

# PERSPECTIVES

GLOBAL AFFAIRS & INDIAN POLITICS

## THE DECLINE OF AMERICA

Beyond exerting power, legitimacy is crucial for global leadership  
It's 'Ra-Ra-Ras-Putin' in the Russian election



PSIR CURRENT AFFAIRS MARCH 2024

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# PREFACE

Welcome to "Perspectives," a beacon of knowledge brought to you by the RausIAS PSIR team, tailored to illuminate the depths of political science and international relations for UPSC aspirants.

Rooted in the fundamental principles of political science—justice, equality, liberty, and development—this magazine serves as a compass guiding you through the labyrinth of current affairs. Our aim is to shed light on the intricate web of global events, ensuring that your perspectives are not merely shaped by ignorance but are illuminated by informed deliberation.

**In this edition, we delve into the tumultuous landscape of international relations,** exploring the dynamics of power and governance on the global stage. From the **decline of America's leadership** to the imperative of **placing Africa at the heart of India's Global South vision,** we navigate through the complex tapestry of geopolitical realities.

Amidst the shifting sands of global politics, we examine the challenges posed by a **Trump presidency for India, the resurgence of Russian influence in the wake of their elections,** and the enduring specter of nuclear escalation.

Additionally, we highlight the exceptional **contributions of women in French diplomacy** and the ramifications of events in Gaza on the rules-based order.

Through the lens of esteemed scholars, **we dissect key concepts of international relations theories** and their applications to contemporary events. Aspiring civil servants embark on a journey of discovery, armed with a nuanced understanding of global affairs.

With "**Perspectives on Polity and Global Affairs,**" we equip UPSC aspirants with the essential insights necessary to navigate the challenges of the examination and make meaningful contributions to the future of our nation and the world.

Join us as we unravel the complexities of governance, diplomacy, and power dynamics, empowering you to forge a path towards a brighter tomorrow.

*Rahul Puri*

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# "THE DECLINE OF AMERICA'S LEADERSHIP"

"Washington is failing to use its leverage in the international environment."

## Krishanan Shrinivasan

(former Foreign Secretary)

The traditional sources of America's global dominance, including its values, military strength, financial centrality, and technological innovation, have been foundational. Despite this, there's a staunch pro-American stance in India that refutes any decline in US power and advocates for closer ties. However, **scholars like Ian Bremmer and Laura Kuenssberg argue that America is grappling with internal divisions** and a changing global landscape where other nations are less bound by traditional international norms. **Andrew Whitehead further suggests that America's democratic processes seem to be faltering.**

While opinions vary on the extent of America's decline, scholars generally agree that its **soft power has waned** while China's hard power has surged, as noted by Niall Ferguson. Ferguson highlights China's economic dominance, pointing out America's challenges such as immigration issues and deficits in various sectors.

The US has historically shaped the international system post-World War II, but its credibility has been marred by military interventions like in Afghanistan and Iraq. Washington's withdrawal from international agreements, like the Trans-Pacific Partnership, has further eroded its influence. The American wars in Afghanistan and Iraq dissipated America's credibility due to its emphasis on military expeditionism, evidenced by about 750 military bases in 80 countries .

Internally, **polarisation has hindered cooperation**, with ideological divides deepening in the two-party system. Liberalism and globalisation have also led to societal fractures and a backlash against immigration in some regions.

**Beyond exerting power, legitimacy is crucial for global leadership.** Yet, there's a growing challenge to the legitimacy of American institutions and leadership, with debates over the electoral system.



China and Russia are actively seeking to maintain their authoritarian regimes and reshape the international system in their favor, while questioning Western democratic values. US-China competition, particularly in technology, is a central global concern, with China's advancements drawing admiration.

**Despite these challenges, America's soft power, like its entertainment industry, and enduring alliances provide some balance.**

However, its policies regarding conflicts, like with Israel and Palestine, have complicated its standing in certain regions.

Regardless of whether the U.S. retains its status as the "indispensable nation," as argued by former U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, India should foster a beneficial relationship with America while acknowledging its shortcomings

# WHY INDIA MUST PUT AFRICA AT THE HEART OF ITS GLOBAL SOUTH VISION

**By Veda Vaidyanathan**

The concept of the Global South is debated for its potential to reshape global governance, yet criticized for oversimplification. India, positioning itself within this framework, should prioritize engagement with African nations to enhance its effectiveness. Africa's significant growth rate of 3.8 per cent and its young population, with 60 per cent under the age of 25, estimated to reach 1.1 billion people by 2040.

**The economic potential**-\$98 billion in Indian investments and \$100 billion in trade in 2023. India's extensive credit and completion of 200 developmental projects underscore its commitment to the region, alongside initiatives like exporting scalable solutions through social enterprises and NGOs.

Africa's significance in global forums is pivotal for India's global governance vision, given the Global South is home to 3/4th of global population and 39% of global GDP share.

Advocating for reform towards a more inclusive system, India's support for the African Union in forums like the G20 resonates with the need for development-focused structures.

**Sustainable development cooperation** - cooperation in the critical minerals sector. To build solar panels and batteries necessary for a low-carbon future, access to minerals classified as "critical", "transition" or "green" is key. Africa, with 30% of the world's mineral reserves, is vital to power the energy transition.

As New Delhi prepares for what the International Energy Agency terms "**the dawn of a new industrial age**", the convergence of India's supply chain diversification and Africa's desire to capture the value chain introduces avenues for cooperation.

India's relationship with African nations is undergoing a significant shift in the current era of geopolitical competition. Leveraging historical partnerships with Africa becomes crucial as India's aspirations for the Global South evolve.



# TWO WARS, THE CONSEQUENCES FOR AMERICA'S STANDING

“To what extent the Ukraine and Gaza wars will be driven by U.S. election-year politics or their own future course, is unclear”

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## Manoj Joshi

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In a recent surprising move, United States Senate Majority **Leader Chuck Schumer called for a change in leadership in Israel**, causing significant strain in the increasingly fragile U.S.-Israel relations. Schumer, a Democrat and a Jewish-American, previously had a strong relationship with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu but now accuses him of being too lenient towards civilian casualties in Gaza.

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán disclosed after meeting former U.S. President Donald Trump that Trump intended to suspend military aid to Ukraine upon taking office. Trump's campaign aides revealed his plans to swiftly negotiate an end to the Russia-Ukraine conflict and to urge European countries to bear more of the conflict's financial burden.

In the case of Israel's conflict with Hamas, U.S. President Joe Biden and Senator Schumer have publicly raised concerns about Israeli actions, signaling a shift in the Democratic Party's stance. Critics, including former U.S. official Richard N. Haass, argue that Israel's actions have damaged its relationship with the U.S. and led to unnecessary civilian casualties.

