

NOT THEIR BUSINESS
The OIC achieved little other than pleasing Pakistan through its Kashmir pronouncements

The statement issued by the Organisation of Islamic Co-operation's Kashmir Contact Group calling on India to "rescind its actions revoking Article 370", among other stipulations, may not even be worth the paper it is written on. If it has a dubious relevance, it is one that allows the Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan to sell the theory back at home that his trip to New York, focused on Kashmir, has met with some success. From the mid-1990s, when this Contact Group was formed, it has issued several statements on behalf of Pakistan, which happens, not surprisingly, to be a member, as does Turkey, Niger, Azerbaijan and Saudi Arabia. The Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman had Imran Khan flown on his private jet to Saudi Arabia for a two-day visit before speeding him on the same plane to New York and the UNGA. It is also no coincidence that OIC is headquartered in Jeddah and receives its financial raison d'être from its chief benefactor, Saudi Arabia. Further, though it boasts of a membership of 57 countries, its influence on world affairs has always been marginal. It is also extremely doubtful if the statement issued by the Contact Group reflects faithfully the national positions of the individual member states. The United Arab Emirates, for instance, conferred the Order of Zayed, its highest civilian award on Prime Minister Narendra Modi, more than a week after New Delhi's moves on Article 370, and declared that Kashmir was India's internal matter.

The OIC's record of conflict resolution when it comes to issues between OIC member states is poor. In practical terms, its fatuous attempts to meddle in Kashmir, including by appointing a so-called special envoy on Jammu and Kashmir, have amounted to nothing. The organisation, constituted on religious lines, but seeking to fulfil geopolitical interests, needs reforms from within. It could begin by asking Pakistan to change its state policy on terrorism. Imran Khan did admit at various fora that Pakistan had backed entities such as the al-Qaeda, but he should ensure that Pakistan abjures support to Kashmir-centric groups such as the Jaish-e-Mohammed and the Lashkar-e-Taiba. It serves no useful purpose for the OIC to paint Kashmir in communal and religious political colours. India, though not a part of the OIC, has the second largest numbers of Muslims in the world, perhaps more than Pakistan and some of its most ardent backers put together. The OIC would do a lot better if it did something useful to better the lot of its members or mediate between warring Saudi Arabia and Yemen, for instance. In the meanwhile, New Delhi must demonstrate to the world that its new Kashmir policy is in the larger interest of all Kashmiris.

| <u>Words</u> | <u>Kind</u> | <u>Meaning</u> |
|---------------------|--------------------|---|
| Pronouncement | Noun | Declaration, assertion, announcement, herald |
| Rescind | Verb | Revoke, repeal, cancel, reverse, abrogate, annul, nullify, override |
| Stipulations | Noun | Condition, precondition, proviso, prerequisite |
| Dubious | Adj. | Doubtful, uncertain, unsure, hesitant |

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| Relevance | Noun | Appositeness, appropriateness, aptness, fitness |
| Trip | Noun | Excursion, outing, jaunt, visit, journey, voyage expedition |
| Surprising | Adj. | Awesome, exemplary, unannounced |
| Speed | Verb | Hurry, race, sprint, dash, bolt, dart |
| Coincidence | Noun | Accident, chance, serendipity, fate, providence |
| Raison | Noun | In justification, in rationale, in function |
| Benefactor | Noun | Patron, benefactress, supporter |
| Boast | Verb | Brag, crow, swagger, swank, show off |
| Marginal | Adj. | Slight, small, tiny, low, insignificant |
| Extreme | Adj. | Utmost, uttermost, ultimate, paramount |
| Instance | Noun | Example, occasion, occurrence, illustration |
| Confer | Verb | Bestow on, present with / to, grant to |
| Declare | Verb | Herald, aver, avow, pronounce, announce, proclaim |
| Conflict | Noun | Dispute, quarrel, squabble, run in |
| Resolution | Noun | Intention, revolve, decision, intent |
| Fatuous | Adj. | Silly, foolish, inane, bafty, vacuous, deft, hare brained infantile |
| Meddle | Verb | Interfere, butt in, introduce, pry, poke, nose |
| Envoy | Noun | Representative, delegate, deputy, mediator intermediary, surrogate, liaison |
| Geopolitical | Adj. | Cartography, chorography, geology |
| Sundry | Adj. | Various, varied, miscellaneous, assorted motley, legion, divers |
| Back | Verb | Support, advocate, buttress, anchor, endorse |
| Entity | Noun | Organization, institution, establishment, structure |
| Ensure | Verb | Make certain, guarantee, warrant, certify |
| Abjure | Verb | Renounce, relinquish, reject, forswear, disavow dispense, dispense with |
| Ardent | Adj. | Passionate, avoid, fervent, fervid |
| Backer | Noun | Supporter, spoon sorer, investor |
| Mediate | Verb | Arbitrate, conciliate, reference, moderate |
| Demonstrate | Verb | Reveal, bespeak, indicate, betoken |

RUNNING FOR PRESIDENT

A second Premadasa is against a second Rajapaksa in race for Sri Lanka's presidency

