

Fair Observer^o

Independence, Diversity, Debate

THIRD QUARTER UPDATE

2025



Dear FO^o Supporter,

In July, August and September, I have largely been in Washington, DC. After my frenetic time in India, I was hoping for a respite. Needless to say, in the words of Harold Macmillan, “events, dear boy, events” have intervened.

In the third quarter of 2025, the news agenda has been fast and furious. We have been publishing daily and trying to keep up with events. Luckily, we publish perspectives on deeper issues, not breaking news. So, we have not gone mad quite yet. Still, publishing diverse perspectives has extracted a cost on us in these extremely polarized times. I have a story about a revealing incident to share with you.

On July 23, I went to an event organized by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS). Arvind Panagariya, the chairman of the 16th Finance Commission of India, was to speak on India-US economic ties. An earlier meeting overran, so I was late for Arvind’s event. Since I know Arvind, I thought I would wait until he finished his discussion and say hello.

That was when the CSIS staff told me that I could not attend the presentation, nor wait for Arvind. Instead, I had to march out of the building. The staff were under strict instructions to make sure that disreputable-looking characters like me, who are bald and badly spoken, were not allowed to wait — standing or sitting — in the CSIS building.

Under normal circumstances, I would have left the building and never looked back. The old me would have sworn never to set foot again in the building. At the end of the day, I am a Rajput and have been unable to shake off that infernal aristocratic pride. I did want to say hello to Arvind, though. He now serves an Indian prime minister who has lost his way and has ruined the Indian economy. Even though I do not support Arvind’s professional choice, I still like him. He was kind to me when I first came up with the idea of *Fair Observer*. The words of encouragement he gave me when I visited a dear Dutch friend at Columbia University, where Arvind was teaching in 2011, have stayed with me.

So, I stepped out to walk around a wee bit in a city designed by a Frenchman and then returned to catch Arvind at the end of his event. As soon as I stepped out of CSIS, I ran into two Americans: one a good-ole southern boy and the other an Indian American with roots in the subcontinent's south. His native tongue was Telugu, the language of the southern Indian states of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, and he asked me what I thought of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

When I told this Telugu gentleman that I did not think highly of Modi, he started yelling at me. He told me that leftists like me were traitors to the country. He accused me of being a supporter of the Nehru dynasty and part of the old elite patronized by the dynasty. Within seconds, he was shouting "*Jai Jagannath*" in my face. Jagannath is regarded as an incarnation of Vishnu and is worshipped in Odisha, an eastern coastal state where Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) won a landslide in the 2024 elections. *Jai Jagannath* literally means "victory to Jagannath." Currently, the Modi government is a coalition government because the BJP failed to win a majority in 2024.

Winning in the state of Jagannath is the only reason Modi could win enough seats to form a government. To quote a BJP spokesman, "Odisha saved our ass."

This Telugu gentleman works for the federal government and is an American citizen. Unlike me, he never served as an officer in India, and he certainly did not pick up dead bodies in the border regions of the country. Also, he has never publicly opposed the Nehru dynasty as I have done for over three decades. Yet he yelled at me because he assumed that, if I critique Modi, I must support, benefit and probably be in the pay of Rahul Gandhi. Ironically, the yelling Telugu gentleman works for the US government, is not even an Indian citizen and yet he is a Modi *bhakt* ("devotee"). I have long spoken about polarization, but this incident on July 23 sums up all that has gone awry in our times.

A few days after this leftist accusation, I was attacked by a bunch of friends for publishing a Texan Republican who supported right-wing America. In a hard-hitting piece, Christopher Roper Schell made a case against [Zohran Mamdani](#), the Democratic candidate running to be mayor of New York City. Christopher sees Zohran as a child of privilege who benefits...

from his elite South Asian heritage. The Texan argues that Zohran is importing elitist third-world socialism to America, which will end up hurting, not benefiting, the working class.

Some friends went on to tell me that we should not have published the piece. Others accused me of publishing the piece because of my own insecurities. Supposedly, I prejudice everyone I meet based on birth — I am a cultural determinist. Furthermore, since my family has been on the losing side of history while Zohran's has been on the winning side, I have a personal grudge against the great hope of American politics. Apparently, Christopher “brilliantly manipulated me” by pandering to my prejudices in his piece. Before I forget, someone even accused Christopher and me of being Islamophobes.

Over the years, I have become thick-skinned. Yet being yelled at by strangers or accused by friends of multiple sins is not exactly pleasant. What is happening to us? In this age of polarization, are we going stark raving mad?

