

Topic 1:China's block: on not listing Azhar as global terrorist

Its decision on Masood Azhar is shocking — but India must keep up persuasive diplomacy

China's decision to block the listing of Jaish-e-Mohammad chief Masood Azhar as a global terrorist at the UN Security Council is both a setback to India's post-Pulwama diplomatic strategy and a reality check on ties with China at present. After the February 14 attack, claimed by the JeM, the government had made the listing of Azhar a focus in its diplomatic efforts. It reached out to several governments, and shared a dossier on Azhar with each member of the Security Council, who are all members of the 1267 ISIL and al-Qaeda sanctions committee. A special effort was made with Beijing, which has blocked the Azhar listing in the past, including just after the 2008 Mumbai attacks. From 2016 to 2018, India's proposals to list Azhar, with evidence of JeM involvement in the Pathankot airbase attack, were also foiled by China, which placed holds on the listing, and then vetoed it. The vetoes came despite the fact that the JeM is banned, and in the UNSC listing it is noted that Azhar, as its leader and founder, accepted funds from Osama bin Laden. China, as the one country that has refused to allow Azhar's name on the list, is well aware of the evidence against him, but is not ready to withdraw its objections. It is clear that despite India-China relations improving after the Wuhan summit in April 2018, China is unwilling to align itself with India on its concerns on cross-border terrorism emanating from Pakistan.

China's stand is regrettable and condemnable, and it has been consistent on this issue. New Delhi must now consider whether it wishes to accept this as a fait accompli, or confront Beijing to try to persuade it to change its stand by means of incentives or coercion. This is a challenge, as any kind of concerted international pressure from the Western countries in this regard has in the past only served to be counterproductive. It is also unlikely that the suggestions being offered by some political groups, of cutting imports from China and other punitive actions, will yield much. The government may be more successful if it identifies the incentives it can offer China in the next few months to review its position. While some of those incentives would be bilateral, the Chinese spokesperson's hint that dialogue between New Delhi and Islamabad, and even possible "triangular" talks including Beijing, is indicative of China's thinking. The government must also not lose sight of the bigger picture: that the UNSC cannot enforce its own listings, and other leaders who have been sanctioned in the past remain free and unencumbered. While listing Azhar at the UNSC is an unfinished task, the larger issue remains: to ensure that Pakistan takes substantive action against Azhar, the JeM and other terror groups that are threatening India. China, with its economic and strategic leverage with Pakistan, may be better-placed to help in this matter.

WORD		MEANING	SYNONYMS
Diplomatic	Adjective	Managing international relations by a country's representative	Ambassadorial, Consular, Foreign-Policy, Political
Dossier	Noun	A collection of documents about a particular person, event, or subject.	File, Report, Case History, Case Study, Casebook
Proposals	Noun	A plan or suggestion, especially a formal or written one	Scheme, Plan, Project, Programme, Manifesto
Foil	Verb	Prevent something considered wrong from succeeding	
Unwilling	Adjective	Not ready, eager, or prepared to do something	Reluctant, Unenthusiastic, Hesitant, Afraid
Concern	Verb	Be relevant or important t	Deal With, Cover, Treat, Have To Do With
Emanate	Verb	Originate from; be produced by	Derive From, Arise From, Stem From, Emanate From, Proceed From
Regrettable	Adjective	Giving rise to regret; undesirable; unwelcome	Sad, Sorry, Woeful, Disappointing, Distressing
<i>Fait accompli</i>	Noun	A thing that has already happened or been decided before those affected hear about it, leaving them with no option but to accept it.	
Condemnable	Verb	Express complete disapproval of; censure	Castigate, Attack, Denounce, Deplore, Decry, Revile
Consistent	Adjective	Unchanging in nature, standard, or effect over time.	Steady, Stable, Constant, Regular, Even, Uniform
Persuade	Verb	Induce someone to do something through reasoning or argument.	Prevail On, Talk Someone Into, Coax, Convince, Make
Concerted	Verb	Jointly arranged or carried out; coordinated	United, Jointly Planned, Coordinated, Collaborative, Collective
Counterproductive	Adjective	Having the opposite of the desired effect.	Harmful, Damaging, Injurious, Hurtful, Inimical, Deleterious
Punitive	Adjective	Intended as punishment	Penal, Disciplinary, Corrective, Correctional, Retributive
Bilateral	Adjective	Having or relating to two sides; affecting both sides	
Unencumbered	Adjective	Not having any burden or impediment	
Leverage	Noun	The power to influence a person or situation	Authority, Weight, Sway, Control, Say, Ascendancy, Dominance,
Substantive	Adjective	Having a separate and independent existence.	