Looking ahead, **the U.S.'s approach to both Ukraine and Israel remains uncertain**, especially as the Biden administration navigates changes in bipartisan foreign policy norms.

The ongoing conflicts in Israel-Hamas and Ukraine are significant global issues with uncertain impacts as the U.S. approaches its pivotal presidential elections in eight months. **The outcomes of these conflicts may shape the country's standing globally, regardless of the election results.**

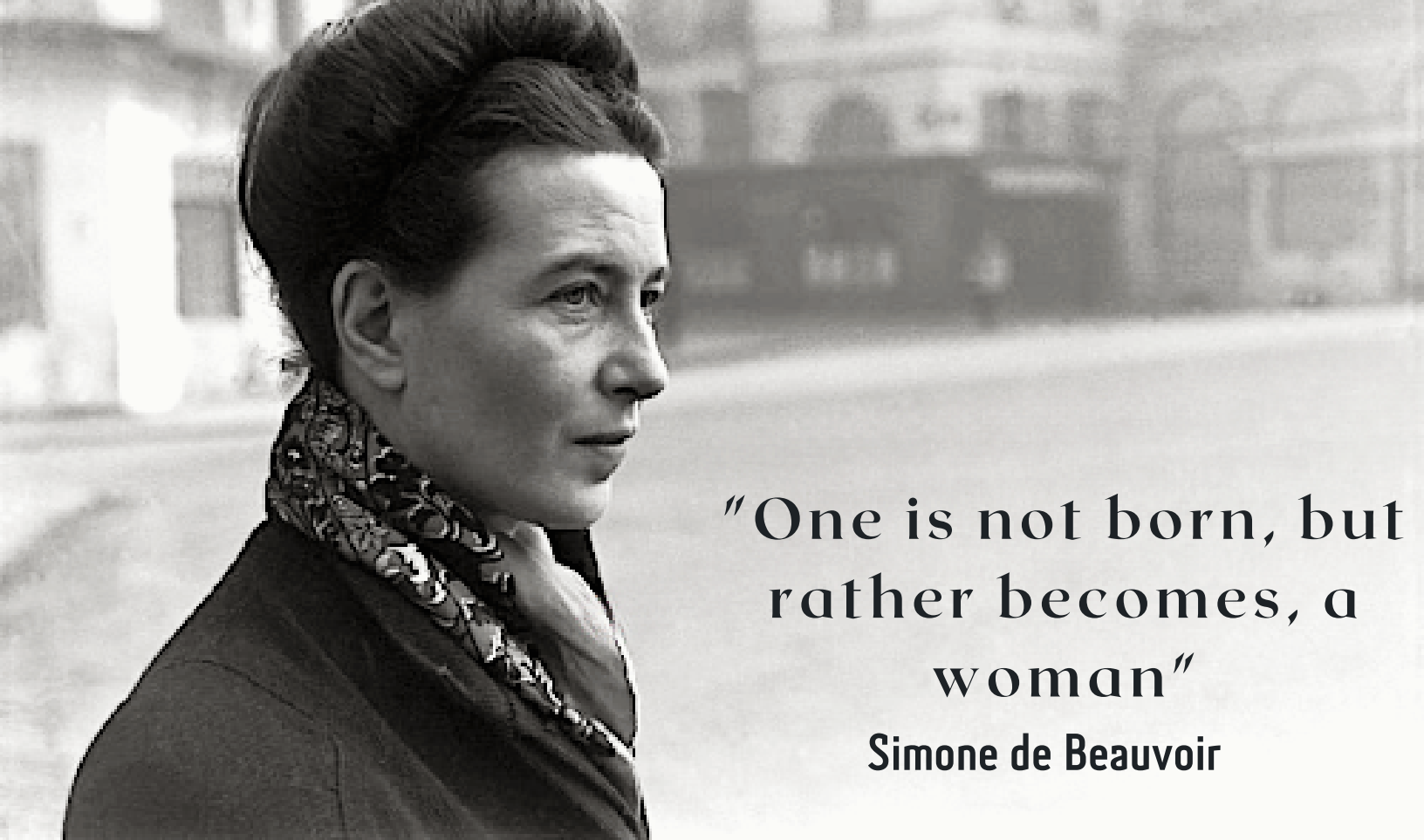
**The U.S. has provided substantial military and civil aid to Ukraine**, including weapons purchases and humanitarian support, totaling around \$75 billion since February 2022. However, a new aid package of \$60 billion has been held up in the U.S. Congress, leaving Ukraine in need of further military assistance.

**On the ground, Ukraine has struggled to counter Russian advances** since its failed summer offensive last year. Meanwhile, Russia has capitalized on its numerical and technological superiority, particularly in electronic warfare and artillery.

Additionally, a potential reelection of Trump could significantly alter U.S. policy directions, impacting alliances and security commitments globally.

The evolving dynamics in these conflicts have implications not only for the U.S.'s role as a global leader but also for its relationships with key allies in regions like Europe and the Indo-Pacific.





“One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman”

Simone de Beauvoir

# FRANCE’S EXCEPTIONAL WOMEN, THEIR IMPRINT ON DIPLOMACY”

**THIERRY MATHOU**

On March 4, 2024, **France made history by constitutionally guaranteeing women the right to choose abortion**, a landmark decision supporting women's rights globally. The history of women's rights in France, particularly the right to bodily autonomy is linked to French feminist icon Simone de Beauvoir who published “The Second Sex” in 1949.

In the second volume of the book, beginning with the well-known feminist phrase “One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman”, Beauvoir devotes a whole section to abortion within the context of motherhood.

Integrating feminist principles with existential theories, she lays the foundation for advocating pro-choice beliefs, emphasizing women's right to make autonomous decisions, crucial within existentialism.

**Critiquing the societal hypocrisy of her era, where abortion was often clandestine despite its prevalence, Beauvoir highlights the need for legal, safe, and accessible abortion services to combat institutionalized oppression** against women perpetuated by patriarchy. She emphasizes the dire consequences of illegal abortions, drawing attention to the autobiographical narrative of Annie Ernaux's illegal abortion in 1963.



Upon its publication in 1949, Beauvoir's groundbreaking work, **"The Second Sex,"** garnered widespread acclaim and played a significant role in influencing the legalization of abortion in France. Despite facing criticism for her unconventional lifestyle and ideas, which included an open relationship with philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre and a decision not to marry or have children, Beauvoir remained steadfast in her advocacy for women's rights and reproductive autonomy.