Perhaps we are swimming against the tide, but I really do think continuing to fight matters. I do not agree with many of our

authors and sometimes disagree with them entirely. Yet, whether I agree or disagree with an author does not matter.

All that matters is that they follow our editorial guidelines and give us a well-reasoned, fact-based perspective. If we are to have a democracy, we will have to learn to disagree. We will need to have empathy for arguments and opinions we dislike. We will have to become less polarized. Note that I am not saying that we stop holding the feet of those in power close to the fire, nor am I championing moral relativism. I am saying that we have to be willing to listen to others if we want what my dear friend Johann Wong calls “a just democracy for all of us.”

As I bid you adieu, I request you to support our [2025 crowdfunding campaign](#). As you can see below, we have been working very hard to do good work. We live in a world where billionaires and governments own the commanding heights of media and social media. In this top-down world, we are backed by you. So, support us and ask your friends to do so too. Thank you!

My warmest regards,



Atul Singh

Founder, CEO & Editor-in-Chief

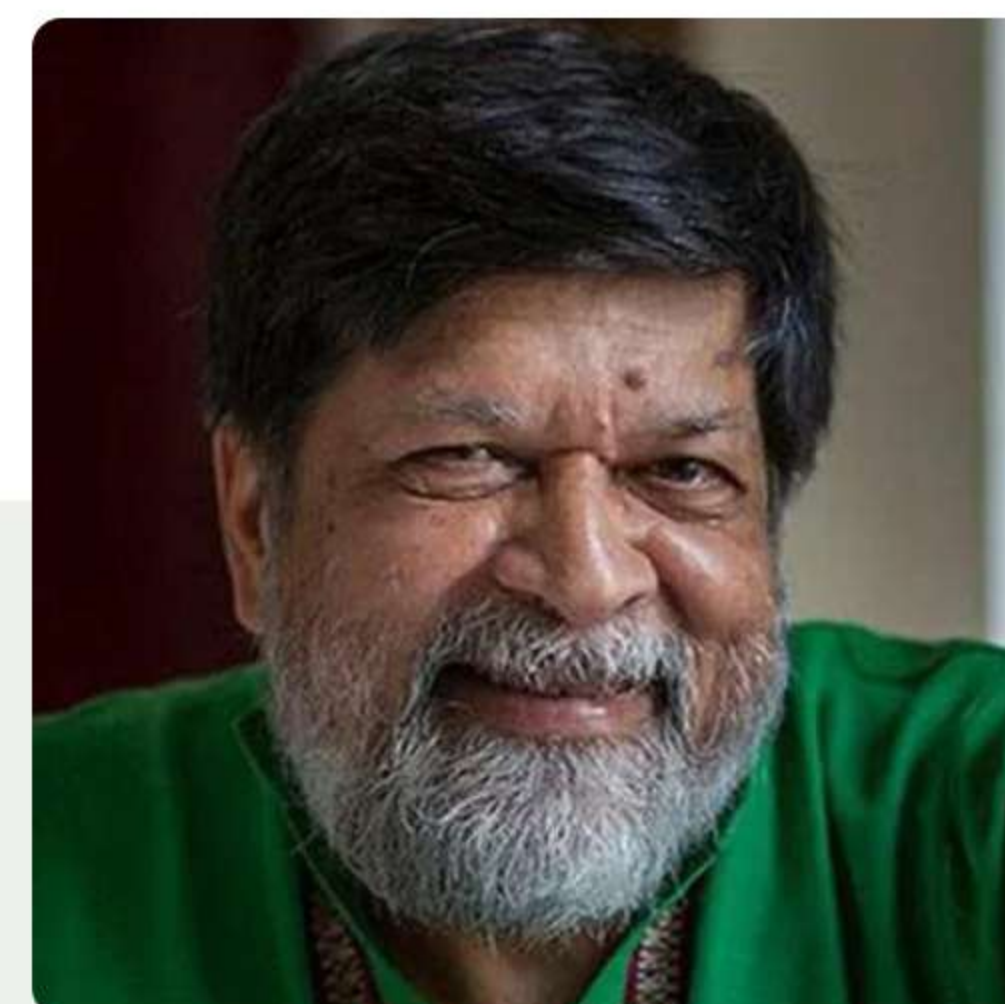
FO° YouTube Channel

We have focused on producing video interviews more regularly in this quarter. On average, we publish ten videos on our YouTube channel a week. A key reason we have been conducting interviews is to broaden the range of people we publish. Many who speak English as a second, third or even fourth language struggle with writing a piece. Even for those for whom English is their native tongue, time constraints sometimes prohibit them from writing something. So, videos are a great way to democratize the global discourse.