Topic 2: Horror in Pollachi: on sexual assault case

Cases of sexual assault and blackmail must be pursued swiftly and the guilty brought to book

The Tamil Nadu government’s decision to transfer the ‘Pollachi sexual abuse case’ to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) gives the case rightful priority, and the agency must swiftly unravel the sexual assault and blackmail racket that has victimised a number of young women. The case had its origins in a complaint of sexual harassment, assault and robbery in a town in Coimbatore district. While the arrest of the accused was made in end-February, the case created a storm early this week when a leaked video found its way into the public sphere. Sourced from the phones of those who were arrested, it had a woman piteously pleading with her abusers to leave her alone. In fact, what has been uncovered so far might be the mere tip of the iceberg, as initial investigation has indicated that the scale of the operations of the four young men in Pollachi might be much larger than is obvious now. Among the accused was a member of the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (who has since been removed from the party’s membership), and Opposition parties allege that the case involves those much higher in the State’s ruling party leadership.

The public outrage that ensued had the government first ordering that the case be transferred to the Crime Branch-CID, and then in just a day, to the CBI. Given the timing, with the Lok Sabha polls and critical Assembly by-elections around the corner, the political glow on the case is likely to be accentuated. But it is important that even as the investigation proceeds to nail the guilty and establish the scale of the abuse and blackmail crimes, the women’s identity and their privacy be strictly protected. The State Women’s Commission has promised that it will conduct an investigation into the matter, providing telephone numbers that victims can call to lodge complaints with complete confidentiality. The National Commission for Women has expressed serious concern over the safety of women in Tamil Nadu. In a letter to the State DGP, its Chairperson has asked that appropriate action be taken, and sought an action taken report. For its part, the government cannot wash its hands of the matter with the transfer of the case to the CBI. It must allow and assist in a free and fair probe into the incidents to bring justice to the victims, and to ensure their dignity and anonymity are maintained. In this election season, the ruling and Opposition parties must summon their political morality by articulating the gravity of the crime and refraining from trying to make political capital out of this heinous crime. Sexual assault and blackmail are dark crimes — the guilty must be brought to book. And the women and their families must be assured of justice and confidentiality.

WORD		MEANING	SYNONYMS
Abuse	Verb	Assault someone, especially a woman or child sexually	
Swiftly	Adverb	At high speed; quickly	rapidly, quickly, fast, speedily, briskly,
Unravel	Verb	Investigate and solve or explain	resolve, work out, clear up, puzzle out, find an answer to
Victimise	Verb	Single (someone) out for cruel or unjust treatment	exploit, prey on, take advantage of, swindle, dupe, cheat, trick
Assault	Verb	Make a physical attack on	slap, smack, beat, thrash, spank,

			thump, thwack, punch
Accused	Noun	A person or group of people who are charged with or on trial for a crime.	litigator, contestant, contender, disputant, plaintiff
Storm	Noun	A tumultuous reaction; an uproar or controversy.	uproar, commotion, furore, brouhaha, trouble
Piteous	Adjective	Deserving or arousing pity	distressing, sad, to be pitied, pitiable, pathetic, disturbing
Pleading	Noun	The action of making an emotional or earnest appeal to someone.	mediation, intermediation, negotiation, arbitration
Uncovered	Adjective	Not covered.	
Iceberg	Noun	A large floating mass of ice detached from a glacier	
Allege	Verb	Claim or assert that someone has done something illegal or wrong	claim, assert, declare, state, proclaim, maintain
Outrage	Noun	An extremely strong reaction of anger	indignation, fury, anger, rage, disapproval
Ensue	Verb	Happen or occur afterwards or as a result	result, follow, develop, stem, spring, arise,
Accentuated	Verb	Make more noticeable or prominent	accent, highlight, spotlight, foreground, feature, give prominence to
Confidentiality	Noun	The state of keeping or being kept secret or private.	
Dignity	Noun	The state or quality of being worthy of honour or respect	
Anonymous	Adjective	Of a person not identified by name; of unknown	unnamed, of unknown name, nameless, incognito, unidentified
Summon	Verb	Authoritatively or urgently call on (someone) to be present, especially as a defendant or witness in a law court.	cite, serve with a citation, serve with a writ
Morality	Noun	Principles concerning the distinction between right and wrong or good and bad behaviour.	ethics, rights and wrongs, correctness, ethicality
Refraining	Verb	Stop oneself from doing something	abstain, desist, hold back, stop oneself, withhold
Heinous	Adjective	Of a person or wrongful act, especially a crime utterly wicked	odious, wicked, evil, atrocious, monstrous, disgraceful,