In 1971, Beauvoir authored the **"Manifesto of the 343,"** signed by 343 notable women admitting to having undergone abortions. The manifesto denounced the secrecy and dangers surrounding abortion in France, demanding the right to choose freely. **This act of civil disobedience challenged societal norms** and played a pivotal role in the passage of the Veil law four years later, legalizing abortion in France.

The enduring significance of "The Second Sex" in contemporary feminism is evident, as demonstrated by its initial translation into Hindi in 1991 by Indian feminist and author Prabha Khaitan, titled **"Stree Upekshita" or "The Neglecting of Women"**. This underscores Beauvoir's enduring impact and the widespread admiration she commands among feminists globally. Furthermore, the recognition of abortion as a fundamental right in the French Constitution can be attributed significantly to Beauvoir's influence.

France's diplomatic efforts reflect the legacy of these remarkable women, as it advocates for a feminist foreign policy. This approach involves integrating gender equality and women's rights into all bilateral engagements, development aid, and advocacy within international forums. Noteworthy is France's co-chairing of the Generation Equality Forum in 2021, a significant global feminist event akin to the Beijing World Conference on Women in 1995.

Similarly, **India has a history of prioritizing women's rights on the international stage.** This includes commitments to implementing Sustainable Development Goal 5, participation in the 2019 Biarritz Partnership for Gender Equality, and recent membership in the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women. There is considerable potential for collaborative efforts between France and India to advance women's rights globally.

*Simone de Beauvoir, a renowned French philosopher, writer, and feminist, stands as a trailblazer in the realm of gender equality and existentialist thought, best known for her "trailblazing work in feminist philosophy". Through her seminal works and activism, she challenged societal norms, advocating for women's rights and questioning traditional gender roles. Beauvoir's influence reverberates through modern feminism, inspiring generations worldwide.*

***The Second Sex (1949):** This monumental work, considered a cornerstone of feminist philosophy, is a comprehensive analysis of women's oppression throughout history. Beauvoir argues that society constructs women as "the Other" – the inessential opposite of the dominant male. She critiques the biological determinism used to justify women's domestic roles and advocates for women's freedom and self-definition through existentialist philosophy. "The Second Sex" challenged societal expectations and ignited the flames of second-wave feminism.*

# THE CHALLENGES OF A TRUMP PRESIDENCY FOR INDIA

**C Raja Mohan**

Donald Trump recently cautioned European nations that **he might allow Russia to invade allies failing to fulfill their NATO defense commitments.** Trump's deep antipathy towards Asian and European allies is evident, as he perceives them as benefiting from the United States without adequately contributing to defense efforts.

Even if Trump does not win, his Republican Party's growing opposition to foreign commitments and a deepening sense of "America First" promise to produce major changes in Eurasian geopolitics. **While India is not an "ally" of the US and does not depend on its military forces for its security, however there are complex consequences of Trump's "America First" policies.** Any American military retrenchment from Eurasia will dramatically alter the balance of power in this region and produce outcomes that are patently unfavourable to India.

**Eurasia without America will be a dream come true for those strategists in Moscow and Beijing** and a nightmare for the neighbours of Russia and China. Although India, a maritime power with natural preference is for a multipolar order in Eurasia, rarely debates the consequences of a Europe without America, it is acutely conscious of the dangers of a unipolar Asia dominated by China. It is possible to see that without American presence, Asia could easily slip into the Chinese orbit.

The Trump Administration initiated a significant shift from Washington's longstanding approach of fostering closer ties with Beijing and increasing economic integration with China by implementing tariffs, reducing economic reliance on Beijing, and revitalizing the QUAD. President Biden has continued and expanded upon this strategic direction set forth by Trump in Asia.



However, this time Allies fear Trump's potential lack of restraint and impulsive behavior, which could damage longstanding US alliances. **Trump argues that US allies must contribute more to their own defense instead of relying solely on American support,** challenging traditional internationalist liberal views of US foreign policy. Trump argues that the entrenched "globalism" of the US foreign policy elite is an important part of the problem. Also the left of the US political spectrum equates American globalism with a disastrous penchant for empire.

**Trump rejects the notion that access to the US market should be given in exchange for geopolitical favors,** believing it has harmed the American economy. He has imposed tariffs on allies and threatens further tariffs on imports, particularly from China, and now threatens to impose an across-the-board tariff of 10 per cent on all imports into the US and tariffs up to 60 per cent on imports from China.

India sees opportunities in aligning with the US on security matters to bolster its regional influence, but faces challenges regarding trade due to previous tensions with the Trump Administration. Despite this, **C Raja Mohan argues, enhancing trade and technology ties with the US remains crucial for India, necessitating innovative approaches to foster cooperation in this area.**





# IT'S 'RA-RA-RAS-PUTIN' IN THE RUSSIAN ELECTION

"Russia is a riddle, wrapped in a mystery, inside an enigma"- Churchill

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**C Raja Mohan**

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In the 2024 Russian presidential election, Putin's leadership of Russia until 2030 was solidified, despite a brief interruption between 2008 and 2012. Although Putin ran as an independent candidate, all three opposition candidates are perceived to have strong ties to him and have endorsed Kremlin policies, including the Ukraine invasion, portraying them as mere puppets in the orchestrated political landscape of the election.

The only serious opposition candidate, Boris Nadezhdin, known for his criticism of Russia's war with Ukraine, was disqualified by the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation. Additionally, Alexei Navalny, a prominent opposition figure, died in a high-security Arctic penal colony in February 2024. Then what is the rationale of the election at all?

The election is characterized as an exercise where the choice is simplified to a binary question: "Are you for or against Putin?" Critics suggest that it effectively serves as a referendum on the issue of the war, implying that a vote for Putin is synonymous with support for the ongoing conflict.

In Russia, there is widespread public backing for Putin's actions; however, there is also a growing sense of war fatigue. Furthermore, as the conflict progresses, the focus and objectives of the war are evolving.

Initially framed as a campaign against "Nazism" in Ukraine, it has gradually transformed into a broader conflict perceived as a struggle against the West.

The Russian economy's resilience amid sustained Western sanctions is credited to Putin's leadership, with scholars attributing this success to "Military Keynesianism." The Ukraine war is portrayed as a Western scheme to weaken Russia and impose cultural hegemony. Historically, Russia has projected itself as a fortress of liberal-conservative values that trace their origin to the Russian orthodox church, rooted in the concept of "Moscow-Third Rome."