As you might remember from our update for the [last quarter](#), Rohan Khattar Singh has joined our team. He has been interviewing people from around the world. Rohan has conducted insightful conversations with authors from a diverse range of countries like [Japan](#), [Bangladesh](#), [Nepal](#) and [Venezuela](#).



[Saya Kiba](#)



[Shahidul Alam](#)



[Kuber Chalise](#)



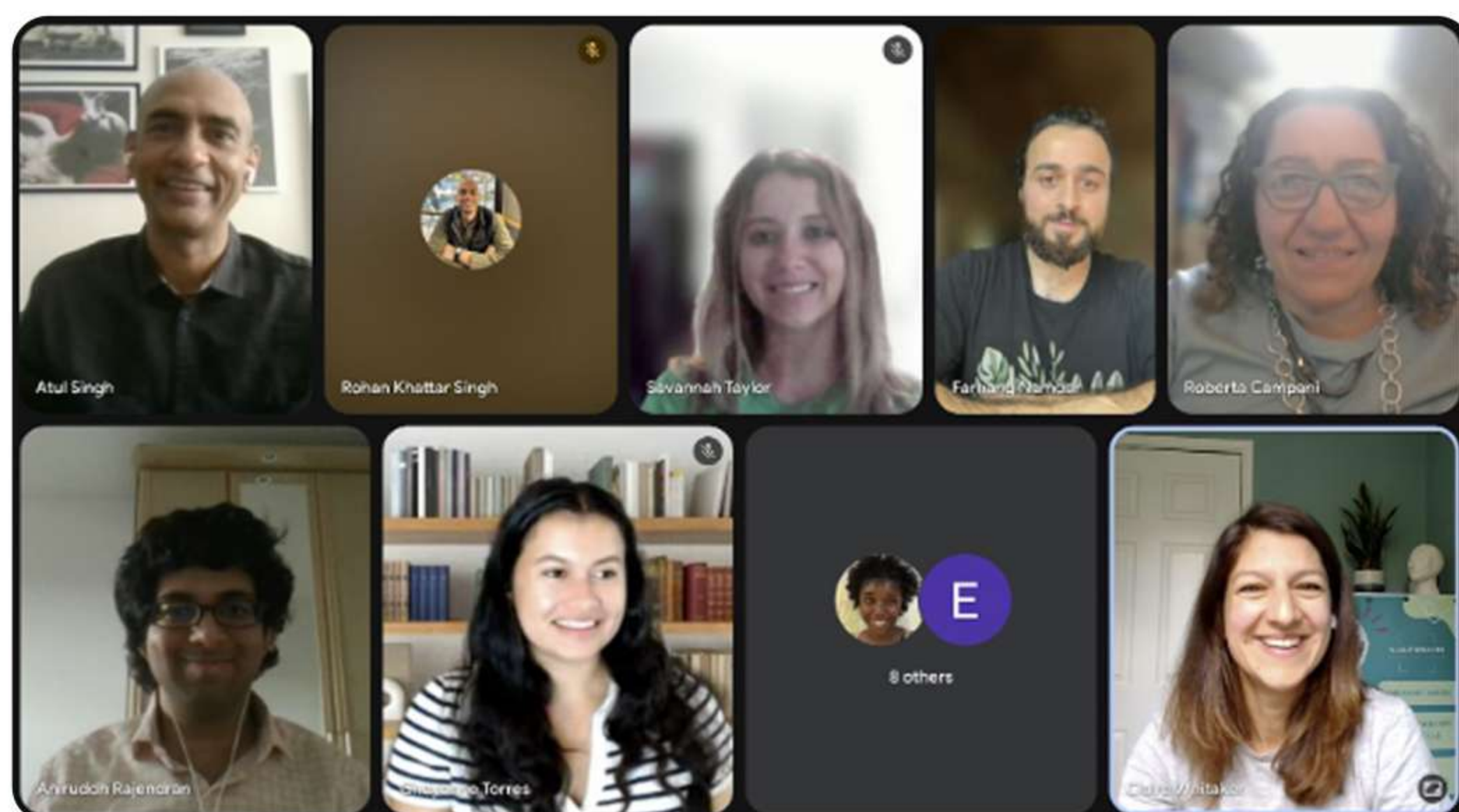
[Leonardo Vivas](#)

FO° Young Editors Program

We have recently inducted a new batch of interns for our FO° Young Editors Program. We meet every Saturday at 10:00 AM Eastern Time for our editorial workshop, which is an Oxford-style tutorial. During this workshop, we train our editors not only in editing and writing but also in history, philosophy and more. Interns have called the FO° Young Editors Program a fast-track master's in history or international relations.

