok Sabha* elections. Much will also depend if there will be a kind of '*Presidential election*' or a sum of statewise contests, which would certainly enable them to perform better.

### **The situation of Dalits in Karnataka**

Karnataka has with 23% a relatively high share of Dalits. Dalits are exposed to social discrimination and forms of violence. The social activist Manuranjini from the *Alternative Law Forum* said, that forms of so-called '*untouchability are occurring on a daily basis, also 'bonded labour' as well as many rapes, where many rapists are not convicted. The conviction rate is about 1%. In murder cases, many witnesses turn hostile and contradict their earlier statements. A resumption of court cases is often accompanied by communal violence.*' Allegedly, a Dalit lawyer was driven to commit suicide.

*"Within the judicial system the caste-system is visible. Don't trust the judiciary, it is biased. – The segregation of children along caste-lines and food habits is visible."*

Manuranjini emphasized, *"that it is a big blow for Dalits, that government schools are increasingly closed and their children are therefore forced to join private schools, whose owners are upper caste Hindus."*

Manuranjini is a Dalit woman converted to Christianity. Her husband is socially belonging to the *Other Backward Class* (OBC), whose parents-in-law accept her only reluctantly, states, that she is *"with regard to her identity rather confused and insecure."* The lawyer concentrates on social violations and cases of the LGBT-community.

Ruth Manorama is a country-wide known Dalit-activist, who heads since 1995 the *National Federation for Dalit Women*, which engages especially with domestic and construction labour, particularly where the ILO-conventions are violated. Altogether there are 35 organisations in this federation with about 10,000 – 15,000 members. The repression with regard to domestic labour has reduced, according to Manorama. The main issues are economic questions.

Manorama is a member of the political party *Janata Dal Secular* (JD/S), which is currently heading a fragile coalition government with the Congress in Karnataka. She is a Christian and mobilizes urban and rural poorer sections. *"There are also some Christian and Muslim women in right-wing parties, so the Bharatiya Muslim Andolan. The church does not put up own candidates or calls for the election of candidates, also out of fear of repercussions. Small churches have been attacked, since the Pentecostal churches are converting. The established churches are not attacked. There are no reservations for Christians",* so Manorama.

The *Service Society Women's Voice* organizes inhabitants of slums through the *Slum Dwellers Federation* and runs a *Construction Workers Union, Leather Workers und Domestic Workers*.

The economic metropolis Bengaluru with a population of about 10 million inhabitants has a slum population between 20 to 25%, socially dominated by Dalits. Dalits are also discriminated in middle class areas.

Ruth Manorama also receives government funds for her programmes, in earlier years she received also support from the German Protestant aid organization *Bread for the World*.

Manorama opined, *"There is no real protection for the defenders of human rights."* *"The Communist Party of India/Marxist (CPI/M) does not want reservations ('sub-quota') within reservations"*, which the *National Alliance for Women* favours for Dalits, Adivasis and Muslims. Manorama has also formed a *'Women's Alternative Parliament'* in Delhi.

These conditions demonstrate how clearly the Indian society is still based on caste-identity and that Dalits are primarily discriminated. A 'caste-less society', envisaged by India's great social reformers, is still a far-distant dream.

**\*Annex:**

The following list gives an overview about the most important regional, respectively single state parties in the various states of the Indian Union, in which normally the BJP as well as the Congress are represented.

**List of regional political parties**

**Andhra Pradesh**

All India Majlis-E-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM)  
Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS)  
Telugu Desam (TDP)  
YSR Congress Party (YSRCP)

**Arunachal Pradesh**

People's Party of Arunachal (PPA)

**Assam**

All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF)  
Asom Gana Parishad (AGP)  
Assam Gana Congress (AGC)  
Bodoland Peoples Front (BPF)  
Gana Mukti Sangram Samitee (GMSS)  
Hill State People's Democratic Party (HSPDP)  
Liberal Democratic Party (LDP)  
United People's Party (UPP)

