



*“History gives answers only to those who know how to ask questions.”*

*-Hajo Holborn*

History, far from being a dusty collection of dates and names, is a vast compendium reflecting the triumphs and follies of humankind. It is a chronicle of power struggles, both on the grand stage of international relations and in the crucible of individual lives. It shapes the world we inhabit, informing our cultures, our politics and even the choices we make at the fast-food counter.

We analyze the grand pronouncements of emperors, the strategic manoeuvres of generals, and the legislative battles fought in grand halls. Yet, power extends far beyond these traditional spheres. It whispers in the undercurrents of social movements, manifests in the control of knowledge, and resonates in the whispers of dissent. This very concept of power, in all its multifaceted glory, forms the cornerstone of this issue.

From opulent courts to clandestine back alleys where revolutions are born, power evinces in moments both monumental and seemingly mundane. From the political manipulation surrounding Taiwan to the unsettling Salem Witch Trials, each article sheds light on a unique facet of power, and the often insidious ways that power permeates our everyday lives.

This issue allows us to see beyond the declarations of the victors to hear the whispers of the silenced and to comprehend the motivations that drive empires to rise and fall. As you turn these pages, dear readers, we invite you not just to consume information, but to engage in a conversation. After all, the ability to understand, to question, and to form your own conclusions – that is the true power history offers us all.

Happy reading!

*Naija Mehra*  
*Editor-in-Chief*

## **CONTENTS**

**Democracy on Trial:  
Watergate Scandal**

**From Heroine to  
Heretic**

**The Scramble for  
Taiwan**

**Dalai Lama’s Dilemma**

**2024: The Year of  
Elections**

**Island of Isolation**

**Even McDonalds’ is  
Political**

**Mediterranean  
Mayhem**

**Maratha’s Undying  
Flame**

**Beyond the Ballot  
Box**

# DEMOCRACY ON TRIAL: *Watergate Scandal*

More than forty years ago, the iconic Watergate scandal shook the foundations of American politics, exposing a network of corruption at the highest levels of power. The scandal began on June 17, 1972, when five men were arrested for attempting to bug the Democratic National Committee (DNC) headquarters at the Watergate complex.

Initially distanced from the burglary, President Richard Nixon was re-elected later that year. However, investigative journalists Carl Bernstein and Bob Woodward, assisted by the elusive informant "Deep Throat" (later revealed to be Federal Bureau of Investigation agent Mark Felt), discovered damaging evidence linking the White House to the break-in.

What emerged was not a single event but a systematic pattern of illegal behaviour that included wiretapping, physical assault and obstruction of justice. Despite several initial convictions, uncertainties remained, prompting Judge John Sirica to disclose a letter from McCord alleging White House pressure on the defendants.

The enormity of the issue became clear when Nixon refused to provide vital Oval Office tapes, resulting in the infamous "Saturday Night Massacre" in which Nixon ordered the firing of Watergate special prosecutor Archibald Cox. Nixon's popularity dwindled, culminating in his resignation on August 9, 1974, followed by Vice President Gerald Ford's rapid rise to the presidency. Ford's pardon of Nixon a month later, however contentious, was intended to heal the nation. Nixon apologised for the ordeal, admitting his failure to address Watergate decisively. As he departed, he issued a warning against succumbing to animosity, emphasising the grim lessons learnt from the affair.

The Watergate incident had a lasting effect on American politics, serving as a warning against unrestrained authority and the loss of democratic values. However, the fight for transparency and accountability remains ongoing. While Watergate exposed a blatant attempt to cover up a crime, modern infringements on privacy are often shrouded in legalese and the complexities of national security. Mass surveillance programs, data collection initiatives, and restrictions on press freedom continue to raise concerns as governments around the world grapple with the balance between security and individual liberties.

