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# INDIA'S STATISTICAL PERFORMANCE ON THE GLOBAL STAGE

Relevant for: International Relations | Topic: International Treaties & Agreements, and other important organizations

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October 02, 2023 12:16 am | Updated 01:27 am IST

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“The World Bank compiles SPIs to assess the performance of national statistical systems across 174 countries” | Photo Credit: Reuters

The World Bank's compilation of Statistical Performance Indicators (SPI) ranks India 67 among 174 countries in 2019. Analysis reveals both shortcomings and a commendable performance in various aspects of SPI. The importance of SPI evaluation to enhance international competitiveness has been highlighted in this article with recommendations for strategic improvements in critical pillars. There is also a need for more robust representation to the World Bank to refine SPI.

As India celebrates its election to the United Nations Statistical Commission, India's own official statistical system has come under scrutiny within the country recently. Questions have been raised about the credibility of the statistics it produces and the competence of the official statisticians. Even acclaimed statistical methods devised to generate these statistics, which were subsequently adopted by other developing countries, now face questioning. What is even more surprising is the assertion that the results of statistical exercises, such as censuses and surveys, are claimed to be of poorer quality when compared to data from administrative sources, most of which suffer from uncertain coverage and conceptual shortcomings. In general, the statistical system is now facing a trial. In this context, looking at the international rankings of national statistical systems compiled by the World Bank can provide valuable insights.

The World Bank compiles SPIs to assess the performance of national statistical systems across 174 countries. The SPI is based on the assessment of five dimensions of performance, commonly referred to as the “five pillars” of a national statistical system, i.e., data use; data services; data products; data sources, and data infrastructure.

India's Score 2019 (SPI Overall Score: 70.4; Pillar 1 - Data use: 80.0; Pillar 2 - Data Services: 88.0; Pillar 3 - Data Products: 60.0; Pillar 4 - Data Sources: 68.9; Pillar 5 - Data Infrastructure: 55.0) and India's Rank 2019 (SPI Overall Score: 67; Pillar 1 - Data Use: 101; Pillar 2 - Data Services: 35; Pillar 3 - Data Products: 105; Pillar 4 - Data sources: 31; Pillar 5 - Data infrastructure: 73).

The latest available scores are from 2019. According to these scores, India's overall SPI score

stands at 70.4, placing it in the 67th rank (ranks are self-computed) among the 174 countries assessed. The pillar-wise scores show India's lower performance in the 'Data use' and 'Data products' pillars, with scores of 80 and 60, respectively, resulting in poor rankings of 101 (with an average rank of 116.5) and 105.

The score in the 'Data use' category depends on how different sectors of society, including the legislature, executive, civil society, academia, and international bodies, utilise the statistics produced by the system. The SPI assessment 2019 considered only data usage by international bodies. India performs well in measures assessing the comparability of estimates of child mortality, debt reporting, drinking water, and labour force participation. However, it loses 20 points due to the unavailability of comparable poverty estimates for the World Bank over the last 10 years (from 2017). This stems from a new comparability indicator introduced by the World Bank's PovcalNet for poverty estimation. It is important to note that India did produce poverty estimates within this period through the NSS Consumption Expenditure Survey.

The pillar 'Data Products' anchors the national statistical system's performance around the essential data required for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). To improve upon this, India has already taken the right step by conducting a Multiple Indicator Survey and Comprehensive Annual Modular Survey in the NSS 78th round (2020-21) and 79th round (2022-23), respectively, for collection of data on SDGs.

Regarding 'Data infrastructure', India's score is 55, ranking 73 (with an average rank of 75.5). This pillar encompasses five sub-dimensions: 'Legislation and Governance', 'Standards and Methods', 'Skills', 'Partnership', and 'Finance' ('Skills' and 'Partnership' were not considered for SPI 2019). India's scores for 'Legislation and Governance' are high, given that the national statistical legislation aligns well with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics. Nonetheless, the overall score for 'Data infrastructure' is diminished due to moderate performance in 'Standards and methods' and poor performance in 'Finance'.

In 'Standards and Methods', India fares well in indicators assessing the adoption of System of National Accounts (SNA) 2008, COICOP (Classification of Individual Consumption According to Purpose), and the latest standards for the compilation of government finance statistics, monetary, and financial statistics.

However, the score in this dimension decreases due to the non-adoption of the latest standards for classifying employment status (such as International Classification of Status in Employment or ICSE-93 or North American Industry Classification System or NAICS 2012), the accounting basis for reporting central government financial data, and the non-utilisation of the Generic Statistical Business Process Model (GSBPM). This is perplexing given that the process followed in NSS surveys closely mirrors and predates the adoption of the GSBPM. The 'Finance' category receives a low score since, according to the World Bank, India's national statistical plan lacks full funding. India excels in data services (score 88, rank 35) and data sources (score 68.9, rank 31), securing a place in the top quintile for these pillars. Under data sources, three indicators are evaluated (with the fourth indicator not considered in 2019): censuses and surveys, administrative data, and geospatial data. Among these indicators, censuses and surveys (score: 100/100 for censuses and 86.6/100 for surveys) contribute the most to India's ranking, followed by administrative data (score: 50/100), and finally, geospatial data (score: 38.9/100).

The relatively low score of administrative data is mainly due to non-fulfilment of criteria of at least 90% registration of births under the Civil Registration System (CRS). The World Bank has taken the estimate of coverage under CRS from the UN SDG monitoring database, which shows estimates of coverage as 89% for children under five and 87% for children under one. However,

these estimates are actually derived from the National Family Health Survey conducted between 2019 and 2021— a period significantly affected by lockdowns following COVID-19. Conversely, the publication of the Office of the Registrar General of India, “Vital Statistics of India”, cites the coverage of births under CRS for 2019 at approximately 93%, which is a much more reliable source than NFHS for estimation of coverage of CRS.

In the ‘Data services’ dimension, India gets full points for data releases and data services, yet avenues for improvement remain in terms of online accessibility. Enhancements in this area could be achieved by improving download options, providing more comprehensive metadata availability, and open terms for data usage. India’s commendable rank of 40 in the ‘Openness’ score from Open Data Inventory deserves recognition.

Clearly, the SPI for 2019, as compiled by the World Bank, underscores India’s superior performance in censuses and surveys in comparison to administrative data. A thorough examination of the SPI score is crucial to drive improvement and enhance international competitiveness. It is through identifying issues and establishing attainable goals that a substantial rise in rankings can be achieved. For instance, achieving a 20-point increase in each of the three pivotal pillars (‘Data products’, ‘Data use’, and ‘Data infrastructure’) would have positioned India at 34 in 2019. Moreover, proactive engagement with the World Bank to fortify the robustness of the SPI is warranted. Use of “Vital Statistics of India” in place of the NFHS for estimating the registration of births and deaths is one such case.

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# CHANGE IN THE MALDIVES: THE HINDU EDITORIAL ON THE NEW LEADER, MOHAMED MUIZZU

Relevant for: International Relations | Topic: Effect of policies and politics of developed & developing countries on India's interests

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October 02, 2023 12:20 am | Updated 12:20 am IST

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The [Maldives has chosen a new leader](#), replacing President [Ibu Solih](#), who won by a landslide in 2018, with [Mohamed Muizzu](#), the Mayor of Male and the choice of the previous ruling party, the PPM. Mr. Muizzu won Saturday's presidential run-off that followed an inconclusive first round in which no candidate crossed 50% of the vote, winning nearly 54% to Solih's 46% in this round. Mr. Solih's electoral loss is being attributed to a heavy anti-incumbency sentiment and concerns over the post-COVID-19 economy that is dependent on tourism, the rift within Solih's party, the MDP, due to a rupture in his old friendship with former President Mohamed Nasheed, as well as concerns over "sovereignty" issues, whipped up by Mr. Muizzu's PPM that is behind an "India out" campaign to oust Indian military personnel. PPM chief and former Maldives President Abdulla Yameen, the chief architect of that campaign and serving a jail term of 11 years, was openly at odds with India during his tenure. He had paved the way for a free trade agreement with China and loans for infrastructure projects that the Opposition said had led the Maldives into a "debt trap". Mr. Solih turned the Maldives's international compass, committing publicly to an "India First" policy, as New Delhi undertook many infrastructure projects, assisted the Maldives during the pandemic, and helped it during the campaign to have Maldives Foreign Minister Abdulla Shahid elected President of the UN General Assembly. As a result, the Solih-Muizzu run-off was billed as an India versus China contest by commentators, who have sought to portray the result as a "setback" for India.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi was among the first to congratulate President-elect Muizzu on social media. New Delhi must avoid the impression that it has favourites within the Maldivian polity. The ball is now in Mr. Muizzu's court to take up the promise of keeping India-Maldives ties close — he has not himself criticised India in the way his party has. Among his tasks would be shoring up the Maldivian economy as debt repayments come due, and taking lessons from events in the neighbourhood such as Sri Lanka's handling of its economic crisis. It remains to be seen whether he will ensure the release of Mr. Yameen, and what control the previous President will have over the new government. Mr. Muizzu will have to preside over an upcoming referendum vote, which Mr. Nasheed has pushed for, to decide whether the Maldives will revert to a parliamentary system rather than the presidential one. Given its location in the Indian Ocean, along key shipping routes, Mr. Muizzu will have to balance traditional, strategic interests with India, which is its closest and most powerful neighbour, while engaging China and the United States, that keenly watch developments there. It is important that neither Delhi nor Male view these interests through the prism of "zero sum" games, as that has led to tensions between

them in the past.

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# BUILDING BRICS FOR THE FUTURE

Relevant for: International Relations | Topic: BRICS, IBSA and India

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October 03, 2023 12:15 am | Updated 12:15 am IST

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In August, six new members were inducted into the BRICS grouping, in South Africa. While many believe that this meeting did not have productive results, we need to look at BRICS from the perspective of how it has evolved rather than the results of one meeting.

First, it is important to note that BRICS emerged out of an economic compulsion. It does not provide military or security support to various countries, is not involved in the policing of nations, and does not provide peacekeepers. Compare this to, say, NATO: European Allies and Canada have invested an extra \$350 billion since 2014, with eight consecutive years of increased defence spending. The GDP of BRICS is now 36% of the global GDP and the population of its members will be 47% of the world population by 2050. Therefore, it is important to look at the long-term opportunities that this group presents. More members could be inducted, which means that BRICS could pose a serious challenge to the dominance of the G7 comprising Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the U.K., and the U.S.

Second, two members of BRICS are China and India, which together contain one-third of the world's population. The two countries are the fastest-growing economies and are expected to be among the top three economies of the world by 2030. Both countries understand that globally, bilateral ties have seen a transformation following the formation of economic blocs such as the European Union or ASEAN, as such blocs accelerate trade and investment. While India and China have bilateral challenges at the political and diplomatic levels since their stand-off at Doklam in 2017, trade between the two countries has continued to grow significantly. That Chinese President Xi Jinping skipped the G20 summit in New Delhi will not impact this economic cooperation. We should never forget that economics and business trumps politics.

Third, there has been some polarisation between the U.S. and other parts of the world. This was especially becoming evident during the Trump administration. Many countries have issues with the U.S.'s stance against China: the U.S. seems keen to impose tariffs and create other barriers to restrict China's expansion in trade and investment. China has made strides in certain areas like communication infrastructure and electric mobility, too, which the U.S. would like to contain. This is expected to get worse. Therefore, countries want to be part of a grouping that involves China too. In the BRICS grouping, China is not a dominant player; democratic countries such as India, South Africa and Brazil provide the counterweight.

Similarly, the way refugees are being treated in Europe do not give a positive perspective of a world that is getting increasingly globalised. Countries such as the U.S. have flouted World Trade Organization rules and have not penalised for the same. This means that countries have



to look for other arrangements.

The search for an alternative such as the Non-Aligned Movement to tackle Cold War challenges has given hope of a new order; thus, many countries are applying for membership to this group. Six new members were inducted in the last meet. As BRICS grows, there will be many trade business and investment protocols created, much like what we see in different free trade arrangements or economic blocs.

Fourth, the U.S. dollar has been the dominant global currency all this time. We have seen the demise of travellers' checks, of people carrying authorised currency that was equivalent to dollar bills. With digital platforms making inroads into many countries, digital currency is clearly the future. Both India and China have made great progress in this field; they are far ahead of the U.S. and Europe. Both India and China are pushing for more trade, investment, and business in their currencies and together, through BRICS, they can push their own currencies as alternative currencies to the dollar. India and China's interests in the long run converge; their short-term challenges will not deter this convergence. Freedom from the U.S. dollar is a big reason for convergence.

Finally, the continent that promises economic growth this century is Africa. The way France has intervened in Niger or the manner in which migrants have been treated in Europe provide Africans with a negative image about Europe. The fact is that while Europe talks about connectivity, a Strait of Gibraltar crossing is still not in place, partly due to geopolitics and partly due to other concerns. Visa restrictions have pushed Africans to travel to travel to China and see its development more closely than to Europe or the U.S. This makes them believe in China's potential. African countries continue to talk about the freedom they need in choosing partners for investment or trade. India proposed full membership for the African Union at the G20 summit in New Delhi. It is trying to push its own reach within Africa.

BRICS will again be out of the news until the next summit. However, each summit generates some spark that provides the building blocks for different networks of people for the future. This is a group for the long run. After all, way back in 2003, even Goldman Sachs saw the potential of this grouping and the opportunities it presents by stating that "If things go right, in less than 40 years, the BRICs economies together could be larger than the G6 in U.S. dollar terms".

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# 11TH MEETING OF THE INDIA-UAE HIGH LEVEL JOINT TASK FORCE ON INVESTMENTS

Relevant for: International Relations | Topic: India - Middle East

The Eleventh meeting of the UAE-India High Level Joint Task Force on Investments ('the Joint Task Force') was held today in Abu Dhabi, co-chaired by His Highness Sheikh Hamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the Managing Director of Abu Dhabi Investment Authority (ADIA), and Shri Piyush Goyal, Minister of Commerce & Industry, Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution, and Textiles, Government of India.

The Joint Task Force was established in 2013 to promote trade, investment and economic ties between India and the UAE. The Joint Task Force has provided an effective mechanism for discussion on opportunities & prospects for investments in both countries as well as resolution of issues faced by investors of the two countries.

During the meeting, the co-Chairs reviewed the progress made on the implementation of the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) between the UAE and India, which came into force in May 2022. The CEPA was a landmark agreement designed to spark a new era of cooperation between two nations, strengthening the long-standing cultural, political and economic ties. It has helped reduce tariffs on more than 80 percent of product lines, eliminate barriers to trade and create new pathways for investment and joint ventures. In the first 12 months of the CEPA, bilateral non-oil trade reached US\$50.5 billion, representing a growth of 5.8% compared to the corresponding period a year earlier. The two countries are fast moving towards the target of US\$100 billion non-oil trade by 2030.

