

Important Vocab For the Editorial

1. **knee-jerk** (adjective) – unthinking, unintentional, unplanned.
2. **expel** (verb) – banish, exile, deport/evict.
3. **envoy** (noun) – ambassador, diplomat, consul.
4. **downgrade** (verb) – decline, lower, reduce.
5. **diplomatic** (adjective) – (delicate & sensitive) consular, foreign-policy, political.
6. **snap** (verb) – break, part, split (suddenly).
7. **solidarity** (noun) – unity, harmony, mutual support.
8. **setback** (noun) – problem, difficulty, issue.
9. **mounting** (adjective) – increasing, growing, escalating.
10. **whittle down** (phrasal verb) – reduce, cut down, decrease/scale down (something in size gradually).
11. **puppet** (noun) – pawn; a person under someone's control.
12. **legitimacy** (noun) – reasonableness, justification, validity.
13. **muddle** (verb) – confuse, bewilder, perplex.
14. **ironically** (adverb) – paradoxically, unexpectedly, strangely.
15. **peddle** (verb) – advocate, suggest, urge/recommend.
16. **unilaterally** (adverb) – used to indicate something done by a person/country without approval/agreement from other people/countries involved in the situation.
17. **status quo** (noun) – the present situation, the current state, the existing state of affairs.
18. **empty out** (verb) – remove, withdraw, clear.
19. **lockdown** (noun) – confinement, restraint, encirclement.
20. **license** (verb) – authorize, permit, allow.
21. **mobilise** (verb) – organize, call up, bring into play.
22. **clout** (noun) – influence, power, control.
23. **overt** (adjective) – clear, visible, noticeable/unconcealed.
24. **covert** (adjective) – secret, furtive, stealthy/hidden.
25. **diplomacy** (noun) – international politics, foreign affairs, foreign policy.
26. **back channel** (adjective) – relating to a secondary or secret route.
27. **seasoned** (adjective) – experienced.
28. **comprehend** (verb) – understand, grasp, fathom.

Knee-jerk: On Pakistan expelling Indian envoy

Pakistan must reconsider its decision to downgrade diplomatic ties with India

Pakistan's decision to expel India's High Commissioner, snap trade relations and observe August 15 as a black day in supposed solidarity with the people of Jammu & Kashmir is a serious setback for diplomatic relations. Wednesday's announcements appear to be a knee-jerk reaction to the mounting pressures on the Pakistani establishment to respond to India's executive-legislative actions that whittle down Article 370. **Pakistan** has consistently

described chief ministers of Jammu & Kashmir as “puppets” and never recognised the legitimacy of the government in Srinagar. Its sudden concerns about India’s actions in its own territory are reflective of muddled confusion. Ironically, this is the first time Islamabad has articulated that Article 370 was aligned with the interests of the Kashmiri people. Every Pakistani government and the country’s permanent establishment have continued to peddle the myth that they could unilaterally alter the status quo in J&K. Now, they feel compelled to respond to the expectations that they have themselves raised in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir. Sections of Indian civil society have legitimate concerns about the actions of the BJP Government in emptying out Article 370 and the continuing lockdown of the Valley, but this does not license Pakistan to interfere in what the MEA correctly described on Thursday as India’s internal matter.

In the days to come, India can expect Pakistan to raise the Kashmir issue at the United Nations, mobilise the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation and send envoys to friendly capitals. India is well placed to deal with Pakistan on the diplomatic front given the changed international context. India’s economic clout has grown enormously in the last couple of decades, and given doubts in the Western world about Pakistan’s overt and covert support to Islamist terror, New Delhi has the space to deal with Islamabad’s efforts to “internationalise” the Kashmir issue. Downgrading diplomatic relations between troubled neighbours is never a good idea. Neither is snapping trade and transport links. India withdrew its High Commissioner to Pakistan after the 2001 Parliament attack, but chose not to send back the Pakistani envoy at the time. However, the Pakistani High Commissioner was expelled by India after the Kaluchak terror strike in 2002. It’s interesting to note that despite all the troubles the two countries have had, High Commissioners have been able to return to their jobs since full diplomatic relations were restored in 1976. In fact, even after the 2001 Parliament attack, India and Pakistan managed to have their High Commissioners back in place by March 2003. **Diplomacy** is a mechanism to ensure that channels of communication remain open. While India and Pakistan have used back channels in recent years, the presence of seasoned diplomats in Delhi and Islamabad has always benefited the two countries. Pakistan needs to comprehend this.