**Bihar**

Janata Dal (United) (JD-U)  
Lok Jan Shakti Party (LJP)



Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD)  
Rashtriya Lok Samta Party (RLSP)

### **Chhattisgarh**

Janata Congress Chhattisgarh (JCC(J))  
Janata Dal (United) (JD-U)  
Lok Jan Shakti Party (LJP)  
National People's Party (NPEP)  
Samajwadi Party (SP)  
Shiv Sena (SHS)

### **Delhi**

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP)  
Indian National Lok Dal (INLD)  
Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD)

### **Goa**

Goa Forward Party (GFP)  
Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party (MGP)

### **Gujarat**

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP)  
Janata Dal (United) (JD-U)  
Lok Janshakti Party (LJP)  
Samajwadi Party (SP)

### **Haryana**

Haryana Janhit Congress BL (HJC-BL)  
Indian National Lok Dal (INLD)

### **Jammu & Kashmir**

Jammu & Kashmir National Conference (JKN)  
Jammu & Kashmir National Panthers Party (JKNPP)  
Jammu & Kashmir Peoples Democratic Party (JKPDP)

### **Jharkhand**

All Jharkhand Students Union Party (AJSUP)  
Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM)  
Jharkhand Vikas Morcha (Prajatantrik) (JVM-P) Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD)

### **Karnataka**

Janata Dal (Secular) (JD(S))

### **Kerala**

Indian Union Muslim League (IUML)

Janata Dal (Secular) (JD(S))  
Kerala Congress (M) KEC(M)  
Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP)

### **Madhya Pradesh**

*Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP)*  
*Samajwadi Party (SP)*

### **Maharashtra**

Awami Vikas Party (AVP)  
Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS)  
Shiv Sena (SHS)

### **Manipur**

Hill State People's Democratic Party (HSPDP)  
Manipur State Congress Party (MSCP)  
Meghalaya  
National People's Party (NPEP)  
NPF Naga Peoples Front (NPF)  
People's Resurgence and Justice Alliance (PRJA)  
People's Democratic Alliance (PDA)  
United Democratic Party (UDP)

### **Mizoram**

Mizo National Front (MNF)  
Mizoram People's Conference (MPC)  
People's Representation for Identity and Status of Mizoram (PRISM)  
Zoram Nationalist Party (ZNP)

### **Nagaland**

Naga Peoples Front (NPF)

### **Odisha**

Biju Janata Dal (BJD)

### **Pondicherry**

All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK)  
Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK)  
Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (MDMK)  
Pattali Makkal Katchi (PMK)  
Pudhucherry Munnetra Congress (PMC)

### **Punjab**

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP)  
Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD)

**Rajasthan**

Bhartiya Tribal Party (BTP)  
Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD)  
Rashtriya Loktantrik Party (RLP)

**Sikkim**

Sikkim Democratic Front (SDF)  
Sikkim Krantikari Morcha (SKM)

**Tamil Nadu**

All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (ADMK)  
Desiya Murpokku Dravida Kazhagam (DMDK)  
Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK)  
Pattali Makkal Katchi (PMK)

**Telangana**

All India Majlis-E-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM)  
Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS)  
Telugu Desam (TDP)  
YSR Congress Party (YSRCP)

**Tripura**

Indigenous People's Front of Tripura (IPFT)  
National Conference of Tripura (NCT)

**Uttar Pradesh**

Apna Dal (AD)  
Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP)  
Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD)  
Samajwadi Janata Party (Rashtriya) (SJP(R))  
Samajwadi Party (SP)  
Suheldev Bharatiya Samaj Party (SBSP)

**Uttarakhand**

Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD)  
Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD)  
Samajwadi Party (SP)  
Shiv Sena (SHS)  
Uttarakhand Kranti Dal (UKD)

**West Bengal**

All India Forward Bloc (AIFB)  
All India Trinamool Congress (AITC)  
Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP)

## Part II India - Economic Developments

The conference on '*Women in the Labour Market*' highlighted many aspects, which give insights into the roles women play especially in rural areas and demonstrates the necessity for more precise labour data, writes Dr. Klaus Voll.

