

International Relations This Week: Episode 77

International relations is a very important segment of the [UPSC syllabus](#). In this series, we present an analysis of the most important international issues and developments that occurred over the past week relevant for the IAS exam. In this article, you can learn more about the latest developments on India's relations with Muslim countries, UK Prime Minister facing a no-confidence motion, the Russia - Ukraine war and other issues.

Video link: <https://youtu.be/AOALuxz7WiM>

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. [Prophet Remarks Row and Impact on India's relations with Muslim countries](#)
2. [No Confidence Motion in UK](#)
3. [Gun violence in USA](#)
4. [India-Taliban Dialogue](#)
5. [Russia-Ukraine](#)

1. Prophet Remarks Row and Impact on India's relations with Muslim countries

Context:

Loose talk by the official spokesperson of the ruling party. Language which was intemperate, uncivil and perceived to be bordering on hate speech was used during a television debate. Qatar, a small nation of 30 lakh people has issued a demarche to the Indian Ambassador and expressed that they are looking for an apology. This action led to a reaction in India and aroused the ire of Indians. Qatar is sitting on one of the largest gas reserves in the world and has a bearing on the energy security of the world.

India's stance

- This is India's internal matter.
- There is freedom of expression, so all shades of opinion should be expressed.
- India is sensitive to the rights of its minorities too.
- None of these countries objects to China, which has been accused of violating the rights of Muslims in the Xinjiang province.

Areas of impact

- Energy dependence of India on West Asia.

- Approximately, 80% of oil in India is imported and 55% of this is directly sourced from the Persian Gulf.
- Al-Qaeda threats
 - Al-Qaeda has threatened attacks on India cities.
- Persian Gulf's importance for India's maritime security.

Conclusion: There is a need to make the Ministry of External Affairs more prepared for damage control in matters affecting India's international standing.

2. No Confidence Motion in UK

Context:

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson has attracted great attention since the Partygate Scandal. He has been accused of lying to the monarch on more than one occasion and also misleading the British Parliament. Although he has successfully defeated the no-confidence motion against himself, the support he enjoys in Parliament is precarious.

What is the partygate scandal?

Amidst the covid-induced lockdowns and restrictions for gatherings, it was found that the PM and others of his party were attending huge gatherings violating all health protocols. The scandal brought forth the fact that the ruling class of Britain that including the Prime Minister, his family and friends live by different rules than the general population. No Covid guidelines were followed by them. In a country like Britain which preaches morality and propriety and swears by convention, such conduct cannot be downplayed.

Implications

- No new no-confidence motion can be moved for a year against him.
- Boris Johnson is rendered a lame-duck Prime Minister. The chances of him getting passed substantial legislation are very low.
- The Conservative Party does not have a candidate to replace PM Boris Johnson.
- PM Johnson may not be an asset to India as precluded by certain spectators.

Failures of Boris Johnson

- The Susan Gray report on the partygate scandal charges him with venal and deceitful conduct.
- Litany of failures includes poor handling of covid, the accusation of the educational system being rigged, race biases of the metropolitan police system, etc.

3. Gun violence in USA

Context:

Another tragic shootout took place in the USA in June 2022. It left 19 children and 2 teachers dead in a primary school. This once again underlines the brutality of gun laws in America. More than 5000 people have lost their lives in the last 5 years in gun-related incidents in the country.

Issues involved

- Many Americans believe that it is their fundamental right to carry arms for self-defence.
- But the self-defence of victims of handgun-related incidents is jeopardized.
- A strong lobby of the National Rifle Association is keen to suggest that no law should be changed.
- Fortifying soft targets like schools, hospitals and churches may not be a solution.
- There are different laws in different states of the USA related to arms.
- White supremacists, Christian evangelists and the gun lobby stand against any reform as they say it is people who kill people due to poor mental health.

Conclusion

Most developing countries are accused of giving undue importance to traditional notions in the electoral process. But here America itself seems to find it difficult to reign in traditional patriarchal ideas.

4. India-Taliban Dialogue

Context:

A constructive development came in the form of an Indian initiative to open dialogue with the [Taliban](#). A joint secretary from the Ministry of External Affairs went to Kabul to discuss the supply of humanitarian aid that India promised to Afghanistan. This can be India's hesitant attempt to open dialogue with the Taliban and open the Indian embassy.

Benefits of such a dialogue

- It does not amount to recognition of the Taliban regime as none of the other countries has recognised it.
- In the Indian absence, Pakistan gains an advantage.

- Indians would like to be assured that the regime in Kabul will safeguard its interest against al-Qaeda and Haqqani Network.
- Taliban is not at ease with Al-Qaeda elements in Afghanistan who were their ally in the anti-American war.
- America spent millions of dollars in Afghanistan not to rebuild or develop it but only to increase its own military presence.
- The present deputy foreign minister is an IMA-trained officer and is willing to build bridges between the Indian and Taliban leadership.

Issues

- No change in the Taliban's policy towards women or the puritanical interpretation of religion is likely.
- The Taliban regime is not conducive to the common cultural heritage of India and Afghanistan as shown by the breaking of idols.
- Other nations may not allow India very amenable conditions to operate in Afghanistan.
- Problems like drug trafficking, human trafficking, etc. have continued.
- Many of Afghanistan's territories are still under warlords.

Conclusion

As revered diplomat Vivek Katju suggests, the time has come to suck with the devil but with a long spoon.

5. Russia-Ukraine

Context:

Russia is occupying 20-25% of Ukraine's territory and the conflict has entered its fourth month.

Economic dimension of conflict

- Ukraine is the bread basket and a large supplier of food oil to Russia and Europe.
- The area occupied by Russia is the prime industrial area that produces weapon parts for Russian weapons.
- Most of the Ukrainian trade paths are under Russian occupation hampering the food security of Europe.

Conclusion

The conversation has now shifted from allowing passage to refugees to the restoration of a narrow pathway for the trade of essentials. India can play a constructive role in this.

