



kālachakra

PEOPLE PEACE PLANET

MESSAGES



MESSAGE

The tenth edition of the Raisina Dialogue is a milestone. It is a moment for us to take stock of the decade gone by and to begin navigating the future.

In a world where relationships are no longer mutually exclusive, and every nation seeks to benefit from the best the international order can offer, there is a constant ebb and flow of geopolitical convergences, alignments, turbulence, and transition. It is these shifts, with their continuity and discontinuities, that the Raisina Dialogue 2025 will deliberate upon.

We are also living through an era of globalization fatigue: older partnerships are being remade and new ones forged. The world is experiencing a wave of intense economic competition, where inter-dependence and derisking struggle to find a balance. There are no lasting landing points, underlining the continuing nature of competition.

Since 2020, instability and conflicts around the globe have continued or escalated, whether in Ukraine, the Middle East, South Asia, or Africa. Divergent approaches towards climate action have created deep fissures. And emerging technologies, particularly AI, have emerged as a driver of contemporary geopolitics, triggering a new tech race, with the potential to shape the destinies of people and nations. The need to strive for peace, progress, prosperity and security has never been greater.

This year's Raisina Dialogue focuses appropriately, on the concept of *Kalachakra*, or eternal time envisaged as a moving wheel, with cycles of life, destruction, re-birth and rejuvenation.

Over the next three days, the Raisina Dialogue will host conversations and debates about the most pressing issues of our times. In doing so, it will reaffirm its importance as a global public square and an inclusive forum where every voice is heard. I welcome all participants and look forward to the meaningful discussions.

(Dr. S. Jaishankar)



MESSAGE FROM THE FOREIGN SECRETARY OF INDIA

We are delighted to welcome you to the tenth edition of the Raisina Dialogue, India's premier conference on geopolitics and geo-economics.

Over the last decade, the Dialogue has emerged as a major global forum, drawing Heads of State and Government, Ministers, senior policymakers, and leaders from the business and research communities. It has also spawned several smaller-scale satellite conferences in other parts of the world, which enable ideation, partnerships and action at a regional level.

Taken together, the conversations convened under the Raisina banner have propelled new thinking, nurtured transcontinental collaboration, and upheld the oft-challenged art of dialogue while working through differences.

This effort is especially crucial today as an older order unravels and a new one is yet to be found. Nations have begun exploring pathways to strategic autonomy and stability amid rising concerns about a world in flux and characterised by renewed great power rivalry, even as some of the protagonists in these rivalries find themselves in disturbingly unfamiliar situations. The gyrations of geopolitical equations and the implications of possible resets of various kinds are preoccupying chancelleries across the world. Conflicts are growing in frequency and intensity, and new ways to "wage peace" must be found. Polarized views about immigration and migrants are dividing States and communities. And with 2030 looming large and only 17 percent of the SDGs' targets on track to be met, questions about what must be done to accelerate development solutions beyond 2030 are looming large. The cumulative effect of these challenges is a dwindling of trust in global governance institutions. It is this trust that we must salvage and rebuild together.

The theme of the Raisina Dialogue 2025, Kālacakra, or the cyclical nature of time where change is the only constant, captures the essential tone of the times we are living through today. Without a doubt, focusing on people, promoting peace, and protecting our planet is the course we must take.

I welcome the delegates to this tenth edition of the Raisina Dialogue and wish all of them a very meaningful set of deliberations and a thought-provoking conference.

(Vikram Misri)



Sunjoy Joshi

Chairman, Observer Research Foundation

When conflicts challenge order, when we struggle to make sense of the road—we seek anchor in symbols and metaphors.

Last year, with conflicts raging in Europe and West Asia, we assembled the Raisina Dialogue under the shadow of *Chaturanga*—the ancient Board game about the art and craft of war. This year, as conflicts nudge towards a peace that seems more conflicted than the wars, the theme chosen is *Kālacakra*—the wheel of time.

The metaphor of the wheel challenges the linear notion of the arrow of time perpetually racing forward in the direction of progress and growth. The *Chakra* gives no such assurance. The unending progress of any civilisation, the manifest destiny of a nation, a race or a species is not guaranteed by any *mandala* (cosmic order). We repeat ourselves, refuse to learn from our mistakes, and throughout centuries, order frequently descends into chaos.

The *chakra* signifies a more sophisticated motion beyond the simple circular monotony of a wheel. It is about cycles of decay and renewal. The dance of the planets and the cosmos set in motion by a balance of opposing forces—a centrifugal force that left to itself will cause the dance of the stars to unravel; and an opposing centripetal force that re-centres to keep that unravelling in check. By itself the centripetal force pulling inward becomes a black hole consuming all to create a dead world from which not even light can escape.

At one extreme, a fragmenting mandala tearing apart the cohesion of societies, disrupting the cosmic balance—hyper-individualism, ecological collapse, ending in disintegration. On the other, an imploding mandala, a universe of entropic decay—rigid, homogenised—a world of authoritarianism and monoculture stifling innovation.

The *Kaalchakra* is no simple cycle but a dynamic spiral mirroring the tension at the heart of the vortex. Each rotation builds on past cycles, inducing shifts that mirror the coils of the vortex as it expands towards chaos or contracts into a spiral of death. In Buddhism, the balance between the two is not a goal but a practice—an eternal calibrated negotiation between unity and diversity, contraction and expansion.