### Women in the Labour Market

One out of four women is in the Indian labour market, but the overall percentage of women is declining. The *Center for Policy Research* (CPR) and the *Just Jobs Network*, headed by Sabina Dewan, discussed these issues in a seminar on the 15<sup>th</sup> of February 2019 at the *India International Center* (IIC) in Delhi.

Professor Santosh Mehrotra, *Jawaharlal Nehru University* (JNU), opined, that the over 15 years old girls are nowadays in schools ('*gender parity*'). Besides, he claimed, that a reduction of child labour has taken place between 2000 and 2010 from ten to 2.5 millions.\* He also mentioned an increase in rural house-hold incomes and that during the UPA-regime, 7.5 million non-agrarian jobs have been created and that millions left agriculture.

In 2004, the absolute number of jobs in agriculture declined, caused also by mechanization. Between 2005 and 2011 real wages increased and 140 million people could cross out of the poverty-line.

The reduction of household animal farming led to a reduction of women in agriculture.

Professor Ravinder Kaur, *Indian Institute of Technology* (IIT), observed, that young girls are increasingly demanding from their parents a better education. She also raised the questions of reduced fertility and the re-entry into the labour force, '*respectable work*' as well as the diversification of working-places, sexual harassment and a kind of caution by employers, to hire women as a result of the *MeToo*-movement.

Dr. Diya Dutta, from the aid organization *Oxfam*, mentioned, that unemployment of literate girls in rural areas is 17%. "*The demographic dividend is turning into a disaster.*"

Women with Dalit/Scheduled Castes-status work predominantly in low-paid unskilled jobs, for instance 30% in cleaning jobs, and only 2% as doctors etc.

As a result of the consequences of '*Demonetisation*' more women lost their jobs.

Rahul Verma from CPR analysed the role of women in politics and observed, that there is no gap anymore in voters turn-out between men and women. But still, more women are not registered.

*"It is interesting to observe, that women follow in election increasingly their own judgement."*

Women are increasingly represented in village- and city-councils because of 33% reservations. But only 8% women are represented in the central Parliament respectively Assemblies in all the states and they belong mostly to political families.

Political parties, led by women, receive more votes from women. But women are not only voting for women candidates. They can also be easily mobilized.

Besides this, the growing nuclearization of families and the fact, that the highest suicide-rate is with married women, were discussed. One conclusion was: *"Women's work is always seen as secondary."*

The seminar demonstrated the importance of these topics and highlighted the existing lack of profound studies since decades and the requirement to so, to discuss the labour market with more precise categories and data.

\* Personally I doubt these numbers, which in my opinion are in reality still far higher. They are part of often very imprecise and contradictory labour statistics, which don't give a proper insight into the real dimensions of unemployment.

### Part III India - Foreign Policy Developments

Dr. Joyce Lobo examines the recent foreign engagements that India had with Argentina, Saudi Arabia and Korea. The economic component largely drives these relations more than strategic aspects.

#### President of Argentina Macri in India

As India and Argentina celebrate their 70<sup>th</sup> year of formal diplomatic relations, President of Argentina Mauricio Macri paid a state visit to India (February 17-19, 2019). Prime Minister Narendra Modi had met his counterpart during the G20 summit held in Buenos Aires last year.

Both nations being members of the G20 have incorporated its goals as part of their bilateral relations. In this regard, the *South-South Cooperation* holds great importance for both nations. There is a deep interest, that the 11-point agenda of '*Hamburg Leaders' Statement*' on countering terrorism be implemented. The visit of Macri saw the issuance of an *India-Argentina Special Declaration to Fight Terrorism*. Through this, India sought the positive support of Argentina in strengthening cooperation against terrorist threats from groups listed in relevant *United Nations Security Council Resolutions*.

