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GLOBAL UP-TO-DATE

A  Publication

The world around us is changing rapidly. Wars, new turn in global politics, human rights issues are occurring every day, posing new challenges and concerns. Global Up-to-Date is an initiative by Centre for Governance Studies (CGS) which will work as a hub for explaining the contemporary global issues.

The regular briefs will focus and explain the issues related to International Politics, Economy, Security, Human Rights, and Development. There will be a monthly printed version newsletter containing briefs of all the contemporary global important issues. The online version contains regular updates of the pressing issues along with the PDF version of the newsletter.

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India's 2024 Elections: Political Shifts and Global Repercussions

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India's recent 2024 national elections have not only reshaped the country's political landscape but have also sparked discussions on the implications for democracy, regional stability, and global relations. As the results unfolded, several key themes emerged, reflecting both continuity and significant shifts in India's political trajectory.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, secured 240 seats in the Lok Sabha, forming a part of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) which achieved a functional mandate of 293 seats. While the BJP-NDA coalition retains power, this electoral outcome marks a notable decline from their previous landslide victory in 2019. The opposition, comprising the Indian National Congress and other regional parties in alliances like the INDIA alliance, gained ground with 232 seats, signaling a resurgence in opposition influence and a more evenly balanced parliament.

One of the central themes of the 2024 elections was the BJP's strong emphasis on Hindu nationalism, epitomized by its pledge to build the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh. The project's completion under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership symbolizes a significant victory for Hindu nationalist sentiment but has also sparked concerns about secularism and religious harmony in India. The electoral outcome, particularly in Uttar Pradesh, reflects a nuanced response from voters, highlighting a complex interplay between religious identity and broader governance issues in India's democratic framework.

The electoral process itself has not been without controversy. The arrest of opposition leaders, including Arvind Kejriwal of the Aam Aadmi Party, on corruption charges during the campaign period raised questions about the timing and political motivations behind such actions. These incidents underscore ongoing challenges to electoral integrity and democratic norms in India, prompting scrutiny from domestic observers and international partners alike.

Criticism of India's Election Commission for its handling of voter safety and transparency in vote counting further underscores concerns about democratic practices. While the Commission managed the elections effectively in many respects, allegations of bias and procedural irregularities have surfaced, casting a shadow over the electoral process's credibility.

The strengthened opposition presence in parliament poses challenges for the BJP-led government in implementing its policy agenda. With a more assertive opposition, Modi's ability to push through contentious reforms and legislative measures may face greater scrutiny and resistance. The need for consensus-building and parliamentary cooperation could potentially temper the BJP's agenda, fostering broader debate but also potentially slowing down governance reforms.

Regionally, India's foreign policy under Modi's leadership has been characterized by strategic engagements with neighboring countries and major global powers. However, India's relations with Bangladesh have been contentious, particularly concerning accusations that Modi's government supported the ruling Awami League in undemocratic practices during Bangladesh's recent national elections. These allegations have strained people-to-people diplomacy between India and Bangladesh, focusing instead on bilateral ties that benefit specific political interests rather than fostering broader societal connections.

Internationally, India's democratic credentials have come under scrutiny, particularly regarding human rights issues and the treatment of dissenting voices. Criticism from Western countries, including the United States, has highlighted concerns over democratic backsliding in certain areas. While India remains a key strategic partner for the US in countering regional instability and economic challenges, divergent views on human rights and democratic norms continue to influence bilateral relations.

However, India's 2024 elections represent a complex interplay of political dynamics, religious identity, and global implications. The BJP's electoral mandate, coupled with a more vocal opposition and international scrutiny, underscores the challenges and opportunities facing India's democracy. As the country navigates these complexities, the balance between religious nationalism, democratic principles, and international partnerships will shape India's trajectory in the years ahead, influencing both domestic policy priorities and its role on the global stage.

June Climate Report- Heatwave Devastation During Hajj

Kazi Rhid

The recent Hajj pilgrimage in Saudi Arabia was marked by a tragic heatwave, resulting in the loss of over 1,300 lives. This devastating event has brought to light the urgent need for comprehensive heat protection measures, especially for vulnerable groups such as the elderly, people with disabilities, and migrant workers.

The extreme temperatures, which soared beyond 50 degrees Celsius (122 degrees Fahrenheit), posed a severe risk to the health and safety of the pilgrims. Many of those who perished were unauthorized pilgrims who lacked access to essential public facilities like air-conditioned tents, misting centers, transportation, or water rehydration areas. The high costs associated with official Hajj permits have been identified as a driving factor behind the unregistered status of many pilgrims, leaving them exposed to the harsh elements without adequate shelter or resources. Saudi authorities have taken steps to mitigate the impact of the heat for pilgrims, including the provision of free health services that treated about 1.3 million individuals during the event. However, the significant number of fatalities indicates that more needs to be done to address this major public health risk.



The issue is not only the fault of the Saudi administration, as many of the deceased were unauthorized for the pilgrimage. The Saudi administration has a quota system which allows different nations to have their Muslim population a chance to fulfil their religious duty. Especially Egypt has sent the highest number of unauthorized people through different travel agencies, the Egyptian government has responded by revoking the licenses of these travel agencies. Of the 660 dead among the Egyptians only 31 were authorized. There has been heartbreaking news of people spending their entire life savings on this hajj trip that were among the deceased. For a tragedy of such a scale there is no 'one' authority that we can point fingers at, it is a collective failure of multiple agencies involved.

