

## The week after: on India-Pak relations

### India must keep up diplomatic pressure on Pakistan to act against terror groups

With India and Pakistan deciding to de-escalate post-Balakot tensions, the focus has moved to the diplomatic sphere. India's strikes on a target deep inside Pakistan were coupled with diplomatic manoeuvres that ensured no country censured India for the move. And in a turnaround for ties with the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation after half a century, External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj was able to put the country's case before the body, while Pakistan stayed out. In recognition of India's justification to act against an imminent terror threat from the Jaish-e-Mohammad, the U.S., the U.K. and France also moved in at record speed to bring another listing request against the group's founder, Masood Azhar, at the UN Security Council's committee for terror designations. There is a reasonable assumption that China will not block it this time as it did during the last three attempts. There were other outcomes that defied the past. Although Islamabad had spoken in the past of its abilities with "tactical nuclear devices", there was no such mobilisation after India's strikes. On the other hand, Pakistan was able to, with its aerial response, also indicate that it was not without non-nuclear options. Finally, indications that the international community was involved in effecting a breakthrough are clear. U.S. President Donald Trump hinted at a breakthrough in talks hours before Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan announced the release of Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman.

The government must, however, also assess what it has actually achieved in strategic terms, and the consequences of the "new normal" it has sought to create with Pakistan. Despite the strikes, it is far from clear that the capabilities of the JeM have been degraded to the point where it can no longer carry out attacks in India. New Delhi must also track the JeM's assets and abilities within Jammu and Kashmir, as well as any intelligence and security protocol failures that may have preceded the Pulwama attack. Second, while Pakistan announced it would study the dossier given by New Delhi on Azhar and the JeM, it does not appear to be willing to act against either, and has not taken steps akin to the few it had after the 2001 Parliament attack, the 2008 Mumbai attacks or the 2016 Pathankot attack. Pakistan Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi's comments practically defending the JeM and putting out excuses of "illness" for Azhar make that clear. It is also necessary to realise the limits of calling international attention to India's concerns, to ensure that there are no curbs on what India sees as its strategic autonomy. Finally, the government must have a firmer handle on its messaging after the events of the past week, so that a public reading of its strategic purpose is not lost in the claim vs counterclaim spiral with Pakistan.

WORD	MEANING	SYNONYMS
<b>De-escalate</b>	Reduce the intensity of (a conflict or potentially violent situation)	Diminish, Lessen, Grow Less, Decrease, Dwindle
<b>Diplomatic</b>	Of or concerning the profession, activity, or skill of managing international relations	Ambassadorial, Consular, Foreign-Policy, Political
<b>Manoeuvres</b>	A movement or series of moves requiring skill and care	Operation, Exercise, Activity, Move, Movement, Action
<b>Censure</b>	Express severe disapproval of (someone or something), especially in a formal statement.	Criticize, Condemn, Castigate, Chastise, Lambaste, Pillory

<b>Justification</b>	The action of showing something to be right or reasonable.	
<b>Imminent</b>	About to happen.	Impending, At Hand, Close, Near, Approaching, Fast Approaching, Coming
<b>Assumption</b>	A thing that is accepted as true or as certain to happen, without proof.	Supposition, Presupposition, Presumption, Premise, Belief, Expectation
<b>Defy</b>	Openly resist or refuse to obey.	O Against, Flout, Disobey, Refuse To Obey, Rebel Against
<b>Tactical</b>	Elating to or constituting actions carefully planned to gain a specific military end	
<b>Mobilisation</b>	The action of a country preparing and organizing troops for active service.	
<b>Assess</b>	Evaluate or estimate the quality	Evaluate, Judge, Gauge, Rate, Estimate, Appraise, Form An Opinion Of, Check Out
<b>Consequence</b>	A result or effect, typically one that is unwelcome or unpleasant.	Result, Upshot, Outcome, Out-Turn, Sequel, Effect, Reaction, Repercussion
<b>Sought /seek</b>	Attempt to find (something).	Search For, Try To Find, Look For, Look About For, Look Around For
<b>Capability</b>	The power or ability to do something.	Ability, Capacity, Power, Potential, Potentiality
<b>Protocol</b>	The official procedure or system of rules governing affairs of state or diplomatic occasions.	Etiquette, Social Practice, Custom, Usage, Use, Habit, Wont, Procedure
<b>Precede</b>	Come before (something) in time.	Come Before, Go Before, Go In Advance Of, Lead Up To, Lead To
<b>Dossier</b>	A collection of documents about a particular person, event, or subject.	File, Report, Case History, Case Study, Casebook
<b>Akin</b>	Of similar character	Similar, Related, Close, Near, Corresponding, Comparable
<b>Crub</b>	Check or restraint on something	Restraint, Restriction, Check, Brake, Rein, Control, Limitation
<b>Autonomy</b>	The right or condition of self-government	