India began its first diplomatic relations by opening a Trade Commission in Buenos Aires in 1943. This was converted into an Embassy, the first in South America, in 1949. India was the first country to sign a *Preferential Trade Agreement* with *Mercado Comun del Sur*, or Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) in 2004. Macri and Modi have utilised the talks to expand the India-MERCOSUR trade.

On the global front, today, India seeks to enhance its relations with different countries. The reasons are trade, investment, civil nuclear cooperation, fight against terrorism, climate change and a permanent seat in the *UN Security Council*. Argentina, despite being more than 15900 kms away from India, is important for establishing cooperation in these areas. Buenos Aires has strongly supported India's membership in the *Missile Technology Control Regime*, *Wassenaar Arrangement*, *Australia Group* and the *Nuclear Suppliers Group*.

Bilateral cooperation includes areas such as nuclear, space, economic and commercial, agriculture, science and technology, culture and tourism. Bilateral trade at present is around US\$ 3 billion, which seems to be on the rise. India exports mainly two wheelers, iron and steel, agro chemicals, yarn, organic chemicals, bulk drugs and drug intermediates and motor vehicles, while Argentina exports to India mainly vegetable oils (soya bean and sunflower), finished leather, cereals, residual chemicals and allied products and pulses.

India intends to build agricultural cooperation with Argentina as it is considered as the powerhouse of agriculture. It depends on foreign countries for food security. Hence, both nations signed two MoUs on a *Work-plan of Agro-Industrial Cooperation* for the years 2019-21.

Indian companies have made investments in IT, agro-chemical, pharmaceutical and cosmetic sectors in Argentina. The total Indian investments in Argentina are to the tune of US\$ 1 billion. New areas that New Delhi and Buenos Aires aim at are tourism, films, healthcare, information technology etc.

India is part of capacity building in Argentina. Also it intends to share its successes in information and communication technology through its *Jandhan-Aadhaar-Mobile* (JAM) trinity and digital payment infrastructure.

India, as part of its efforts to counter climate change, has started an ambitious initiative called the *International Solar Alliance* (ISA). Argentina has joined this initiative. Also, India intends to join Argentina in a bid to diversify energy resources. Argentina is a part of the Lithium Triangle, wherein it has approximately 54% of the world's lithium reservoirs. India has set a goal of having 30% of its vehicles run with electrical batteries by 2030. Hence, Indian joint ventures of three public sector mining companies *Khanij Bidesh India* (KABIL), had shown interest in the lithium mining in Argentina. Discussions have led to Argentina facilitating geological information for lithium exploration and coordinate with the Argentine provinces through the Federal Mining Council.

Agreements and MoU's were signed in the areas of civil-nuclear, tourism, pharmaceuticals, defence, Antarctica, ICT, etc. Some of the unfinished works which can enhance trade between both the nations are the signing of a *Bilateral Investment Treaty* (BIT) and a *Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement* (DTAA).

Relations with Argentina have over the years become better and have moved away from pure trade aspects. Both countries have utilised their partnerships to combat global problems associated with global finance, global trade, climate, terrorism, etc.

### **Saudi Crown Prince Salman in India**

What was started during the time of former Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh, his successor Narendra Modi has continued relations with the Gulf and the Middle East in a much more robust manner, be it with Saudi Arabia, Qatar, UAE or Iran. However the timing of Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence – Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's visit to India and other countries in Asia is attributed largely to improve his image and improving ties with other countries.

The murder of *Washington Post* columnist Jamal Khashoggi at the Saudi consulate in Turkey was followed by worldwide condemnations and the US Congress has threatened to place sanctions on Saudi Arabia. The intention of Saudi Arabia to improve ties with Asian countries has led Salman to visit Pakistan, India and China. Asian business is important to Saudi Arabia, as China tops in terms of total trade, followed by USA, Japan, India, South Korea etc. Out of the top ten countries, six are from Asia and the Far East.