**Rudrani Rajyalaskhmi (AI)**



## FROM HEROINE TO HERETIC:

### *The Salem Witch Trials*

The stark disparity in how society perceives and labels individuals based on gender is a glaring reflection of deep-rooted misogyny and patriarchal norms. The contrast is shocking between the revered status often accorded to male figures possessing magical abilities, such as wizards or sorcerers, and the vilification faced by women with similar powers, labelled as witches. This historical gender bias and discrimination was epitomized in the Salem Witch Trials in colonial Massachusetts.

The Salem Witch Trials unfolded between early 1692 and mid-1693, marked by paranoia, injustice, and the execution of over twenty individuals accused of practising witchcraft. Triggered by accusations against three women — Tituba, Sarah Good, and Sarah Osborne — the trials escalated into mass hysteria and witch hunts, fuelled by xenophobia, religious extremism, and social tensions. The Salem Witch Trials, serving as a cautionary tale about the dangers of mass hysteria, intolerance, and the abuse of power, have left a lasting imprint on American culture.

Yet, these were not the only women who fell victim to the twisted witch hunt. Even renowned figures like Joan of Arc, celebrated for her valour and leadership in the face of English aggression during the Hundred Years' War, were not spared from this. Joan of Arc's remarkable leadership and military tactics on the battlefield were crucial in securing several French victories, notably in Orleans. Exhibiting extraordinary strength and courage, she defied societal expectations and helped legitimize Charles VII's claim to the French throne. However, instead of being lauded for her achievements, she was captured and condemned as a witch — a label concocted by the English to undermine her military achievements and suppress the burgeoning theme of women's emancipation.

The tragic fate of Joan of Arc serves as a poignant reminder of the perils faced by women when they dared to defy societal constraints. Her martyrdom at the stake in Rouen at the tender age of nineteen not only immortalized her as a symbol of resilience but also underscored the lengths to which patriarchal forces would go to maintain the status quo and their grip on power, even at the cost of society's most courageous members.

Vedika Poddar (SC)