Central to the Kalachakra is the idea of impermanence—no state lasts forever. It is not merely a non-linear system but also one that is non-binary. Kalachakra teaches us not to think in dualistic Manichean terms. Not to see the world in black and white. To do that is to ignore nuances, to lose the capacity to cope with complexity.

For in the Kalachakra, neither order nor chaos are endpoints. They are transitory phases of the cycle of time—phases that demand recalibration. And recalibration is a time for difficult and } unconventional decisions.

"*Vasudhaiva Kutumbukam* (One Earth, One Family, One Future)" is the ideal in the cosmic order—the Mandala—one that is offered as an all-encompassing guide. In truth lived and living, reality is a dance of *kāla* (time) and mandala (order)—interdependent, impermanent, and infinitely interconnected. It is a cosmic dance of order and chaos, challenging humanity to participate in it constantly and consciously through thought and action.

As we celebrate and convene a decade of the Raisina Dialogue in 2025, to delve into the world of thought and action, there is a need to recognise that every spiral, whether tightening into unity or fraying into chaos—always holds the seed of its opposite.

I extend my best wishes to everyone engaging in thought-provoking conversations that engender a shift from conflict and contestation to creative cooperation. May these dialogues open new frontiers for all.

- Sunjoy Joshi



Samir Saran
President, Observer Research Foundation
Curator, Raisina Dialogue

TEN is a good number, and it is the age of the Raisina Dialogue.

As we mark the tenth year of India's pre-eminent conference on geopolitics and geo-economics, we can celebrate the fact that Raisina has not slowed down. It continues to reach new regions, audiences and constituencies worldwide, incubating the ideas and partnerships that will craft a new world order.

Rabindranath Tagore once hoped our minds would be "led forward ... into ever-widening thought and action." Raisina has opened up those horizons for many of us.

Helping in this journey is not just our flagship annual Dialogue in New Delhi—which brings together nearly 4,000 stakeholders from across the world—but also our Raisina forums in the United States, Australia, Japan, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). This year, we look forward to the launch of Raisina Mediterranean in Marseille.

We have broadened our audience in other ways as well. Our Young Fellows programmes have been running for 15 years, even predating the Raisina Dialogue. Our alumni—we've counted

2,500 so far—are helping change the world through leadership positions in government, business, and civil society. At our Raisina Forum for the Future of Diplomacy, early-career diplomats gather to build the bridges needed in this complex new era.

Raisina's platforms also introduce young scholars to the important policy debates of our time. This year, our Raisina IE Global Student Challenge assembled teams from 60 top-rated schools and universities across the world. And our Raisina Hackathons saw the participation of 2,500 young people from 90 higher education institutions in three Indian cities.

The 10th edition of the Raisina Dialogue is as much an occasion for looking ahead as it is for reflecting on the road we have travelled. Our theme this year, Kālachakra, the 'Wheel of Time', reflects this circularity of the past, present, and future. Time is eternal; change is constant; politics shifts direction. The motive forces propelling Raisina 2025 are the well-being of people, the quest for peace, and the stewardship of our planet.

These are the pressing priorities facing humanity. They are also the culmination of the Dialogue's years of discussion.

In 2016 we set out to connect Asia with itself and the world. In doing so we took on the task of understanding multilateralism in a multipolar world. That vital project engaged us for the next three years.

2020 changed our societies and our nations forever. Our attention turned to the dynamics of a "viral world"—a world of viruses and vaccines, of expansionist and revisionist powers, and of information and news that fed our biases.

Yet some geographies remained a beacon of hope. In particular, India's G20 presidency was a lighthouse in the tempest. And last year, we devised new strategies and frameworks to engage a brave new post-pandemic world.

These are the many threads that the Raisina Dialogue 2025 weaves together for you: 'Kalachakara, People, Peace, and Planet'—the proposition that brings us here today. Our prime minister has invested in these through his decisions and actions; the US president has expressed the same desire; so have European leaders and those of countries of the Global South at various times and places. When we all seek the same end, why are we so far apart? Let us bridge the distance - here, in New Delhi, at the Raisina Dialogue.

Conversations are the first step towards peace, progress and prosperity. However hard the circumstances, we cannot allow dialogue to die. We must shun cancel culture. We must listen to each other, and work constructively towards lasting solutions. But, as a Conference organiser, I have to say the number of speaking requests far outnumber those who want to listen and learn.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, sitting before us today, has demonstrated the power of listening. Since 2017, he has attended the Raisina Dialogue every year and spoken only once, setting a personal example about the importance of listening, absorbing, and understanding. His tireless efforts to promote dialogue on the world stage are also an inspiration. As he urged us recently, quoting the poet Rumi, "Raise your words, not your voice. It is rain that grows flowers, not thunder."

Our hearts are filled with pride that the Raisina Dialogue has evolved into a truly global public square. Incubated by India and nurtured by the world, this arena has allowed a thousand ideas to bloom, nourished by the constant showers of wisdom that does not take anything as a given, that challenges what is and dares to visualise what could be.

I welcome you all once again to the Dialogue and to our family. Let us debate, disagree and discover, and let this begin now.

- Samir Saran