The Joint Task Force delegations discussed the status of negotiations for the India-UAE Bilateral Investment Treaty, underscoring the need to accelerate the bilateral discussions for an early conclusion of a balanced agreement that benefits both countries and their investors.

The two sides also discussed ways and incentives for encouraging further growth in investment flows from UAE sovereign investment entities into India.

In this context, the Indian side shared opportunities for investments in priority sectors like renewable energy, health, semi-conductors and asset monetization sectors in India.

In this regard, progress on the creation of the Fast Track Mechanism to facilitate Indian investment into the UAE was also discussed. The Indian side requested for strengthening the mechanism especially for facilitation of investments in priority sectors like renewable energy and energy transition. Both sides agreed to use this channel as a means of developing more competitive and accommodating ecosystems that can enable the private sector to fully pursue expansion opportunities in each other's markets.

Talks also covered the India-UAE Start-Up Bridge, a joint initiative between the UAE Ministry of Economy and India's Ministry of Commerce and Industry. The bridge is expected to act as a one-stop platform that offers training sessions and knowledge-sharing on important topics such as market access, investment funds, venture capital, incubators and the respective business landscape in each country.

Another important agenda topic was the establishment of Abu Dhabi – India Virtual Trade Corridor, which aims to increase overall trade volumes by developing data exchange systems to

facilitate paperless trade between the two countries, improving efficiencies and security. Both sides agreed to continue coordination and cooperation between the respective counterparties of both countries for the early implementation of this milestone.

The co-chairs also reviewed the progress on key projects including the food security corridor related investment under I2U2 Framework into India. The project will be instrumental in addressing food security challenges, with the aim of bolstering the supply of essential food items and establishing a resilient value chain between the two nations.

The Joint Task Force noted the progress of plans for the Abu Dhabi Investment Authority (ADIA) to establish a presence in Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT City), a financial free zone in Gujarat, with the aim of facilitating future investments into India. Indian side invited other Sovereign Wealth Funds in the UAE to establish similar presence in India.

The Joint Task Force witnessed the signing of an MOU between the UAE Ministry of Industry & Advanced Technology and the Ministry of Commerce & Industry of the Republic of India, related to cooperation in the fields of Industry and Advanced Technology. The MOU will promote cooperation in sectors such space, healthcare, renewable energy, artificial intelligence, among others. The two sides aim to develop cooperation efforts and build an institutional framework to promote and develop bilateral cooperation, bearing in mind the important role of industries and advanced technologies play in the diversification and growth of economies.

Another agreement was also signed between Al Etihad Payments, a subsidiary of the Central Bank of the UAE, and the National Payments Corporation of India. The agreement creates a strategic partnership to develop the UAE's Domestic Card Scheme (DCS). The UAE DCS is a key element of the Central Bank of the UAE's Financial Infrastructure Transformation programme which aims to position the UAE as a global leader in digital financial infrastructure. The DCS will be the nation's first unified, secure, and efficient card payment platform, accelerating the UAE's transition to a digital economy by facilitating the growth of e-commerce, providing consumers with a customised offering, enhancing financial inclusion, and reducing the cost of payments.

Since its creation, the Joint Task Force has been used as a valuable forum for highlighting and resolving specific issues faced by companies from both countries when investing into the UAE and India. Both sides discussed pending issues related to investments and agreed on the need for timely resolution of issues and difficulties experienced by the investors. The co-chairs directed both teams to work together and with the relevant government entities to address these issues in a timely and mutually acceptable manner.

The meeting was attended by H.E Mohamed Hassan Alsuwaidi, UAE Minister of Investment, MD & CEO of ADQ, H.E Dr. Thani bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi, UAE Minister of State for Foreign Trade and H.E Khaled Mohamed Balama, Governor of the Central Bank of the UAE, and a number of senior officials from government authorities and investment entities from both countries.

Commenting at the meeting, His Highness Sheikh Hamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the Managing Director of the Abu Dhabi Investment Authority and Co-Chair of the Joint Task Force, said, "The delegates at today's Joint Task Force meeting were able to take great satisfaction from the progress made on implementing the landmark Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement between India and the UAE, and reiterated their intent to continue working collaboratively to ensure this partnership grows ever stronger. The activities of the Joint Task Force will play an important role in maintaining momentum, exploring new opportunities and ensuring the India-UAE trade and investment relationship continues to flourish."

Shri Piyush Goyal, Minister of Commerce & Industry, Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution, and Textiles, Government of India, and Co-chair of the Joint Task Force, said, "With the conclusion of another fruitful meeting of this Joint Task Force, a lot of ground was covered. Existing collaborations were reviewed and strengthened, and new opportunities for partnerships were explored. Government of India reiterates the importance of food security in the UAE and extends its full support for the same. In this context, the progress of the food corridor project gains great significance, which received more clarity. Partnership agreement between NPCI and CBUAE for development of a National Card scheme for the UAE, modelled on India's RuPay card, is another milestone in our economic engagement. The India-UAE partnership will go a long way and would be exemplary for the world."

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Trade and H.E Khaled Mohamed Balama, Governor of the Central Bank of the UAE, and a number of senior officials from government authorities and investment entities from both countries.

Commenting at the meeting, His Highness Sheikh Hamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the Managing Director of the Abu Dhabi Investment Authority and Co-Chair of the Joint Task Force, said, "The delegates at today's Joint Task Force meeting were able to take great satisfaction from the progress made on implementing the landmark Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement between India and the UAE, and reiterated their intent to continue working collaboratively to ensure this partnership grows ever stronger. The activities of the Joint Task Force will play an important role in maintaining momentum, exploring new opportunities and ensuring the India-UAE trade and investment relationship continues to flourish."

Shri Piyush Goyal, Minister of Commerce & Industry, Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution, and Textiles, Government of India, and Co-chair of the Joint Task Force, said, "With the conclusion of another fruitful meeting of this Joint Task Force, a lot of ground was covered. Existing collaborations were reviewed and strengthened, and new opportunities for partnerships were explored. Government of India reiterates the importance of food security in the UAE and extends its full support for the same. In this context, the progress of the food corridor project gains great significance, which received more clarity. Partnership agreement between NPCI and CBUAE for development of a National Card scheme for the UAE, modelled on India's RuPay card, is another milestone in our economic engagement. The India-UAE partnership will go a long way and would be exemplary for the world."

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# FRACTURED COLLECTIVE: THE HINDU EDITORIAL ON KEVIN MCCARTHY'S OUSTER AS U.S. HOUSE SPEAKER

Relevant for: International Relations | Topic: Effect of policies and politics of developed & developing countries on India's interests

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October 07, 2023 12:15 am | Updated 08:05 am IST

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The “surprise” [ouster of U.S. House of Representatives Speaker Kevin McCarthy](#) from the top post of the lower chamber of Congress has once again left the Republican Party exposed as a fractured collective. The tenure of Mr. McCarthy, the first ever Speaker in U.S. history to be ejected from the chair, came to an end after Florida Congressman Matt Gaetz invoked a relatively rarely used clause called a “motion to vacate”, which was ironically a concession made by Mr. McCarthy to his Republican opponents to win them over during his arduous campaign to be Speaker in early 2023. The ensuing vote saw Mr. McCarthy, a lawmaker from California, defeated by 216 votes against 210 that supported his continuance as Speaker. Eight Republicans sided with the entire Democratic Caucus of the House to deny Mr. McCarthy his political ambitions in Congress. Particularly vociferous in their resistance to being governed by Mr. McCarthy were members of the Republican Freedom Caucus and their allies, who appeared to resent his cooperation with Democrats on critical policy matters. The most significant among these were bipartisan efforts to avoid a federal government shutdown by raising the debt ceiling. Towards this goal, Mr. McCarthy had signed off on a 45-day temporary spending bill, much to the chagrin of his Republican detractors in the House.

Therein lies an indication of the malaise gripping the Republican Party — that there is a vocal faction within the party that sees itself as closely aligned with the political outlook of former President Donald Trump, urging not only for smaller government and lower public expenditure, but also seeking to influence areas of U.S. foreign policy, for example by calling for cuts to U.S. funding to Ukraine in its war efforts against the Russian invasion. This group, described by some as the “GOP radicals”, rejects the notion of compromise, even when it comes at a potentially catastrophic economic cost, such as the shutdown of the government’s critical functions. Indeed, Mr. McCarthy tried to placate this group by denying President Joe Biden his request for \$6 billion in support of Ukraine and by announcing a plan to impeach the president on charges related to allegations of wrongdoing by the latter’s son, Hunter Biden, but failed. Ultimately, however, the recalcitrance of this group could prove to be politically costly for the entire party, as 2024 is an election year. This matters especially in the context of independent voters, who often carry the swing votes but would likely walk away from a party that has failed to put its house in order and present a united front at the hustings.

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## INDIA AND SAUDI ARABIA SIGN MOU IN ELECTRICAL INTERCONNECTIONS, GREEN / CLEAN HYDROGEN AND SUPPLY CHAINS

Relevant for: International Relations | Topic: Effect of policies and politics of developed & developing countries on India's interests

India and Saudi Arabia have signed a Memorandum of Understanding in Riyadh today afternoon, in the fields of Electrical Interconnections, Green / Clean Hydrogen and Supply Chains. The MoU was signed between the visiting Union Minister for Power and New & Renewable Energy, Government of India, Shri R.K. Singh and the Minister of Energy, Government of Saudi Arabia, Mr. Abdulaziz bin Salman Al-Saud on the sidelines of the MENA Climate Week in Riyadh today.



This MoU aims to establish a general framework for cooperation between the two countries in the field of electrical interconnection; exchange of electricity during peak times and emergencies; co-development of projects; co-production of green / clean hydrogen and renewable energy; and also establishing secure, reliable and resilient supply chains of materials used in green / clean hydrogen and the renewable energy sector.

It was also decided between the two energy ministers that B2B Business Summits and regular B2B interactions between the two countries will be conducted to establish complete supply and value chains in the above-mentioned areas of energy sector cooperation.

Earlier, an Indian delegation led by the Union Minister for Power and New & Renewable Energy, Government of India, Shri R.K. Singh participated in the High-Level Segment of [the Middle East and North Africa \(MENA\) Climate Week 2023](#), which is being held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia during October 8 - 12, 2023. MENA Climate Week 2023 will discuss climate solutions ahead of COP28 and is being hosted by the government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. This important event brings together a diverse group of stakeholders to discuss many topics, including the Global Stocktake, and the economic and energy security aspects of climate action in the context of the Paris Agreement. It provides a valuable opportunity to share insights and best practices, and to develop ambitious climate strategies for the rest of this critical decade.

Addressing a session on “Global Stocktake of the Paris Agreement (GST) Regional Dialogue: Highlighting enablers and technologies for ambition and just and inclusive transitions” on the first day of the MENA Climate Week in Riyadh today, the Union Minister for Power and New & Renewable Energy said that MENA Climate Week is extremely important in exploring and sharing opportunities to shape the future of energy production, consumption and sustainability

on a global scale. He said that the gathering at MENA CW holds great significance for the MENA region and collectively possesses immense potential in influencing the current and future narrative of energy transition.

The Minister told the global community that India today is one of the world's most vital voices in the energy landscape, and has emerged as a leader in energy transition. "India having almost 17% of the world population and being the world's fifth largest economy, is taking significant steps to reduce emission intensity of its GDP by 45% by the year 2030 and to achieve the goal of Net Zero by the year 2070." He recalled that India's energy sector has undergone a remarkable transformation, aimed at providing reliable, affordable and sustainable energy to its people. "The country has made significant strides in enhancing power generation capacity from non-fossil fuels, established a unified national grid and has strengthened distribution network, promoting renewable energy, expanding access to energy and achieving 100% household electrification, and implementing innovative policies."

Shri Singh said that green hydrogen is a promising alternative for accelerating India's energy transition. "It brings me great pleasure in informing you that the Government of India has launched the National Green Hydrogen Mission for harnessing hydrogen energy and has approved an initial outlay of US \$ 2.3 billion for this Mission."



The Minister called upon MENA countries to join the Global Biofuel Alliance, in order to advance international cooperation in sustainable biofuels to realize the full potential of the Alliance. He said that the Alliance aims to facilitate cooperation in intensifying the development and deployment of sustainable biofuels, to facilitate trade in biofuels and much more, in collaboration with international biofuels organizations.

The Minister underlined that India firmly believes that all nations must recognize that the energy transition will have different challenges and opportunities for developing countries and the global south in particular. "Therefore, it is imperative that we work together to support each other in this transition." Shri Singh asserted at the MENA Climate Week that individual actions and sustainable behavioural choices are crucial to achieve the energy transition in a sustainable manner. "In this regard, I call upon MENA region to join India's initiative on Lifestyle for Environment (LiFE)", said the Minister.

The opening ceremony of MENA Climate Week can be watched [here](#).

### **Global Stocktake of Paris Agreement**

The high-level GST (Global Stocktake of the Paris Agreement) regional dialogue at the Middle-East and North Africa (MENA) Climate Week will bring together policy makers, key stakeholders and partners in the intergovernmental process to discuss key messages from the region with a view to shaping the GST outcome. The dialogue will further serve as a platform to discuss the



challenges, barriers, solutions and opportunities for enhancing climate action and support within the context of MENA and for enhancing international cooperation.

The GST allows countries to periodically take stock of the implementation of the Paris Agreement to assess the collective progress towards achieving the purpose of the Agreement and its long-term goals. It is done in a comprehensive and facilitative manner, considering mitigation, adaptation and the means of implementation and support, and in the light of equity and the best available science. The first GST started in Glasgow in 2021 and will conclude at the climate change conference in Dubai, UAE (at COP 28). The outcome of the GST shall inform Parties in updating and enhancing, in a nationally determined manner, their action and support, as well as in enhancing international cooperation for climate action.

The conclusion of the first global stocktake is an important political moment to highlight collective progress made globally towards the achievement of the Paris Agreement provisions and goals. It is an important moment to underscore challenges, but also the plenitude of opportunities to accelerate climate action including various regional priorities. It will also be critical to signal a positive message of unity and cooperation to the world, to enable ownership of the outcome and subsequent buy-in for effective implementation.