For Saudi Arabia, as per 2017 data, India is the 4th largest market for its exports, accounting for 8.88% of its global exports. For India, Saudi Arabia is the fourth largest trade partner after China, USA and UAE. India imports about 17% of crude oil and 32% of LPG from Saudi Arabia. In 2017-18, the India-Saudi bilateral trade has increased by 9.56% to USD 27.48 billion. However, it should be noted, that trade between India and Saudi has declined from US\$ 37.50bn in 2011-12 to US\$ 25.08bn in 2016-17.

### *Indo-Saudi bilateral relations*

The Riyadh Declaration of 2010 had forged a Strategic Partnership between India and Saudi Arabia. So far, both countries have dialogue mechanisms, related to finance and energy. Saudi Arabia has identified India as one of the 8 countries, to elevate the existing partnership to a comprehensive strategic partnership. India shares this privilege with other nations, such as USA, UK, Germany, France, China, Japan and South Korea. Saudi Arabia has proposed to establish a '*Strategic Partnership Council*' with India, focusing on four aspects namely Political, Security, Economic and Socio-Cultural.

According to the *Saudi Arabian General Investment Authority* (SAGIA) report of December 2017, there are 322 Indian companies as joint ventures or 100% owned entities in Saudi Arabia with a total investment of USD 1.4 billion. According to the *Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion* (DIPP) of India, Saudi investment in India has till now been modest, amounting to US\$ 208.38 million from April 2000 to June 2018.

Hence both nations seek to diversify the economic component with a focus on investments wherein a MoU was signed by Saudi Arabia to invest in the *National Investment and Infrastructure Fund* (NIIF) of India. As part of the visit, Saudi Arabia pledged US\$100 billion in areas such as agriculture, infrastructure, energy, refining, petrochemicals and manufacturing. In order to further move away from a buyer-seller relationship in energy, the Saudi ARAMCO along with ADNOC of UAE had agreed to partner in *Ratnagiri Refinery and Petro-Chemical project Ltd.* – a joint venture of US\$ 44 billion.

The joint collaboration extends to areas such as fertilizers, food security, infrastructure, renewable energy, etc. India has sought enhanced cooperation from Riyadh in ICT, healthcare and pharmaceuticals, electronic and manufacturing facilities, housing, etc. The talks between Prime Minister Modi and Salman have resulted in four other MoU's / Agreements in areas of investment, tourism, housing and information & broadcasting.

Salman announced certain measures that spoke of his benevolence, an attempt to maybe improve his dented global image post Khashoggi. These are ordering the release of 850 Indian prisoners lodged in Saudi jails and doubling the number of Hajj pilgrims.

Despite Saudi Arabia being a nation, that is not kind to women's rights with gross violations on human rights, India still continues to have enhanced cooperation, given that it hosts 2.7 million Indians, who form the largest expatriate group. They send remittances of more than US\$ 11 billion annually.

Salman also made a commitment to some of the new initiatives, that were launched by Modi—joining the *International Solar Alliance* (ISA), cooperate and collaborate in joint defence production of spare parts for Naval and Land systems as well as supply chain development as part of '*Make in India*', etc.



### *Defence and strategic cooperation*

In strategic terms, India and Saudi relations have been unfavourable given the latter's support to Pakistan, especially during the 1971 liberation of Bangladesh. However, in 2006 relations at the highest level were established. In 2014, a defence cooperation pact was signed during King Salman's visit to India, followed by Modi's visit in 2016, that focussed on security and counter-terrorism.

Though Saudi Arabia shares good relations with Pakistan, it had a moral approach in condemning the recent Pulwama attack by terrorists related to *Jaish-e-Mohammed* based in Pakistan. However, Salman prior to issuing a joint statement with India in this regard, had also appreciated Islamabad's efforts to fight against terrorism and its peace initiatives with India, such as the recently inaugurated Kartarpur Corridor. Salman has balanced relations with its traditional partner and its new found partner. Also, he acceded to India's request to reach Saudi Arabia after his Pakistan visit and then to visit India (February 19-20, 2019).

The joint statement issued after the Modi-Salman talks strongly condemned the terrorist attack at Pulwama and terrorist activities in general.