While Putin is the lynchpin around which Russian politics revolves, entrenched elites also wield influence, with loyalty to Putin crucial for survival. Russian political culture, shaped by historical autocratic regimes, contributes to Putin's firm control. Putin is the arbiter of different interest groups. These interest groups are made of the bureaucracy, the business elite and local political elites, and their complete loyalty towards Mr. Putin is needed to ensure their survival. Despite Western doomsday prophecies, Russia's resilience and efforts to garner support from anti-Western nations bolster its global standing.

# THE RETURN OF NUCLEAR ESCALATION

NATO's strategy made nuclear weapons the ultimate weapons of the weak.  
How America's Adversaries Have Hijacked Its Old Deterrence Strategy.

By- **Keir A. Lieber and Daryl G. Press**

## Pakistan

Pakistan, facing conventional military inferiority against stronger adversaries like India, rely on nuclear deterrence to prevent catastrophic defeat, leveraging their nuclear arsenal to deter aggression and maintain strategic stability.

## North Korea

North Korea, facing significant military inferiority against South Korea and the United States, relies heavily on its nuclear arsenal due to its outdated conventional military capabilities.

## China

China, despite its conventional military inferiority compared to the United States, has opted not to rely on nuclear threats for compensation.

## Russia

Observers agree that Russia's nuclear doctrine prioritises escalation to counter major military threats.

Contrary to expectations following the Cold War, the belief that nuclear weapons would diminish in significance has been upended, with **several nations increasingly relying on them to compensate for deficiencies** in their conventional military capabilities. North Korea's development of intercontinental ballistic missiles targeting the United States, China's expansion of its nuclear arsenal, Russia's threats of nuclear utilization in the Ukraine conflict, and indications of Iran's accumulation of fissile material for potential weaponization underscore the gravity of the situation.

However, Some optimists in the United States argue that **nuclear weapons cannot compensate for conventional military weaknesses**, as threats to escalate, even from desperate adversaries, lack credibility. During the Cold War, the West formulated a strategy of coercive nuclear escalation aimed at persuading the Soviet Union that NATO allies would indeed deploy nuclear weapons in the event of an invasion. Today, U.S. adversaries have adopted NATO's previous nuclear strategy and devised their own methods for credible escalation.

In the late 1950s, the Warsaw Pact, led by the Soviet Union and its satellite states, outnumbered NATO forces nearly three to one. NATO's response was straightforward: **in the event of a Soviet invasion of Western Europe, the United States would retaliate with a massive nuclear bombing campaign**, making clear that any conflict would escalate to nuclear warfare. However, Within a decade, the USSR obtained the capability to retaliate with nuclear weapons. This meant NATO faced a lose-lose scenario: either lose a conventional conflict or initiate a mutually catastrophic nuclear exchange during a war.

NATO shifted its nuclear strategy to employ nuclear weapons coercively in response to a Soviet invasion, utilising tactical weapons to pressure Soviet leaders to halt the conflict by showcasing the risk of nuclear escalation. This approach aimed to deter Soviet aggression by demonstrating the potential for uncontrollable nuclear escalation. To back up this strategy, the United States deployed thousands of tactical nuclear weapons to Europe. NATO's strategy involved a gradual and coercive escalation, designed to make the risks of prolonging the conflict unbearable for the

Deterrence strategists observed that in a defensive conflict, NATO allies would prioritize defending their freedom and territorial integrity, a motivation stronger than the Soviets' inclination towards aggression. Critics condemned NATO's strategy for risking civilization-ending nuclear conflict and assuming controllable escalation, yet the alliance still relied on deliberate escalation logic to defend against a superior adversary, making nuclear weapons the ultimate defense for weaker powers.

**Post Cold war case 1- Pakistan:** Pakistan, facing conventional military inferiority against stronger adversaries like India, rely on nuclear deterrence to prevent catastrophic defeat, leveraging their nuclear arsenal to deter aggression and maintain strategic stability. India has five times the population, nine times the GDP, and spends six times as much on its military. Pakistan possesses around 170 nuclear warheads, with a significant portion being tactical, strategically aimed at deterring or halting an Indian attack, forming a "strategic shield" to counter India's conventional military dominance, despite the recognition that Pakistan could not prevail in a nuclear conflict against India's comparable arsenal and retaliatory capabilities.

**Case 2 - North Korea:** North Korea, facing significant military inferiority against South Korea and the United States, relies heavily on its nuclear arsenal due to its outdated conventional military capabilities. Kim Jong Un clarified in 2022 that while the primary purpose of North Korea's nuclear weapons is deterrence, they would be used to repel an attack if deterrence failed, emphasizing the regime's reliance on nuclear deterrence to safeguard its interests.

US strategists recognize that in a conflict on the Korean Peninsula, North Korea, fearing a fate akin to ousted leaders like Saddam Hussein and Muammar al-Qaddafi, would face immense pressure to engage in a dangerous nuclear exchange, targeting regional and possibly US locations, to coerce Seoul and Washington into accepting a ceasefire

**Case 3 - China:** China, despite its conventional military inferiority compared to the United States, has opted not to rely on nuclear threats for compensation. Instead, China prioritizes enhancing its conventional military capabilities over preparing its nuclear arsenal for wartime coercion. Moreover, Beijing asserts a policy of never being the first to use nuclear weapons in a conflict. While China publicly upholds a no-first-use nuclear policy and emphasizes strengthening its conventional military, its nuclear doctrine includes exceptions for major conventional defeats. Chinese strategists have explored the potential coercive use of low-yield nuclear weapons, and recent updates to China's nuclear forces aim to enhance survivability and allow for wartime escalation without fear of US retaliation. There remains a possibility of China's leaders altering their stance and employing nuclear weapons if a conflict with the United States deteriorates.

**Case 4- Russia:** Observers agree that Russia's nuclear doctrine prioritises escalation to counter major military threats. Russia, like other nuclear-armed nations with conventional weaknesses, has integrated tactical nuclear weapons into its war plans. In the event of a significant shift favouring Ukraine in the conflict portrayed by Putin as a national security threat, Russia could resort to coercive nuclear tactics if Putin perceives a threat to his regime.

Preventing a military catastrophe is crucial for Putin, with nuclear escalation representing one of his last resorts. While no immediate invasion threat looms over Russia, if Putin perceives the risk of being ousted or harmed due to complete defeat in Ukraine, he may view the situation as dire enough to consider deploying nuclear weapons.

Some Western observers doubt the credibility of Russia's nuclear threats, suggesting they may be bluffing to pressure the West to withdraw support for Ukraine. Skeptics argue that nuclear escalation would not alleviate Russia's military challenges in Ukraine and could worsen its situation by inviting NATO's conventional retaliation.