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### **PIB DELHI | Alok Mishra / Dheep Joy Mampilly**

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# ORIGINAL SIN: ON THE ATTACK ON ISRAEL AND THE OCCUPATION OF PALESTINE

Relevant for: International Relations | Topic: Effect of policies and politics of developed & developing countries on India's interests

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October 10, 2023 12:20 am | Updated 12:20 am IST

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The unprecedented surprise attack by Hamas on Israel on Saturday, killing some 700 people, should serve as a reminder of the unsustainability of the situation in the occupied and blockaded Palestinian territories and the dangers that non-state actors such as Hamas pose to Israel, no matter how strong their military and intelligence agencies are. Tensions have been flaring in the West Bank for months, but nobody expected such a coordinated, low-tech yet lethal incursion from Gaza. The West Bank has seen violence on a daily basis in recent months. Before Saturday's attack, some 200 Palestinians and 30 Israelis were killed this year alone. The Benjamin Netanyahu government largely ignored the violence, and went ahead with its other policy preferences, including the overhaul of the judiciary. The Israeli military described the situation in Gaza as "stable instability", noting that the situation, though volatile, was under control. And then came the Hamas attack, reminiscent of the 1973 Yom Kippur war when Egypt and Syria shook Israel. Hamas, an Islamist militant organisation that carried out suicide attacks in the 1990s and early 2000s, showed no distinction between civilians and soldiers, dealing the bloodiest blow to Israel in recent history.

The attack raises moral and pragmatic questions. Hamas's indiscriminate violence against Israeli civilians is repugnant and is not going to help the Palestinian cause in any way. On the contrary, it will put more Palestinian lives at risk as Israel, equally disregarding civilian casualties, is pounding the besieged enclave. But at the same time, Palestinian territories, under the yoke of the longest occupation in modern history, have been a fuming volcano. There is no peace process. Israel has continued to build settlements in the West Bank, raising security barriers and checkpoints, limiting Palestinian movements, and never hesitating to use force or collective punishment to keep organised Palestinians under check. This status quo has only turned Palestinians more radical and Hamas even stronger. Israel has now declared war. But past attacks — ground invasions and air strikes — have done little to weaken Hamas. West Asia has also witnessed geopolitical realignments in recent years — from the Israel-Arab reconciliation to the Iran-Saudi détente. But these changes have conveniently sidestepped the occupation of Palestine, West Asia's original sin, letting the status quo prevail. But the status quo cannot prevail without consequences. If Israel and other regional and international players want lasting peace and stability in the region, their focus must turn to finding a solution to the question of Palestine. The military operations without addressing the core issue would only be cosmetic interventions.

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# THE END OF THE TWO-STATE SOLUTION

Relevant for: International Relations | Topic: Effect of policies and politics of developed & developing countries on India's interests

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October 10, 2023 12:15 am | Updated 12:15 am IST

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Destruction made by a rocket fired from the Gaza Strip is seen in Ashkelon, Israel, on October 9, 2023, | Photo Credit: AP

The answer was always known; it was the question that had been unclear. From the very beginning of the Jewish-Arab conflict, the only viable long-term solution has been to divide the land between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea by creating two countries for two people.

Both the Arabs and Jews have had strong self-conceptions of nationhood tied to the same land — self-conceptions that did not reckon for the other. But for much of this 100-year war, Jews accepted the inevitability of partition while the Arabs rejected it. For the last few decades, however, the situation seems to have been reversed. One section of the Palestinian leadership, much of the Arab world, and all of the West seem to have agreed on a two-state solution, while it is Israel that is balking at creating a sovereign Palestinian state in West Bank and Gaza, with its capital in East Jerusalem. Understanding its reason is central to predicting the consequences of Hamas's recent terror attacks on Israel, one that has killed more than 700 Israelis and provoked the Israeli response.

At first glance, there seem to be many stakeholders to this never-ending conflict such as the Palestinian people, the multiple Palestinian leaderships of Hamas, Islamic Jihad and the Palestinian Authority, the Israeli voters, the Israeli government with its many coalition partners, the Arab countries, Iran, the West led by the U.S., and now even China. From a position of justice, one could argue that the only two stakeholders who should matter are the Palestinian and Israeli people.

But as a matter of realpolitik, the key stakeholder has always been the Israeli public. This is because, without the acquiescence of the more powerful Israel, no solution is possible. And since Israel is a democracy, without the agreement of the Israeli public no Israeli acquiescence is possible. So, the only question to ask is: will Hamas's attacks push the Israeli public into creating a sovereign Palestinian state?

Some opinion-makers think so. They feel that Israel's trauma from Hamas's strikes will finally make the people understand that a sovereign Palestinian state is a prerequisite for peace. But it is more likely that Israelis will come to the opposite conclusion: that a two-state solution — one where a Palestinian state will have its own Army and security — will empower Palestinians to

attack Israel even more effectively. They fear that an independent Palestine will behave as Hamas has been doing all along.

Hamas does not accept Israel's right to exist in any shape. It attacked Israel on its southern borders that will remain with Israel in any eventual peace deal, and killed and abducted innocent civilians, not religious settlers occupying the West Bank. The attack was directed at the very existence of Israel as a Jewish state. That the supposedly moderate Palestinian Authority in the West Bank has supported Hamas will only heighten Israeli fears that an end to the conflict will not be a Palestinian and Jewish state living side by side, but a single Palestinian state between the river and the sea. This is not a semantic difference. A citizen may accept the division of her country under some circumstances, but in no circumstances will she accept its annihilation.

The central obstruction to a two-state solution has not been the Israeli occupation of West Bank and Gaza — there was after all a murderous conflict between the two sides even before the occupation in 1967. The main roadblock has been the inability of the Palestinians to convince Israeli voters that if given sovereignty in some part of the land, they would leave the Jews alone in the other.

There has always been a radical Israeli fringe unwilling to see the Palestinians as a people deserving a state. These religious bigots had historically been on the margins of Israeli politics. Today, they are key members of the ruling coalition, reflecting a widening distrust among Israeli voters of Palestinians as partners in any eventual peace.

The lesson Palestinians have learnt from their decades-long occupation and daily humiliations has been that Israeli civilians need to share their pain to force them to reduce it. But from the Israeli perspective, every wave of violence against their civilian community has made them less likely to risk ending the occupation of Palestinians. The recent terror attacks will further Israeli suspicions that if this is what Hamas can do with a tiny bit of power, what would they do to Israel with sovereign state power?

Hamas' unprecedented attack will reinforce among Israelis the only two options they feel they have: they can either endure the continuing moral shame of ruling over another people or they can risk their very existence by creating a sovereign Palestinian state that might then wipe out Israel as a Jewish state.

Given the power imbalance between Israel and the rest of the Arab world, there is only one way for Palestinians to get their sovereign state. That will be to convince Israeli voters that an eventual Palestine will live peaceably next to Israel. But for this generation of Israelis who are scarred by images of a kidnapped 84-year-old grandmother being paraded in a golf cart by Hamas, the immorality of occupying another people will be preferable to risking the annihilation of one's own people. The only way forward is for a Palestinian leadership that can credibly signal to the Israeli people that it will not use the freedoms it gains from any peace deal to hurt Israel. The prospects for that seem dim.

*Vinay Sitapati is a professor of law and politics, and author of 'Half-Lion: How PV Narasimha Rao Transformed India' and 'Jugalbandi: The BJP Before Modi'*

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# SPECIAL ROUND OF NEGOTIATIONS FOR THE INDIA-PERU TRADE AGREEMENT

Relevant for: International Relations | Topic: Effect of policies and politics of developed & developing countries on India's interests

A Special Round of negotiations for the India - Peru Trade Agreement is scheduled to be held virtually on 10-11th October, 2023. The Indian track will be led by Chief Negotiator Mr. Vipul Bansal, Joint Secretary, Department of Commerce and Peruvian track will be led by Mr. Gerardo Antonio Meza Grillo, Director for Asia, Oceania and Africa, Ministry of Foreign Trade and Tourism.

Discussions on various chapters including Initial Provisions and General Definitions, Rules of Origin, Trade in Goods, Customs Procedures and Trade Facilitation, Technical Barriers to Trade, Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures, General and Security Exceptions, Cooperation and Legal and Institutional Issues/Dispute Settlement are expected to be undertaken during this special round. Discussions on Services, Movement of Natural Persons, Trade Remedies and Investment chapter will be held later in the month based on mutual convenience of the negotiators.

Negotiations for the India-Peru Trade Agreement commenced in the year 2017 and the fifth round was concluded in August, 2019. On account of Covid, the negotiations came to a pause.

On the sidelines of CII India-LAC Conclave held in New Delhi on 3rd-4th August, 2023, a delegation led by H.E. Dr. Teresa Mera Gomez, Vice Minister of Foreign Trade of Peru met Shri Piyush Goyal, the Union Minister of Commerce & Industry wherein both sides expressed an interest in resuming the trade negotiations. Subsequently, Minister Goyal has directed to recommence the negotiations with Peru.

It is anticipated that the Trade Agreement will significantly boost trade, investment and enhance cooperation in various sectors. The sixth round is slated to be held in December, 2023 at Lima in Peru.

India and Peru have been experiencing a steady growth in their trade relationship. During FY 2022-23, the bilateral trade volume reached \$3.12 billion. India exported goods worth \$ 865.91 million to Peru, and imported goods valued at \$ 2.25 billion from Peru. Key Indian exports to Peru include motor vehicles/cars, cotton yarn and pharmaceuticals, while Peru primarily exports gold, copper ores and concentrates.

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# JOINT STATEMENT DURING THE STATE VISIT OF THE PRESIDENT OF TANZANIA TO INDIA AND LAUNCH OF STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN INDIA AND TANZANIA (8-10 OCTOBER 2023)

Relevant for: International Relations | Topic: Effect of policies and politics of developed & developing countries on India's interests

1. At the invitation of Smt. Droupadi Murmu, President of the Republic of India, Her Excellency Samia Suluhu Hassan, President of the United Republic of Tanzania undertook a State Visit to the Republic of India from 8-10 October 2023. H.E. President Samia Suluhu Hassan was accompanied by a high-level delegation including the Minister for Foreign Affairs and East African Cooperation Hon. January Makamba (MP), and other members from different sectors, Senior Government Officials as well as members of the Tanzania Business Community.

2. H.E. President Samia Suluhu Hassan was accorded a ceremonial welcome on 9 October 2023, at the forecourt of the Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi. She also visited Rajghat to pay her respect to Mahatma Gandhi. H.E. President of India Smt. Droupadi Murmu will hold bilateral talks and also host a State Banquet in honour of H.E. President Samia Suluhu Hassan.

3. President Samia Suluhu Hassan and Prime Minister Narendra Modi held official bilateral talks in a warm and cordial atmosphere and exchanged views on bilateral, regional and international issues of mutual interest. The two leaders commended the existing close, cordial and cooperative relations and noted that India and Tanzania are time-tested partners bound by a long history of shared values and ideals spanning many years. They both acknowledged that the bilateral relations were further deepened by the visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Tanzania in July 2016, giving a significant boost to development cooperation.

4. The leaders recalled the recent visits of External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar to Co-chair the 10th Joint Commission on Economic, Technical and Scientific Cooperation and the Parliamentary delegation led by Speaker of Lok Sabha Shri. Om Birla to Tanzania. In addition, similar visits by several Tanzanian Ministers were held this year. The two leaders agreed that such high-level visits have reinforced the strong relations existing between Tanzania and India.

5. H.E. President Samia Suluhu Hassan will also attend the India-Tanzania Business and Investment Forum on October 10, 2023, where she will deliver the keynote address to the Indian and Tanzanian business communities. She will also hold one-on-one meetings (B2B) with key Indian Business Leaders.

6. With a view to further strengthen the bilateral relations and expanding cooperation across various sectors, the two leaders announced the elevation of Indo-Tanzania relationship to the level of 'Strategic Partnership'. Both sides noted that the strategic partnership will help the two countries to jointly work on issues like Maritime Security, Defence Cooperation, Development Partnership, Trade and Investment among others.

7. During the visit, MoUs covering a wide range of sectors were signed. List is enclosed as [Annexure A](#).

Political Relations

8. Both sides noted with satisfaction, an increasing level of bilateral political engagement and strategic dialogue on regional and global issues including the vision for the Indo-Pacific and implementation of the Indian Ocean Rim Association's Outlook on the Indo-Pacific. It was noted that India and Tanzania are maritime neighbours with a long history of trade and people to people linkages therefore Tanzania has an important place in India's vision of SAGAR (Security and Growth for all in the Region). Both sides encouraged cooperation on the Indo-Pacific noting that the AU vision for peace and security in Africa with focus on development of Blue/ocean economy for accelerated economic growth coincides with SAGAR vision. They also welcomed Tanzania's participation in the annual Humanitarian Assistance Disaster Relief (HADR) exercises in India for sharing of experiences to undertake rescue and relief operations during major natural calamities.

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12. Considering the successful hosting of the Defence Expos twice in Dar es Salaam on 31st May 2022 and 2nd October 2023 which saw participation of several Indian defence companies; both sides expressed interests in expanding cooperation in the area of Defence industry. The two leaders also expressed pleasure at the progress of cooperation between the two sides towards the capacity building of the Tanzanian forces as well as industry.

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14. The Tanzanian side appreciated the hydrographic surveys of Tanzanian major ports done by India in recent years. Thus, the two sides agreed to continue cooperation in this area.

15. Both leaders looked forward to increased interoperability between their Armed Forces. They noted the regular port calls by the Indian ships to Tanzanian ports and appreciated the conduct of the maiden trilateral maritime exercise involving India, Tanzania and Mozambique in the Mozambique Channel during the visit of the Indian Naval Ship Tarkash in October 2022.

16. The two leaders commended the signing of the Technical Agreement on sharing White Shipping Information between India and Tanzania.

## Blue Economy

17. The Tanzanian side expressed interest to cooperate with the Government of India in the field of Blue economy including tourism, maritime trade, services and infrastructure, marine scientific research, capacity in seabed mining, ocean conservation and maritime safety and security. India and Tanzania agreed to cooperate under the framework of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) to ensure a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable Indian Ocean Region.

## Trade and Investment

18. The two sides expressed commitment to increase bilateral trade volumes and towards this end, directed the respective Officials to explore new areas of trade. It was further agreed that both sides should harmonise trade volume data and take initiatives to further enhance bilateral trade volumes by organizing visits of business delegations, business exhibitions and interaction with business communities.

19. The Tanzanian side acknowledged that India is amongst the top five investment sources for Tanzania whereby 630 investment projects worth USD 3.74 billion have been registered and thus creating 60,000 new jobs. Both sides welcomed recent trends of renewed interest among Indian businesspersons for investment in Tanzania. Both sides agreed to explore the possibility of setting up of an Investment Park in Tanzania, Tanzanian side assured full support in this regard.

20. The two leaders expressed desire to expand bilateral trade using Local currencies. They noted that Reserve Bank of India (Indian Central Bank) has cleared the way for trade using local currencies i.e. Indian Rupee (INR) & Tanzanian Shilling by allowing the authorized banks in India to open Special Rupee Vostro Accounts (SRVA) of correspondent banks of Tanzania and that transactions using this mechanism have already materialised. The two sides agreed to continue with the consultations in order to address any concerns so as to ensure sustainability of this arrangement.

