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Who gained from the NATO Ankara summit



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Who Gained from the NATO Ankara Summit: An Assessment

Dr Pravesh Kumar Gupta, Associate Fellow, VIF

July 22, 2026 Views: 14846 Comments: 0

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Dr Pravesh Kumar Gupta, Associate Fellow, VIF

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Who Gained from the NATO Ankara Summit: An Assessment
Background On July

Context The recent NATO Summit reaffirmed alliance unity despite internal differences over burden-sharing, Ukraine and Türkiye.

Facts

Article 5 and NATO's 360° deterrence strategy were reaffirmed.

Allies announced over \$50 billion in new defence procurements & industrial expansion.

€70 billion was pledged for Ukraine in 2026, with Europe and Canada now financing most military assistance.

Analytical Crux

The summit demonstrated that strategic interests outweigh internal disagreements within NATO. While burden sharing has shifted towards Europe, the US continues to shape the alliance's strategic direction. Türkiye emerged as the principle beneficiary by leveraging its geopolitical location, defence industry & mediation role to secure concessions from the West. For India, the summit underscores the importance of defence industrial capacity, alliance politics and strategic flexibility amid an increasingly competitive global security environment.

Verbatim Quotes

“Despite all the anticipation, the NATO summit in Ankara demonstrated that the organization has survived the frictions and is resilient.” — Pravesh Kumar Gupta

Bangladesh's instability has sharpened India's Chicken Neck Challenge

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Bangladesh's instability has sharpened India's 'Chicken Neck' challenge

Vice Admiral Shekhar Sinha • July 21, 2026, 16:59:30 IST

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India could consider notifying a union territory around the Siliguri Corridor consisting of parts of all bordering districts

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A map of the northeastern region of India, highlighting the 'Chicken's Neck' area. The map shows the borders of Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, and India. Indian states shown include Sikkim, West Bengal, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, and Bihar. The 'CHICKEN'S NECK' is labeled with a red arrow pointing to the narrow strip of land connecting West Bengal to the rest of India.

Context Following political changes in Bangladesh, concerns have grown over the security of India's 22Km wide Siliguri Corridor (Chicken Neck), the only land link connecting the Northeast with mainland India.

Facts

- The India- Bangladesh border is 4096 Km long across five Indian States.
- Bangladesh is reviving the Lalmonirhat airfield with Chinese assistance , about 135 Km from the corridor.

Analytical Crux

The article argues that India's eastern security must adapt to changing regional geopolitics rather than rely on historical goodwill. The Siliguri Corridor has become strategically vulnerable due to increasing Chinese influence and political uncertainty in Bangladesh. The broader lesson is the need for stronger border infrastructure, military preparedness, connectivity alternatives & sustained diplomatic engagement with Bangladesh to secure India's Northeast.

Verbatim Quotes

"India's basic premise that the creation of Bangladesh was the result of the sacrifice of Indian soldiers, has evaporated after 50 years."

- Vice Admiral Shekhar Sinha

Restoration of J&K statehood calls for phased roadmap

Restoration of J&K statehood calls for a phased and negotiated roadmap

IT HAS been seven years since Jammu & Kashmir was downgraded to a Union Territory. It has been five years since the Union government committed in Parliament to restore statehood. It has been four years since delimitation was done. It has been three years since the Supreme Court was assured of restoration. It has been two years since an elected government took office.

Yet, so far, there has not even been a serious conversation about it. The only response from the Centre, a clear and consistent one, has been an assurance wrapped in ambiguity: Statehood will be restored at the “appropriate time”. The “appropriate time” is not a date on the calendar; it is whatever time suits the present dispensation. At the “appropriate time” is not a promise but an instrument of power. Every demand for a date is an indicator of impatience, and every postponement a proof of prudence.

Faced with growing public disillusionment locally over the Omar Abdullah-led government’s performance, the National Conference recently launched an outreach drive. After civil-society consultations, it called for a protest in New Delhi on July 20.

The National Conference positioned its protest as a broad-based political initiative rather than a party-specific agitation. Though well-placed to lead the J&K parties and wider civil society by virtue of a strong electoral mandate, all the Valley-centric parties decided not to participate in the protest. This has turned a potential show of strength into a display of fragmentation, thereby significantly reducing the political pressure on the Union government to act.

Without a united front at least from the Valley, the Centre can easily treat the demand as partisan rather than regional, and delay statehood restoration on its own timeline.

Being a constituent of the INDIA bloc, the National Conference had also reached out to the national and regional parties to build a wider constituency of support and gain greater political traction. This could have provided an opportunity to frame the demand as a larger federal issue that touches upon the basic structure of India’s constitutional arrangements. For the most potent blueprint for the restoration of statehood is not a political manifesto of any party, but an agenda for federal democratic polity of India. But that was not to be.

