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PERSPECTIVE

Holding money in your hand can reduce stress levels as well as minimise pain.

Four Bangladeshis, Indian national detained in Assam over suspected cattle smuggling

SILCHAR
Police in Assam's Sribhumi district have detained four Bangladeshi nationals and an Indian man in connection with a suspected cattle smuggling operation, officials said on Tuesday.

The five were detained during a late-night operation in the Badarpur area on Monday following information about the alleged illegal movement of cattle and buffaloes across the India-Bangladesh border.

The operation was conducted by a team led by Sribhumi Border Police DSP Mukut Kakati and Badarpur police station officer-in-charge Manas Pratim Bora.

Police said the four Bangladeshi nationals were apprehended from Mahakal village in Badarpur. They were identified as Rezaul Karim, Sabbir Ahmed, Rachel Ahmed and Hasan Ahmed, all reportedly residents of Zakiganj in Bangladesh's Sylhet district.

An Indian national, Fazal Uddin of Jagadishpur village under Katigora in neighbouring Cachar district, was also detained. Investigators suspect that he may have acted as a middleman in the alleged transportation of cattle and buffaloes.

Preliminary investigation suggests that the four Bangladeshi nationals may have entered India through the Tukurgram area along the international border and were allegedly preparing to transport cattle and buffaloes illegally to Bangladesh.

Police are probing the circumstances surrounding their alleged entry into India and whether other people were involved in the suspected smuggling network.

The five detained persons are being questioned about their alleged route of entry, the movement of the cattle and buffaloes and possible links with others involved in the operation.

Further investigation is underway.

WHO SAID WHAT

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The Pandemic Agreement is a promise that no country will be left behind in the next crisis. #UNGA81 ~ WHO

Sarma blames Congress factions for Samaguri clash, urges party to resolve differences



GUWAHATI
Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has alleged that the violence reported during a Congress campaign

convoy in Samaguri was the result of an internal clash within the opposition party, and urged its state leadership to address factional differences.

Sarma made the remarks in a social media post on September 22, a day after a Congress campaign convoy was allegedly attacked with stones in Samaguri while travel-

ling to an election meeting. The convoy included Assam Pradesh Congress Committee president Gaurav Gogoi and former Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel.

Congress has alleged that BJP supporters were responsible for the incident and said its leaders were confronted with black flags and slogans before stones were thrown at vehicles. A police complaint was subsequently filed. The circumstances surrounding the confrontation and responsibility for the alleged violence have not been independently established.

Sarma said the incident occurred in the Samaguri Assembly constituency, represented by Congress MLA Tanzil Hussain, son of Dhubri MP Rakibul Hussain.

"At its core, this was a clash between rival factions within the Congress itself," Sarma said in his post.

The chief minister also referred to the constituency's

electoral record, saying Congress had secured 1,45,212 votes in Samaguri in the last Assembly election, compared with 36,902 votes polled by the BJP. He also noted the constituency's predominantly minority population.

Sarma urged the Congress state leadership to take responsibility for what he described as internal differences rather than blaming other political parties.

The clash comes amid campaigning for the Nagaon Lok Sabha by-election, scheduled for October 6. Congress has fielded Sibamoni Bora, with senior leaders including Gogoi and Rakibul Hussain campaigning for her.

Sarma said political differences should not lead to violence or disturb public order.

"Political rivalries within a party should never be allowed to spill onto the streets and disturb the peace and harmony of society at large," he said.

Meghalaya designates MBOSE hostel as temporary detention centre for 30 foreign nationals

SHILLONG
The Meghalaya government has designated the MBOSE hostel at Laitumkhrach in Shillong as a temporary detention and holding centre for foreign nationals who have completed their prison sentences but are awaiting deportation. The Home (Political) Department issued the notification on September 17 after the Meghalaya High Court rejected a proposal to use a building in Nongstoin for the purpose. The development came during the hearing of a suo motu case concerning the prolonged detention of foreign nationals in the state's prisons. A division bench comprising Chief Justice Revati Mohite Dere and Justice W Diengdoh directed the state government to shift 30 foreign nationals to the newly designated facility by September 28. The court was informed that the MBOSE hostel, a G+2 building, has six dormitories with a capacity of 60 beds. The facility will be supported by 26 administrative and guarding personnel, eight security personnel and a platoon deployed