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However, Scholars argue that underestimating Russia's nuclear options overlooks the logic of coercive escalation. Russia's objective would not be to rectify military imbalances but to signal the conflict's uncontrollable escalation, raising the specter of a wider nuclear war to compel Western leaders to end the conflict due to Moscow's resolve to avoid defeat.

Hawkish policy analysts argue that the US can counter adversaries' nuclear threats with military strength and resolve, but warn against underestimating desperate, nuclear-armed foes, emphasizing the grave risk posed if their determination is underestimated.

# GAZA AND THE END OF THE RULES-BASED ORDER

“What the Israel-Hamas War Means for the Future of Human Rights and International Law”

**By Agnès Callamard**

**1**

“War on terror” has been deployed to expand the reach and range of state “self-defense”

**2**

The principle of universality has been increasingly disregarded in conflicts involving terror.

**3**

The erosion of the rules-based international order is emphasized, with warnings of increased instability, conflict.

**Israel's retaliation against Hamas in Gaza has been marked by alleged war crimes and violations of international law.** This includes indiscriminate attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure, resulting in significant casualties and displacement. Over 28,000 Palestinians killed, majority women and children; widespread destruction of infrastructure; allegations of indiscriminate attacks on civilians and civilian objects.

Despite allegations of war crimes, the United States and many Western countries have supported Israel, providing military assistance and opposing calls for a cease-fire at the United Nations as visible in military assistance from Western countries; opposition to cease-fire resolutions at the UN.

The international rule of law and human rights system have been eroded, particularly since the "war on terror" post-9/11. This erosion has normalized actions that violate human rights and international law.

Allegations of war crimes and violations of international law in Gaza conflict; normalization of violence and abuses. For the last 20 years, the doctrine and methods of the "war on terror" have been adopted or mimicked by governments the world over. **They have been deployed to expand the reach and range of state "self-defense"** measures and to hunt down, with the barest of restraints, any people or authorities deemed to warrant the loosely defined but widely applied designation of "terrorist threat."

The principle of universality, which holds that all individuals are endowed with human rights equally, is highlighted as foundational to the international human rights system. However, this principle has been increasingly disregarded, particularly in conflicts involving terrorism.

American airstrikes in Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Somalia, and Syria resulted in significant civilian casualties. The US military often claimed to take necessary steps to protect civilians but provided little explanation for the high number of civilian deaths.

**Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine was justified with references to self-defense and exceptions to the prohibition of the use of force.** However, indiscriminate attacks by Russian forces resulted in thousands of civilian casualties, with mounting evidence of crimes under international law, including torture, deportation, sexual violence, and unlawful killings. In Syria, Russia's relentless bombings of civilian infrastructure had led to thousands of civilian deaths, with Russian authorities often claiming to target "terrorist" sites despite evidence of civilian casualties.

**China has invoked the "fight against terrorism" to justify its widespread crackdown on Uyghurs,** Kazakhs, and other predominantly Muslim ethnic minorities in Xinjiang. This crackdown has resulted in crimes against humanity, including arbitrary detention, torture, and forced assimilation.

The dire humanitarian situation in Gaza is described, with thousands of civilian casualties and widespread destruction of infrastructure. There is a sheer lack of international condemnation and calls for immediate cessation of military operations by both Israel and Hamas.

**Deterioration of International Order:** The erosion of the rules-based international order is emphasized, with warnings of increased instability, conflict, and suffering if current trends continue. The article calls for urgent action to address the humanitarian crisis and uphold international law. Concerns about erosion of international order; there is need for urgent action to address humanitarian crisis.

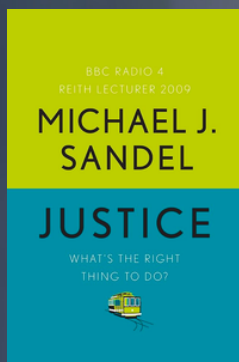
# EXCERPTS FROM INTERVIEW OF MICHAEL SANDEL ON INDIAN EXPRESS EXPERT ADDA

## “Politics of hope can’t just be about technocratic things” - Michael Sandel



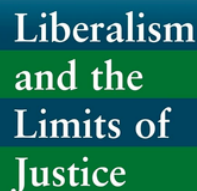
THE TYRANNY OF MERIT  
— ★ —  
WHAT'S BECOME OF THE COMMON GOOD?  
—  
MICHAEL J. SANDEL  
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

He examines how the meritocratic ideal has led to inequality and social division.



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Liberalism and the Limits of Justice

second edition

MICHAEL J. SANDEL

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Harvard University

### Points from interview of Michael Sandel on Indian Express Expert Adda. -

The success of right-wing authoritarian populist figures and parties is usually a symptom of the failure of progressive politics. Eg Success of Trump in USA.

Rise of populism is linked with the **failure of liberal progressive politics** to provide a compelling alternative, a tendency of elites to look down. It also relates to cultural sources and the religious sources of populist appeal.

According to him **“A politics of hope can’t just be about technocratic things.** It has to address the deepest cultural and spiritual sources that move people, that give rise to people’s anger and frustrations and resentments, but also to their hopes and aspirations.”

There is a **backlash against elites in many democratic societies** and it takes different forms. (you can link it with theories of elitist democracy. **“Iron law of oligarchy”** by Robert Michels. Views of Pareto, Mosca etc.)

Secularism as a governing philosophy- there was a kind of faith in countries around the world that the way to a tolerant society, the way to avoid communal conflict and violence, was to insist on governing principles that were entirely secular, even to the point in some countries as this liberal secular picture unfolded, **it was a version of liberalism that insisted that citizens leave their moral and spiritual convictions** outside when they enter the public square.

On patriotism and national identity- It’s a mistake for progressive parties and politicians **to allow patriotism and national identity and belonging to become a monopoly** of the right. The left speaks of solidarity, the right monopolises the term patriotism.

Opposition is required to articulate an alternative governing vision. **Democracy is not the same as majoritarianism.** Democracy is not only about voting or about majorities.



Democracy at its best describes a public culture of deliberation and ongoing argument and contestation. And so for democracy to flourish, it's necessary that there be sites and occasions for genuine citizen deliberation about these kinds of questions.

**Minorities- respecting the minority is a fundamental condition of the mutual respect on which a decent society depends.**

Judiciary- **“The judiciary at its best, especially in constitutional democracies, not only adjudicates disputes and conflicting interpretations of the law, it also serves as an institution of civic education, especially where big public questions are decided. This is one of the most important tests of the role the judiciary can play in a constitutional democracy. Safeguarding rights under the Constitution is crucial. Protecting those rights against majoritarian incursion and violation, is important.”**

# REGULATORY DHARMA

**Appointement  
and removal**

**Accountability**

**Interface with  
Government**



The article revolves around the multifaceted challenges faced by regulators in fulfilling their duties effectively. It highlights that while the tasks of regulators may not involve physically demanding actions, such as firefighting or deep-sea diving, they are nevertheless critical in regulating and nurturing various sectors like environment, energy, finance, and more.