In fielding Sajith Premadasa, Sri Lanka's United National Party (UNP) has chosen arguably its strongest candidate to take on former Defence Secretary Gotabaya Rajapaksa in the presidential election to be held on November 16. The party chose to back the claims of Mr. Premadasa, its deputy leader, over those of Ranil Wickremesinghe, its leader and the Prime Minister. The party may have reckoned that Mr. Premadasa, son of the late President Ranasinghe Premadasa, with a lineage not drawn from the urban elite, is its best bet while facing Mr. Gotabaya, a rival from another Sinhalese political family from the same southern region. The latter has the image of a strongman who guided the armed forces, as defence secretary, to victory over the separatist LTTE, and the UNP may need all the grassroots support that Mr. Premadasa can mobilise to recapture the presidency it lost in 1994. For

Mr. Wickremesinghe, it will be the third consecutive election in which he has had to step aside from the contest in favour of another. In the 2015 election, as part of a grand opposition plan to unseat Mr. Rajapaksa, he backed Maithripala Sirisena, who recorded a historic victory on the promise of good governance, economic revival and ethnic reconciliation.

It is quite uncommon that the battle lines in a presidential election appear to be drawn even before it is known whether the incumbent will seek re-election or his party will field a candidate. In recent times, President Sirisena has been marginalised in the political arena, and his Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) is no more the organisation it was in its heyday. He has had a bitter parting of ways with Mr. Wickremesinghe, even though both have shared power for nearly five years. Last year, the president ousted Mr. Wickremesinghe from his post, but the courts reinstated him. Former President Mahinda Rajapaksa, who cannot run for president now because he has already completed two terms, has walked away with a significant part of the SLFP's support base, and leads the Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP). He has fielded his brother, Gotabaya Rajapaksa, on its behalf. It will be primarily a contest to win the support of the majority Sinhalese. The leftist Janatha Vimukti Peramuna has chosen its leader Anura Dissanayake as its candidate, whose prospects may not be high, but can make a dent in the vote share of the two principal candidates. Lost in the perennial jockeying for power is the promise of abolishing the executive presidency, something that has been heard for the last 25 years. Sri Lanka will be holding one more election for the post, even while the idea of scrapping it remains a key issue. That there is no sign of the promised inclusive Constitution for the multi-ethnic country is another disappointing feature of recent Sri Lankan history.

| <u>Words</u> | <u>Kind</u> | <u>Meaning</u> |
|---------------------|--------------------|---|
| Arguably | Adv. | Possibly, conceivably, feasibly, plausibly, probably |
| Take on | Verb | Become very upset, especially, needlessly |
| Claim | Noun | Assert, declare, profess, aver, pro test, insist |
| Reckon | Verb | Calculate, compute, believe, suppose |
| Lineage | Noun | Ancestry, family, parentage, extraction |
| Urban | Adj. | Built up, town, city, townified, suburban |
| Elite | Noun | Best, pick, cream, nonpareil, elect, nobility |
| Bet | Noun | Wager, stake, gamble, ante, side bet, perfecta |
| Rival | Adj. | Competitor, opponent, contender, antagonist |
| Mobilise | Verb | Marshal, deploy, muster, rally, summon, ready |
| Capture | Verb | Catch, apprehend, seize, imprison, detain |
| Consecutive | Adj. | Successive, succeeding, following, continuous |
| Step aside | Verb | Abjure, demit, deny, disavow, disclaim |
| Apposition | Noun | Resistance, hostility, antagonism, antipathy |
| Unseat | Verb | Dislodge, throw dismount, spill, unhorse |
| Revival | Noun | Improvement, rallying, betterment, amelioration advance, upswing |
| Ethnic | Adj. | Racial, race related, genetic, inherited |
| Reconciliation | Noun | Reuniting, reunion, conciliation, appeasement, |

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| | | placating |
| Incumbent | Adj. | Binding, obligatory, current, existing, present |
| Reckon | Noun | Estimate, count, suppose |
| Marginalise | Verb | Criticize, demean, deprecate, belittle, disparage |
| Bitter | | Acrimonious, sharp, acid, acidic, resentful |
| Parting | Noun | Division, dividing, separation, splitting, severance, detachment |
| Oust | Verb | Drive out, expel, force out, depose, topple |
| Reinstate | Verb | Restore, return to a former position, put back, re-install |
| Prospects | Noun | Likelihood, hope, expectation, anticipation odds-chances |
| Dent | Noun | Reduction, depletion, deduction, cut, hole |
| Perennial | Adj. | Everlasting, perpetual, struggle, scramble |
| Jockey | Verb | Compete, vie, contend, struggle, scramble, jostle grapple |
| Abrogate | Verb | Repudiate, revoke, repeal, rescind, abolish, over ride annul |
| Scrap | Noun | Fragment, piece, bit, snippet, oddment, remnant, iota Crumb |
| Let down | Verb | Disappoint, sadden, dishearten, upset |
| Lee way | Noun | Freedom, emancipation, elbow room, latitude |
| Languish | Verb | Become slow, decrease, sooth, alleviate, mitigate abate, relegate, allay |
| Robust | Adj. | Strong, healthy, hearty, hardy, salubrious |
| Vicar | Noun | Leader, minister, premier. |
| Triumph | Noun | Victory, win, conquest, success, ascendancy, Achievement, mastery, accomplishment |
| Inkling | Noun | Idea, abstraction, notion |
| Lineaments | Noun | Features, characteristics |
| Tidings | Noun | Information, lowdown, tipoff |