at the gates and watchtowers. The arrangements also include a medical officer and three medical staff, 26 CCTV cameras, fire-safety equipment and office infrastructure. Photographs of the facility were submitted before the court. Following the court's directions, the Inspector General of Prisons and Correctional Services instructed district jail authorities to begin transferring foreign inmates who have completed their sentences but remain in custody to Shillong. During the September 21 hearing, the court was informed that deportation orders had already been issued in four cases and that steps were underway to facilitate their repatriation. The matter was placed before the bench by the SP (Traffic), who is holding additional charge as SP-cum-Foreigners Registration Officer (FRO), as FRO Shillong Vivek Syiem is on medical leave. FRRO Kolkata Nidhi Rani also appeared through video conference, along with the Commissioner and Secretary of the Home (Political) Department.

NEW DELHI

Guwahati has emerged as a key cybercrime coordination hub in the Northeast, helping Assam Police track and investigate criminal networks operating across state and Union Territory boundaries, a government official said.

The Joint Cyber Crime Coordination Team (JCCT) in Guwahati, constituted by the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C) under the Union Ministry of Home Affairs, is among seven such hubs set up across the country to tackle cybercrime hotspots and cases involving multiple jurisdictions.

The other hubs are located in Mehat, Jamtara, Ahmedabad, Hyderabad, Chandigarh and Visakhapatnam.

"Guwahati has emerged as one of seven JCCT hubs under the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre, giving Assam and the Northeast a dedicated mechanism to pursue cybercrime networks that extend beyond state boundaries," the official



told. The importance of the Guwahati hub has become more evident in investigations where Assam Police has used national cyber intelligence, digital forensics and inter-state data to identify suspects and trace criminal networks.

One recent example was an Assam CID operation in January against the creation and circulation of child sexual exploitative and abuse material (CSEAM). Acting on inputs received through the Cyber Tipline, the CID conducted opera-

tions across six districts and arrested seven accused. The accused were apprehended within 24 hours, with investigators receiving live forensic assistance from I4C and technical support from the Assam CID, according to the official. The official said the case demonstrated how I4C's forensic capabilities could be integrated into an ongoing state investigation, allowing investigators to analyse digital evidence while an operation was in progress. The cybercrime network has also highlighted the

use of Assam-based bank accounts to move suspected fraud proceeds. Last month, Dhubri Police arrested four people suspected of operating mule bank accounts used to receive and transfer proceeds of cyber fraud from different parts of the country. The investigation was initiated following intelligence shared by the Crime Branch through the I4C's Samanvaya Portal. Investigators found that accounts in Dhubri had repeatedly received suspected cyber fraud proceeds originating from different states and Union Territories. The official said the case pointed to the possible use of Assam as a financial transit point within a wider cybercrime network. Such intelligence can help investigators connect complaints registered in different states and identify common financial channels used by criminal networks.

The JCCT mechanism is supported by Samanvaya, I4C's data repository and coordination platform, which uses cybercrime data analytics to identify links between crimes and suspected criminals.

Its Pratibimb module maps suspected criminals and cybercrime infrastructure, allowing investigators to visualise networks extending beyond their jurisdictions.

As of June 30, 2026, Samanvaya-Pratibimb had contributed to the arrest of more than 29,837 accused and facilitated over 2.33 lakh cyber investigation assistance requests.

Cyber-forensics support
Guwahati's role has also been strengthened by the National-Digital Investigation Support Centre established in Assam in August 2025. The I4C facility provides early-stage cyber-forensic assistance to investigating officers. At the national level, the I4C's Suspect Registry has received more than 30.48 lakh suspect identifiers, while participating financial institutions have declined transactions worth Rs 25,698 crore.

The Citizen Financial Cyber Fraud Reporting and Management System, linked to the 1930 helpline, has helped prevent losses of more than Rs 11,158 crore across 32.80 lakh complaints as of June 30, 2026.

Manipur CM Khemchand condemns killing Naga youth in Tamenglong



IMPHAL

Manipur Chief Minister Y. Khemchand Singh has condemned the killing of 17-year-old Naga youth NK Wiphenbou in Tamenglong district, calling it an act of violence that has no place in society.

Wiphenbou, a resident of Upper Takou village in the Tamei subdivision, was allegedly attacked while travelling alone towards Tamei on Monday morning. Police and local reports said the teenager was shot around 10:30 am between Upper Takou and Tamah (Malek). His body was later found by Naga village volunteers along a narrow path.

