

Important Vocab For the Editorial

1. **flaw** (noun) – defect, fault, imperfection/weakness.
2. **surge** (noun) – sudden increase, rise, growth.
3. **stakeholder** (noun) – a person with an interest in something.
4. **pilgrimage** (noun) – religious journey, holy expedition.
5. **fortnight** (noun) – a period of two weeks/fourteen days continuously.
6. **intriguing** (adjective) – puzzling/bewildering, confusing, unusual/mysterious.
7. **on the heels of** (phrase) – very soon after something, following closely after something.
8. **miserly** (adverb) – close-fisted/tight-fisted, mean (unwilling to share things), ungenerous.
9. **stridently** (adverb) – strictly, firmly, in a tough/stiff way.
10. **apparatus** (noun) – a complicated structure/network/system of a organization.
11. **the executive** (noun) – the executive is a branch of government which enforces the law as written by the legislature and interpreted by the judiciary.
12. **imperative** (adjective) – necessary/essential, crucial, critical.
13. **curtailment** (noun) – reduction, limitation, restriction.
14. **prevailing** (adjective) – existing; current.
15. **stretch** (verb) – bend, strain, distort.
16. **intolerance** (noun) – prejudice, bias/bigotry; sensitivity.
17. **patriotism** (noun) – devoted love and support for country; nationalism, national loyalty.
18. **unequivocal** (adjective) – unambiguous, unmistakable; straightforward, categorical.
19. **push forward** (phrasal verb) – continue, rush, hasten.
20. **annul** (verb) – declare invalid, nullify, invalidate.
21. **accord** (verb) – give, grant, tender/present (status).
22. **interlocutor** (noun) – a person who takes part in a dialogue or conversation.
23. **defunct** (adjective) – no longer existing, inoperative, non-functioning.
24. **pursue** (verb) – engage in, follow, conduct.
25. **undermine** (verb) – weaken, spoil, damage.
26. **rhetoric** (noun) – bombast, loftiness, hyperbole/extravagant language.
27. **fall short of** (phrase) – be deficient/inadequate/insufficient; fail to meet/reach.
28. **nevertheless** (adverb) – in spite of that, notwithstanding, however.
29. **puppeteer** (verb) – manoeuvre, connive, intrigue.
30. **separatist** (adjective) – dissident, nonconformist, sectarian.
31. **upend** (verb) – overturn, reverse, invert.

32. **aggravate** (verb) – worsen/make worse, exacerbate, compound.
33. **rebuff** (verb) – reject, refuse, decline.
34. **evidently** (adverb) – seemingly, apparently, on the face of it.
35. **make headway** (phrase) – make progress, make strides, gain ground.
36. **misstep** (noun) – mistake, blunder.
37. **costly** (adjective) – catastrophic, ruinous, disastrous.

Valley of flaws: On Kashmir troop surge

New Delhi will have to engage with all stakeholders in finding a solution in Kashmir

The **Jammu and Kashmir** State government's decision to abruptly end the Amarnath pilgrimage, at least a fortnight ahead of schedule, citing terror threats, is intriguing. The announcement came close on the heels of an unexplained troop surge in the State, already one of the most militarised regions of the world. Governments usually tend to be miserly with information, and on questions related to national security they are more stridently so. By the very nature of the security apparatus, it is impossible for Parliament, the media or the general public to access information that is not voluntarily provided by the executive. Hence, it is imperative to accept the State government's position that the decision on curtailment of the yatra season was taken "keeping in view the latest intelligence inputs of terror threats, with specific targeting of the Amarnath Yatra, and given the prevailing security situation in the Kashmir Valley". There could be valid professional and tactical reasons for the limited transparency in security management. But the Narendra Modi government has stretched this principle to intolerance to request for transparency in general, often questioning the patriotism of those seeking meaningful information.

This government has been unequivocal and outspoken about its intentions to push forward with annulling the special status that Jammu and Kashmir is accorded in the Constitution through Articles 370 and 35A. The government is clear that there is nothing to negotiate with anyone in the Valley or about the Valley with anyone. An interlocutor appointed by the Centre is defunct. The BJP and the Centre have also been pursuing a policy of undermining the mainstream political parties in the State through administrative measures and political rhetoric. True, the governance track record of the Peoples Democratic Party and the National Conference falls far short of inspiring; nevertheless, these parties have been integral to the ways in which New Delhi engaged with the Valley. **Pakistan** may be

puppeteering the separatist Hurriyat, but New Delhi will have to engage with all stakeholders in resolving the conflict in the Valley. Unfortunately, the first BJP government with a majority of its own in the Lok Sabha has instead upended the policy of the first Vajpayee-led BJP government which sought to strengthen the regional parties, engage the separatists and Pakistan to make progress towards peace. In recent years, the situation in the Valley has worsened and tensions between India and Pakistan have become aggravated. New Delhi quite rightly rebuffed U.S. President Donald Trump who, evidently in search of an arena for peacemaking after failing to make headway with North Korea, offered to mediate. But while dealing directly with the challenge in Kashmir, it must realise any misstep can be costly.