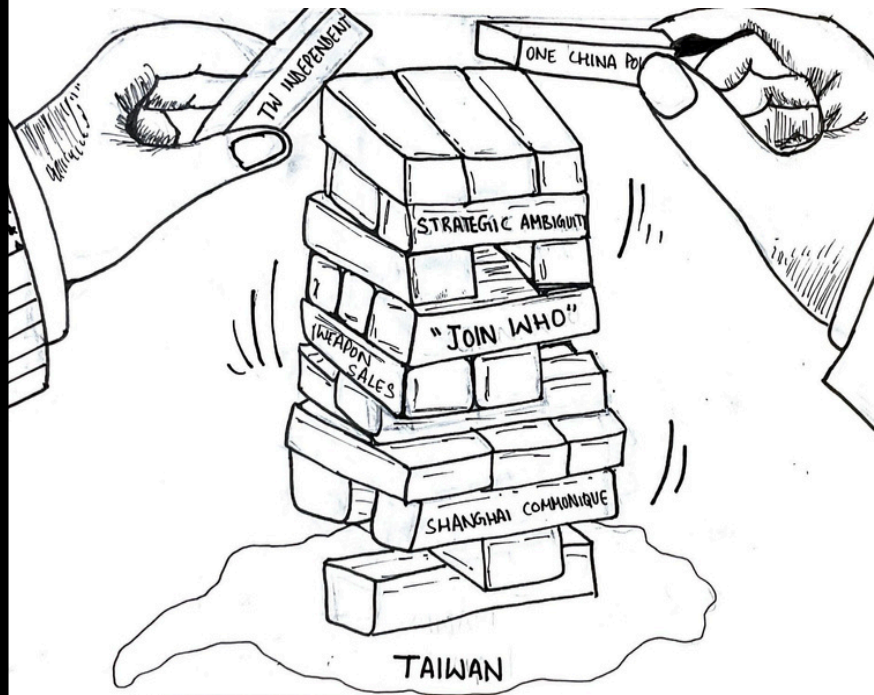
### TRivia

- The famous Queen Cleopatra wasn't Egyptian, but Greek by birth. She was a descendant of Alexander the Great's Macedonian General Ptolemy.
- The shortest war in history lasted 38 minutes! It was between Britain and Zanzibar and is known as the Anglo-Zanzibar War.
- It is actually possible to see Russia from the USA and vice versa! Two islands in the Bering Strait—Big Diomedes (Russia) and Little Diomedes (USA) are only 2.4 miles apart.
- Fidel Castro, the former leader of Cuba, holds the record for the longest-serving non-royal head of the government, ruling from 1959 until 2008.
- The oldest written document in the world is generally considered to be the Sumerian "Kesh Temple Hymn," also known as the "Instructions of Shuruppak," dating back to around 2600 BCE.



# THE SCRAMBLE FOR TAIWAN

The Taiwan Strait has become a focal point of international tension. With nearly 150 warplanes dispatched into Taiwan's air defence zone, the United States is routinely conducting naval transits through the strait, prompting a surge in Chinese military activity. Taiwan, caught in the crossfire of geopolitics, is uncertain about what the future holds due to the possible repercussions of a power struggle for Taiwan's sovereignty between China and the United States.



Taiwan has historically experienced multiple eras of colonial and imperial control. Following a two-century old dominion under Imperial China, Taiwan was subject to Japanese control for fifty years before being returned to Chinese jurisdiction post-World War II. The retreat of Chiang Kai-Shek's nationalist government to Taiwan in 1949 precipitated a dual governance scenario, with the Republic of China (ROC) established in Taiwan and the People's Republic of China (PRC) in Beijing, each asserting legitimate claims to governance over Taiwan.

While refraining from advocating for formal independence, successive administrations, including that of current President Gwo, have resisted Beijing's insistence on Taiwan's integration into mainland China.

Strategic ambiguity characterizes US involvement in the Taiwan dispute, which aims to preserve regional balance. While it formally recognizes Taiwan as a part of China, the US reaffirms its determination to protect Taiwan from Beijing's unwarranted aggression. However, Washington has made it clear that should China and Taiwan engage in an incited fight, it will not act militarily.

Taiwan's political significance stems from its proximity to Japan, a key US ally. Furthermore, Taiwan's dominance in global microchip production underscores its economic importance, with potential implications for global supply chains in the event of a shift in control over this sector.

The future of Taiwan hangs in the balance. Many believe that preserving its freedoms and economic prosperity is paramount, even if it means maintaining the current tensions. In this case, inaction might be the most prudent course. Others advocate for a negotiated settlement that formally recognizes Taiwan's autonomy within a "One China" framework. The path forward requires delicate diplomacy and a willingness from all sides to prioritize peace and stability over escalating tensions.

Sanvi Aggarwal (SC)



# AUTONOMY VS SOVEREIGNTY:

## *Dalai Lama's Dilemma*



Tibet has been a subject of contention between the Chinese government and the Tibetan dissidents, since its invasion by the People's Liberation Army (PLA) in 1950. The Seventeen Point Agreement of 1951, ostensibly granting Tibet autonomy in exchange for recognizing Chinese sovereignty, failed to ease tensions as China continued to encroach upon Tibetan culture and religion.

By 1956, the unrest began to boil over in regions due to the PLA's heavy-handed tactics and interference in local affairs, culminating in widespread attacks. The trigger for the uprising was the perceived threat to the Dalai Lama's safety, prompting thousands of Tibetans to form a human shield around his palace.

The March 2008 anti-government clashes in Tibet and other regions in China brought the decades-long dispute once more into the international spotlight demonstrating the depth of historical disagreement over the territory. When asked, the PRC Government has always held the stance that Tibet was an oppressive and backward nation before the 1951 invasion, which led to its “liberation from serfdom” whereas the Tibetans have viewed the invasion as a violent conquest aimed at disregarding their religious and cultural freedom.