As for the defence cooperation is concerned, both nations operate through a joint committee. Defence cooperation will now include joint naval exercises, working together with other Indian Ocean Rim Countries for enhancing maritime security etc.

Experts point out, that relations of Saudi Arabia with India are purely transactional, while the strategic component is provided by countries such as the US. India can play perhaps an important role in ensuring peace initiatives in the Gulf, given the crisis in Yemen and in other parts.

### **Modi visits Korea before General Elections**

As General Elections to the Indian Parliament approach, Prime Minister Narendra Modi is on the last leg of his foreign trips. Key among these was the Korean visit wherein he was awarded the *14th Seoul Peace Prize* for his policies for regional stability, world peace, economic and the social inclusion policies. Modi's visits to Korea have been in his second year (2015) and last year in office. He has struck better relations with Seoul especially at a personal level with President Moon Jae-in who visited India in July 2018.

The present visit focussed on ways to further realise the '*Special Strategic Partnership*' signed in 2015. Modi and Moon held summit level meetings (Feb., 22, 2019) laying more emphasis on the economic aspects that have remained key to Indo-Korean relations.

### *Economic cooperation: 'Start-up India' gets major boost*

Presently the bilateral trade amounts to US\$21 billion (2018) with a target being set at US\$50bn for 2030. Korean investments into India have reached a cumulative figure of almost US\$ 6 billion. Over 600 Korean companies have invested in India. Hence talks revolved around ways to enhance trade and the up-gradation of *Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement* (CEPA) which is caught in the trade balance issue.

India seeks investments in infrastructure with an estimate of over US\$ 700 billion by 2022. To upgrade and build new ports and port infrastructure, Modi government has initiated the *Sagarmala Project* which involves an investment of over US\$10 billion in the upcoming five years. As more Indians move to urban areas or 500 million of India population will be urban by 2025, there is tremendous potential in growth of urban utilities and creation of smart cities. Agreements were signed between India and Korea in infrastructural projects. Korea is very much part of these initiatives wherein it has identified US\$10 billion under its *Economic Development Cooperation Fund and Export Credit to finance projects*.

The major thrust area in terms of economic cooperation comes from electronics. India has the largest manufacturing plant of Samsung under its flagship programme of '*Make in India*'. It seeks to ensure sustainable economic growth. By 2030, India intends to have 30% of its vehicles run with electrical batteries. Korea being a leading manufacturer of Electric Vehicles has a huge opportunity in this sector in India.

The other important initiative of India is *Start-up India* with US\$ 1.4 billion fund for four years to create a start-up ecosystem in India. This is done with an aim to promote research and innovation. Moon has already unveiled a program to spend 9.4 billion Dollars by 2020 in a bid to increase capital supply for startups and venture-friendly environment. This complements with India's *Start-up India*. Both sides have signed a *MoU on Startup Cooperation* and have launched an *India-Korea Startup Centre* in Seoul. The centre will serve as one-stop platform to bring Indian and Korean startup ecosystems closer and to facilitate joint innovation between the two economies.

Similarly *Korean National IT Industry promotion Agency* has opened office in Bengaluru to facilitate Korean startups to India. In the field of innovation, both countries have decided to establish '*India-Korea Future Strategy Group*' and '*India-Korea Centre for research and Innovation Cooperation*' to provide an institutional framework for future-oriented cooperation based on research, innovation and entrepreneurship.

#### *Defence cooperation*

Second important area of cooperation was in defence. Both nations have a joint venture in India between Larsen & Toubro and Hanwha which manufactures artillery guns — the *K9 Vajra*. Modi and Moon talks led to the announcement of the roadmap for future cooperation in defence co-production and in defence technology. There would be closer consultations between the defence ministries, the three services and the coast guards. Korea has keen interest in the defence corridors that India has been developing particularly in Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh.

Along with defence, nuclear and space cooperation are also emerging as new areas.