According to **Thomas Jefferson, government is created to secure the inalienable rights of all citizens** - i.e., the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

If everyone were to be allowed to pursue complete freedom for doing whatever he wants and to pursue his happiness, then it may lead to a situation where rights and freedom of other persons are affected. **This necessitates the regulatory role of the government.** The State enacts laws which impose restrictions on the activities of citizens, in the larger interest of society.

In the world of governance, regulators act like architects, weaving through the complex web of laws and policies that shape our society. Their job goes beyond just enforcing rules; they're the protectors of public interests, tasked with finding the right balance between individual freedoms and the greater good. Though they may not be seen as heroes like emergency responders, their decisions have a big impact on sectors vital to our country's growth. This editorial explores the many challenges facing regulators in India, focusing on the need for independence and accountability to make regulation work effectively.

**Understanding Regulation:** Regulation is all about society's collective effort to protect everyone's rights and make sure opportunities are fair for all. In India, regulators have evolved to become more independent, with agencies set up specifically to regulate certain areas and given some freedom from direct government control.

**Changes in the Economy:** Back in the 1990s, India made big changes to its economy, **moving away from strict government control to more market-driven policies.** But with these changes came new problems, especially when it comes to how regulations are set up. There are lots of laws governing different regulators, but they all work differently, which can make things confusing and less efficient. This **lack of consistency can make it hard for regulators to do their jobs fairly and independently.**

**Are Regulators Really Independent?** For regulators to do their jobs well, **they need to be independent from outside influences.** But sometimes, they end up being too connected to government officials, which can make it hard for them to make decisions on their own. Also, the rules about who gets appointed and for how long can vary a lot between different regulators. This lack of clear rules can make it easier for outside pressures to influence how regulators do their jobs.

**Making Regulators More Accountable:** To make sure regulators are doing their jobs properly, they need to be held accountable. This means there should be **clear rules about how they're chosen and how long they serve.** It also means there should be ways for people to challenge their decisions if they think they're unfair. And just like in other countries, India should start doing regular assessments of how well regulations are working and what effects they're having on society.

**What Needs to Change:** To fix these problems, **we need to make sure regulators have clear rules about how they're chosen and how long they serve.** There should also be stronger oversight from government officials to make sure regulators are doing their jobs properly. And we need to make sure regulators have enough money and resources to do their jobs without being controlled by outside interests.

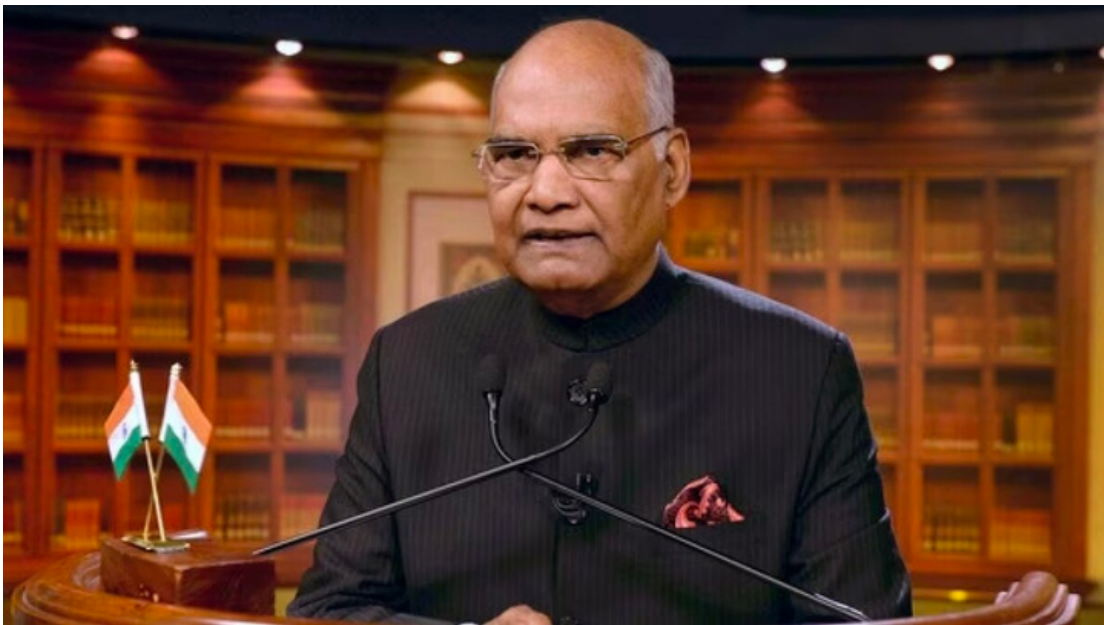
As India moves forward, regulators play a big role in shaping our society. By making sure they're independent and accountable, we can make sure they're doing their jobs fairly and effectively. It's important to keep working towards a system where regulations work for everyone, helping to create a fair and prosperous society for all.

# TRANSITIONING TO SIMULTANEOUS ELECTIONS

A Unified Approach to Governance

Solution to Hung House, No-Confidence Motion or Defection:

In the event of a hung house, no-confidence motion or any such events, fresh elections may be held to constitute the new House. However, the tenure of the newly House of People or State Legislative Assembly will be only for the unexpired term (or remaining term) of the immediately preceding full term of House of People.



In the intricate tapestry of India's democratic framework, a proposition gaining momentum is the **synchronization of all elections—both national and state levels**. This concept, termed simultaneous elections, presents a nuanced landscape of advantages and drawbacks. Let's delve into the nuances of this proposal and explore the trajectory for its realization.

At its core, **simultaneous elections promise a shift towards a more holistic governance paradigm**. By consolidating electoral cycles, policymakers would be afforded an extended runway to focus on substantive developmental agendas, transcending the narrow confines of short-term electoral calculus. This, in turn, could catalyze a concerted push towards long-term progress and sustained governance reforms.

Moreover, **the financial dividends of simultaneous elections loom large on the horizon**. The considerable cost savings accrued from streamlining electoral processes hold profound implications for prudent fiscal management. By mitigating the recurrent expenditure associated with multiple election cycles, resources could be reallocated towards priority areas such as healthcare, education, and infrastructure development, amplifying the dividends of public investment.