Tibet is officially acknowledged as a part of the People's Republic of China in the United Nations, with no international legitimacy given to the Tibetan government. In fact, even though India, to this day, provides refuge to Dalai Lama, the spiritual leader of Tibet, we do not recognize it as an independent state due to our economic ties with China.

Geopolitically, Tibet holds a significant importance for China's national identity and security. The fear of Tibetan independence triggering similar movements in regions like Xinjiang and Taiwan underscores China's firm stance on maintaining control over Tibet.

Some speculate that China may be biding its time, waiting for the passing of the Dalai Lama in hopes of quelling Tibetan nationalism. However, the resilience of the Tibetan independence movement suggests that the struggle for autonomy will persist, challenging China's grip on the region for years to come.

**Anukriti Dhandhanian (SC)**

# 2024: THE YEAR



In the November U.S. presidential race, the world will witness a Trump-Biden rematch. The 2024 polls are crucial as the results will determine the USA's approach to critical issues such as economy, immigration and foreign policy, including the ongoing conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza.

With a bleak economic outlook casting a shadow over the U.K.'s ruling Conservative Party, which has been in power for nearly 14 years, opinion polls suggest the opposition Labour Party will likely come out on top in Britain's next General election in 2024.

On July 28, 2024, Venezuelans will elect their President for the next six years, with incumbent pro-China President Nicolas Maduro contesting against Maria Corina Machado, who is currently facing an electoral ban. The election will determine if Maduro's authority is further solidified in a country losing sight of its democracy.

2024 is not just *an* election year. More voters than ever in history will vote in many countries, the results of which, for years to come, and will completely alter the





# OF ELECTIONS



Ukraine's presidential elections, set for March 31, 2024, were postponed due to martial law which has been in operation since February 24, 2022. Parliamentary elections are held only six months after the lifting of martial law. President Zelensky prioritizes upholding the highest democratic standards amid Russia's attacks by calling for free and fair elections, impacting aid and Ukraine's democratic reputation.

India's Lok Sabha elections, which commenced on April 19 will determine the ruling party for the 543-seat lower house of Parliament. The BJP, part of the NDA coalition, faces a tough competition from the Congress-led INDIA alliance, including regional parties like the Trinamool Congress. India recorded 65.4% polling as over millions have already voted in phase 1 of the elections.

South Sudan's President Salva Kiir has extended his political tenure by deferring elections since 2005, despite being authorized for a 4-year term after the country's 2011 independence vote. The nation is now preparing for its inaugural general elections this year.

It's perhaps *the* election year. Globally, will head to the polls as at least 64 plus r many, will prove consequential for years the geo-political relations present today.



## ISLAND OF ISOLATION: INDIA'S CELLULAR JAIL

Kala Pani, the infamous Cellular Jail on the remote Andaman Islands, where rebels were made to suffer in isolation, was a tool of the British to instil fear in the country. Being located on the remote Andaman and Nicobar Islands, nearly 1,300 kilometres from mainland India, it was not a regular prison. Once the doors of this jail shut behind you, there was no going back. Not only were the prisoners isolated from the mainland, but the overseas journey to the islands also threatened them with loss of caste, resulting in social exclusion.

Built between 1896 and 1906, the Cellular Jail was designed for isolation. Individual cells housed prisoners, denying them interaction and fostering a sense of despair. This isolation was meant to break the spirit of political dissidents fighting for India's independence.

Kala Pani was not just geographically remote; it was a harsh environment as well. The tropical climate brought sweltering heat, humidity, and diseases. Prisoners were forced into hard labour, clearing forests and building infrastructure. Many succumbed to illness, harsh conditions, and the sheer hopelessness of their situation. However, it also became a symbol of resistance. Notable figures like Veer Savarkar and Yogendra Shukla were imprisoned there. Despite isolation, they found ways to communicate, share revolutionary ideals, and keep their spirits high. Hunger strikes erupted in the 1930s as a powerful form of protest, ultimately leading to the closure of the jail in 1937.