In a social media post, Khemchand condemned the killing and expressed condolences to the victim's family.

"Such an act of violence against an innocent student has no place in our society," the chief minister said, while praying for strength and comfort for

the bereaved family. The killing has drawn condemnation from political leaders and Naga representatives amid renewed tensions in parts of Manipur. Former chief minister N. Biren Singh also called for those responsible to be brought to justice, while Naga People's Front legislator and senior Naga leader Awangbou Newmai condemned the killing and described the attack as targeting an innocent civilian. The identity of those responsible has not been officially established. Some Naga organisations and local sources have alleged the involvement of Kuki armed groups, but those allegations have not been independently verified.

The incident comes amid continuing violence between Naga and Kuki groups in parts of Manipur. Reports citing officials say more than 40 people have been killed since clashes between the two communities began in February.

Sikkim records first two third-gender voters in electoral rolls

GANGTOK
Sikkim has registered its first two voters under the third-gender category during the latest Special Summary Revision (SSR) of electoral rolls, officials said.

The two voters, Sajan Basnet and Tshering W. Lepcha, are government employees whose registration marks the first formal inclusion of voters under the third-gender category in the Himalayan state.

Basnet, 34, from Rongli in East Sikkim, said her journey towards accepting her gender identity began during her school years. She recalled performing in traditional female attire as early as Class 6, although it took several years for her to openly accept her identity.

She said being registered under her gender identity was significant because it gave her a separate identity in the electoral process. "I have a separate line all to myself when I go for voting," Basnet said.

With support from family and friends, Basnet gradually became more comfortable with her identity. She is also involved in local LGBTQIA+ initiatives and has been seeking a dedicated drop-in centre through the Social Welfare Department to provide support and a safe space for members of the community. Basnet is also the first openly transgender government employee in Sikkim, according to the report.

The second voter, 40-year-old Tshering W. Lepcha, is a government schoolteacher from Dzongu in North Sikkim. Lepcha, who lost her parents at a young age, said accepting her identity had been a difficult personal process as she struggled to reconcile her feelings and identity with social expectations. "It was very difficult to accept about my reality because it's clashing with my different thoughts... conflicting with my belief, feelings, and my body," she said. The inclusion of the two names under the third-gender category in the electoral rolls marks a significant administrative development for transgender and gender-diverse people in Sikkim, while also highlighting the personal journeys behind official recognition.

Kaito urges Naga youth to put tribal differences aside, build unity

KOHIAMA
Nagaland Roads and Bridges Minister G. Kaito Aye has called for greater unity among the Naga people, urging young people to look beyond tribal differences and work collectively for social progress.

Speaking at a cultural fiesta organised by the Angami Students' Union (ASU) in Kohima on September 21, Aye said cultural interaction could play an important role in strengthening a shared Naga identity. The event was held under the theme "Together in Culture - Together in Harmony" and brought together student bodies representing 17 Naga tribes.

"We may have a different history, but today we are Naga. Unless we become Naga, nothing will progress. We will become weaker again," Aye said.

The minister praised the ASU initiative and called for its message of unity to reach other parts of Nagaland. He urged members of different tribes to recognise and support one another and work together to improve living conditions.

Aye also placed emphasis on the role of young people, describing them as the leaders of the future. He asked students to focus on education and prepare for opportunities across different fields, calling education their "first weapon".

He advised the youth not to be discouraged by uncertainties over employment and instead work towards building their skills and qualifications.

The minister also urged young people to play a greater role in tackling social problems, including alcoholism and drug abuse. He cautioned against excessive dependence on technology turning into addiction.

Aye further encouraged students to identify shortcomings in government functioning and raise them constructively so that corrective measures could be considered.

He stressed that unity could not be separated from harmony and peace.

"Unity comes through harmony only, through peace only," he said.

Angami Public Organisation president Thajao Vihienuo described the fiesta as a celebration of Naga identity and cultural diversity. He urged participants to take pride in their traditions while respecting those of other communities.

ASU president Diezevisie Nakhro said the event was aimed at celebrating the diverse traditions, talents and cultures of the Naga people while creating greater interaction among young people.