The foreign policies of both countries lay complimentary with India's *Act East policy* and Korea's *New Southern policy*. In terms of India's cooperation with South-east Asia, it lays emphasis on the Indo-Pacific with ASEAN as a pivot. Through their shared values and interests India and Korea have built the bilateral relations. Both countries have an understanding of the situation in the Korean Peninsula and in Kashmir. The recent attack at Pulwama by the terrorists was strongly condemned by Korea. A *MoU on transnational crime and terrorism* was signed during visit.

There is an attempt to build cultural contacts through promotion of shared history and cultural heritage. India and Korea have decided to release a stamp commemorating Princess Suriratna (Queen Hur Hwang-ok), a legendary Princess of Ayodhya. According to the "Samguk Yusa," a 13th-century Korean historical chronicle, in 48 A.D. Princess Suriratna of Ayodhya in India married King Kim Su-ro and subsequently became Queen Heo Hwang-ok of the Gaya Kingdom. Some of the clans in Korea trace their origins to the Gaya Kingdom. Many visit Ayodha to pay their tribute to this legendary queen.

The other agreements that India and Korea signed were to enhance cooperation in key areas, including infrastructure development, media, etc.

## Part IV South Asia

The book *"The Line of Control. Travelling with the Indian and Pakistani Armies"*, Penguin Books, 2019, by Professor Happymon Jacob gives insights into the India-Pakistan relations. This part includes a brief on the recent retaliations between India and Pakistan after the terrorist attack at Pulwama in Jammu and Kashmir.

### India – Pakistan Conflict from nearby

The excellent young Assistant Professor Happymon Jacob presented his new book *"The Line of Control. Travelling with the Indian and Pakistani Armies"*, Penguin Books, 2019, on the 8<sup>th</sup> of February 2019 in the *India Habitat Centre*.

In front of a full auditorium with about 90% young people, Jyoti Malhotra, *The Print*, guided the debate with Ajai Shukla, defence expert, Manish Tewari, Congress spokesperson and a former Minister, and the engaged student Gurmehar Kaur, followed by an intensive interaction with the audience.

Happymon Jacob, *Centre for International Politics, Organization and Disarmament, School of International Studies, JNU*, described with many details and empathised with the situation of affected inhabitants on both sides of the *Line of Control (LoC)*, without romanticizing the conditions. Tens of thousands of people had to be evacuated on both sides in the past, particularly on the Pakistani side.

Manish Tewari referred very sceptically to the bilateral relations and to the *"narrative of hate with its toxic past memories. A new narrative is required."*

Malhotra reminded the audience about the 4 points formula, which Dr. Manmohan Singh and Pervez Musharraf had reached, which in her opinion *"is the only Modus Vivendi without altering the borders. This formula did not want to unite Kashmir, but to concentrate on environment, education, tourism and trade."*

Tewari countered: *"This formula is dead. There is not a single file about it in Pakistan. There are no threads, where we could follow up during the last five years."*

The 22-years old Gurmehar Kaur, whose father was killed as an active military at the LoC, advocates openly understanding with Pakistan and speaks out against the senseless killings at the border, about the *"continuing pains of the partition of the sub-continent."* She is a victim of hate ('Go to Pakistan') and death threats

The defence and security analyst Ajai Shukla, *Business Standard* and before an active soldier in Kashmir, described vividly the situation at the 776 kilometers long LoC, *"with about 200 000 soldiers on each side. 70% of the Indian military is posted against Pakistan. It is a completely unrealistic world. Shooting takes place during cricket matches between India and Pakistan. About 70% of the decision-making is 'outsourced', we have it therefore to do with an autonomous factor at the LoC, which is not decided exclusively by Islamabad/Rawalpindi and Delhi. After new personnel comes into its positions, there is a 'welcome-fire'. There are no documents about the Cease-fire agreement of 2003."*

Shukla mentioned that the top military is highly politicized on both sides. *The Siachen Glacier is nowadays contrary to earlier times no low-hanging fruit anymore."* Kaur: *"The whole conflict is so muscular."*

