

## What suits Trump

The U.S. President violated diplomatic protocols in talking of mediation on Kashmir

Facing a furore in Parliament over the issue, the government has clarified in no uncertain terms that Prime Minister Narendra Modi did not request U.S. President Donald Trump to “mediate or arbitrate” on the Kashmir issue, as Mr. Trump claimed on Monday. Addressing Parliament, External Affairs Minister S.Jaishankar said India remains committed to its policy of discussing all outstanding issues with Pakistan only bilaterally, and assured the House that Mr. Modi did not raise this with Mr. Trump at their recent meeting in Osaka during the G-20 summit. In making the claim that has been roundly denied by New Delhi, Mr. Trump breached several well-laid diplomatic protocols, including one against discussing privileged conversations with a leader, during a public conversation with another. Mr. Trump also said a “lot” of his talks with the Pakistan Prime Minister would focus on India and Afghanistan, an odd departure from the precept of putting bilateral issues to the fore, and being more discreet when discussing sensitive relations involving other countries. For New Delhi, it may be time to recognise that Mr. Trump’s comments are a sign of new realities in international diplomacy, where leaders care less about niceties and more about open communication.

Mr. Modi will have to prepare accordingly for some plain speaking when he visits the U.S. and meets with Mr. Trump, as he is expected to, in September this year. In the short term, the government’s decision to address the claim by Mr. Trump will have nipped any repercussions in the bud. The government should pursue the issue through diplomatic channels with the U.S. government, and determine whether Mr. Trump made the comments out of confusion or deliberately. India has always opposed any suggestion of third-party mediation on Jammu and Kashmir; both the 1972 Shimla Agreement and the 1999 Lahore declaration included India’s and Pakistan’s commitment to resolving issues between them. It is unlikely that Mr. Modi would have spoken out of line with this policy, and the most charitable explanation for Mr. Trump’s new contention is that he mistook India’s appeal to the international community to hold Pakistan accountable for terror groups on its soil that carry out attacks in Kashmir, for a general desire for mediation. Mr. Trump’s comment in March that the U.S. successfully mediated for the release of captured fighter pilot Abhinandan by Pakistan may have even given him some hope that the U.S. could play a larger role on the Kashmir issue, and New Delhi would need to address that. A more worrying proposition is that Mr. Trump took the line favoured by his Pakistani interlocutors on Kashmir as a way of enhancing his own plans for a pullout from Afghanistan with Pakistan’s help on security and talks with the Taliban. While the damage from Mr. Trump’s words may not have a very lasting impact on India-U.S. ties,

that from any rushed measures to force a resolution in Afghanistan will have far-reaching and lasting impact, including on India.

<b><u>Words</u></b>	<b><u>Kind</u></b>	<b><u>Meaning</u></b>
Furore		Commotion, uproar, outcry, fuss, brouhaha
Mediate		arbitrate, conciliate, intercede, moderate
Arbitrate		adjudicate, judge, referee
Summit		peak, top, tip, pinnacle, zenith, apex
Roundly		vehemently, emphatically, fiercely, forcefully
Breach		contravention, violation, infringement, infraction
Protocol		etiquette, convention, formalities, customs
Privilege		advantage, benefit, prerogative, entitlement
Conversation		discussion, tack, chat, gossip, tete-a-tete
Precept		principle, rule, tenet, canon, doctrine
Fore		situated, placed in front
Discreet		careful, prudent, wary
Niceties		fine point, subtlety, nuance, refinement
Nip in the bud		to stop something at an early stage
Repercussions		results, outcome, upshots, sequel
Deliberate		intentional, calculated, premeditated
Resolve		settle, sort out, wind up, solve
Out of line		behaving in an inappropriate manner
Charitable		philanthropic, humanitarian, humane
Contention		disagreement, dispute, argument, altruistic
Accountable		responsible, liable, answerable
Interlocutors		a person who takes part in a dialogue
Enhance		boost, increase, surge, snowball

## Caribbean cruise

India goes to the West Indies sensing more cricketing opportunities than threats. In the past, a tour of the West Indies was deemed the toughest endeavour for any cricketer. Reputations were either enhanced or lost and fractures seemed imminent in the battles against the fiery fast bowlers, while the crowds requested the perfume-ball, a euphemism for a nasty bouncer. But times change, and the inherent quality of the Caribbean squads has declined so much that a sporting visit to the isles with their sunny beaches is seen as an exercise towards etching triumphs, fattening batting averages and multiplying bowling yields. With this as the backdrop, India will fly halfway across the earth for a set of three Twenty20s —interestingly, two of them are being hosted in the United States of America — three ODIs and two Tests against the West Indies from August 3 to September 3. India will be the favourites across the three formats, though in limited overs games, where the abridged nature of the sport tends to iron out the flaws, the host might fancy its chances. The tour, coming as it does close on the heels of the World Cup in England, presents an opportunity for India to look ahead, make a few changes in personnel and prepare for the future. Transition always coincides with the quadrennial World Cup and India too is part of that global trend.

M.S. Dhoni has straddled three generations, the one that had Sachin Tendulkar, the second with the likes of Yuvraj Singh and the latest under Virat Kohli as captain. The former India captain has held firm in a storied career of triumphs, losses, frenzied runs, sharp catches and quicksilver stumpings, but at 38 he is near his cricketing twilight. Though he avoided retiring from the blue shade by preferring to serve the Army in his role as an honorary lieutenant colonel, Dhoni presented an opportunity to M.S.K. Prasad and his fellow selectors to fast-track Rishabh Pant as the first-choice wicket-keeper batsman across all formats. Dhoni, who retired from Tests in 2014, might still make appearances in the shorter versions, and there is speculation about next year's Twenty20 World Cup in Australia being his preferred last stop. But it all depends on what the selectors and Kohli prefer as they look at building the team afresh for the 2023 World Cup in India. The imminent West Indies tour will help the team management get a fair idea about the potential in the likes of Shreyas Iyer, Mayank Agarwal, Manish Pandey, Rahul Chahar, Krunal Pandya, Washington Sundar, Khaleel Ahmed, Deepak Chahar and Navdeep Saini, besides the other regulars. The opposition may be depleted, but for these players, hope floats and a crucial August awaits.

<u>Words</u>	<u>Kind</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
Threat		warning, ultimatum, danger, peril, hazard, menace
Deem		consider, regard, judge, adjudge
Endeavour		try, attempt, strive, struggle, exert oneself
Enhance		increase, boost, surge, spur, snowball

Imminent	impending, very close, approaching, in the offing
Perfume ball	the ball bowled very fast targeting batsmans face
Euphemism	polite term, indirect term, substitute, genteelism
Inherent	intrinsic, innate, connate, immanent, inborn
Etch	corrode, engrave, carve, inscribe, incise
Triumph	victory, win, conquest, success, achievement
Fattening	putting on weight, gaining weight
Yield	produce, bear, give, supply, provide, afford
Backdrop	lie behind/ beyond, backgroiund
Abridge	shorten, abstract, curtail, truncate, trim
Iron out	eliminate, eriadicate, erase, get rid of
Fancy (v)	think, imagine, believe, be of the opinion
Straddle	stand astride, bestride, mount, get on
Frenzied	frantic, wild, frenetic, bectic, fraught
Speculation	conjecture, theory, hypothesis, guess
Afresh	a new, again, once again
Deplete	exhaust, use up, consume, expend drain, empty