21. Both sides recognised that agriculture sector cooperation remains a strong pillar in the relations whereby 98% of product lines from Tanzania are imported tariff-free using India's Duty Free Tariff Preference (DFTP) scheme. India remains a major destination for Tanzanian cashew nuts, pigeon peas, spices, avocado and other agricultural commodities. Both sides agreed to further revitalise cooperation in this sector.

## Development Partnership

22. Tanzania appreciated India's development partnership assistance in the areas of Water, Health, Education, Capacity Building, Scholarships and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) among others.

23. The two sides also expressed satisfaction on Lines of Credits (LoCs) extended by India to Tanzania that amount to over USD 1.1 billion covering fields of drinking water infrastructure, agriculture and defence. It was specifically noted that Water Projects in 24 towns of Tanzania worth USD 500 Million through a Line of Credit scheme are presently being implemented. Once completed, it would provide easy access to safe drinking water to about 6 million residents of these regions.

24. The Tanzanian side appreciated that the Indian scholarship and capacity building program has tremendously contributed to its Human Resource development. India offers 450 Indian



Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) scholarships for capacity building and 70 Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) scholarships for long term programmes in 2023-24. The Indian side announced the decision to increase the number of Long term scholarships (ICCR) from 70 to 85 for the year 2023-24. As part of its commitment to the Global South, India also announced 1000 additional ITEC slots for Tanzania to be used over a 5-year period in new and emergent fields like Smart Ports, Space, Biotechnology, Artificial Intelligence, Aviation Management, etc.

#### Education, Skill Development and Development of ICT

25. The Indian side offered collaboration in areas of space technologies and digital public infrastructure under India Stack including Unified Payments Interface (UPI) and Digital Unique Identity (Aadhar).

26. The Tanzanian side welcomed Indian support for establishing a Vocational Training Centre (VTC) in Pemba, Zanzibar and designing courses based on the demands of the local market. The Indian side offered to set up vocational training institutions on the lines of Vocational Skilling Centres of India to provide training and skill enhancement to the Tanzanian youth.

27. Tanzania commended the decision by India to set up two ICT Centres at Dar es Salaam Institute of Technology and at Nelson Mandela African Institute for Science & Technology (NMAIST) in Arusha. Tanzanian side also express its appreciation to India for upgrading the ICT centre in NM-AIST.

#### Indian Institute of Technology Madras Campus in Zanzibar

28. Both leaders affirmed the significance of establishing the first overseas campus of the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Madras in Zanzibar. They also agreed that IIT in Zanzibar has the potential to become the premier centre for technical education in the African continent. They noted that classes for the first batch are scheduled to begin this month. Tanzanian side appreciated India's commitment in this regard and assured of its full support to the growth and sustainability of IIT in Zanzibar.

#### Space Cooperation

29. Tanzanian side congratulated the Indian side on the successful landing of Chandrayaan-3 lander on the surface of the moon on 23 August, 2023.

30. The Indian side offered collaboration in area of space technologies to Tanzania, which was welcomed by the Tanzanian side.

#### Health

31. Both sides reaffirmed the excellent cooperation in the health sector, noting the recent visit of Hon. Ummu Mwalimu (MP), Minister for Health of Tanzania to India in July 2023 and the visit of a joint delegation from India and UAE that visited Tanzania in August 2022 to scout for opportunities. Both sides agreed to work for further collaboration in the health sector.

32. Tanzanian side appreciated the donation of 10 ambulances by the Government of India aimed at assisting in the provision of prompt medical care to patients and support to hospital infrastructure.

33. Both sides also highlighted the excellent track record of bilateral cooperation in the

implementation of grant projects including donation of radiation therapy machine, "Bhabhatron II", essential medicines, an artificial limbs fitment camp organized in 2019 which benefited 520 Tanzanian patients among others.

#### People to People Relations and Cultural Exchanges

34. Both leaders underscored the importance of strong people-to-people contacts, cultural exchanges, academic linkages and tourism between the two countries. They appreciated the contribution of the large Indian diaspora in Tanzania who have acted as a bridge between the two nations and made significant contribution to the Tanzanian economy and society.

35. Both sides agreed to heighten cooperation in cultural exchanges and appreciated the signing of the Cultural Exchange Program for the 2023-27 periods. The Indian side extended an invitation to Tanzania to be a partner country in the upcoming Surajkund Mela to be held in February 2024 in Surajkund, Faridabad, National Capital Region of Delhi.

36. The two sides noted the ongoing exchange of cultural troupes of both sides and encouraged further cultural exchanges between the two countries.

37. The Tanzanian side thanked the Government of India for the deployment of two Kabaddi Coaches from India considering the rising popularity of the sport in Tanzania.

38. The leaders agreed to a closer collaboration between Universities and Think Tanks of the two countries.

#### Regional Issues

39. The Indian side congratulated Tanzania for successfully hosting two major Summits, namely, the African Human Capital Heads of State summit and the Africa Food Systems Summit in July and September 2023, respectively.

#### International Issues

40. Indian side thanked Tanzania for their support in increasing interaction with the East African Community (EAC).

41. Both leaders underscored that there are convergences between the two countries in international forums. It was noted that both sides have active participation in UN Peacekeeping Operations and have contributed towards regional security initiatives. Both sides noted the contributions made by Tanzania in the peacekeeping operations deployed under the auspices of the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

42. India and Tanzania agreed on the need for reform of the United Nations Security Council through expansion in both categories of membership. Indian side conveyed appreciation to Tanzania for its support during India's term as a non-Permanent member of the UNSC for the period 2021-22 and also for Tanzania's support for the Indian candidature for a non-Permanent membership of UNSC in 2028-29.

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45. The two leaders strongly condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, whenever, wherever, and by whom-so-ever committed and the use of terrorist proxies for cross-border terrorism. They agreed that terrorism is one of the most serious threats to global peace, security and stability and must seriously be addressed.

46. H.E. President Samia Suluhu Hassan expressed her appreciation to H.E. Shri Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of the Republic of India for the warm reception and hospitality extended to her and her accompanying delegation. H.E. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi thanked H.E. President Samia Suluhu Hassan for visiting India and wished her good health and prosperity for the friendly people of the United Republic of Tanzania.

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## **DS/ST**

1. At the invitation of Smt. Droupadi Murmu, President of the Republic of India, Her Excellency Samia Suluhu Hassan, President of the United Republic of Tanzania undertook a State Visit to the Republic of India from 8-10 October 2023. H.E. President Samia Suluhu Hassan was accompanied by a high-level delegation including the Minister for Foreign Affairs and East African Cooperation Hon. January Makamba (MP), and other members from different sectors, Senior Government Officials as well as members of the Tanzania Business Community.

2. H.E. President Samia Suluhu Hassan was accorded a ceremonial welcome on 9 October 2023, at the forecourt of the Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi. She also visited Rajghat to pay her respect to Mahatma Gandhi. H.E. President of India Smt. Droupadi Murmu will hold bilateral talks and also host a State Banquet in honour of H.E. President Samia Suluhu Hassan.

3. President Samia Suluhu Hassan and Prime Minister Narendra Modi held official bilateral talks in a warm and cordial atmosphere and exchanged views on bilateral, regional and international issues of mutual interest. The two leaders commended the existing close, cordial and cooperative relations and noted that India and Tanzania are time-tested partners bound by a long history of shared values and ideals spanning many years. They both acknowledged that the bilateral relations were further deepened by the visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Tanzania in July 2016, giving a significant boost to development cooperation.

4. The leaders recalled the recent visits of External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar to Co-chair the 10th Joint Commission on Economic, Technical and Scientific Cooperation and the Parliamentary delegation led by Speaker of Lok Sabha Shri. Om Birla to Tanzania. In addition, similar visits by several Tanzanian Ministers were held this year. The two leaders agreed that such high-level visits have reinforced the strong relations existing between Tanzania and India.

5. H.E. President Samia Suluhu Hassan will also attend the India-Tanzania Business and Investment Forum on October 10, 2023, where she will deliver the keynote address to the Indian and Tanzanian business communities. She will also hold one-on-one meetings (B2B) with key Indian Business Leaders.

6. With a view to further strengthen the bilateral relations and expanding cooperation across various sectors, the two leaders announced the elevation of Indo-Tanzania relationship to the level of 'Strategic Partnership'. Both sides noted that the strategic partnership will help the two countries to jointly work on issues like Maritime Security, Defence Cooperation, Development Partnership, Trade and Investment among others.

7. During the visit, MoUs covering a wide range of sectors were signed. List is enclosed as [Annexure A](#).

#### Political Relations

8. Both sides noted with satisfaction, an increasing level of bilateral political engagement and strategic dialogue on regional and global issues including the vision for the Indo-Pacific and implementation of the Indian Ocean Rim Association's Outlook on the Indo-Pacific. It was noted that India and Tanzania are maritime neighbours with a long history of trade and people to people linkages therefore Tanzania has an important place in India's vision of SAGAR (Security and Growth for all in the Region). Both sides encouraged cooperation on the Indo-Pacific noting that the AU vision for peace and security in Africa with focus on development of Blue/ocean economy for accelerated economic growth coincides with SAGAR vision. They also welcomed Tanzania's participation in the annual Humanitarian Assistance Disaster Relief (HADR) exercises in India for sharing of experiences to undertake rescue and relief operations during major natural calamities.

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# THE MALDIVES, THE EVOLUTION OF A DEMOCRACY

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Mohamed Muizzu, after the election | Photo Credit: AFP

The Maldives, South Asia's smallest nation-state, sent a clear signal through its latest presidential election: democracy is thriving. The holding of yet another free and fair election enhances the country's international prestige. The key issues at play related to the concerns of voters, especially young voters, for their economic well-being: employment, housing and improvements needed for the tourism industry, education, and health care. Therefore, to portray the election as a football match between China and India resulting in India's defeat — as some western news agencies have done — is to betray ignorance of how this nation of 1,192 islands functions. Luckily, the people of Maldives know better.

The old era, when Maumoon Abdul Gayoom ruled as the President from 1978 to 2008, gave way to a multiparty democracy under a new constitution. Mohamed Nasheed, a charismatic but mercurial leader, became the first directly elected President. He did not complete his five-year term and ended up sharing it with Mohamed Waheed Hassan. Abdulla Yameen, the most pro-China president so far, served his full term (2013–18), followed by Ibrahim Mohamed Solih, the candidate of the Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) and the architect of 'India First' policy, who served from 2018 till now. Following his defeat, he will hand over the presidency to the clear winner — Mohamed Muizzu, the opposition candidate backed by an alliance of the Progressive Party of Maldives and the People's National Congress. The mayor of the capital city Male, Mr. Muizzu will be sworn in as the new President next month.

Objectively, the outgoing President had a commendable term in office during a difficult period marked by COVID-19, the Ukraine war, and the global economic slowdown that affected the Maldives too.

Why then, was Mr. Solih defeated?

There are three reasons. First, he was fighting against the currents of history: no incumbent has been re-elected in the Maldives. People feel empowered by the weapons of democracy, to bring in and oust rulers. Second, what seemed a certainty became inevitable once the ruling MDP party split and Mr. Nasheed exited. Mr. Solih's apparent attachment to the presidential chair clashed with Mr. Nasheed's overwhelming ambition. No reconciliation was forthcoming and, as a result, Mr. Solih lost by the same margin — about 8% of the votes — in the second round that Mr. Nasheed's candidate had scored in the first round.

Third, old-timers believe that with Mr. Nasheed, a communicator par excellence, gone, the MDP could not effectively counter the disinformation campaign launched by the opposition alliance, which inserted, unnecessarily, the issues of geopolitics in a domestic campaign. But in politics, perceptions matter. With Mr. Nasheed's departure, the ruling party lost its 'motherboard'.

The election results have triggered rapid developments. At the request of President-elect Muizzu, President Solih agreed to shift former President Yameen from prison to house arrest. Mr. Yameen is serving a long sentence (11 years) for corruption. He is seen as Mr. Muizzu's mentor. Hence, the first facet of Maldivian politics to watch now is the type of dynamic that develops between the men.

Political compulsions may operate in the beginning, but the logic of power and the magic of a presidency work alike everywhere. It can be expected that the Mayor of Male will soon begin to think and act like a President, conscious of his obligations to all his people and his august regional responsibilities. He may focus on domestic priorities of development while leveraging foreign policy to promote his nation's interests.

In external relations, the new administration will have at least three choices: revert to the 'India Out' campaign of former President Yameen; continue the 'India First' policy of the outgoing President; or innovate a calibrated policy that allows a balancing of relations with its key partners, especially China and India.

The world has changed since Mr. Yameen's time. The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) which Maldives had accepted under his leadership, is in serious trouble. Then, the Sri Lankan financial crisis erupted, which required India's steady help. Finally, the Islamist constituency in the Maldives, not particularly friendly to India, will no doubt note the changed equations between India and the Gulf States. It is reflected also in the waning interest of West Asia in a bankrupt Pakistan, which has long nurtured extremism in the Maldives, and can hardly provide succour to those elements in the island-state.

For India, the next phase of regional diplomacy may admittedly be complex. But enough assets and achievements exist to impart confidence. At the people's level, a positive mindset prevails towards India. This has been reinforced by extensive development work and numerous small community development projects already completed, such as the building of community centres, children's parks, and student ferries between islands. Thousands of Maldivian youth have been to India for training and capacity-building programmes in the past five years. India is a major source of tourism, imports and investment, and zealously nurtures its role as the first responder every time an emergency strikes the Maldives.

But more can be done and should be considered. First, the Colombo Security Conclave (comprising India, Sri Lanka, the Maldives, Mauritius, Bangladesh and the Seychelles) should be strengthened showing tangible outcomes in maritime security and the development of the Blue Economy. By boldly re-imagining the post-South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation South Asia, New Delhi should create a basis for The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) to invite the Maldives as an observer at its next summit. Finally, there is the perennial need for additional resources so that India's strategic community and media organisations take a greater interest in a small but vital neighbour, building bridges of mutual understanding and trust.

Rajiv Bhatia is Distinguished Fellow, Gateway House and a former Ambassador. He headed the division responsible for relations with the Maldives in the Ministry of External Affairs

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## INDIA-TANZANIA TO WORK FOR THE COLLECTIVE GOOD OF AFRICA AND INDIA: SHRI PIYUSH GOYAL AT INDIA TANZANIA INVESTMENT FORUM

Relevant for: International Relations | Topic: Effect of policies and politics of developed & developing countries on India's interests

Welcoming the President of Tanzania Her Excellency Samia Suluhu Hassan at the India Tanzania Investment Forum in New Delhi today, Shri Piyush Goyal, Union Minister of Commerce & Industry, Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution and Textiles said that the friendship between the two countries has been elevated to the level of strategic partnership and the wonderful people-to-people and business relationship that exists between the two countries will only get stronger in the years to come.