<b>Firm</b>	Having a solid, almost unyielding surface or structure	Hard, Solid, Unyielding, Resistant
<b>Strategic</b>	Relating to the identification of long-term or overall plan to achieve them	Planned, Calculated, Deliberate
<b>Counterclaim</b>	A claim made to rebut a previous claim.	

## Deepening slowdown: on the Indian economy

### Can the RBI's reduction in borrowing costs help check the demand slowdown?

India's economy is inarguably slowing, and the latest estimates from the Central Statistics Office disconcertingly point to a deepening slowdown. GDP growth is projected to have eased to 6.6% in the October-December period. With the CSO now forecasting the full-year expansion at 7%, fiscal fourth-quarter growth is implicitly pegged at an even slower 6.5%. At that level, growth would have slowed to a seven-quarter low, giving the incumbent NDA government its slowest pace of annual growth. The data clearly reflect the pain points in the real economy that have been evident for some time now. For one, the farm sector continues to remain in trouble with GVA (gross value added) growth in agriculture, forestry and fishing having slowed sharply to 2.7% in the last quarter, from a 4.2% pace in July-September and 4.6% a year earlier. With rabi sowing showing a shortfall across most crops after a deficient north-east monsoon, and the abiding structural issues that have pushed a multitude of farmers into acute distress nowhere near resolution, it is hard to foresee an early revival in this crucial primary sector. This, in turn, continues to dog demand in the hinterland for manufactured products, from two-wheelers to tractors, and is evident in the consumption spending data. Growth in private final consumption expenditure eased appreciably to 8.4%, from the second quarter's pace of 9.8%.

Manufacturing is another source of concern. The estimates for growth in GVA for the sector put the pace at 6.7%, weaker than the 6.9% posted in the second quarter and a rapid deceleration from the April-June period's 12.4%. The latest Index of Industrial Production (IIP) figures also give little cause for optimism as manufacturing expansion in December slowed to 2.7%, from 8.7% 12 months earlier. RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das had in fact pointedly cited how "high-frequency and survey-based indicators for the manufacturing and services sectors" suggested a slowdown in the pace of activity, to help justify his vote last month for an interest rate cut to bolster growth. That most of the sectors comprising the broader services basket remain becalmed adds to the sense of disquiet. It remains to be seen if the RBI's reduction in borrowing costs helps check the demand slowdown in the fourth quarter, an improvement in investment activity notwithstanding. Gross fixed capital formation, the key metric for investment demand, expanded by a healthy 10.6%, building on the second quarter's 10.2% increase. Still, with military tensions with Pakistan on the boil, a long campaign for the general election ahead, uncertainties looming on the global trade and growth horizons, and little fiscal leeway to tease back momentum through increased spending, the economy appears headed for a period of uncertainty at least till the next government is in place.