The ASU had been planning the fiesta since last year. Nakhro said, thanking tribal student organisations for supporting the initiative. The event featured cultural presentations by representatives of 17 Naga tribes and provided a platform for cultural exchange among students from different communities.



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Can India’s Soft
Diplomacy Deliver on
China Border

The diplomatic thaw between India and China is welcome, but it should not be mistaken for a settlement of their fundamental dispute. Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping on the sidelines of the 18th BRICS Summit in New Delhi offered an opportunity to stabilise ties. The real test, however, is whether renewed engagement can produce tangible progress along the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

India has consistently maintained that peace and tranquillity along the border are essential for the broader relationship. At the BRICS meeting, New Delhi stressed the need to preserve peace along the LAC while seeking stronger economic and trade ties with Beijing. This is a pragmatic position: without a stable border, political trust, commercial ties and wider cooperation will remain vulnerable.

The Galwan Valley clash of June 2020 fundamentally altered that relationship. The violent confrontation at Patrol Point 14, which caused casualties on both sides, transformed the LAC into a heavily militarised frontier and sharply deepened strategic distrust between the two nuclear-armed neighbours.

India responded with a combination of military preparedness and sustained diplomacy. Multiple rounds of military and diplomatic talks, including meetings under the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination, sought to reduce tensions. The October 2024 disengagement arrangements subsequently changed the situation at several friction points, including the restoration of patrolling arrangements in Demchok and Depsang.

But disengagement is not a boundary settlement. That distinction is critical. Buffer arrangements at some friction points have reduced the immediate risk of confrontation, but they have also raised questions about access to areas traditionally patrolled by Indian troops. The consequences have extended beyond military operations. Communities living close to the LAC, including nomadic groups, have faced restrictions on access to traditional grazing grounds.

The frontier is therefore not merely a military line. It involves territorial access, local livelihoods, infrastructure and long-term strategic positioning.

China’s infrastructure expansion has made this contest more consequential. Beijing has built roads, bridges, permanent structures and border settlements close to the LAC. Its Xiaokang villages, in particular, have drawn attention because they combine civilian settlement with potential logistical and surveillance advantages while reinforcing China’s territorial claims.

This strategy predates Galwan. China’s construction of the Aksai Chin road linking Tibet and Xinjiang demonstrated decades ago the strategic value Beijing attaches to frontier infrastructure. Following the 2017 Doklam stand-off and the 2020 Galwan clash, such activity accelerated.

India has since moved to strengthen its own border infrastructure through strategic roads, tunnels, bridges and forward settlements. The objective is not simply to match China project for project, but to ensure that Indian forces and border communities can maintain reliable access to difficult frontier areas.

The 2005 Agreement on Political Parameters and Guiding Principles for the Settlement of the India-China Boundary Question remains an important diplomatic reference. It states that the boundary question should not be allowed to affect the overall development of bilateral relations and calls for a mutually acceptable settlement. Yet subsequent developments show the limits of diplomatic principles when competing claims remain unresolved on the ground.

China’s continuing claims over Arunachal Pradesh add another layer to the dispute. Beijing refers to the state as “Zangnan” or “South Tibet”, a claim India firmly rejects. The issue is therefore not simply a cartographic disagreement; it involves competing territorial claims and the consolidation of positions along a disputed frontier.

India must consequently avoid confusing dialogue with accommodation. Diplomatic engagement is necessary, but its value will ultimately depend on whether it produces verifiable arrangements that protect India’s security interests and restore confidence along the LAC.

There are signs of renewed engagement. Xi’s participation in the BRICS Summit marked his first visit to India since the Galwan clash. His interaction with Modi followed renewed diplomatic contacts, including discussions between National Security Adviser Ajit Doval and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi. Their talks have focused on border management, trans-border rivers and military communications, signalling an attempt to rebuild mechanisms for preventing local tensions from escalating.

A sector-by-sector approach could provide a practical route forward, particularly if the two sides first address less contentious areas. Recent military-level discussions in the eastern sector, including the September meeting at the Wacha meeting point in Arunachal Pradesh, underline the importance of maintaining communication across the entire frontier.

Yet diplomacy alone cannot resolve the central problem. Nor can military preparedness substitute for negotiations.

India therefore needs to maintain both tracks simultaneously. Diplomatic engagement should continue, while military readiness and border infrastructure are strengthened. Roads, tunnels, communications networks and border settlements are essential not only for development but also for effective territorial administration and security.

