



SANISKĀRA

ASSERTION | ACCOMMODATION | ADVANCEMENT

Messages

विदेश मंत्री
भारत



Minister of External Affairs
India



Message

As the Raisina Dialogue convenes for its 11th edition, the pace of change in the global order has accelerated. In various ways, the behaviour of States has reflected the resulting stresses. Assertion, Accommodation and Advancement are their expressions. What is needed to complete the picture is the Argumentation. And that is why the Raisina Dialogue is particularly valuable.

The dimensions of change are multiple and varied. They include economic volatility, political uncertainty, technology shocks and cultural frictions. Cumulatively, they have generated debates on multi-polarity, de-risking, resilience, diversification and multilateralism. That many events have unfolded in a manner that challenges longstanding assumptions is but one aspect. Equally, departures from the norm have exceeded expectations in many domains.

The world looks very different from what it was just a year ago. As the best minds from various geographies grapple with it, the Raisina Dialogue is an important crossroads where assessments intersect, views are exchanged and opinions formed. I welcome all participants and look forward to the conversations.

(Dr. S. Jaishankar)

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Sunjoy Joshi

Chairman, Observer Research
Foundation

We gather at a peculiar juncture of history. A hyper-informed world finds itself strategically fractured, caught in a vortex of disintegration. Coalitions that seemed foundational now strain. An era of Assertion—driven not by vision but the collective unconscious impulse of inherited grievances.

Raisina Dialogue 2025 centred on *Kālachakra*—the cycle of time. Transitions in the world order are never linear but negotiated through contests between opposites. Civilisations move through cycles of integration and disintegration.

Herein lies the answer to a question that haunts us: Why do smart people, strong nations, make self-destructive choices? The answer lies within the Indian intellectual tradition of





Saṃskāra—an idea too often reduced to a “rite of passage”, trivialised like an Instagram reel or cultural memorabilia.

Removed from all these, *Saṃskāra* is akin to the code that runs a civilisation. Not a static code—a strand of DNA frozen in amber; but a constant evolving refinement of the human condition. *Saṃskāra* is not to be the prisoner of the groove, but to let the groove guide water to the field to irrigate, to enliven.

As we convene for the eleventh edition of the Raisina Dialogue, we stand on the cusp of a paradigm shift. Navigating it responsibly will require both memory and innovation.

A nation primed for Assertion is a nation trapped in repetitive, habitual patterns operating from the collective unconscious, from wounded self-worth. It reacts to slights—real or imagined—with the force of a thousand-year-old memory. It escalates because its scars command escalation. It withdraws because its wounds dictate withdrawal. A network of power, addicted to its own narrative, unable to look into the mirror. This is not *samskara*, but primordial stimulus-response.

Saṃskāra teaches us that we are not merely products of past residues but fruits of conscious refinement. We must learn to see the ‘other’ as a mirror, not as a target. The true etymological power of *Saṃskāra* lies in the prefix *Sam*, *Samatva*, balance the Middle Path of Equanimity.

Advancement is not found in the victory of one force over the other. Advancement lies in the ***Saṃskāra* of Accommodation.**

From resurgent tariffs to resurgent geopolitics—across rising data centres, automation, and digitally enabled warfare—we are confronted by a complex overlay of the old and the new. The questions before us cannot be resolved in silos. They require sustained intellectual engagement, ideological candour, and a willingness to engage across differences. Honest dialogue may yield uncomfortable conclusions but remains preferable to complacent consensus.

It is timely and significant that we welcome His Excellency Mr Alexander Stubb, President of Finland, as Chief Guest at this edition of the Raisina Dialogue. European civilisation finds itself at a consequential juncture. Having served as a pillar of the Western order, it now introspects over the contours of the future. Finland's journey—shaped by geography, resilience, and strategic clarity—offers a particularly relevant lens for examining questions of sovereignty, security, and cooperative multilateralism in an unsettled era.

We no longer operate in a simple world of states talking to states. We live in a multi-nodal reality where knowledge and power flow through networks. At the Raisina Dialogue, we gather such nodes.

Our endeavour is to create a space where policymakers, practitioners, scholars, and innovators deliberate without artifice. In an age defined by fragmentation, the Raisina Dialogue presents a platform to test ideas, to listen as much as to speak, to realise that tomorrow need not be shaped by today's anxieties.

Sunjoy Joshi



CURATOR'S NOTE



Samir Saran

President, Observer Research Foundation
Curator, Raisina Dialogue

The Raisina Dialogue begins its second decade as the century enters its second quarter. It is an achievement worth celebrating, and we are humbled by its enormity. Yet we also stand here today amidst a crisis, and we spare a moment for all those who are in conflict zones in West Asia and elsewhere. May shanti prevail; may peace be upon them and upon all of us.