Our program gives young editors an education, a portfolio of work (we give credit to them for everything they edit or write) and a community. We get over 100 applicants each time we announce a new intake. These young editors are highly motivated. Those in California join us at 7:00 AM on a Saturday morning, and one of them in Guam used to join us at midnight.

Our young editors asked for speaking and video interview training. So, our chair, Claire Whitaker, has begun conducting this [training](#) for them. Claire used to head video news for Africa at Agence-France Presse (AFP). These days, she trains CEOs and leaders of other organizations to become better speakers, both on and off camera.



In a nutshell, our editors are getting an all-around education in journalism and in the humanities. Our programs enable them to be better journalists, diplomats, academics, policy wonks or whatever else they choose to be.



[Georgianne Cushmore](#)

“Saturdays with Atul, Kaitlyn, Cheyenne and the other interns are the highlight of my week. We work on our editing skills while laughing over satire and our different styles of humor. For those interested in improving their editing skills, learning more about international affairs, and in need of a good laugh, come and join the Young Editors Program.”



[Liam Roman](#)

“Fair Observer has provided me with greater insights into geopolitics and history in just a few months than I gained during four years of undergraduate studies.”

FO° Features Newsletter

Through trial and error, our Sunday newsletter has evolved into a fine product. We now shine the light on a particular region or issue, often underreported or inadequately understood. Roberta Campani has been the driving force behind this newsletter. It is now called FO° Features.

For this newsletter, our team peruses both local and international media sources. Roberta has now recruited interns from our FO° Young Editors Program to work on FO° Features. Every Monday, Nick St-Sauveur, Casey Herrmann and Farhang Faraydoon Namdar get together with Roberta to discuss news from around the world and pick an issue or a region to focus on. Then, the four of them do research throughout the week and produce the final newsletter for Sunday.



[Nick St-Sauveur](#)



[Casey Herrmann](#)



[Farhang Faraydoon
Namdar](#)

You can find four examples of FO° Features below:



[France: Citizens Reclaim Agency Even In a Fading Political Scene](#)

August 3, 2025



[Georgia, Moving Away From the West, Unwillingly](#)

August 10, 2025



[Guyana's Oil, Elections and a Border Dispute](#)

August 31, 2025



[Nepal's Shock Week — What Happened, Why It Matters, What's Next](#)

September 14, 2025

FO° Website, YouTube, LinkedIn and Podcast Analytics

Our website had almost a million visitor interactions from more than 100 countries. Most visitors tend to come from the US, India, the UK, China, Australia, Singapore, Brazil, Germany and Canada.

Our FO° YouTube channel grew by more than 150% in both views and watch time. In August alone, our videos attracted more than 120,000 views. In addition, our LinkedIn page passed 5,000 followers this quarter. Our podcasts crossed 5,000 downloads.

FO° Editorial Update

We are committed to democratizing and globalizing the news media landscape by publishing perspectives from around the world. Please find some of them below.

You can read noted British geopolitical risk analyst Alan Waring's opinion on how the global community's silence has enabled Gaza's devastation. He argued that the reluctance of world leaders to condemn Israel's actions raises profound questions about the world we live in.



The World's Silent Complicity in Israel's War on Gaza

July 19, 2025

You can read investigative journalist Anke Richter's account of Sarito Carroll, who, as a teenager, was sexually abused and neglected in the Rajneeshpuram commune in Oregon. Her testimony exposes how charismatic systems can trap vulnerable people.



40 Years After the Oregon Cult Commune: The Girl from the Osho Ranch

September 11, 2025

You can read the US-based Afghan author Saboor Sakhizada's cynical look at the reality that children, especially girls, face in Afghanistan under the Taliban four years after they retook control.



Afghanistan Under the Taliban Four Years Later: No School, No Future, No Problem

August 15, 2025

You can read Professor of African and development studies Mario Zamponi's analysis of Belgian director Johan Grimonprez's *Soundtrack to a Coup d'Etat*. The film tells the story of the assassination of Patrice Lumumba, the Prime Minister of the Belgian Congo.