Tiwari said, that the constant feature for many decades was *'no peace, no war'*. *What do we actually want? An end of cross-border terrorism! The Indian elite is condescending towards Pakistan and thinks sub-consciously always with regard to terror and the bleeding through a thousand cuts by Pakistan.*

*On the other side, the humiliation of Pakistan in Bangladesh in the Pakistani military is deeply rooted. Pakistan has revived all the Khalistan-groups. Even in the context of the Kartarpur Gurdwara, highly revered by Sikhs, the 'deep state' of Pakistan has its hands involved. The deeply embedded opinions are not changing."*

In the end, Jyoti Malhotra summarized, that more connections between India and Pakistan are required, also in order to revive the old trade routes from 1947 of the erstwhile kingdom of Kashmir.

Happymon Jacob expressed the view that after the *Lok Sabha* elections dialogues would be resumed.

Conclusions:

- The relations between India and Pakistan are on an all-time low. There is a lack of mutual trust.
- The forces opposed to an understanding have currently the upper hand.
- The political elites in both countries lack the required concepts, in order to conceptualize a strategy of *'peaceful co-existence'* with a mutual constructive engagement, e. g. *"a policy of small steps."*

### **India and Pakistan relations post Pulwama**

The attack on the *Central Reserve Police Force* (CRPF) on February 14, 2019 has resulted in escalation of firings at the border. For the first time since 1971, India has conducted air operations over *Pakistan occupied Kashmir* (PoK).

India termed its strike as a *"non-military anti-terror pre-emptive strike."* This was aimed at the *Jaish-e-Mohammad* (JeM) terrorist camp in Balakot on 26 February 2019.

Indian forces struck at the terror camps and launch pads in PoK at a place called Balakot at 3.30 a.m. on Feb., 26. Balakot is in Pakistan's north-western Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. Sources in the Indian Air Force said 1,000 kg of bombs were dropped on JeM group bases across the *Line of Control* (LoC) by multiple jets, including the IAF's Mirage 2000.

After the Balakot operations by Indian forces, Indian Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale told a news conference that the strikes had killed a *"large number"* of militants, including commanders, and had avoided civilian casualties. *"Credible intel [intelligence] was received, that JeM was planning more suicide attacks in India. In the face of imminent danger, a pre-emptive strike became absolutely necessary,"* he said.

Pakistan said that Indian forces were not able to complete its operations after Islamabad scrambled its forces. This resulted in Indian forces dropping its payload hastily over Balakot, which it claimed was an open area.

On February 27, India again carried its operations to foil the attempts of the Pakistan Air force to enter Indian air space. India claims to have downed a Pakistan fighter jet. The MiG 21 Bison which carried the operations crashed and one of *Indian Air Force* (IAF) pilots was taken into custody by Pakistan.

The Indian government has confirmed, that one of the IAF pilots was in the custody of Pakistan. They also lodged a strong complaint with the Acting High Commissioner of Pakistan at the *"unprovoked act of aggression by Pakistan against India"* on February 27. The government has also strongly objected to Pakistan's *"vulgar display of an injured personnel of the Indian Air Force"* in violation of all norms of the Geneva Convention. It has requested Pakistan to treat the pilot humanely and ensure his safe return.

After this incident, PM Modi was meeting with top officials that included the National Security Adviser Ajit Doval, Defence and Foreign Secretaries and intelligence officials.

The air strike carried out by India on February 27 has not resulted in casualties of Pakistani civilians or the Pakistan army.

Commenting on the entire episode, 21 opposition political parties read out a statement: *"The meeting of 21 parties expressed their deep anguish over the blatant politicization of the sacrifices made by our Armed Forces by leaders of the ruling party. National security must transcend narrow political considerations"*.

There is a sense of fear amongst the people in Jammu and Kashmir, as they will be caught in between the retaliatory fire of two forces. Already people have started to hoard essential supplies, food, fuel etc.

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