Today, the Cellular Jail stands as a monument to the sacrifices made by Indian freedom fighters. The desolate cells and stark architecture serve as a chilling reminder of British colonial cruelty. Simultaneously, they also tell the story of resilience and the unwavering spirit of those who dared to fight for an independent India.

**Tamanna Baid (PreSC)**

## EVEN MCDONALD'S IS POLITICAL

From Big Macs to political debates, the story of McDonald's in the complex landscape of Israel - Palestine conflict raises the question, 'Is the clown supporting the Israelis?' When McDonald's Israel announced that it would be giving Israeli soldiers a free meal while the country was still at war with Hamas, it sparked an uproar. Social media users' responses to the move were divided; some criticized it and called for a boycott, while others applauded the support shown for the Israeli Defence Forces.

In the wake of a horrific strike on a Gaza hospital that killed hundreds, several branches of the chain were vandalized in Turkey, Lebanon and Egypt. A week into the crisis, franchises in Turkey, Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon, and across the Persian Gulf, released statements distancing themselves from the actions of their Israeli counterparts. Indeed, why should a business making and selling hamburgers or coffee be taking a stand at all? But when it comes to Israel and Palestine, everything, even a hamburger, is political.

**Anayna Agarwal and Aaliya Gupta (AIIs)**



## MEDITERRANEAN MAYHEM

The tale of Cyprus is not unforeseen in human history. It is the story of a tiny island with an outsized role in the ongoing geopolitical conflict between Turkey and Greece. Relations between the Greek and Turkish Cypriots soured since 2017 when negotiations under the auspices of the United Nations to reunify Cyprus as a bizonal, bicomunal federation broke down.

At the heart of the issue is the division of Cyprus between the Turkish Cypriots in the north and the Greek Cypriots in the south.

This divide dates back to 1974 when Turkey invaded the island in response to a Greek-inspired coup, in order to 'protect' the island.



It is imperative, foremost, to acknowledge Turkey's military presence in Northern Cyprus not as a mere "security measure" but as a blatant occupation. While Ankara contends its intervention is to safeguard the Turkish minority, does that justify maintaining a military foothold for nearly half a century?

On the other hand, Greece too bears culpability in this protracted conflict. Historical aspirations of a "Greater Greece" have, at times, clouded judgment, leading to ill-conceived coup attempts and exacerbating tensions in the region.

The path to resolution necessitates a principled departure from entrenched positions, requiring Turkey and Greece to espouse the virtues of compromise, mutual respect and reconciliation. This entails Ankara's unconditional withdrawal of its military presence and its unequivocal recognition of Cyprus's sovereignty.

While a federal solution might sound like a pipe dream, we must strive towards the creation of a united Cyprus where Greek and Turkish Cypriots coexist peacefully, trading halloumi and baklava across the buffer zone instead of barbed wire. In the end, this is not just about redrawing maps or counting military bases – it is about building a future where Cyprus is not a pawn in someone else's game!

Amaya Marwah (PreSC)

## ReCOMMENDATIONS

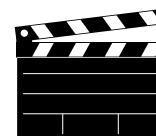
### Books

1. **How to Stand up to A Dictator**
2. **The Prisoners of Geography**
3. **Why Bharat Matters**
4. **How Democracies Die**
5. **The White Tiger**



### Movies

1. **The Post**
2. **Darkest Hour**
3. **Zero Dark Thirty**
4. **All The President's Men**
5. **All Quiet on The Western Front**



# MARATHA'S UNYIELDING FLAME

“मृत्यू लाही मात देईल  
असा त्यांचा गनिमी कावा,  
झुकले नाही डोळे त्यांचे  
असा माझा शिवबाचा छावा.”

*“He deceives death's grasp with guerrilla tact,  
Swiftly weaving through its tangled tracks  
His gaze never falters, never bows  
Such, the son of the mighty Shivaji vows”*

This is the story of one of the greatest of kings, the “Chava” of the Maratha Empire, Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj.

