GS-II: PoK and Gilgit Baltistan, parts of J&K under Pakistan occupation

News

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said this week that “we expect one day we will have physical jurisdiction” over Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK).

Supporting regulation

- A resolution unanimously adopted by Parliament on February 22, 1994 affirmed that “the State of Jammu & Kashmir has been, is and shall be an integral part of India.
- It demanded that Pakistan must vacate the areas of the Indian State of Jammu and Kashmir, which they have occupied through aggression.
- PoK and GB are both part of the State of Jammu and Kashmir, which is an integral part of India by virtue of its accession to India in 1947.

The PoK:

- Pakistan Occupied Kashmir is an area of 13,297 sq km, which was under the control of the Pakistani forces when the ceasefire line came into effect on January 1, 1949.
- That was after a 14-month period of hostilities between India and Pakistan, which began with an invasion of Kashmir by Pashtun tribesmen, and later its Army, to seize Kashmir.
- In 1963, through an agreement, Pakistan ceded to China over 5,000 sq km of J&K land under its control, in the Shaksgam area, in northern Kashmir, beyond the Karakoram.

And what is Gilgit Baltistan?

- This is a picturesque, hilly region to the north of PoK and east of the Pakistani province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.
- The British sold it, along with the rest of Jammu and Kashmir, to the Dogra ruler of Jammu, Gulab Singh, after defeating the Sikh army in 1846.
- However they retained controlled over the area through a lease extracted from the Maharaja. This lease was last renewed in 1935.
- In 1947, a British army officer of the rank of Colonel imprisoned Maharaja Hari Singh’s governor in the region, and handed over the area for accession to Pakistan.
- Gilgit Baltistan (GB) is spread over 72,871 sq km, and is five-and-a-half times the size of PoK. But it is sparsely populated, with just under 20 lakh people.
- GB is divided into three administrative divisions and 10 districts.

What is the administrative status in Gilgit Baltistan?

- Though both PoK and GB are ruled directly from Islamabad, neither is officially listed as the territory of Pakistan.
- Pak has just four provinces: Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (which now includes the Federally Administered Tribal areas or FATA), Balochistan, and Sindh.
- PoK and Gilgit Baltistan are both “autonomous territories”.
- Pakistan has kept this fiction going, as incorporating these areas into its map would damage its international position in the UN and elsewhere that the entire Jammu and Kashmir is “disputed”.