I thank each one of you. Many of you rescheduled flights and travelled through unfamiliar routes—determined to meet with us here, as a collective, in New Delhi.

Every year that we have met, the debates that confront us have expanded and taken on new forms. Throughout,

the Raisina Dialogue has remained as steadfast as a 200-year-old Banyan tree, its roots planted firmly in the ground.

The Raisina Dialogue has kept faith in its aim of unpacking the present to help shape our future. And with the task comes a commitment to agility and to deepening our engagement with a world in flux.

Complementing our flagship annual Dialogue in New Delhi, we have Raisina satellite convenings in Australia, Japan, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and the Mediterranean in Marseille, France. This year will also see the launch of Raisina Americas, an action-oriented platform established jointly by India and Canada to support a constituency of responsive powers.

Today, we are proud to launch the Science and Diplomacy Initiative, in collaboration with the Office of the Principal Scientific Advisor to the Government of India, the Kōi Tū Centre for Informed Futures in New Zealand, the Geneva Science and Diplomacy Anticipator, and various international organisations. Chaired by India, the initiative is an acknowledgement of the role of science and technology in shaping our world and building an inclusive future. Beyond this inaugural edition, we hope to begin the process of fostering more partnerships and dialogues on science, technology, and innovation.

Our long-standing Raisina Young Fellows Programme has produced hundreds of global leaders over the past decade. Four years ago, on the advice of the Prime Minister, we also launched the Raisina Forum for the Future of Diplomacy for





early-career diplomats. These programmes have made a seminal contribution to the nurturing of excellence in world affairs and diplomacy. Today, over 2,500 leaders from more than 130 countries have become part of the Raisina Leaders family. More than 200 of them are here with us at this Dialogue.

Indeed, discovering and investing in tomorrow's leaders is central to our work. This year, 250 students from 60 countries are taking part in the Raisina Dialogue under different programmes.

In a moment unlike any before, we recall the words of Prime Minister Modi: "Strength in a nation does not suddenly emerge; it is built over generations. It is refined through knowledge, tradition, hard work, and experience."

Today, nations are manifesting strength in different ways. We see a boldness of intent. We see contests for land and leverage. We see mutual respect and efforts to be inclusive. And we see the desire for growth and progress.

In other words, nations are asserting their identity, accommodating their differences, and advancing through dialogue. *Saṁskāra*, the theme of Raisina Dialogue 2026, captures this perfectly.

At this Dialogue, we prize honesty. We will be honest to ourselves and our aspirations. We will be honest to the partners who impact us. And we will be honest to the civilisations we have inherited. That is *Saṁskāra*.

At this Dialogue, we prize our principles while searching for what is possible. Together, we will acknowledge the differences between us and create a path forward that may not be perfect but will be framed by what Finnish President Alexander Stubb articulates as value-based realism. That is also *Samskāra*.

Our goal is to find shared priorities and a common purpose. We will not linger over a damaged world order. Instead, we will rebuild, repair, and embellish it anew. This has never been more difficult and the stakes have never been higher. But it is the essence of *Samskāra*.

We will look at ways to rejuvenate the world's connective tissue. Multilateral institutions are no longer fit-for-purpose; the architecture of international cooperation needs rebuilding. The Global South may well decide how this architecture is rebuilt. At this Dialogue, we will hear how multilateralism can be renewed from those most invested in its rejuvenation.

We will re-centre the world's most pressing aspiration: development. Global shocks, debt crises, and financing fatigue have forced on us the cold reality that with less than five years remaining to 2030, the Sustainable Development Goals may not be achieved. What will it take to prioritise development? Who will decide the next development goals, and what will they be? The Raisina Dialogue seeks these answers.





In 2026, ORF is pleased to initiate a High-Level Empowered Board on the Green Transition we all must embrace. Supported by a secretariat, the Board will guide and accelerate transition. This is the moment that states are advancing on climate action—from pledges to accountability. At this Dialogue, we will examine how the cost of delay can be turned into a call for action.

During the AI Impact Summit, the world gathered in New Delhi and saw the future of technology—where code defines identity, data drives geopolitics, and AI is shaping the wealth of nations. Algorithms are indeed power. We are delighted to announce a new initiative this year: the Raisina Global Innovation Square. Here, we will seek to build AI for India, and AI for the world out of India. We will ask how technology will shape civilisations—and how civilisations must shape technology in turn.

Finally, the map of global commerce is being redrawn. From the dance of creation and destruction, innovation is born. It is born not in ease but in effort; not despite adversity but because of it. The Dialogue will examine the new geoeconomics, where policy, politics, and polycrisis meet.

This is the broad canvas of Raisina Dialogue 2026. And, as always, its conversations will remind us that change must begin with ourselves.

I welcome you once again to the Dialogue, and to the Raisina family. Let us, with eyes and hearts wide open, debate and disagree, and contemplate and co-create.

Samir Saran