At the negotiating table, New Delhi must also seek clarity on patrolling arrangements and ensure that temporary disengagement measures do not gradually become permanent restrictions on traditional access. The immediate objective should be preventing another Galwan; the longer-term objective must remain a mutually acceptable boundary settlement.

India also has compelling reasons to improve relations with China. Trade, regional stability, multilateral cooperation and global economic interests make engagement unavoidable. But engagement cannot come at the cost of ambiguity over territorial integrity.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

“Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.”
- George Santayana

BRICS: INDIA’S
ACHIEVEMENTS AND
CHALLENGES

DR D. K. GIRI

When the national flags of the 21 participating countries were lowered at Bharat Mandapam following the conclusion of the 18th BRICS Summit last Sunday, it was time for the host country to assess its achievements and shortcomings - the successes it has secured and the challenges that lie ahead.

After any summit, all stakeholders undertake such an assessment. But BRICS is somewhat different. The grouping is widely seen as an alternative to Western-led institutions and groupings such as NATO, the Quad, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. That is why India’s presence and role within BRICS attract particular international attention.

The first and most important achievement was that India successfully steered the summit towards a consensus declaration. There were neither sharp debates nor overt expressions of disagreement. At the same time, India ensured that the declaration did not explicitly adopt an anti-American or anti-Western position. The 45-page, 140-paragraph declaration covers a wide range of issues, but India gave priority to practical financial reforms. These include interoperable national payment systems and trade in local currencies. The idea of a common currency was kept separate from these initiatives.

This achievement deserves emphasis. The expanded BRICS has become far more diverse and heterogeneous than the original four-member grouping. Today, alongside India, China, Russia, Brazil and South Africa, the group includes Egypt, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Iran, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. There are also 10 partner countries. Naturally, these countries have significantly different strategic priorities

structural reforms in global institutions, particularly the United Nations Security Council, to give the Global South a more effective voice. For the first time, both Russia and China openly supported a larger role for Brazil and India in global institutions. This suggests that China may no longer block India’s entry into the UN Security Council. However, the question remains whether China would support granting India veto power, as enjoyed by the existing permanent members. If the structure is reformed, it is possible that the veto system itself could become irrelevant.

The third achievement was India’s role in restoring dialogue among member countries whose channels of communication had almost broken down. India used its diplomatic capacity to bridge differences and, particularly on the issue of regional stability, helped advance dialogue between Iran and the UAE. Only recently, in response to a US attack, Iran had targeted American bases located in the UAE.

Fourth, as always, India ensured that the BRICS position remained non-Western without allowing it to become anti-Western. This should send a clear message to the United States and Europe that New Delhi does not view BRICS as an alternative to its important relations with the West. For a large number of Indians, the security and counter-terrorism provisions in the declaration are also reassuring. India ensured an explicit condemnation of the Pahalgam terror attack and secured language calling for zero tolerance towards terrorism, full accountability for those responsible and a demand that terrorists not be provided safe havens. This language is stronger than what India received at the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation or the G20 - and this should be recognised as a diplomatic achievement.

bers.

China wants to establish BRICS as an alternative to Western-dominated institutions and even sees it as a counterweight to NATO. Beijing openly criticises US policies and seeks to replace the United States with a China-centred global order. Russia largely views BRICS as a means of weakening Western sanctions. Iran, meanwhile, is seeking a way out of international isolation and wants a multipolar world order in which the United States cannot exert overwhelming pressure on any country.

India views BRICS from a very different perspective. For New Delhi, BRICS is another global network, much like the Quad, SCO, SAARC or BIMSTEC. New Delhi does not want to replace one hegemonic system with another, nor does it view BRICS as a mirror image of NATO.

The challenge for New Delhi is to counter the perception developing in the West that India has tilted towards a Beijing-Moscow-Tehran axis and that its participation signals a strategic realignment. If India fails to effectively address this perception, maintaining a balance between the two sides could become more difficult. The author has long argued that India can engage, transact and cooperate strategically with any country on the basis of strategic autonomy and multi-alignment, but that in a polarised world it must make its position clear. New Delhi should remain aligned with the democratic world rather than authoritarian systems. Coincidentally, the democratic world has an advantage in two key elements that determine the balance of power - capital and technology.