Simultaneous elections also hold the promise of **fortifying the edifice of democracy by curbing the specter of corruption and malfeasance**. The protracted electoral cycle often serves as fertile ground for the proliferation of illicit financial flows and patronage networks. By reducing the frequency of electoral contests, the temptation for politicians to resort to unscrupulous means to secure electoral victory is correspondingly diminished, fostering a climate of transparency and accountability.

Furthermore, **the optimization of logistical resources emerges as a salient benefit of simultaneous elections**. The judicious deployment of security personnel and administrative machinery during electoral processes could be streamlined, mitigating the strain on public services and minimizing disruptions to civic life. This, in turn, engenders an environment conducive to the seamless conduct of electoral affairs, bolstering public confidence in the democratic process.

However, **the transition to simultaneous elections is not devoid of challenges and considerations**. The conflation of local and national issues, for instance, risks diluting the granularity of regional concerns within the broader electoral discourse. Moreover, the logistical complexities inherent in coordinating the deployment of security forces across diverse geographies necessitate meticulous planning and resource allocation.

The **realization of simultaneous elections necessitates a multifaceted approach** encompassing legal, administrative, and political dimensions. The recommendations put forth by the Kovind committee offer a blueprint for legislative amendments and institutional reforms to facilitate this transition. However, the efficacy of these proposals hinges upon consensus-building and collaborative engagement across political spectra.

In charting the course forward, **concerted efforts are imperative to navigate the intricacies of this transformative endeavor.** A collaborative ethos, underpinned by a shared commitment to democratic principles, is indispensable in surmounting the challenges that lie ahead. As India strides towards the realization of simultaneous elections, it embarks on a transformative journey towards a more robust and inclusive democratic ethos.

### **Suggestions by Ramnath Kovind Committee on Operationalisation of Simultaneous Elections**

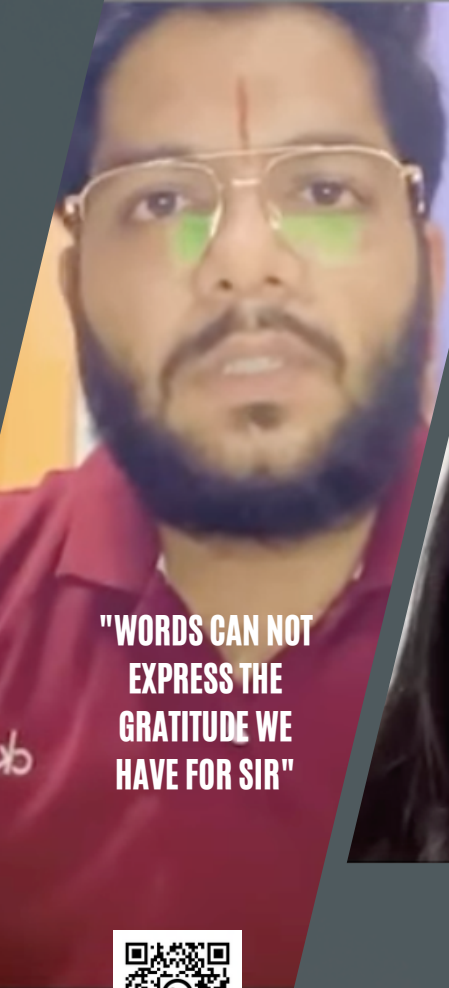
- Government must develop a legally tenable mechanism to restore the cycle of simultaneous elections.
- **Proposed Mechanism by the Committee:**
  - **Step 1:** Simultaneous elections to Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies should be held.
  - **Step 2:** Elections to Municipalities and Panchayats will be synchronized with Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies in such a way that elections to Municipalities and Panchayats are held within a hundred days of elections of Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies.
- **Proposal for bring synchronisation between the House of People and State Legislative Assemblies:**
  - President, may by notification, issued on the date of first sitting of House of the People (Lok Sabha) after a General Election. The date of this notification shall be called the Appointed date.

- Tenure of all State Legislative Assemblies, constituted by elections to State Legislative Assemblies after the Appointed Date and before the expiry of the full term of Lok Sabha, shall be only for the period pending up to the subsequent General elections to the Lok Sabha. (ie Tenure of State Legislative Assemblies will be full term of the House of People).
- Thereafter, all General elections to Lok Sabha and all State Legislative Assemblies shall be held simultaneously.
- **Proposal for enabling simultaneous elections in Constitutional Local Bodies (Panchayats & Municipalities with Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assembly):**
  - **Introduction of Article 324A** This Constitution Amendment should be introduced for enabling simultaneous elections in Panchayats and Municipalities with General elections of Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies.
- **Solution to Hung House, No-Confidence Motion or Defection:**
  - In the event of a hung house, no-confidence motion or any such events, fresh elections may be held to constitute the new House. **However, the tenure of the newly House of People or State Legislative Assembly will be only for the unexpired term (or remaining term) of the immediately preceding full term of House of People.** After the expiration of this remaining term, there will be dissolution of the House.
  - Similarly, where fresh elections are held for State Legislative Assemblies, then such new Legislative Assembly unless sooner dissolved, shall continue up to the end of the full term of the House of People.
  - These changes will require amendments Article 83 (Duration of Houses of Parliament) and Article 172 (Duration of State Legislatures). This Constitution Amendment will not need ratification by the States.



- **Single Electoral Roll and Single Elector's Photo Identity Card:** (Amendment of Article 325) Required for enabling Single Electoral Roll and Single Elector's Photo Identity Card (EPIC), which shall be prepared by ECI in consultation with State Election Commission. This Single Electoral Roll will substitute any other electoral roll prepared by ECI under Article 325 or State Election Commission (SEC) under Article 243K and 243ZA of Indian Constitution. This amendment to the Constitution will require ratification by more than 50% of State Legislative Assemblies.
- **Addressing of Logistical Challenges:**
  - For Simultaneous elections to Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies: For making logistical arrangements for conduct of simultaneous elections to the House of People and State Legislative Assemblies, the ECI may estimate in advance for the procurement of equipment such as EVMs and VVPATs, deployment of polling personnel and security forces and make other arrangements.
  - For elections to Municipalities and Panchayats: State Election Commission in consultation with Election Commission of India may estimate in advance for procurement of equipment such as EVMs & VVPATs, deployment of polling personnel and security forces.

