

Important Vocab for the Editorial

1. **influence** (noun) – power, sway, leverage, authority.
2. **comment** (noun) – remark, statement, observation; mention.
3. **signal** (verb) – indicate, show, express, point to, imply.
4. **subtle** (adjective) – delicate, indistinct, toned down.
5. **The Heart of Asia** (noun) – it provides a platform for sincere and results-oriented regional cooperation by placing Afghanistan at its center, in recognition of the fact that a secure and stable Afghanistan is vital to the prosperity of the Heart of Asia region. This platform was established to address the shared challenges and interests of Afghanistan and its neighbors and regional partners. The Heart of Asia is comprised of 15 participating countries, 17 supporting countries, and 12 supporting regional and international organizations.
6. **supportive** (adjective) – in favour, approving, on the side of.
7. **accelerate** (verb) – increase, hasten, expedite, speed up.
8. **dialogue** (noun) – discussion, discourse, exchange of views (to solve a problem).
9. **in reference to** (phrase) – with regard to, regarding, as regards, with respect to, on the subject of.
10. **insurgent** (noun) – rebellious, mutinous, seditious, subversive; dissenting, agitating/rioting.
11. **steadfastly** (adverb) – firmly, resolutely, single-mindedly.
12. **evolve** (verb) – alter, change, transform gradually; develop, progress, advance gradually.
13. **host** (verb) – arrange, organize something (in one's place).
14. **diplomatic** (adjective) – (delicate & sensitive) consular, foreign-policy, political.
15. **delegation** (noun) – a body of delegates/representatives; diplomatic mission, commission, deputation.
16. **intra-** (prefix) – within.
17. **Doha Agreement** (noun) – The Doha Agreement, more formally, “Agreement for Bringing Peace to Afghanistan between the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan which is not recognised by the US as a state and is known as the Taliban and the United States of America, 2020” was signed on the February 29 in Doha, Qatar. The deal was considered a historic step towards establishing peace in Afghanistan.
18. **inaugural** (adjective) – first, initial, introductory.
19. **reaffirm** (verb) – assert, state, assure again strongly.
20. **long-held** (adjective) – held for a long time.
21. **close on the heels of** (phrase) – close behind, soon after, immediately after, following closely.
22. **push** (noun) – effort, initiative, drive.
23. **warring** (adjective) – opposing, conflicting, clashing, at war, fighting.
24. **transition government** (noun) – interim/temporary government.
25. **multilateral** (adjective) – involving many different countries/parties/organizations.
26. **envoy** (noun) – diplomat, consul, ambassador; representative, delegate, mediator.
27. **apparent** (adjective) – evident/clear, visible, noticeable, recognizable.
28. **climbdown** (noun) – withdrawal, retraction, u-turn/concession.
29. **willingness** (noun) – readiness, preparedness, inclination.
30. **evolution** (noun) – change, transformation, adaptation; development, advancement.

31. **in sync** (phrase) – working well together, in agreement.
32. **territory** (noun) – area, region, sphere; country, state, dominion.
33. **wherein** (adverb) – in which.
34. **pull back** (phrasal verb) – withdraw, retreat, disengage.
35. **reach out** (phrasal verb) – contact someone to obtain/offer help/assistance/cooperation.
36. **sponsor** (verb) – uphold, support, back.
37. **flexible** (adjective) – accommodating, adaptable, amenable, willing to compromise.
38. **strategic** (adjective) – relating to achieving long-term or overall (military) goals.
39. **fall** (noun) – downfall, ruin, collapse, failure, decline.
40. **cultivate** (verb) – grow, raise.
41. **ties** (noun) – association, relationship, bond, connection.
42. **irrigation** (noun) – the process of (artificially) supplying water to farmland to grow crops & plants.
43. **infrastructure** (noun) – the basic physical or organisational structure for something (to function properly).
44. **vaccine** (noun) – a biological preparation that improves immunity to a particular disease.
45. **take over** (phrasal verb) – assume control of, take control of, gain control of, take charge of, take command of.
46. **stakeholder** (noun) – a person with an interest in something.
47. **capitulation** (noun) – surrender, submission, yielding, giving in.
48. **strengthen someone's hand** (phrase) – encourage someone to act more effectively.
49. **clout** (noun) – influence, power, control.
50. **as well as** (phrase) – and in addition.
51. **strive** (verb) – try, attempt, make every effort.

Enter the peace process: On India's role in Afghanistan

APRIL 01, 2021 00:02 IST

India should use its influence to ensure peace within Afghanistan and the wider region

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar's comment that India supports talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban signals a subtle shift in New Delhi's approach towards the Afghan crisis. At the 9th Heart of Asia Conference in Tajikistan, he said India has been supportive of all efforts being made to "accelerate the dialogue" between the Afghan government and the Taliban, in a rare direct reference to the insurgent group. In the 1990s and 2000s, India was steadfastly opposed to any dealings with the Taliban. But its position seems to have evolved over the years. In 2018, when Russia hosted Afghan and Taliban talks, India had sent a diplomatic delegation to Moscow. In September 2020, at the intra-Afghan peace talks in Doha, Mr. Jaishankar was present at the inaugural session via a video link, reaffirming the long-held Indian position that any peace process should be Afghan-led, Afghan-owned and Afghan-controlled. His latest comments come close on the heels of a

new peace push by the Joe Biden administration of the U.S. The Biden plan includes two key proposals — a unity transition government between the warring parties and a UN-led multilateral conference of envoys from India, China, Iran, Pakistan, Russia, and the U.S. India has supported the UN-led process, in an apparent climbdown from its earlier position, and now shown willingness to deal with the Taliban.

The evolution of India's position is in sync with the evolution of the reality in Afghanistan. The Taliban, no longer an untouchable force, control much of the country's rural territories. The U.S. has already signed a deal with the Taliban, wherein American troops are scheduled to pull back from Afghanistan by May 1. China had long ago reached out to the Taliban. Russia has hosted talks between the two sides. European powers have also shown interest in sponsoring talks. So, India has to be more flexible and adapt to the new strategic reality. Since the fall of the Taliban, India has cultivated deep ties with the Afghan people and the government, with investments in multiple projects dealing with education, power generation, irrigation and other infrastructure development. The first batch of vaccines Afghanistan got was from India, in February. Recently, India signed an agreement to build the Shahtoot dam near Kabul. Thus, its economic, strategic and security ties could be disrupted if the Taliban were to take over. The question India faces, like the other stakeholders, is how to help Afghanistan end the violence without a total capitulation to the Taliban. India joining the peace process could strengthen the hands of the Afghan government, which is negotiating from a position of weakness. New Delhi should, using its regional clout as well as its deep ties with both the U.S. and Russia, strive for what Mr. Jaishankar called "double peace", both inside Afghanistan and in the region.

GUPTA