Shri Goyal noted that the Prime Minister Narendra Modi is a big advocate of bringing the Global South on one platform. The India Africa partnership has flourished under his leadership and the effort that Prime Minister Modi put in to create convergence on making the African Union a full member of the G20 has finally happened, he added.

Shri Goyal said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi looks at this partnership between two modern, vibrant nations as a very defining and substantial relationship that will work for the good of two billion people of Africa and India for inclusive and sustainable growth.

Shri Goyal pointed out that the two countries share a rich history and our ties go back decades and noting that Mahatma Gandhi learnt his first lesson in Africa, Shri Goyal said that there is a lot of similarity in our freedom struggle, we have worked together as non-aligned nations and that we have successfully decolonized our economies. He said that we now have important engagements with each other and are working from investments to startups, from the healthcare sector to business and trade. He added that there is huge potential and our business persons will truly make both countries proud with their commitment to make this relationship grow, expand and really provide opportunities for jobs and for entrepreneurs in both countries.

India will partner with Tanzania in different sectors like education, skill development, capacity building, culture, energy, climate action, trade settlement in local currencies and in technology, Shri Goyal said. He noted that India has offered lines of credit to ensure infrastructure development and ensure creation of utilities in Tanzania.

Tanzania is the biggest export destination of India in Africa and we look forward to making this another fast growing story, Shri Goyal said adding that we can work together to ensure mutual food security, and in pharma sector and the new and emerging space sector.

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### AD/VN

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# UN SECURITY COUNCIL REFORM IS A SONG IN A LOOP

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October 12, 2023 12:16 am | Updated 02:09 am IST

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The UN Security Council holding a ministerial level meeting on the crisis in Ukraine at the UN headquarters in New York, in September, 2023 | Photo Credit: REUTERS

More than three decades after the debate first started over fundamental reforms at the United Nations (UN), the issue appears to have resurfaced at the ongoing General Assembly session of the world body. President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan of Türkiye was blunt: “The Security Council has ceased to be the guarantor of world security and has become a battleground for the political strategies of only five countries.” Even the UN’s Secretary-General, António Guterres, issued a stern warning: “The world has changed. Our institutions have not. We cannot effectively address problems as they are if institutions do not reflect the world as it is. Instead of solving problems, they risk becoming part of the problem.”

It could not have been put more bluntly, but we have heard this song before. Politically, it is untenable that the five permanent members (China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States) enjoy their position, and the privilege of a veto over any Council resolution or decision, merely by virtue of having won a war 76 years ago. In the case of China, the word ‘won’ needs to be placed within inverted commas.

I was serving at the UN when then-Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali declared that Security Council reform must be accomplished in time for the 50th anniversary of the world organisation in 1995. But even as the urgent rhetoric continues to be spoken, the organisation has missed not only the 50th anniversary of the UN, but even the 60th, the 70th and now the 75th. Left to their own devices, member-states will be arguing the merits of the case well past the UN’s centenary.

The problem of reforming the Security Council is akin to a malady in which a number of doctors gather around a patient; they all agree on the diagnosis but they cannot agree on the prescription. The diagnosis is clear — the Security Council reflects the geopolitical realities of 1945 and not of today. When the UN was founded in 1945, the Council consisted of 11 members out of a total UN membership of 51 countries; in other words, some 22% of the member states were on the Security Council.

Today, there are 193 member-states of the UN, and only 15 members of the Council — fewer

than 8%. The one change ever made to the original Charter was in 1965 when the Security Council was expanded from 11 members to 15 by adding four more elected non-permanent members. So, many more countries, both in absolute numbers and as a proportion of the membership, do not feel adequately represented on the body. The composition of the Council also gives undue weightage to the balance of power of those days. Europe, for instance, which accounts for barely 5% of the world's population, still controls 33% of the seats in any given year (and that does not count Russia, another European power).

In terms of simple considerations of equity, this situation is unjust: for starters, to those countries whose financial contributions to the UN outweigh those of four of the five permanent members — Japan and Germany have for decades been the second and third largest contributors to the UN budget, while still being referred to as 'enemy states' in the United Nations Charter (since the UN was set up by the victorious Allies of the Second World War). And it denies opportunities to other states such as India, which by its sheer size of population, share of the world economy, or contributions in kind to the UN (through participation in peacekeeping operations, for example) have helped shape the evolution of world affairs in the seven decades since the organisation was born.

So, the Security Council is clearly ripe for reform to bring it into the second quarter of the 21st century. But for every state that feels it deserves a place on the Security Council, and especially the handful of countries which believe their status in the world ought to be recognised as being in no way inferior to at least three of the existing permanent members, there are several who know they will not benefit from any reform. The small countries that make up more than half the UN's membership accept that reality and are content to compete occasionally for a two-year non-permanent seat on the Council. But the medium-sized and large countries, which are the rivals of the prospective beneficiaries, deeply resent the prospect of a select few breaking free of their current second-rank status in the world body. Many are openly animated by a spirit of competition, historical grievance or simple envy. They have successfully and indefinitely thwarted reform of the membership of the Security Council.

Part of the problem is that the bar to amending the UN Charter has been set rather high. Any amendment requires a two-thirds majority of the overall membership, in other words 129 of the 193 states in the General Assembly, and would further have to be ratified by two-thirds of the member states. Ratification is usually a parliamentary procedure, so, in other words, the only 'prescription' that has any chance of passing is one that will both persuade two-thirds of the UN member-states to support it and not attract the opposition of any of the existing permanent five — or even that of a powerful U.S. Senator who could block ratification in Washington.

That has proved to be a tall order indeed. India's credentials may seem obvious to us, but China is none too keen on diluting its status as the only Asian permanent member; Pakistan, which fancies itself as India's strategic rival on the subcontinent, is unalterably opposed; and to some extent Indonesia seems to feel diminished by the prospect of an Indian seat. In Latin America, Brazil occupies a place analogous to India's in Asia, but Argentina and Mexico have other ideas, pointing to Portuguese-speaking Brazil's inferior credentials in representing largely Hispanic Latin America. And while Africa, given that it accounts for 54 member-states, insists on two permanent seats, how is one to adjudicate the rival credentials of the continent's largest democracy, Nigeria, its historically largest economy, South Africa, and its oldest civilization, Egypt? Another proposal suggests creating a second category of "semi-permanent members" to accommodate such states for, say, 10-year electable terms. It has found no takers among the principal aspirants.

So, while the debate keeps going round in circles for decades, gridlock continues in the Security Council, as most vividly illustrated recently over the Ukraine conflict, when a Permanent Member

of the Security Council invaded a sovereign UN member-state and the Council proved powerless to respond. Russia's increasing resort to the veto has blocked resolutions on Ukraine, Mali, Syria and North Korea. Similar obstructionism by the West has affected proposals to reform the financial institutions established at Bretton Woods in 1944, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. And yet this is the only global system we have got that brings all countries together on a common platform. Can we afford to let it fade into ineffectiveness and irrelevance?

***Shashi Tharoor is a third-term Member of Parliament (Congress) and former Under-Secretary General of the United Nations, former chair of the External Affairs Committee of Parliament and author of 25 books including 'Pax Indica' and (with Samir Saran) 'The New World Disorder'***

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# BALANCING POLICY: THE HINDU EDITORIAL ON ISRAEL, PALESTINE AND INDIA'S LINE

Relevant for: International Relations | Topic: Effect of policies and politics of developed & developing countries on India's interests

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October 14, 2023 12:20 am | Updated 12:20 am IST

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Within hours of [the massacre of Israeli citizens by Hamas](#) fighters last Saturday, [Prime Minister Narendra Modi tweeted](#) India's solidarity with Israel. While the histories of their conflicts and the scale of violence have been very different, India has faced terror attacks all too often to not feel the pain in Israel where teenagers at a concert, children in a park, grandparents at home, and even babies in cribs were gunned down, amidst other atrocities Hamas carried out, including taking dozens hostage. The sentiments were repeated when [Mr. Modi spoke to Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu](#), condemning terrorism in all its forms. India's second big concern has been the safety of its citizens, especially as Israel began retaliatory strikes on Gaza. Around 18,000 Indians work or study in Israel, in addition to about 85,000 Israelis of Indian origin (from Maharashtra, Manipur, Mizoram, Kerala, and West Bengal). The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has [chartered flights to bring them home](#). New Delhi has also added nuance to the initial position, with the MEA delivering the government's first formal statement. While repeating the condemnation of the Hamas attacks, the statement reminded Israel about the "universal obligation to observe international humanitarian law", as it carries out "global responsibility to fight the menace of terrorism..." In addition, the MEA [reiterated its "long-standing and consistent" position on the Palestine issue](#).

The statement is a reminder of the tightrope India has walked since 1992, when New Delhi established full diplomatic ties with Israel, while continuing to support the Palestinian cause. There has been a shift towards Israel's position, given increasingly close bilateral relations, trade, technological assistance, military procurement, and counter-terrorism cooperation. In 2017, Mr. Modi became the [first Indian Prime Minister to visit Israel](#), while in 2018, [Mr. Netanyahu visited India](#). However, Mr. Modi was also the [first Indian Prime Minister to make an official visit to Palestine](#). In 2017, India voted against the U.S. and Israel for an attempt to declare unilaterally all of Jerusalem as the Israeli capital. The policy lines New Delhi is continuing to draw seem clear: to abhor terrorism, but not to condone indiscriminate reprisal bombings, even as it holds its consistent position on Palestine. No claim to righting historical grievances can possibly be used by Hamas to explain its inhuman attacks on Israel. However, a responsible state cannot behave like an insurgent group, and Israel's latest demand, that more than a million Gaza residents must evacuate as it continues to pound the city and plans a possible ground offensive, will make Delhi's challenge at balancing policy even more complex.

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# A WAR THAT ENDS THE SAUDI-ISRAEL 'NORMALISATION' PROCESS

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'The Gaza war has once again placed the Palestinian issue at the centre of West Asian politics' | Photo Credit: AFP

As Hamas launched its lethal attacks on Israel on October 7, the assault has firmly overturned Israeli efforts, supported by the United States, to promote a normalisation of relations with Arab states without conceding anything to the Palestinians. Specifically, the Gaza war has dealt a mortal blow to the efforts for Saudi Arabia to normalise ties with Israel.

On September 22, Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was at his arrogant and triumphalist best as he waved two maps to embellish his speech at the United Nations General Assembly: one depicted an isolated Israel in 1948, while the other showed Arab neighbours that now had peace agreements with Israel — Egypt, Sudan, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and Jordan. It also showed all the occupied Palestinian territories — the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem — as integral parts of Israel. Mr. Netanyahu specifically applauded the normalisation process with Saudi Arabia under U.S. auspices, and insisted that the Palestinians should have no veto over the process.

Mr. Netanyahu's remarks reflected the flurry of diplomatic activity over the last few months between Washington, Tel Aviv and Riyadh as U.S. officials pushed for diplomatic relations between Israel and Saudi Arabia, possibly within this year. American and Israeli officials publicly affirmed that the broad contours of the agreement have been finalised. Meanwhile, two Israeli Ministers visited Saudi Arabia for international conferences, signifying increasing bonhomie between the two countries.

The normalisation deal had hinged on three conditions that the kingdom had placed before the U.S.: U.S. approval for a civilian nuclear programme that provides for uranium enrichment within the country; an "iron-clad" U.S. security guarantee for the country, and sales of advanced weapons. The Americans were said to be insisting that Saudi Arabia back U.S. interests on oil prices, dilute its political, military and technological ties with China and deepen strategic engagement with the U.S.

Saudi Arabia's three conditions for normalisation were contentious in Israel and the U.S. Several U.S. politicians opposed the idea of giving security guarantees to an authoritarian state. They

also warned the U.S. President against Saudi Arabia developing its own nuclear programme, believing that it poses an unacceptable proliferation risk — a concern shared in Israel as well. There were also obstacles to the U.S. sales of advanced weapons, largely due to Saudi Arabia's poor human rights record at home and in Yemen. Finally, there were concerns about Saudi insistence that arms supplies be accompanied by a transfer of technology to develop its arms industry. Despite these obstacles, the U.S. was confident the deal would go through.

Palestinian interests and concerns did not figure in these normalisation discussions. Given the extremist political coalition that Mr. Netanyahu heads, there was no interest in Israel to give even lip service to Palestinian aspirations for a sovereign and viable state or accept East Jerusalem as the capital of that state. In fact, Mr. Netanyahu was not even willing to promise freezing settlements in the West Bank, deferring annexation, or dismantling illegal outposts.

At that time, hundreds of Israel's religious zealots, backed by Mr. Netanyahu's Ministers, made provocative incursions into the Al-Aqsa complex, while the settlers in the West Bank increased violence against their Palestinian neighbours, usually with the support of the security forces.

The Gaza war has once again placed the Palestinian issue at the centre of West Asian politics. Some writers are blaming Iran, arguing that the Islamic Republic has instigated the Hamas attacks to block Saudi Arabia's normalisation initiative with Israel. This argument has little credibility. Saudi-Iran ties have already been normalised under Chinese mediation: embassies have been re-opened in both capitals, high-level visits have been exchanged and economic cooperation is being expanded.

Now, following the Hamas attacks, the kingdom has recognised that peace and stability in the region are not possible without Palestinian interests being addressed. In an official statement, the Saudi Foreign Office has recalled the kingdom's "repeated warnings of the dangers of the explosion of the situation as a result of the occupation, the deprivation of the Palestinian people of their legitimate rights and the repetition of systematic provocations of its sanctities". This statement is referring to the abuses countenanced by the Netanyahu government — desecration of the Al-Aqsa Mosque complex and settlement expansion and settler violence in the West Bank. Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman has now asserted that the kingdom will "stand by the Palestinian people to achieve their legitimate rights to a decent life, achieve their hopes and aspirations, and achieve just and lasting peace".

Again, the Saudis have abandoned recourse to insincere verbal assurances to the Palestinians that were under consideration during the normalisation negotiations. The search now is for concrete action to serve Palestinian interests, As the Saudi journalist, Faisal Abbas, has written: "... the international community must act now to activate a credible peace plan that enables a two-state solution".

Looking ahead, it has been obvious over the last three years that the kingdom had shrugged off the American yoke and was pursuing its foreign policy engagements in terms of its own interests, without any U.S. involvement. The kingdom rejects the U.S. interest in building an anti-China coalition globally and an anti-Iran cabal regionally.

Again, regardless of the U.S.'s wishes there is no question of Saudi Arabia accommodating the Americans on oil prices or diluting its comprehensive strategic ties with China. They exemplify its assertion of strategic autonomy and are an integral part of its quest for diverse, multifaceted, and substantial ties across Asia. Promoting the Palestinian cause will now form an important part of this foreign policy approach.

