

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

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,

		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