As the National Conference assembled in New Delhi for the restoration of statehood for J&K, the refrain in the lacklustre affair was unfulfilled promises rather than rights denied. Speeches, slogans and bytes invoked constitutional morality, legislative assurances, judicial precedents and political commitments. These are valid, necessary political arguments but have limited relevance in the current context.

For the Centre, it is amply evident that security and “normalcy” are the non-negotiable pre-conditions for restoring statehood. This is not a temporary hurdle. Until these concerns are credibly addressed, arguments based only on constitutional grounds will remain secondary in the decision-making process at the highest levels.

The restoration of statehood is not a simple administrative deci-



HASEEB A DRABU

sion or a one-sided concession. It will be the outcome of a political bargain in which enhanced powers and privileges will come with greater responsibilities, aka conditionalities. This is already visible in the case of Ladakh, where statehood has been made contingent on meeting certain revenue and self-sustainability criteria. J&K is unlikely to be treated differently.

This is why the political leadership in J&K needs to move beyond making a legal case. Engaging substantively with the Centre’s stated concerns on security and governance could prove more consequential than constitutional arguments alone. The tragic killing of a police officer on Amarnath Yatra duty, the first terror attack in the Valley since Pahalgam, serves as a stark illustration of why constitutional arguments alone are insufficient without credible progress on the ground.

Treating the security issue as a chicken-and-egg problem — the lack of full powers is cited as the reason for limited initiative — is technically correct but politically unwise because it restricts the space for political agency. While the elected government’s limited powers are a structural constraint, demonstrating statecraft even within the current framework could help build credibility with the Centre.

From the Union’s point of view, the restoration of statehood may be seen as a decision to be taken at an appropriate time. However, from the perspective of J&K, it will be a process. Statehood cannot simply be restored by an executive order

changing its status. Such a move would leave the underlying administrative and financial distortions created since 2019 largely unaddressed. Converting the former state into a Union Territory did not just alter its administrative boundaries, it fundamentally changed its governance DNA and deepened J&K’s dependence on the Centre.

It is high time to move away from the binary of statehood restoration to what it will entail, politically and administratively. A more strategic approach would require the J&K political leadership to move from episodic mobilisation to a sustained, multi-track engagement. In the short term, this would mean building a unified negotiating position across parties on the benchmarks for “normalcy” that the Centre considers non-negotiable.

In parallel, the focus should shift to negotiating a time-bound framework, possibly through a structured administrative mechanism of unwinding the central controls. Without such a phased and negotiated roadmap, the demand for statehood risks remaining a recurring political slogan instead of becoming a manageable political settlement.

It is unlikely that the recent Delhi protest will be the starting point of a political process for statehood with status. To reach a milestone on that road, the Valley-centric political leadership needs to prioritise pragmatic sequencing over fragmented posturing. This will determine if J&K can convert public sentiment into concrete constitutional gains in the coming years.

The writer is the former finance minister of J&K

Context Restoration of statehood to J&K will depend more on political negotiations & evolving security conditions than on constitutional arguments alone.

Facts

It has been 7 years since J&K became a UT & 5 years since parliament assured restoration of statehood.

The Union government continues to maintain that statehood will be restored at the “appropriate time”.

The Centre considers security and normalcy as essential preconditions for restoration.

Analytical Crux

The restoration of J&K's statehood is fundamentally a political bargaining process rather than merely a constitutional issue. While constitutional morality & parliamentary assurances remain relevant, the Centre prioritises security, governance and stability before restoring full statehood. The debate highlights the evolving nature of Indian federalism, where constitutional provisions, political negotiations and national security considerations increasingly intersect in determining Centre-State relations.

Verbatim Quotes

"The appropriate time is not a date on the calendar; it is whatever time suits the present dispensation."

-Haseeb A. Drabu

PSIR 2024, Paper II : "Do you agree with the view that the USA uses NATO as a traditional tool of strategy to perpetuate its hegemony in the world?"

PSIR 2025, Paper II : "Trump's return to the White House is a jolt to push the European Union to invest in its own defence and economic and technological revival." Comment.

PSIR 2025, Paper II : "China's growing footprint and a tangible shift in power dynamics in Bangladesh has weakened India's leverage in Dhaka." Comment.

PSIR 2024, Paper II : implications of scrapping the Free Movement Regime with Myanmar for the ethno-political dynamics of the north-eastern region.

PSIR 2025, Paper I : "Delineate the key factors that have shaped the evolving political landscape in Jammu and Kashmir post 2019."

GS-2 2025 : nature of the J&K Legislative Assembly after the Reorganization Act, 2019, and the powers and functions of the UT Assembly.



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