***Talmiz Ahmad is a former diplomat***

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# THE ISRAEL-HAMAS CONFLICT AND NUSSEIBEH'S ANALYSIS

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An airstrike on the Gaza Strip, as seen from southern Israel | Photo Credit: AP

Sooner or later, experts and military observers will busy themselves with analysing and holding forth on who won this (ongoing) 'war' between the state of Israel and Hamas. The verdicts will not be unanimous and will be largely guided by the personal and national biases of the experts. But there will be no — and nor should there be any — difference of opinion about who lost.

[Hamas's lightning, brutal and simultaneous attack](#) on several locations in Israel on Saturday, October 7, 2023, stunned Israel and the international community. The question of how Israel was caught unawares about this operation underlines the fact that it was a total failure of intelligence on the part of Israel as well as the United States. Understandably, the authorities here are reluctant to talk about this matter while the war is going on. Many 'fall guys' will be found, no doubt, when the inquiries are completed and published.

Prima facie, Hamas seems to have done better. The very fact that Israel had to declare 'war' is a morale booster for Hamas. As for Hamas, it has openly declared war on Israel ever since its foundation. When this writer lived in Gaza from 1997-99, most people were convinced that Israel had something to do with Hamas's creation. That the mighty state of Israel, the strongest power in the region, had to officially, through a decision of its war cabinet, declare war is highly flattering to Hamas. In the past, the rocket shower ended the same day, with Israel achieving its declared objective by the end of the day. In the present conflict, Hamas managed to continue its rocket attacks for several days, inflicting extremely heavy, unprecedented casualties on Israel, resulting in many deaths, many more injured and a massive dislocation of the population in the vicinity of Gaza. The world has witnessed unspeakable cruelty by Hamas on innocent men, women and children in Israel, worthy of undiluted condemnation. But Hamas would be 'proud' of its accomplishment. The fact that several Palestinian civilians have lost their lives does not seem to worry Hamas too much; they will be declared martyrs.

Hamas has inflicted almost a body blow to the Palestinian Authority in Ramallah, ruled by the Palestine Liberation Organization, more specifically by the Fatah party. The position of the Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, has become untenable and he might have to resign. Hamas's following in the West Bank will increase manifold. Further, support for Hamas on the 'Arab Street' will also increase. Is it also not possible that there will be sneaking, unstated

admiration, however grudging, among some western countries for the way Hamas has carried out such a well-coordinated operation?

In military terms, Israel will, of course, prevail. Reports suggest that Israel has modified its goal from 'containing' Hamas to eliminating it. How it will go about achieving this objective remains to be seen. Will Israel mount a ground operation into Gaza? It would have to be a massive operation, consisting of thousands of troops and dozens of tanks. Casualties would be heavy on both sides. One can assume that Israel would not wish to physically reoccupy the Gaza strip, since it would be a kind of death trap.

Who lost in this war? The people on both sides. Innocent civilian citizens would pay heavily for the bloodthirstiness of leaders on both sides. This is not to say that one is suggesting equal blame on both. But it is undeniable that the price for the war will be paid by ordinary people.

The government of India has thrown its full support behind Israel. No doubt it has done so, convinced of the brutality of the attack by Hamas, but also in the belief that this posture will not have the slightest negative fallout among the Arab countries. For a long time, the ruling establishments in West Asia and elsewhere have wanted to normalise relations with Israel, which can provide them with much-needed technology and investment opportunities. One should not forget that Kuwait had expelled nearly 1,00,000 Palestinians in the early 1990s because Arafat had sided with Saddam Hussain during the first Gulf War. Arab governments do not want to do anything with the Palestinian cause. But their citizens will oblige them to rethink their wish to normalise with Israel, including Saudi Arabia's ongoing dialogue with Israel about normalising relations with Israel. Also, such categorical support for Israel will go down well in Washington; India for once is not 'sitting on the fence' as it was in the Ukraine war.

Sari Nusseibeh, an eminent Palestinian intellectual, activist and a true Gandhian — if there is one in the world — wrote an extraordinary book that was published in 2011, called *What Is a Palestinian State Worth?*

He argues that the state is for the people, not the other way around. The state's primary duty is to protect its citizens and to enable them to develop, prosper, enjoy family life, and move around freely within the country. However, the governing groups in the government, primarily interested in remaining in power, generate strong 'patriotic' fervour to the extent of stimulating the people to sacrifice their life to save the country. But, and this is important, if the state knows that it will not and cannot achieve its objective, and still perseveres in its objective, it will be acting immorally and unethically according to Nusseibeh. What right does the state have to wilfully sacrifice so many lives for a cause it knows is unattainable? It would be obligatory for the state to dilute its war objective and to seek compromise.

Nusseibeh's analysis, in the case of the ongoing war, would suggest that both the Israeli government and Hamas know that they simply cannot achieve their respective goals. Hamas is conscious that the state of Israel can never be destroyed or 'pushed into the sea' as they say. Israel equally knows that the ideology behind Hamas cannot be eliminated, nor can Hamas as an entity. Thus, both sides are behaving immorally and unethically, pushing ordinary citizens into the jaws of death. The zeal for war has seeped so deep among the populace that it does not realise that it is being exploited by the state for the sake of its and country's 'glory'.

Can Nusseibeh's logic be applied to the Kashmir problem? Successive governments in India and Pakistan have known that they cannot achieve their maximalist objectives: capturing Pakistan Occupied Kashmir on the Indian side, capturing the whole of Kashmir, or at least the Valley, on the Pakistan side. Applying Nusseibeh's logic, persevering in these objectives, therefore, is immoral and unethical. Should not some compromise, perhaps along the lines of

the four-point formula worked out by both sides a few years ago, be revived and reconsidered seriously?

Chinmaya R. Gharekhan is former Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations

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# THE ISRAEL-PALESTINE CONFLICT AND 'MAINSTREAM MEDIA'

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Israeli Iron Dome air defence system fires to intercept a rocket fired from the Gaza Strip, in Ashkelon, Israel on October 19, 2023. | Photo Credit: AP

Large, established journalistic publications, amorphously clubbed together as “mainstream media”, are often portrayed as villains online. Politically convenient ideas and blatant misinformation are shared as “things that the mainstream media will never tell you”; and the belief that “mainstream media” has certain “agendas” is a driving force of the online misinformation mills. This repeated messaging across social media is reflected in studies that show a declining trust in established news outlets.

The distrust is more evident now as the fault lines in West Asia have opened up once again. To cite an example, a headline from *The New York Times* had initially stated that an Israeli strike had caused the explosion and fire at the Al-Ahli Arab Hospital in Gaza on Tuesday. The headline was [later revised to avoid Israeli involvement](#), drawing intense scrutiny online. The original headline was seen as evidence of the publication being biased towards information emerging from the Palestinian side. Incidentally, in the pro-Palestine sections of social media, *The New York Times* is seen to support Israel and its policies.

The BBC in the U.K., too, faced such a predicament when one of its initial social media posts on the current violence spoke of many Israelis having been “killed” while many Palestinians had “died”. The choice of words was the subject of a viral video from a Palestine supporter, who claimed it was evidence of Western media’s pro-Israel bias. Meanwhile, in pro-Israel circles, the BBC is seen as being biased towards the Palestinian cause. In fact, the BBC has so far received about 1,500 complaints regarding its coverage of the current conflict, and as per a report in *The Guardian*, the complaints are evenly split between those alleging a pro-Palestine bias and those alleging a pro-Israel bias. This reminds one of many a veteran journalist’s adage that “if both sides are not happy, we are doing something right.”

**Editorial | [Endless woes: On the Israel-Hamas conflict and Palestine](#)**

The debate over the choice also brings to mind the flak that *The Hindu* takes on social media for not using the word “martyr” when it reports on soldiers killed in action. The Defence Ministry has made it clear in Parliament that the Indian [armed forces do not use the word “martyr”](#), which by

definition is reserved for someone who has been killed for their beliefs. However, it is seen by some as unpatriotic on the part of an English language publication to not use the term.

Such issues over the choice of language, headlines, and images are exacerbated as the fog of war covers the social media landscape. This is particularly true for the [Israel-Palestine conflict](#), a decades- (or centuries-) old issue that has deeply divided opinions across the world, and which has its own vocabulary around land and rights. In the fast-changing environment of an armed conflict, the chances of a newsroom slipping up on these are very high, often feeding into existing perceptions regarding bias. Another factor aiding the perception of bias is algorithm-driven platforms, where articles are mostly consumed as stand-alone entities rather than as part of a whole. This pattern of news consumption often drives the “whataboutism” and “both-sideism” that have become the bane of online political conversations.

It should also be noted that social media is heavily visual, driven by TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube. These facilitate and encourage repeated viewing and immediate responses in the form of likes, shares, and comments. The ongoing violence in Israel is also particularly visual, with actual footage of missile strikes and their aftermath mixed with fake videos, including those from video games. The loss of trust in “mainstream media” often drives people to look for raw content online — footage and images shorn of context and analysis that only good journalism can provide.

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# ENDLESS WOES: THE HINDU EDITORIAL ON THE ISRAEL-HAMAS CONFLICT AND PALESTINE

Relevant for: International Relations | Topic: Effect of policies and politics of developed & developing countries on India's interests

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October 20, 2023 12:20 am | Updated 12:35 am IST

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[Thirteen days after Hamas carried out a brutal attack on Israel](#), killing some 1,400 people, Israel's air strikes on the besieged, defenceless Gaza continue with disproportionate ferocity, killing 3,785 Palestinians, including hundreds of children. As Israel is amassing troops and tanks on its border with Gaza in preparation for a ground invasion, after ordering some one million people to evacuate from the northern half of the land strip, [U.S. President Joe Biden](#) and [British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak](#) travelled to Israel to declare their support for the Jewish nation's "right to defend itself". Mr. Biden's visit came hours after an attack on a hospital in Gaza left at least 500 dead. The Palestinians say the hospital, which was sheltering thousands, was hit by Israeli jets, while Israel claimed that a rocket fired by Palestinian militants caused the explosion. While truth is the first casualty of war, a vengeful Israel's mindless bombing of a tiny, blockaded enclave is pushing its 2.3 million people into an unimaginable struggle of life and death, even as the powerful nations are either looking away or busy backing Israel's campaign. Mr. Biden announced that Israel has allowed to let some 20 trucks of humanitarian aid into Gaza from Egypt. While any aid is welcome, 20 trucks of aid for two million people is, as the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies put it, "a drop in the ocean".

The [October 7 Sabbath attack that Hamas carried out in Israel](#) should be condemned without any hesitation. At the same time, collectively punishing Gaza in the name of fighting Hamas and carrying out indiscriminate bombing that is killing hundreds a day do not make Israel any better than Hamas. Moreover, this approach of the Israeli state towards the Palestinians has neither improved Israel's security nor helped the stakeholders find a solution to the crisis. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, on whose watch the country's biggest security crisis unfolded, says he will "crush" Hamas. But Israel does not have easy options. Reoccupying Gaza would lead to a prolonged urban war of attrition. Hamas rose to prominence using the vacuum left by the failures of Fatah and the Palestinian Liberation Organization. If Israel manages to diminish Hamas's influence in Gaza, nobody knows what comes next as the Palestine question, which is the ongoing Israeli occupation, remains unaddressed. In an ideal world, the U.S., the most powerful country which is ruled by a President who has stated his commitment to "a foreign policy centred on human rights", should be enraged by what its ally is doing and apply pressure on Tel Aviv to stop the bombing and start talking, involving regional powers. But as that is a non-possibility as of now, Israel is set to continue the attacks with impunity, multiplying the woes of millions of Palestinians.

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# FROSTY TIES: THE HINDU EDITORIAL ON THE WORSENING INDIA-CANADA TIES

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October 21, 2023 12:20 am | Updated 12:20 am IST

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India and Canada are headed for an even frostier season in ties after the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA)'s latest move [to pare down the number of Canadian diplomats in India](#), from 62 to 21. While New Delhi had made its demand to equalise the numbers in each other's missions known last month, in the fiery aftermath of the Trudeau government's allegations that India had a role in the killing of Canadian national and [Khalistani activist Hardeep Singh Nijjar](#), matters were thought to have cooled down. It had even been hoped that quiet diplomacy was at work to repair ties. However, Canada continues to hold, without proffering any further proof, that India must cooperate in its investigations against unnamed Indian officials, while [India is standing by measures](#) it has taken in reprisal: last month, after the tit-for-tat expulsions of their respective diplomats from security agencies, the Modi government suspended visas for all Canadians, and demanded the downsizing of Canadian diplomatic strength. This week, India issued an ultimatum for the removal of two thirds of those numbers with a deadline of October 31 — after which India would unilaterally withdraw diplomatic immunity. As a result, Canada's Foreign Ministry flew out 41 of its diplomats and their families, calling India's demand a violation of international law including the Vienna Convention. The MEA has retorted that the convention's Article 11.1 does authorise India to "require that the size of a mission be kept within limits". Canada has also conveyed that with staffing shortages now, consulate "in-person" visa services would no longer be provided. The Canadian Immigration Minister has added that India's moves would not deter Canada's prosecution in the Nijjar case.

The developments indicate that if there had been any diplomatic efforts to defuse the situation in the past, they have been fruitless. Apart from the Modi-Trudeau and National Security Adviser meetings that had discussed the Nijjar case, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar had reportedly met Canadian Foreign Minister Mélanie Joly in the U.S. on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly. None of those appears to have turned the trajectory of events; attempts by Canada's "Five Eyes" Allies to mediate have not worked either. While the allies have supported Canada's claims, they have also shored up their ties with India, with possible visits by the British, U.S. and Australian leaders that will assure New Delhi. With diplomatic options exhausted for now, it is hoped a period of reflection will bring fresh counsel on how to break the logjam. Till then, students, tourists and businesspersons will suffer.

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# A MASSIVE INTELLIGENCE FAILURE IN ISRAEL

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October 23, 2023 01:17 am | Updated 08:48 am IST

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Relatives and friends mourn during the funeral of Toni Levy who was killed by Hamas militants on October 7, in in Revivim in southern Israel. | Photo Credit: AFP

No words can be strong enough to condemn the [massacres carried out in Israel by Hamas](#), the [Gaza](#)-based Palestinian terrorist organisation. A humanitarian catastrophe is unfolding in the densely populated Gaza Strip as Israel, expectedly, responds with the full might of its armed forces.

The scale and complexity of the attack indicated that Hamas had been meticulously planning it for months. The cross-border incursion across the hi-tech fence separating southern Israel from Gaza began with rocket fire and involved the use of dinghies, bulldozers, motorcycles, paragliders, and drones bearing explosives. Hamas fighters targeted civilian settlements and a military intelligence hub. Israel's inability to detect signs of the impending assault and take preventive action represents a catastrophic intelligence failure. Like 9/11 in the U.S. and 26/11 in India, October 7, 2023 in Israel signifies the horrors of terrorism.