Soundtrack to a Coup d'Etat: Jazz and International Politics in Léopoldville

July 27, 2025

You can read German economist Alexander Gloy's article on how the dollar's dominant global role distorts trade. He argues that US fiscal and monetary policy is now a global risk.



The Problem with the Dollar: When One Nation's Currency Becomes the World's

July 15, 2025

You can listen to former Swiss diplomat Jean-Daniel Ruch examine how the control of over 40% of Gaza by Israeli Defense Forces might play out in the future.



FO° Talks: Israel Escalates Deadly Assault in Gaza, IDF Now Controls Over 40% of the Gaza Strip

September 26, 2025

You can read Japanese economist Masaaki Yoshimori's piece on the contrasting approaches of two former Japanese Prime Ministers Shinzo Abe and Fumio Kishida to economic policy. The piece explains how Abe's pro-growth policies prioritized corporate expansion, while Kishida's fairness agenda sought fairer wealth distribution.



Abe and Kishida: The Two Contrasting Visions for Japan's Political Economy

August 27, 2025

You can read Assistant Editor Cheyenne Torres's review of *The Mechanics of Changing the World* by John MacGregor. The book offers a perspective on democratic decline and what we can do about it.



Democracy is in Decline. The Mechanics of Changing the World Offers a Way Out

August 10, 2025

You can read Contributing Editor Laura Pavón's article on how the Trump administration's revocation of the Colombian president's visa symbolizes deeper geopolitical realignments in Latin America.



US Revokes Colombian President's Visa: The Volatile Relationship Between North and South America

October 22, 2025

FO° Crystal Ball Initiative

Here at Fair Observer, we believe in creating discourse around issues that matter. We also want to find solutions to today's seemingly intractable problems. Our binational French and American colleague Peter Isackson is leading an initiative to come up with some ideas for such solutions.

To do so, we need many diverse minds to weigh in. So, send us your ideas and tell your friends to do so too. Many questions come to our minds. Can we emulate the Japanese and organize our cities? If so, how? Can we conserve the Brazilian rainforest? If so, what could and should we do locally and globally?

As an example, see what our Swiss colleague Roberta Campani is trying to do: [watch](#) her conversation with Rob Avis of [5th World](#) about regenerative agriculture.

FO° Events

As you know, we believe in community. A website alone is not enough to create one. We need to meet, to interact, to break bread, have a drink or two and talk to each other.

Therefore, we have been organizing FO° Meetups in different cities. The ones in Washington, DC and New York have attracted interesting people interested in issues from all ages and backgrounds.

In the course of our meetups, we have discussed increasing social polarization, rising political authoritarianism and growing economic risks. Chatham House Rules apply in all our meetups and, therefore, people speak freely and honestly. You can find upcoming events [here](#) and photos from our previous meetups below.



| Why Supporting FO° Is a Jolly Good Thing

We are now running our [2025 crowdfunding campaign](#). If you do not want billionaires and governments controlling the news media, then [donate now](#). If you are already a donor, then ask your friends to become one.

In addition to donations, here's what you can do to help:

1. Ask people in your circle to **sign up** for our [newsletter](#) and **follow us** on social media: [LinkedIn](#), [YouTube](#), [X](#), [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#).
2. Introduce us to those who might want to [publish](#) with us.
3. **Share** our newsletters, articles, podcasts and videos with your circle.
4. **Download** our [e-publications](#): **monthly magazines, yearbooks** and more. You can read them on your e-reader or print them out. (That will save your eyes from overexposure to blue light).
5. **Donate through your company platform, especially on Giving Tuesday (December 2, 2025) in our [2025 crowdfunding campaign](#).** Keep in mind that companies like Visa and Google **match your donation** because we are a 501(c)(3) organization. Our EIN is 46-4070943.

Fair Observer[°]

Independence, Diversity, Debate

In a world of filter bubbles, echo chambers and polarization, Fair Observer continues to be a forum for discussion, debate and dialogue across borders, backgrounds and beliefs.

Thanks to you, we are educating young authors, young editors and young readers, and plan to do much more.

With gratitude,

Claire, Atul, Peter, Roberta, Anton, Kaitlyn, Lee, Cheyenne, Aniruddh, Rohan, Liam and the rest of the FO[°] Team

