

- This wedge gives India **control over a sensitive triangular area** that is critical to its national security calculus.
- From this location, India can **oversee and counter strategic movements** in three crucial regions:
 - **Gilgit-Baltistan (PoK)** to the west
 - **Depsang Plains and Karakoram Pass** to the east
 - **Shaksgam Valley** (illegally ceded to China) to the north

3. Dominance Over Saltoro Ridge

- India's control over the **Saltoro Ridge** provides a **clear military advantage**, enabling the army to monitor and dominate the region.
- This ridge physically **prevents Pakistan and China from linking up** through this part of Ladakh.

4. The LoC Dispute and Siachen

- Post the **1947-48 Indo-Pak War**, the **Karachi Agreement (1949)** defined the **Ceasefire Line (CFL)** up to **Point NJ 9842**.
- Post the **1971 War**, this line was renamed the **Line of Control (LoC)** under the **Shimla Agreement (1972)**.
- However, **beyond Point NJ 9842**, the LoC was ambiguously marked as going **"northwards to the glaciers,"** leading to different interpretations:
 - **Pakistan's View:** LoC should extend **northeast** to the **Karakoram Pass**, giving it access to Siachen.
 - **India's View:** LoC should go **northwards** along the **Saltoro Ridge**, asserting control over Siachen Glacier.

5. India's Pre-Emptive Action – Operation Meghdoot

- On **April 13, 1984** (Baisakhi Day), India launched **Operation Meghdoot** under PM **Indira Gandhi** to preempt Pakistani moves.
- Troops from the **4 Kumaon Regiment** were airlifted to key passes like **Bilafond La** (17,880 ft).

- Indian Army quickly occupied the **Salto Ridge** and raised the national flag.
- **Pakistan's counter-efforts failed**, and India has retained strategic control ever since.

6. Role of Indian Air Force

- Siachen operations are supported by a **wide range of IAF aircraft** under harsh, high-altitude conditions.
- Aircraft include:
 - **Fighters:** Rafale, Su-30MKI, MiG-29, Mirage-2000
 - **Transport:** C-17, C-130J, IL-76, An-32
 - **Helicopters:** Chinook, Apache, ALH Mk III & IV, LCH Prachand
- This **air support ensures logistics, surveillance, and rapid response** in this remote terrain.

7. Rising Chinese Threat in the Region

- In recent years, **China has emerged as the more prominent threat** than Pakistan in the Siachen region.
- The **Chinese PLA** could attempt a **westward thrust through the Depsang Plains** to:
 - **Sever the DSDBO Road** (India's lifeline to the Karakoram Pass)
 - **Capture Saser La**, threatening the **Siachen base camp**

8. Chinese Expansionism via CPEC

- China has increased its presence in **PoK under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)**.
- The **Karakoram Highway**, part of CPEC, passes near Siachen, enhancing China's strategic access.
- **Chinese workers**, deployed for infrastructure projects, are being used as a front for **military logistics and surveillance**.

9. India's Strategic Infrastructure Development

- India has developed and fortified the **DSDBO Road (Daulat Beg Oldie Road)**—a 255-km stretch linking **Leh** to **Daulat Beg Oldie**, near the Karakoram Pass.
- This road is critical for **supplying troops and equipment** in northern Ladakh.
- If China manages to **cut off this road**, it would **isolate Indian positions in the north**, creating a major vulnerability.

10. India's Defensive Preparedness

- India has **heavily militarised the region** with tanks, artillery, advanced air defense systems, and fully stocked forward posts.
- The infrastructure and troop deployments are designed to **counter any aggressive move** from either China or Pakistan.

Significance of Operation Meghdoot

- **Technological Progress and Infrastructure Development:** Over the last four decades, significant efforts have been made to **enhance infrastructure and habitat on the Siachen Glacier**.
 - Example-Introduction of **VSAT (Very Small Aperture Terminal) technology** has **revolutionized communication on the glacier** providing troops with **crucial data and internet connectivity**.
- **Enhanced Supply Chain and Logistics:** The introduction of heavy-lift helicopters and logistic drones significantly **improved the supply of essential resources to personnel** stationed at isolated posts, especially during harsh winter conditions.
 - This includes ensuring the **availability of clothing, mountaineering equipment, and rations**.
- **Improved Living Conditions and Connectivity:** Recent initiatives have focused on **improving connectivity, leading to advancements in the supply chain**.
- **State-of-the-Art Medical Infrastructure:** The Siachen Glacier now has **state-of-the-art medical infrastructure**, including **telemedicine nodes established by ISRO**.
 - These facilities provide **critical medical support** not only to troops but also to the local populace and tourists in the Nubra Valley.

Source: https://www.business-standard.com/external-affairs-defence-security/news/siachen-day-indian-army-honours-bravehearts-of-world-s-highest-battlefield-125041300064_1.html