Tragedy struck young Sambhaji at the tender age of two when he lost his mother. Raised under the watchful eye of his father, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, and his indomitable grandmother Jijabai, Sambhaji learned wisdom and the art of warfare from a young age. He understood that true victory lies not just in strength, but also in intelligence. This wisdom guided him, making him one of only three rulers in India who remained undefeated throughout their reign.

At the age of nine, facing Aurangzeb's treachery, Sambhaji stood by his father's side in the face of danger. Refusing to succumb to fear, they outwitted the Mughal Emperor's schemes, escaping captivity against all odds by outsmarting the vast Mughal army.

When Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj died, fears arose of the empire's collapse. However, Sambhaji Maharaj, opting for practicality over sentiment, led it forward with determination.

A fort, brimming with wealth crucial for the sustenance of the Maratha Empire, stood under Mughal control on the outskirts of Aurangabad, Maharashtra. At just 23 years of age, Sambhaji Maharaj defeated Aurangzeb despite the Mughal King's superior resources, expertise, and experience, repeatedly triumphing over him with a small army of 20,000 Marathas.

In the space of just nine years, Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj fought 136 battles, emerging victorious in every single one, and his saffron flag fluttered triumphantly. This was his profound contribution, his enduring legacy. If Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj gave birth to the Swaraj Movement, Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj kept it alive.

Betrayal, however, lurked in the shadows amidst the triumphs. Ganoji Shirke, consumed by envy, betrayed his kin, leading to Sambhaji Maharaj's capture. Enduring torment, he remained steadfast, refusing to forsake his father's legacy for Aurangzeb's false promises. Chhatrapati Sambhaji will forever be remembered as the king who kept the flame of freedom burning bright against all odds.

**Tanisha Bhangdia (SC)**



## Beyond the Ballot Box

In the grand theatre of democracy, elections are often hailed as the epitome of civic engagement, a fundamental mechanism through which citizens exercise their right to vote. Yet, beneath the claims of “free and fair elections” in a democracy lies a truth that is often little more than a carefully developed facade, concealing the complicated politics governing political systems worldwide. The notion of elections as a symbol of democracy is deeply ingrained in our collective consciousness. We are taught to believe that through the ballot box, individuals have the power to shape the course of their nation, that every vote counts, and that the will of the people reigns supreme. While this is the ideal all countries strive to achieve, its actual implementation is a different matter altogether.

In many countries, elections are marred by rampant gerrymandering, whereby electoral boundaries are redrawn to favour incumbent parties or certain demographics, effectively diluting the influence of opposition voices. In an era dominated by corporate interests and billionaire donors, elections have become little more than auctions, where the highest bidder receives disproportionate influence over policy decisions and legislative agendas. Campaign finance laws, ostensibly designed to prevent undue influence, are routinely circumvented through loopholes and legal manoeuvring, allowing wealthy individuals and special interest groups to effectively buy their preferred outcomes.

The rise of digital disinformation and manipulation has further eroded the integrity of electoral processes. From targeted social media campaigns to foreign interference operations, the weaponization of information has sown seeds of doubt and discord, undermining public trust in the electoral system itself. Perhaps the most insidious of all is the role of entrenched power structures in perpetuating the illusion of democracy. Political officeholders, aided by a complicit media, often exploit elections as a means of legitimising their authority.