The climate scientists all across the globe have been warning authorities to be on damage control, during the next hajj greater measures need to be taken in order to avoid situations like this. The tragedy underscores the broader implications of the climate crisis, which is making extreme heat events more frequent and intense. It also highlights the need for stronger heat protection measures not only during the Hajj but also for the millions of migrant workers in Saudi Arabia who are exposed to extreme heat amid inadequate protections. The recent events serve as a somber reminder of the human cost of extreme weather conditions and the importance of proactive measures to prevent such tragedies in the future. A 2019 study by experts at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) found that even if the world succeeds in mitigating the worst effects of climate change, the Hajj would be held in temperatures exceeding an "extreme danger threshold" from 2047 to 2052.

What can be done to mitigate such risks in the future since the heatwaves because of climate change isn't going away anytime soon? Broader public awareness of the heat related issues needs to be addressed from the landing airport to all the hotels and mosques. The countries the people come from should take more action regarding unauthorized travel over the capacity of the Saudi authorities. Since the pilgrimage is one of the key pillars of Islam it is bound to be a will of Muslims, but that shouldn't mean that they would need to put their lives at risk. The Saudi authorities should have more emergency response teams in order to avoid this sort of tragedy. Since the lunar calendar is on its way to winter for the coming Hajj timeline, it should be only for the next five years that the Saudi government need to step up their actions in order to prevent heat related deaths.

Forging Alliances: North Korea and Russia's Bold Move

Nuzhat Tabassum



Russia which used to deter North Korea in its nuclear program with the international community is now giving support to North Korea openly. A significant breakthrough has happened between North Korea and Russia as the two countries made a new deal this June which is considered the strongest since the Cold War. Two leaders of the country have signed a comprehensive strategic partnership agreement during the Russian president's high-profile visit to North Korea after 25 years. The deal will replace several previous agreements, including the Treaty of Friendship and Mutual Assistance of 1961, the Treaty on Friendship and Good Neighborliness in Cooperation of 2000, and the Moscow and Pyongyang declarations of 2000 and 2001.

The agreement pledges mutual aid if any one of the countries faces aggression, the other country will assist without delay and with whatever they have at their disposal. The agreement not only commits to defense assistance but also to matters such as cooperation in military, foreign policy, and trade. The treaty also aims to establish a just and multipolar new world order as both countries are facing tensions with the US and its Western allies. Kim Jong Un has said the agreement is the 'strongest-ever treaty' while Putin has said that the agreement is a 'breakthrough document'.

The world is concerned over this agreement in which Pyongyang provides arms to Russia to continue its war in Ukraine, in return, it will receive economic assistance and technology from Russia as well as bypassing global sanctions and increasing its leverage in the regional power dynamics. But in this process, the agreement will increase tensions in the Korean Peninsula. The US and South Korea have accused North Korea of sending weapons to Russia for the war in Ukraine and violating international laws. Some analysts have suggested that the deal is a sign of bolstering ties between nations hostile to the US and the rules-based global order, which has served as the foundation for international affairs since the end of the Second World War. They also suggest that historically relations between the two countries have been based on interest.

The strengthening relationship between Russia and North Korea has been a grave threat to the US and its allies since the Korean War. Based on the authoritarian regimes' growing support for one another, the agreement increases the possibility of a new dictatorship axis. The consequences for world peace and security are severe, resembling the build-up to the world war seen in 1938. Given the millions of rounds of ammunition and several ballistic missiles that Russia uses in combat, its effect on European security is evident. The deal also poses a threat to the US as well. The deal has made it harder for Western countries to halt North Korea's nuclear ambitions. If North Korea demands high-end nuclear and missile technology from Russia, Putin will have no choice but to comply with the demand. It would be advantageous for North Korea to have a nuclear weapons force equipped with nuclear submarines and advanced intercontinental ballistic missiles that could get past American missile defense systems.

South Korea has announced that it will strengthen security cooperation with the US and Japan and has banned 243 new items from export and reviewed its position on giving arms to Ukraine. The deal will bring the US, Japan, and South Korean military alliance closer making the Indo-Pacific region even more of a hotbed for joint military exercises, demonstrations, and an increased US presence. Some experts are saying that China would be somewhat anxious about the growing relationship between Russia and North Korea but this could lead to, though unlikely, Sino-US efforts to deter Russia and North Korea from moving forward. Also, China and South Korea held their first security dialogue in nine years in response to the news of Putin's visit to Pyongyang. With rising tension in the Korean Peninsula in recent years, the recent development has already taken a toll. North Korea is instigating low-intensity provocations such as trash balloons, GPS jamming attacks, and activities near the Military Demarcation Line (MDL). Experts also point out that, North Korea may conduct a military provocation to open a second front in Northeast Asia and divert the military power and attention of the U.S. and the West if the war in Ukraine goes badly for Russia.

The 2024 deal between North Korea and Russia has the potential to profoundly alter global political conditions by strengthening the military alliance between the two countries, undermining Western dominance, and possibly escalating hostilities in the Northeast Asian region.