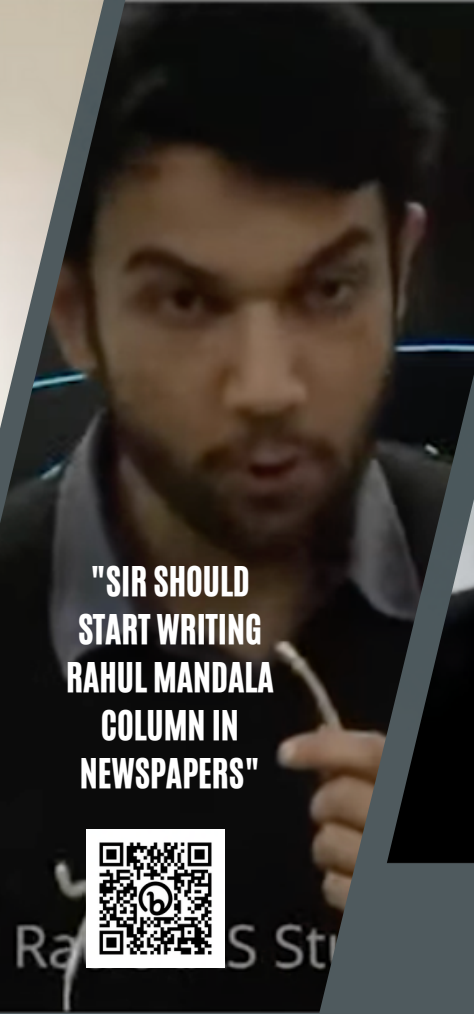




**"WORDS CAN NOT EXPRESS THE GRATITUDE WE HAVE FOR SIR"**



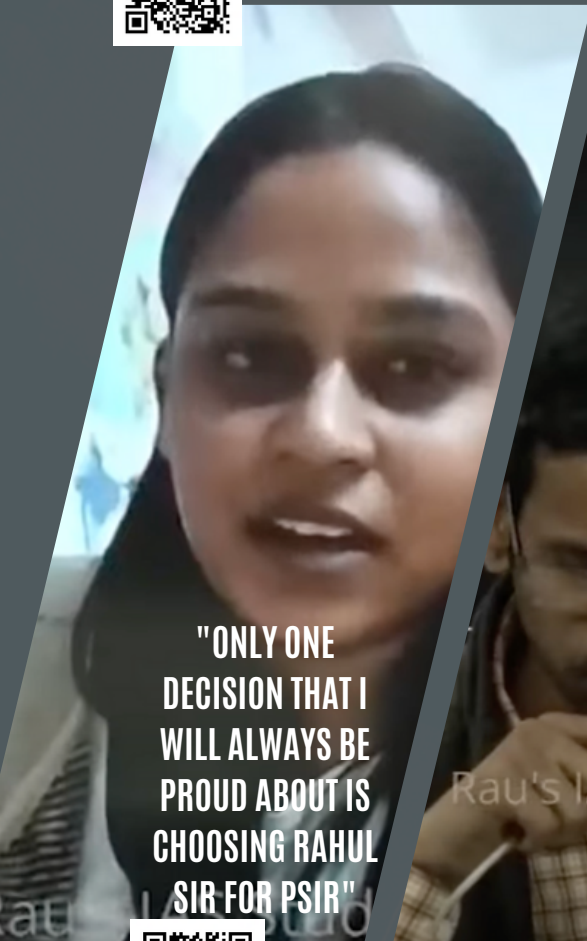
**"I COULD NEVER EXPECT TO LEARN SO MUCH IN MY OWN GRADUATION SUBJECT"**



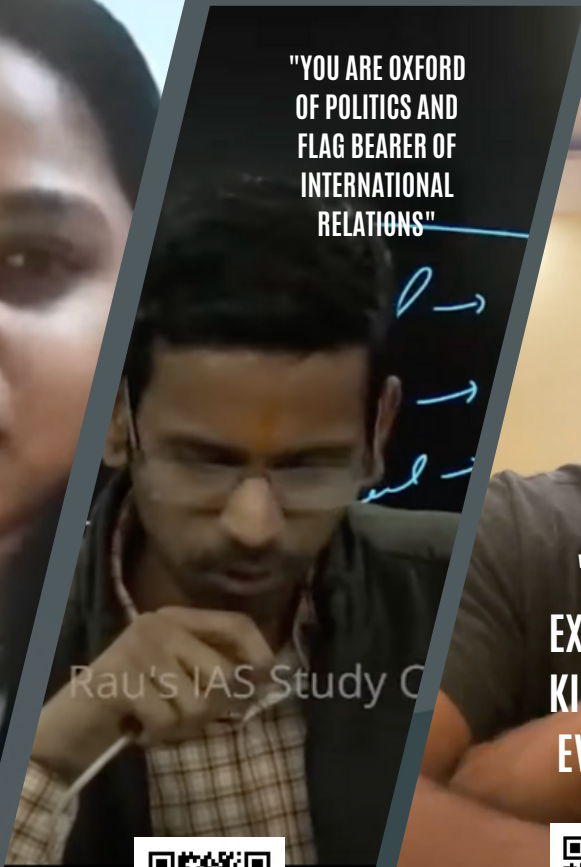
**"SIR SHOULD START WRITING RAHUL MANDALA COLUMN IN NEWSPAPERS"**



**"RAHUL SIR BECAME MY GO TO PERSON FOR ALL GUIDANCE AND NOT JUST PSIR"**



**"ONLY ONE DECISION THAT I WILL ALWAYS BE PROUD ABOUT IS CHOOSING RAHUL SIR FOR PSIR"**



**"YOU ARE OXFORD OF POLITICS AND FLAG BEARER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS"**



**"I HAVE NEVER EXPERIENCED THIS KIND OF TEACHING EVER IN MY LIFE"**

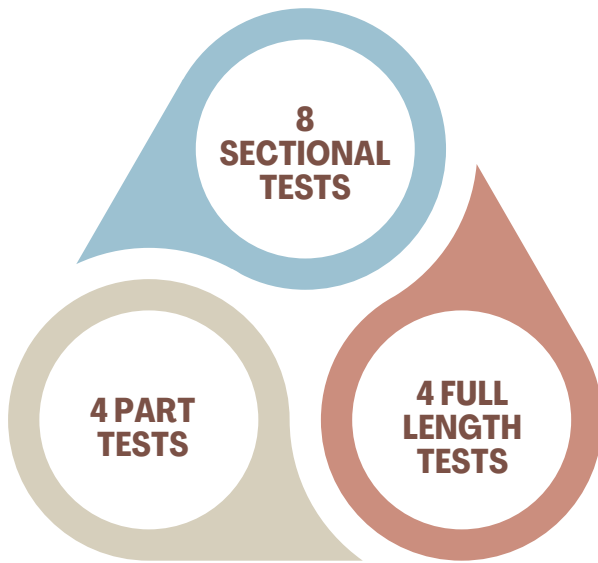


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