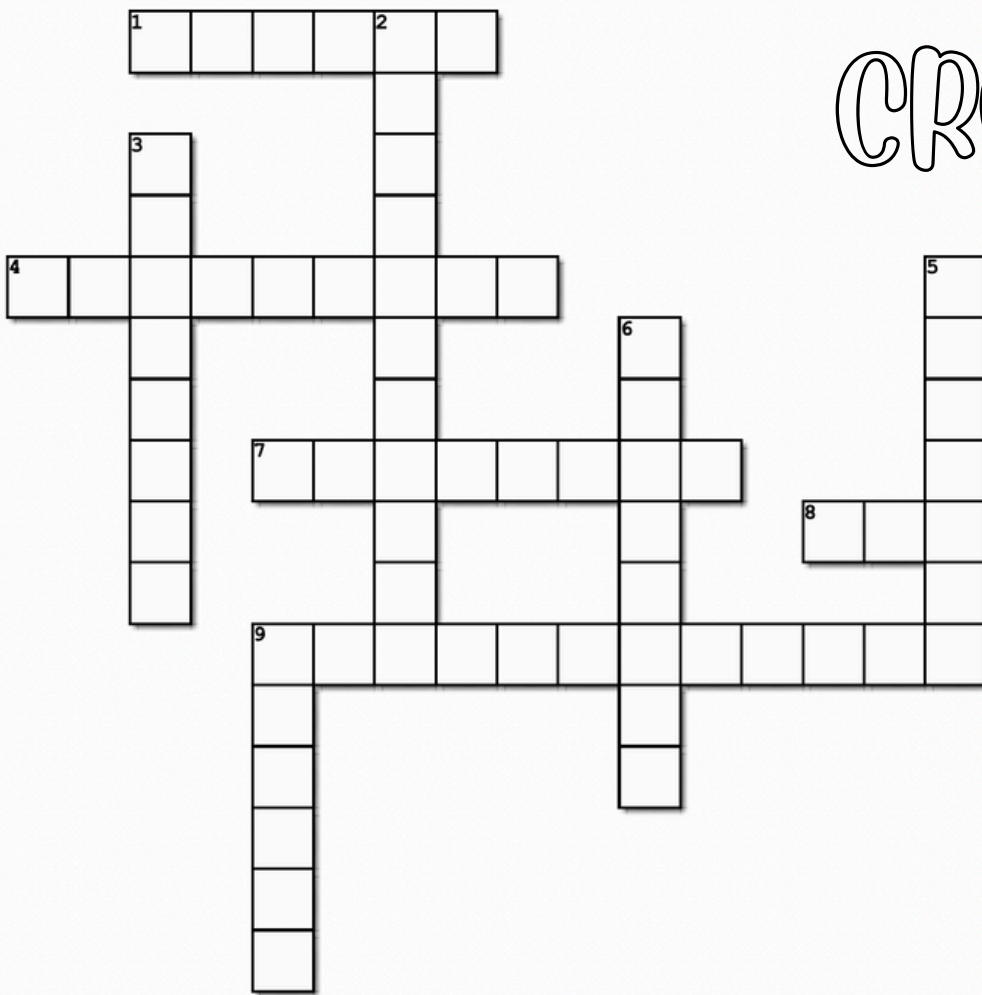
However, recognizing the inherent flaws of electoral systems does not necessitate resignation or despair. Elections still remain a vital cornerstone of democracy. On the contrary, it serves as a call to action – a reminder that true democracy cannot be achieved through the mere act of casting a ballot, but rather through collective action, civic engagement, and a relentless commitment to justice and equality.

**Shreem Miglani (SC)**

### TRivia

- Singapore has been ruled by the People's Action Party since 1959, making it one of the world's longest-ruling political parties.
- During World War I, on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day of 1914, widespread unofficial ceasefires occurred along the Western Front. Soldiers from both sides ventured into no-man's-land to exchange gifts, sing carols, and even play football.





# CROSSWORD

## DOWN

2. Historical period known for its artistic rebirth
3. Oldest continuously inhabited city in the world
5. Ancient city which was famously destroyed by a volcanic eruption in 79 BCE
6. The landmark Supreme Court case which established abortion rights in the United States in 1973
9. Country to join NATO in 2024?

## ACROSS

1. Leader of the Cuban Revolution
4. Political ideology that advocates for a classless society
7. First female Prime Minister of the United Kingdom
8. Country where the COP 28 summit was held
9. Ancient ruler credited with building the Grand Trunk Road

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