<b>WORD</b>	<b>MEANING</b>	<b>SYNONYMS</b>
<b>Deepening</b>	Make or become deep or deeper.	
<b>Inarguable/unarguable</b>	Not open to disagreement; indisputable.	Incontrovertible, Incontestable, Undeniable, Irrefutable, Unassailable
<b>Disconcerting</b>	Causing one to feel unsettled.	Unsettling, Unnerving, Discomfiting, Disturbing, Perturbing,
<b>Expansion</b>	The action of becoming larger or more extensive.	Growth, Increase In Size, Enlargement, Extension,
<b>Rabi</b>	The grain crop sown in September and reaped in the spring	
<b>Sow</b>	Plant (seed) by scattering it on or in the earth.	Scatter, Spread, Broadcast, Disperse, Strew, Disseminate, Distribute
<b>Deficient</b>	Not having enough of a specified quality or ingredient.	
<b>Structural</b>	Organized plan	Constructional, Organizational, Systemic, Constitutional, Configurational, Formational
<b>Multitude</b>	A large number of people or things.	A Lot, A Great Number, A Large Number, A Great Quantity, A Large Quantity, Host, Horde, Mass,

<b>Foresee</b>	Be aware of beforehand; predict.	Anticipate, Predict, Forecast, Expect, Envisage, Envision, See, Think Likely
<b>Revival</b>	An improvement in the condition, strength, or fortunes of someone or something.	Improvement, Rallying, Picking Up, Betterment, Amelioration, Turn For The Better
<b>Hinterland</b>	The remote areas of a country away from the coast or the banks of major rivers.	The Back Of Beyond, The Middle Of Nowhere, The Backwoods, The Wilds, The Bush, Remote Areas, A Backwater
<b>Consumption</b>	The action of using up a resource.	Using Up, Use, Utilization, Expending, Expenditure
<b>Ease</b>	Make (something) happen more easily; facilitate.	Facilitate, Make Easy, Make Easier, Expedite, Speed Up, Assist, Help, Aid, Advance, Further, Forward, Smooth The Way For, Clear The Way For, Simplify
<b>Appreciably</b>	To an appreciable extent; considerably.	Considerably, Substantially, Significantly, Markedly
<b>Concern</b>	E relevant or important to; affect or involve.	Affect, Be The Business Of, Involve, Be Relevant To, Apply To, Pertain To, Have A Bearing On, Bear On, Impact On
<b>Deceleration</b>	Reduction in speed or rate.	

<b>Optimism</b>	Hopefulness or confidence about the future	Hopefulness, Hope, Confidence, Buoyancy, Cheer, Good Cheer, Cheerfulness, Sanguineness, Positiveness, Positive Attitude
<b>Cited</b>	Mention as an example	Refer To, Make Reference To, Mention, Allude To, Adduce, Instance, Give As An Example, Point To
<b>Disquiet</b>	A feeling of worry or unease.	Unease, Uneasiness, Worry, Anxiety, Anxiousness, Distress, Concern
<b>Uncertain</b>	Not able to be relied on; not known or definite.	Unknown, Undetermined, Unsettled, Unresolved, Unsure, Pending,
<b>Looming</b>	Appear as a shadowy form, especially one that is large or threatening.	Emerge, Appear, Become Visible, Come Into View, Take Shape, Materialize, Reveal Itself, Appear Indistinctly, Come To Light, Take On A Threatening Shape
<b>Horizons</b>	The line at which the earth's surface and the sky appear to meet.	Skyline, Range Of Vision, Field Of View, Vista, View
<b>Leeway</b>	The amount of freedom to move or act that is available.	Freedom, Scope, Room To Manoeuvre, Latitude, Elbow Room, Slack, Space, Room, Liberty, Room To Spare, Room To Operate

<b>Tease back</b>	Make fun of or attempt to provoke (a person or animal) in a playful way again	Make Fun Of, Poke Fun At, Chaff, Make Jokes About, Rag, Mock, Laugh At, Guy, Satirize, Be Sarcastic About
<b>Momentum</b>	The impetus gained by a moving object.	Energy, Force Push, Driving Power, Steam, Velocity