At the level of intelligence collection, Israel does not seem to have had human spies penetrating Hamas in any meaningful manner. This is a familiar shortcoming in intelligence agencies worldwide, which seek to recruit moles in ideologically driven terrorist organisations. Israel's formidable array of electronic sensors and surveillance systems along the border did not work. This failure is being attributed to the high order of communications security practiced by Hamas, which presumably avoided the use of phones and other forms of digital communication that are susceptible to interception. It has been suggested that any movement of Hamas fighters near the border before the attack may have been discounted by Israeli monitors as nothing more than gamesmanship intended to test Israeli nerves. If so, Hamas seems to have succeeded in lulling Israel into a false sense of normalcy.

Second, much like 50 years ago, when an attack by the armies of Egypt and Syria during the Yom Kippur festival caught Israel unawares, the available intelligence may have been misinterpreted. In 1973, Israeli defence intelligence had assessed that Egypt and Syria were not likely to resort to war until they upgraded their air force, although Mossad chief Zvi Zamir, whose agent in the Egyptian leadership had warned him of an imminent attack, had informed Prime Minister Golda Meir of the same. In today's context, Israeli intelligence may have believed that Hamas' exercise of political control over Gaza since 2007 had made the group pragmatic and that continued financial aid from Qatar and the grant of permits to Palestinian daily wagers to

work in Israel were sufficient incentives for Hamas to refrain from initiating large-scale conflict. Any evidence of attack preparations by Hamas could have been underplayed due to this 'confirmation bias'.

The most serious charge of failure pertains to the weakening of institutions and the politicisation of intelligence. The gravamen of this charge is that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu cynically pursued a policy of 'divide and conquer' by propping up the Islamist Hamas to undercut its rival and secular-nationalist Palestinian faction Fatah, which exercises a semblance of control over the West Bank through the Palestinian Authority. Unlike Hamas, which stands for the destruction of the Jewish state, the Palestinian Authority favours a negotiated, two-state solution. Mr. Netanyahu is alleged to have employed the tactic of undermining the Palestinian Authority to scuttle the two-state solution by arguing that Israel has no credible 'partner for peace' among the Palestinians; in effect, making Palestine a 'problem with no solution.' This ploy enabled him to retain the support of the right-wing and religious parties, which his coalition government had been dependent on for its survival. Representatives of these parties in his government also demanded more resources for policing the occupied West Bank where Israeli settlers, mainly right-wing supporters, live among the Palestinians who are in a majority. Israel's security services could have been blind-sided by these political pressures and taken their eyes off the threat from Hamas.

#### History of the Israel-Palestine conflict – Part 1 (Origins)

What did Hamas hope to achieve through this attack? Was it to remind the world of the Palestine issue amid the unprecedented thaw in relations between Israel and the Arab states including Saudi Arabia? Was it retribution for the pain inflicted by Israel on Palestinians? Or was it to puncture the myth of Israel's invincibility? Was the operation green-lighted at recent meetings in Lebanon between representatives of Hamas and Hezbollah, and Iranian Brigadier Esmail Qaani, as some reports suggest? Or was it the exclusive handiwork of Hamas 'hard-liners' led by Muhammad Diab Al-Nasri and Yahya Sinwar? Did the 'judicial reforms' of the Netanyahu government, which had a corrosive impact on Israel's military preparedness, embolden Hamas? Can a policy of eliminating Hamas, the central objective of Israel's anticipated ground offensive in Gaza, succeed? Do the U.S.'s military campaign in Afghanistan, Israel's experience in southern Lebanon, or the persistence of the ideology of the Islamic State despite the physical eradication of its so-called Caliphate offer any lessons in this regard? Definite answers to these questions may only emerge with time, possibly after a full-fledged inquiry is held in Israel. At a more fundamental level, the latest outbreak of violence reminds us yet again that intractable conflicts steeped in decades of bloodshed can be resolved only through negotiation and dialogue between the parties concerned. The application of force and more force by one side or the other cannot be the answer.

***Ramanathan Kumar is former Special Secretary, R&AW. Views are personal***

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# AN INDIA-CANADA BONDING THAT IS IN DANGER OF SNAPPING

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October 25, 2023 12:16 am | Updated 01:22 am IST

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'The present diplomatic tensions between the two governments seem to be undermining objective 19 of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration' | Photo Credit: Getty Images

The current state of [Canada-India diplomatic relations](#) has evoked a mountain of uncertainty. The questions are: what uncertainty and for whom? India is a prime origin country of immigrants to Canada, who have settled there as naturalised citizens (most holding the Overseas Citizenship of India, a life-time Indian visa or semi-dual-citizenship) as well as permanent residents (PRs) who range from investors, industrialists and business people, the highly skilled "knowledge professionals" to low- and medium-skilled "service workers". Apart from the settled Indian diaspora, there are "temporary visitors" who are international students, trainees, exchange scholars, tourists, and their families. Thus, a majority of them comprise a substantial share of India's human capital abroad, some of them even costing the country much in terms of large-scale brain drain.

**Editorial | [Frosty ties: On the worsening India-Canada ties](#)**

According to the Census of Canada 2021, the country is home to over 1.86 million people of Indian origin, i.e., about 5% of the country's 36.99 million population, and 5.8% of the 32 million strong global Indian diaspora. According to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) data, 225,940 or over 40% of 549,260 total study permits to international students were issued to Indians in 2022. How are all these emigrants and prospective ones affected by the ongoing diplomatic row, with Canada and India curtailing time-bound consular and visa services drastically?

Canada and India are not only members of the Commonwealth but also signatories to the [Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration agreement](#), that was adopted at an intergovernmental conference on migration in Marrakesh, Morocco in December 2018. A result of the three-year-long parleys by civil society to incorporate migration in the global development agenda (otherwise cocooned by a hyped notion of exclusive sovereignty closely guarded and flagged by every UN member state), it is a landmark sequel to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Among the 23 objectives of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration aimed at making migration “safe, orderly and regular” worldwide, objective number 19 is noteworthy: to “create conditions for migrants and diasporas to fully contribute to sustainable development in all countries”. But the questions are: who is to create those conditions for empowering migrants and diaspora? For what contributions to be fully realised? And for whom? The obvious answers are the origin and destination country governments; remittances and investments, transfer of knowledge and return migration for development engagement; for the two countries and their migrants, and families, and their diaspora members.

Remittances to India are from mainly migrant workers in West Asia/the Gulf countries. PRs and diaspora members in developed countries such as Canada are the source of investments in both countries. In 2022, India was Canada’s 10th largest bilateral trading partner (exceeding \$13.7 billion). Canada was India’s ninth largest partner, with exports up to \$5.3 billion. Similarly, visitors from India comprised Canada’s fourth largest international air travel market. Many of these traders and investors are members of the Indian diaspora in Canada. In 2021, Canadians visiting India spent \$93 million, and tourists from India exceeding 89,500, the highest from any single country, spent \$3.4 billion in Canada. In 2022, Canada and India agreed to remove restrictions on the number of bilateral flights, which was previously limited to 35 per week. Now, there is practically a travel ban with visa issuance withheld and/or restricted on both sides, rekindling memories of the pile-up in visa applications and travel plans during the COVID-19 pandemic, subjecting migrants and diaspora to the miseries of uncertainty once again.

Among the Indian diaspora in Canada, 7,70,000 people are from the Sikh religion. Sikhs of Indian origin dominate the Canadian tapestry of the Indian diaspora, coexisting harmoniously with other religions, primarily Indian Hindus for over a century. Despite the occasional strains caused by the separatist Khalistan movement gaining some support in Canada, the strong ties between the Indian diaspora and Canadian society have survived. One needs to go back in history to the tragic incident of May 23, 1914 when the steamship SS Komagata Maru arriving in Vancouver with 376 Indian passengers was denied entry due to the colonial British laws in Canada. The passengers were primarily Sikhs from Punjab but there were also Hindus, Muslims and Christians, all hoping for a new life in Canada. A century later, the Canadian government, upholding multicultural values enshrined in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms played a constructive role. On May 1, 2014, a stamp commemorating the 100th anniversary of the arrival of SS Komagata Maru was released by Canada Post, and on May 18, 2016, the Prime Minister of Canada, Justin Trudeau, delivered a formal statement of apology in the House of Commons for the Komagata Maru incident.

How does confrontation with India fit in with Canada’s Indo-Pacific ‘pivot’?

He emphasised the point that Canada’s rich diversity was a source of strength for the country. He said, “The Komagata Maru incident is a stain on Canada’s past. But the history of our country is one in which we constantly challenge ourselves, and each other, to extend our personal definitions of who is a Canadian. We have learned, and will continue to learn, from the mistakes of our past. We must make sure to never repeat them.”

Suddenly, all that bonding seems to be on the brink of snapping. Unfortunately, the present diplomatic tensions between the two governments seem to be undermining objective 19 of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and have cast a shroud over migrants and the diaspora in terms of uncertainty about their own status in Canada and India.

If the issue is not resolved soon, the strain in ties would irreparably erode the cherished values of trust, time and loyalty to the detriment of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and the SDGs globally. Our first classroom lessons in rational collective choice had

taught us that willingness came first, and then ability was to be created to turn a wish or an objective function into reality.

Strangely, in the row between India and Canada, the abilities of both nations are already there but willingness seems to be on the wane. The driver for reinstating the willingness in both governments would be an unwavering commitment by each side to regain the three individual values of trust, time and loyalty of their migrants and diaspora, and above all their citizens.

***Binod Khadria is a retired Professor of Jawaharlal Nehru University, and presently President of the think tank, Global Research Forum on Diaspora and Transnationalism (GRFDT)***

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# WARMING TIES: THE HINDU EDITORIAL ON BHUTAN-CHINA RELATIONS AND INDIA'S CONCERNS

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October 26, 2023 12:20 am | Updated 12:38 am IST

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This week's [visit of Bhutan's Foreign Minister Tandi Dorji to China](#), was unprecedented on several levels. Bhutan and China do not maintain diplomatic relations. His visit is the first ever by a Bhutanese Foreign Minister. Moreover, the main purpose was the holding of boundary talks that have not taken place in more than seven years. The talks appeared to yield substantive progress, according to a joint statement, with both countries having also signed a cooperation agreement outlining the functioning of a new joint technical team for the delimitation and demarcation of the boundary. In the talks with Dr. Dorji, the Chinese Foreign Minister, Wang Yi, called for both sides to soon establish diplomatic relations and to conclude their boundary negotiations. It is true that India, given its special relationship with Bhutan, has been very wary about the possibility of the establishment of diplomatic relations and the signing of a boundary agreement. But both those outcomes increasingly appear inevitable. Indeed, only this month, the [Bhutanese Prime Minister in an interview with this paper](#) said that the two countries were inching towards the completion of a three-step road map on boundary delineation and demarcation. He asserted that no agreement with China would in any way go against India's interests.

Given Bhutan's unique dependence on India, there is little doubt that it will have taken New Delhi on board in its efforts to normalise relations with China, in return guaranteeing India's security interests and red lines. One such red line will involve keeping China away from southern Doklam's ridges that overlook India's "Siliguri corridor", even as Beijing and Thimphu consider a "swap" between territories in the valleys of the north, where Bhutan is coming under intense Chinese pressure, and on the Doklam plateau in the west. A second line will likely involve Thimphu going slow on normalising ties and opening itself up to a permanent Chinese diplomatic presence, while continuing with border talks. The question now facing New Delhi is how best to protect its interests. One lesson from the crisis that was thrust upon Thimphu in 2017, during the India-China Doklam stand-off, is that India's interests are better served by taking Bhutan on board and aligning strategies rather than by expecting acquiescence from a sovereign nation that will understandably pursue its own. A border deal that addresses Bhutanese concerns in the north while preserving India's red lines in the west will not necessarily undermine New Delhi's interests. Rather than alarm, India must approach the boundary negotiations with a greater understanding of Bhutan's reasoning, and with confidence that India's long-trusted neighbour will take both India's interests and its own into consideration before any final agreement.

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Poland's right-wing Law and Justice party, in power since 2015, was punished by voters in the October 15 parliamentary election, termed one of the most consequential since the fall of communism in 1989. The party, known by its Polish acronym, PiS, ran a campaign that it could protect Poland's traditional values and its independence from the European oligarchy, while the [Donald Tusk-led centrist opposition Civic Coalition](#) said the election was the last opportunity to arrest the slide into autocracy. In the past eight years, PiS has shifted Poland's polity towards the right and often clashed with the European Union (EU). Its government was also accused of squeezing liberal democracy, stifling the free press, undermining gay rights and seizing control of institutions, mainly the judiciary. It emerged as the single largest party with 35.38% of the votes (200 seats), but fell short of a governing majority in the 460-strong lower House of Parliament. The Civic Coalition won 30.70% of the vote, but with potential coalition partners (the Third Way and Left party), the centre-left alliance, which has the support of 248 legislators, has a way forward to government formation.

The result is an opportunity for the centrist coalition to right the wrongs of the PiS government. Mr. Tusk has already promised to make amends with the EU, strengthen democracy and institutions, roll back the near-total ban of abortion and restore gay rights. An area where there would be continuity is Ukraine. PiS had offered staunch support for Ukraine against Russia's invasion, though there were quarrels over economic issues between Warsaw and Kyiv. Mr. Tusk, a former EU bureaucrat, has promised to continue support for Kyiv and to coordinate better with NATO and the EU in this regard. But Mr. Tusk faces many challenges that begin with the formation of the government itself. There is no certainty that Polish President Andrzej Duda, who is from PiS, would invite Mr. Tusk to form the government first. If the PiS is invited first, it could lead to horse trading. Even if Mr. Tusk manages to form the government, he will have to reach a consensus with President Duda, who wields a legislative veto, to initiate critical reforms. There is a consensus on social issues within Mr. Tusk's coalition, but members have different views on economic and climate policies. Tackling Russia's ongoing war in Ukraine, which has raised Poland's strategic profile in Europe, without a spillover is another challenge. What is awaiting Mr. Tusk is a tough balancing act straddling the spheres of economy, politics and foreign policy.

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# INTERNECINE SQUABBLING: THE HINDU EDITORIAL ON THE DISSONANCES WITHIN THE REPUBLICAN PARTY IN THE U.S.

