

Important Vocab for the Editorial

1. (in/by) fits and starts (phrase) – irregularly, interruptedly, fitfully, sporadically, now and again.
2. dialogue (noun) – discussion, discourse, exchange of views (to solve a problem).
3. nascent (adjective) – just beginning, developing, emerging, rising, burgeoning.
4. engagement (noun) – participation, taking part, involvement.
5. ties (noun) – bond, connection, association, relationship.
6. move (noun) – initiative, step, action, act, measure.
7. detente (noun) – restoration of harmony, agreement, compromise/understanding.
8. slam (verb) – push/press with great force.
9. slam the brakes (phrase) – to quickly press on a (vehicle’s) brake.
10. ceasefire (noun) – a negotiated agreement that will be accompanied by other associated commitments to de-escalate the fighting; a temporary stoppage of war, truce, armistice.
11. Line of Control (LoC) (noun) – it is a 450 mile-long military control line lying between India and Pakistan’s controlled parts of the former (under the British) Jammu and Kashmir. This line is not actually a legally recognized international boundary but prevails as per de facto. After the Simla Agreement signed in July 1972, this line was officially renamed as “Line of Control” from “the Cease-fire Line”.
12. measure (noun) – action, step, procedure.
13. push for (phrasal verb) – demand, insist on, ask/call/speak for; urge, advocate, recommend, champion, espouse.
14. rapprochement (noun) – reconciliation, reuniting, restoration of harmony, compromise/understanding.
15. salutary (adjective) – good, helpful/useful, beneficial, practical, valuable.
16. despite (preposition) – in spite of, notwithstanding, regardless of, for all.
17. growing (adjective) – increasing.
18. bonhomie (noun) – friendliness, warmth, geniality/affability.
19. lead a charge of (phrase) – to cause/inspire/influence (others) to act/ behave in a certain way.
20. Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) (noun) – a principle federal institution and a consultative forum used by the people-elected Prime Minister of Pakistan as its chairman, for concerning matters of state’s economic security, geoeconomic, political economic and financial endowment issues.
21. subsequently (adverb) – afterwards, later on, in due course.
22. drop (verb) – abandon, discontinue, cancel, give up, discard.
23. capacity (noun) – ability, power, potential; post/position.
24. normalise (verb) – to have a friendly relationship again after a war or disagreement.
25. revoke (verb) – cancel, repeal, reverse, abrogate.
26. Article 370 of Indian Constitution (noun) – It had “temporary provisions with respect to the State of Jammu and Kashmir” which gave special powers to the

state. The article allowed the state a certain amount of autonomy – its own constitution, a separate flag and freedom to make laws. Foreign affairs, defence and communications remained the preserve (domain) of the central government. It also allowed Jammu and Kashmir to make its own rules relating to permanent residency, ownership of property and fundamental rights. It did also bar Indians from outside the state from purchasing property or settling there.

27. **back channel** (noun) – a secondary or secret route.
28. **facilitate** (verb) – make easy, make possible; assist, help/aid.
29. **U-turn** (noun) – about-turn, a reversal of policy, change of mind/plan, about-face.
30. **swing** (noun) – fluctuation, change/shift, variation, oscillation.
31. **scenario** (noun) – situation, background, context.
32. **pose** (verb) – constitute, present, create, cause (a problem or danger or risk).
33. **indeed** (adverb) – in fact, actually, undeniably.
34. **under way** (phrase) – in progress, happening, occurring, taking place.
35. **behind the scenes** (phrase) – secretly, privately, surreptitiously.
36. **stress** (verb) – emphasize, draw attention to, highlight, underline, underscore.
37. **geo-economic** (adjective) – relating to the use of economic interests to promote and defend national interests, and to produce beneficial geopolitical results; relating to the use of economics as an instrument/tool of state power.
38. **prioritise** (verb) – make a point of, highlight, call attention to (something as very important).
39. **prosperity** (noun) – success, profitability, affluence, fortune.
40. **all-powerful** (adjective) – having total power; dictatorial, despotic, totalitarian, autocratic.
41. **the establishment** (noun) – the powers that be, the authorities, the system, the ruling class, the regime.
42. **spoiler** (noun) – a person who is spoiling something.
43. **press home one's advantage over** (phrase) – to utilize the advantage one has.
44. **embarrassing** (adjective) – humiliating, degrading, demeaning, disgracing.
45. **stand** (noun) – attitude, point of view, opinion, standpoint.
46. **unworkable** (adjective) – unrealistic, unfeasible, non-viable, impracticable.
47. **draw** (verb) – be the cause of some (controversial) reaction.
48. **reportedly** (adverb) – supposedly, seemingly, apparently, allegedly.
49. **outlooked** (adjective) – viewed, excepted.
50. **restoration** (noun) – reinstatement, return, re-establishment, putting back.
51. **cross-border** (adjective) – across a border between two countries.
52. **embark upon** (phrasal verb) – start, begin, initiate.

Fits and starts: On India-Pakistan dialogue process

APRIL 07, 2021 00:02 IST

India, Pakistan must be clear on scope of their nascent engagement if ties are to improve

After a month of moves and messages that indicated a détente, events last week appear to have slammed the brakes on the India-Pakistan dialogue process. The moves began with **a ceasefire announcement at the LoC in February**, followed by Indus water talks, sporting visas and other measures, including official speeches by Pakistan's top leadership pushing for regional rapprochement, and **salutary messages exchanged between Prime Ministers Narendra Modi and Imran Khan**. Despite the growing bonhomie, however, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and Pakistan's Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi decided **not to meet or even exchange greetings** at a conference in Dushanbe last week. And then days later, Mr. Qureshi led a charge of Cabinet Ministers who opposed a move by Pakistan's Economic Coordination Committee to reopen imports of Indian cotton and sugar, arguing that it would violate Pakistan's commitments on Kashmir. Subsequently, Mr. Khan announced he was **dropping the import proposal** he had made in his capacity as Commerce Minister, and that ties with India would not be normalised unless the Modi government revoked its steps of August 2019, on Jammu and Kashmir and Article 370. New Delhi, which has chosen not to comment on the events of the past month, and has not denied reports that claimed India-Pakistan moves were part of a back-channel dialogue facilitated by other countries, has also made no comment on Mr. Khan's U-turn.

While such swings have been common in the India-Pakistan engagement, the present scenario poses questions. If talks are indeed under way behind the scenes, it is unclear why Pakistan's import decision was not better coordinated before being publicly announced. The move **followed a speech by Pakistan's Gen. Bajwa** where he stressed the need for geo-economics, trade and connectivity to be prioritised for regional prosperity. So, if it is not the all-powerful Army Chief or the 'Pakistani establishment' that

is playing the “spoiler”, the Khan government must identify who it is. It is significant that New Delhi has chosen not to press its advantage over the embarrassing confusion in Pakistan’s stand, or react to its unworkable demand on Article 370, which has drawn India’s sharp comments in the past. This might indicate that the dialogue that has reportedly been on for months has been paused and much will depend on whether any other outlooked steps, including the restoration of High Commissioners in each other’s capitals and LoC trade that was suspended for security reasons in 2019, or commitments from Pakistan on cross-border terrorism, are announced next. If the nascent re-engagement is to have any chance, there must be also more clarity on what the two governments have decided to embark upon and hope to achieve from it.

GUPTA CLASSES