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October 27, 2023 12:10 am | Updated 01:49 am IST

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After a prolonged spell of costly indecisiveness, the U.S. House of Representatives has finally elected a Speaker, Representative Mike Johnson of Louisiana. Recent weeks have seen convulsions rock the House as Republicans struggled to find a consensus candidate to lead the majority in the Lower Chamber of Congress. After the political debacle of the ouster of the previous Speaker Kevin McCarthy on October 3, laying bare the deeply factionalised landscape of the House Republican caucus, several party notables tried and failed to secure the confidence of the House majority in their bids for the top post. Initially, multiple closed-door meetings failed to produce a consensus candidate. Heavyweights including Tom Emmer of Minnesota, Jim Jordan of Ohio and Steve Scalise of Louisiana, were unable to secure the gavel by cornering the minimum of 217 votes, despite being nominated to the role. While Mr. Johnson has now emerged as the Speaker, second in line for the U.S. presidency, after much confabulations and voting, the politically messy process of his win signals serious deadlock in the party and the Chamber.

In a sense, the intra-party fractures that impeded the House Republican caucus from taking forward funding bills relating to the U.S. federal government, Israel and Ukraine, reflect the contradictions between the Congressmen who support and are supported by former President Donald Trump on the one hand, and those who are not in that category, on the other. Shortly after Mr. Emmer pulled out of the contest, Mr. Trump described him on social media as a “Rino”, or ‘Republican in Name Only’, who “never respected the power of a Trump endorsement or the breadth and scope of MAGA”, and that it would be “a tragic mistake” to support him. Trump acolytes in the House took their cue from the 45th President, it appears, and they are a sizeable cohort. Looking beyond the political embarrassment of this rupture, it portends trouble for the Grand Old Party in the 2024 presidential election. It certainly does appear at this time as though Mr. Trump will win his party’s nomination by a considerable margin. However, many “traditional” conservatives do not side with him on hot button issues, including criminal charges that he faces, for example for obstructing justice in seeking to delegitimise the results of the 2020 presidential election. If the House’s Speaker saga indicates anything, it is that the dissonances within the Republican Party will sooner or later be manifested in popular anger among conservatives, and that might be an even greater barrier to Mr. Trump’s political ambitions than the opposition he faces from Democrats.

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October 28, 2023 12:20 am | Updated 12:20 am IST

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The [death sentence handed down by a Qatari court](#) on Thursday to eight Indians reportedly accused of espionage is indeed “deeply shocking”, as the Ministry of External Affairs described in a statement, and the situation is now [a major test of the Narendra Modi government's diplomatic skills](#). The trial was shrouded in secrecy, with scant information on the charges and evidence against the former Indian Navy servicemen, arrested in August 2022. Despite pleas from their families and Indian diplomats in Doha, Qatar has not explained why it has not divulged details of the case. Even the judgment has yet to be shared with New Delhi. Leaked reports suggest that the men have been accused of sharing secret information pertaining to the stealth submarine programme they worked on, with a third country, a charge their families have denied. Visits by Indian officials to Qatar to plead for leniency and transparency have been of no avail. While this case has some parallels to the case of former Naval Commander Jadhav, who is on death row too in Pakistan, the difference is that India's ties with Qatar have been relatively better. Apart from strategic and defence cooperation agreements, India sources 40% of its LNG needs from Qatar. India is also Qatar's third biggest source of imports, particularly raw materials for construction and fresh food items. Pertinently, these supplies continued despite the Gulf blockade against Qatar in 2017, which should have counted for some goodwill towards India. In addition, 7,00,000 Indian expatriates are an integral part of Qatar's institutions, industry and workforce. A rift in ties, which a sentence like this is bound to engender, will be to the detriment of both countries, and India must make this clear to Qatar.

The government must waste no time in charting the next steps to ensure the Indians are given the best possible support in an appeal. Apart from the legal appeals process and diplomatic legwork, channels to the Qatari leadership should be activated at the highest levels, including the Prime Minister if necessary. A case must be made for clemency and commuting the sentences to jail terms that could even be served out in India if the men are indeed found guilty in the appeals process. Notwithstanding reports that seek to tie the verdict to more geopolitical considerations, including perceived Qatari differences with India over its policy on Israel and Palestine in the current conflict, the government must demonstrate that the lives of the men are indeed a priority for their country and for a government that claims a policy of “no Indian left behind”.

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# A CHINA-INDIA PARTNERSHIP, ITS VAST GLOBAL POTENTIAL

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'As Asian civilisations that have been living side by side, China and India share common thoughts on the future and destiny of mankind' | Photo Credit: Getty Images/iStockphoto

The crisis in Ukraine continues unabated even as new conflict has flared up in West Asia. Traditional and non-traditional security threats are interlocked and global deficits in peace, development, security and governance are growing. What has happened to the world? How should we respond? These are profound questions that have been raised by the world, by history and by the times, and challenge mankind to search for answers.

As Asian civilisations that have been living side by side for thousands of years, China and India share common thoughts on the future and destiny of mankind. The Chinese people have cherished the vision of "a world of fairness and justice for the common good" since ancient times. Ancient Indian literature also records the motto of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam".

In the 1950s, China and India jointly initiated the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence, which has turned into basic norms governing international relations. As two largest developing countries and emerging market economies, each with a population of over one billion, China and India are both at a crucial stage of development and revitalisation. They have the responsibility, the ability and the opportunity to once again illuminate the path forward for mankind with Oriental wisdom. The answer China's President Xi Jinping gives out is to build a global community of a shared future. A white paper China recently released titled "A Global Community of Shared Future: China's Proposals and Actions", systematically lays out the theoretical base, practice and development of that over the past decade. It advocates forging greater synergy to achieve lasting peace, developing a conducive environment for common security, instilling greater confidence in common development, providing sustainable driving forces for mutual learning among civilisations, and taking more actions to protect the ecology.

The vision of a global community of shared future has been included in United Nations General Assembly Resolutions for six consecutive years and incorporated in the resolutions and declarations of multilateral mechanisms such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and BRICS. It has won the international community's understanding and support, especially among developing countries, and has a clear path forward.

These are: Keep to the correct direction of economic globalisation. Jointly build an open world economy that reflects the demands and represents the interests of developing countries. Unilateralism, protectionism, decoupling, and the zero-sum game of the “winner-takes-all” should be rejected.

Follow the right path of peaceful development. The world needs peace, just like people need air and sunshine. The trend today is the pursuit of peace, development, cooperation, and win-win results. The old path of colonialism and hegemonism leads to a dead end and those who follow it will pay a heavy price. Only by working together to pursue peace, safeguard peace, and share peace, can countries achieve their development goals and make greater contributions to the world.

Foster a new type of international relations. By building a global community of a shared future, emerging countries and established powers can avoid falling into the Thucydides trap and build common ground and achieve common development for different civilisations and countries with different social systems. Countries should uphold the principles of mutual respect, equity and justice, and mutually beneficial cooperation so as to build broader and deeper global partnerships based on equality, openness, and cooperation.

Practice true multilateralism. Building cliques in the name of multilateralism is no more than bloc politics. Seeking supremacy in the name of multilateralism is still unilateral thinking. “Selective multilateralism” is practising double standards. The world should be fair and free from domineering practices. There is only one system for the world, which is the international system with the United Nations at its core. There is only one order for the world, which is the international order based on international law. There is only one set of rules for the world, which is the basic norms governing international relations based on the purposes and principles of the UN Charter.

Promote the common values of peace, development, equity, justice, democracy and freedom of humanity. There is no single model of democracy that is universally applicable, far less a superior one. Promoting the common values of humanity is about seeking common ground while reserving differences, harmony without uniformity, and fully respecting the diversity of civilisations and the right of all countries to independently choose their social systems and development paths.

Over the past decade, China has contributed its strength to building a global community of a shared future with firm conviction and solid actions. The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has become a popular global public good and a cooperation platform provided by China to the world. The Global Development Initiative, Global Security Initiative, and Global Civilization Initiative point to the direction of human progress across three dimensions and have evolved into a crucial cornerstone for building a global community of a shared future, providing comprehensive solutions to the challenges confronting humanity.

With a third of the global population, China and India are natural partners in building a global community of a shared future. China and India could jointly work hand in hand with global development, security and civilisation initiatives to demonstrate the common will and resolution of the Global South countries to build an open, inclusive, clean and beautiful world that enjoys lasting peace, universal security, and common prosperity.

Ma Jia is Chargé d’Affaires ad interim (a.i.) of the Chinese Embassy in India

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## INDIAN ARMY AND AIR FORCE CONTINGENT DEPARTS FOR INDIA-KAZAKHSTAN JOINT MILITARY EXERCISE KAZIND-2023

Relevant for: International Relations | Topic: Effect of policies and politics of developed & developing countries on India's interests

Indian Army and Indian Air Force contingent comprising 120 personnel departed for Kazakhstan today to take part in the 7<sup>th</sup> edition of Joint Military 'Exercise KAZIND-2023'. The Exercise will be conducted at Otar, Kazakhstan from 30<sup>th</sup> October to 11<sup>th</sup> November 2023.

Indian Army contingent comprises 90 personnel led by a Battalion from the DOGRA Regiment. The Kazakhstan contingent is mainly represented by personnel from Regional Command South of Kazakh Ground Forces. 30 personnel of Air Force from both sides will also participate in the current edition of the Exercise alongside the Army contingents.

The Joint Exercise between India and Kazakhstan was instituted as 'Exercise PRABAL DOSTYK' in the year 2016. After the second edition, the Exercise was upgraded to a company-level exercise and renamed as 'Exercise KAZIND'. The Exercise has been further upgraded as a Bi-service Exercise this year by including the Air Force component.

In this edition of the Exercise, both sides will practice conduct of Counter Terrorism operations in a sub-conventional environment under United Nations mandate. The contingents will jointly rehearse various tactical drills to include Raid, Search and Destroy Operations, Small Team Insertion and Extraction Operations etc. The scope of the Exercise also includes conduct of Counter Unmanned Aerial System Operations.

'Exercise KAZIND-2023' will provide an opportunity for both sides to gain an insight into the tactics, battle drills and procedures of each other, which is a prerequisite while operating under the ambit of the United Nations. The joint training will develop the necessary skills, resilience and coordination to conduct joint military operations in Semi-Urban and Urban environments.

Both sides will get a chance to practice drills on a wide spectrum of combat skills and mutually learn from each other. The Exercise will provide an opportunity for the contingents to exchange views and share the best practices. 'Exercise KAZIND-2023' will further strengthen the bond between the two armies.





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# A WAR WHERE HUMANITY IS ON TRIAL NOW

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A picture taken from the Israeli border, overlooking the Gaza Strip | Photo Credit: AFP

On October 7, 2023, on the 50th anniversary of the Yom Kippur War,  [Hamas launched a brutal attack on Israel](#), killing more than a thousand people, mostly civilians, and kidnapping over 200 more. The unprecedented attack was devastating for Israel. The Indian National Congress strongly believes that violence has no place in a decent world, and the very next day unequivocally condemned Hamas's attacks.

This tragedy is, however, being compounded by the [Israeli military's indiscriminate operations in and around Gaza](#) that have led to thousands of deaths, including large numbers of innocent children, women and men. The power of the Israeli state is now focused on exacting revenge from a population that is largely as helpless as it is blameless. The destructive might of one of the world's most potent military arsenals is being unleashed upon children, women and men who have no part in the Hamas assault; they, instead, for the most part, have been at the heart of decades of discrimination and suffering.

In this war, as it is now described, entire families have been wiped out and neighbourhoods have been reduced to rubble. Medical facilities are unable to cope with the vast humanitarian crisis that has befallen the population. The denial of water, food and electricity is no less than the collective punishment of the Palestinian people. The outside world, particularly those who want to help, is largely blocked out of Gaza, with relief and aid reaching the needy in a trickle, and not on the scale that is necessary. Not only is it inhumane but it is also illegal in international law. Very few Gazans are untouched by the violence. Bottled up on a small, over-densely populated strip of territory, they have nothing to fall back upon. And now, even the occupied West Bank has flared up and the conflict is widening.

The prospects for the future are ominous. Senior Israeli officials have spoken of destroying and depopulating large parts of Gaza. The Israeli Defence Minister has referred to Palestinians as "human animals". This dehumanising language is shocking coming from the descendants of those who themselves were the victims of the Holocaust.

Humanity is on trial now. We were collectively diminished by the brutal attacks on Israel. We are now all diminished by Israel's disproportionate and equally brutal response. How many more lives will have to be taken before our collective conscience is stirred and awakened?

The Israeli government is making a grievous error in equating the actions of Hamas with the Palestinian people. In its determination to destroy Hamas, it has unleashed indiscriminate death and destruction against the ordinary people of Gaza. Even if the long history of the suffering of the Palestinians is ignored, by what logic can a whole population be held responsible for the actions of a few?

It bears constant repeating that the complex problems faced by Palestinians — problems that are rooted in a troubled imperial history orchestrated by outside powers — can only be solved through dialogue. It bears constant repeating, too, that this dialogue must accommodate the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinians, including that of a sovereign state, that have been denied to them for decades, while at the same time ensuring the security of Israel.

There can be no peace without justice. Israel's unremitting blockade for over a decade and a half has reduced Gaza to an "open-air prison" for its two million inhabitants packed into dense cities and refugee camps. In Jerusalem and the West Bank, Israeli settlers backed by the Israeli state have continued to push out Palestinians from their own land in a seeming effort to destroy the vision of a two-state solution. Peace will come only if the world, led by countries that have the ability to influence policies and events, can restart the process of restoring the two-state vision and make it a reality.

The Indian National Congress has been consistent over the years in its strong belief that both the Palestinians and Israelis have the right to live in a just peace. We value our friendship with the people of Israel. But this does not mean that we erase from our memories, the painful history of forced dispossession of the Palestinians from what was their homeland for centuries, and of years of suppression of their basic right to a life of dignity and self-respect.

Contrary to some mischievous suggestions, the position of the Indian National Congress has been long standing and principled: it is to support direct negotiations for a sovereign independent, viable and secure state of Palestine coexisting in peace with Israel. This is also the [stand taken by the Ministry of External Affairs on October 12, 2023](#). It is noteworthy that the reiteration of India's historic position on Palestine came only after Israel began its assault on Gaza. The Prime Minister had made no mention of Palestinian rights in the initial statement expressing complete solidarity with Israel. The Indian National Congress is strongly opposed to India's abstention on the recent United Nations General Assembly Resolution calling for an "immediate, durable and sustained humanitarian truce leading to a cessation of hostilities" between Israeli forces and Hamas in Gaza.

There are voices on both sides speaking for an end to this madness. Many Israelis, having lost friends and family in the terror attacks, still believe that a dialogue with the Palestinians is the only way forward. Many Palestinians acknowledge that violence will only lead to more suffering and take them further away from their dream of a life of self-respect, equality and dignity.

It is unfortunate that many influential countries are being wholly partisan when they should be trying their utmost to end the war. The loudest and most powerful voices should be for a cessation of military activity. Otherwise, this cycle will continue and make it difficult for anyone in the region to live in peace for a long time to come.

***Sonia Gandhi is chairperson of the Congress Parliamentary Party***

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