Another challenge is dealing effectively with China while protecting national interests. Practical bilateral relations with China will determine India’s effectiveness within BRICS. The author has long

between China and Pakistan and, therefore, that the commission is illegal and ineffective.

Finally, New Delhi will have to gradually reduce its trade dependence on China. A massive trade deficit of \$112 billion in China’s favour is not in India’s national interest. New Delhi will have to make determined efforts to correct this imbalance or explore alternatives. It is true that, following globali-

DIGITAL WAR OF WORDS

Himveers summit Mt Abi Gamin!

A 23-member #ITBP expedition led by DC Parikshit Shah summited Mt Abi Gamin (7,355 m) on 16 Sept 2026. Flagged off on 7 Aug, the team displayed exceptional mountaineering skills, determination & team spirit. DG #ITBP congratulated the #Himveers. ~ Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP)



and national interests.

For instance, Iran is in confrontation with the United States and Israel. The United Arab Emirates has deep economic and security ties with Western countries. New Delhi continues to strengthen its strategic partnership with Washington. China remains America’s principal strategic rival, while Russia is facing unprecedented sanctions and is at war with Ukraine, which is backed by the West.

The second achievement was the emphasis at the summit on

The biggest strategic challenge is how to prevent BRICS from becoming an anti-Western platform. The New Delhi declaration clearly reflects the Global South’s dissatisfaction with the existing international financial system, which is dominated by Western institutions. Developing countries have been severely affected by unilateral sanctions, tariff barriers and the strategic use of supply chains. Even so, India’s strategic objectives differ considerably from those of several major BRICS mem-

warned about what he describes as China’s opaque and almost deceptive security policies, reflected in what he regards as false territorial claims and border confrontations dating back to 1962.

Immediately after the BRICS summit, China once again adopted what the author describes as a provocative position by confirming the reactivation of a joint boundary commission with Pakistan. New Delhi has rejected the move in strong terms. India maintains that there is no legitimate boundary

sation, trade and commerce have to some extent been separated from foreign and security policies. Beijing continues to favour this approach. It built its economy by benefiting from Western investment and relying on its low-cost labour force, while, according to the author, violations of human rights and suppression of citizens’ voices continued. At the height of Western investment in China, the world witnessed the use of tanks to suppress student protests in Tiananmen Square.

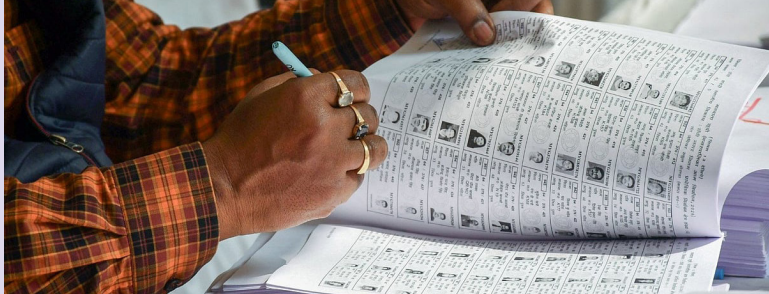
Nearly 5 lakh Nagaland voters face notices over SIR mapping gaps

KOHIMA

Nearly five lakh voters in Nagaland are likely to receive notices from electoral authorities over discrepancies in mapping their details with the 2005 electoral roll as part of the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR).

Additional Chief Electoral Officer Awa Lorin said on Monday that 9.33% of electors fell under the “no mapping” category, while another 27.31% were classified as having mapping anomalies. Together, the two categories account for 36.64% of the electorate.

The statement came a day after Nagaland published its draft electoral roll, which excluded nearly 1.59 lakh names from the 13.57 lakh electors covered by the



revision exercise.

Lorin said voters whose names could not be linked to the 2005 electoral roll, or who could not establish their relationship with a person included in that roll, would receive notices from Electoral Registration

Officers (EROs) or Assistant Electoral Registration Officers (AEROs).

Such voters would have to submit prescribed documents, with the requirements varying according to their date or year of birth.

“If they are satisfied with your claim and your documents, then your name will continue to appear in the final roll,” Lorin said, adding that failure to establish the claim or provide the required documents could result in exclusion from the final roll, scheduled for publication on November 22.

He clarified that voters who were not registered in 2005 would not be automatically deleted from the current roll. They could establish a linkage with a person listed in the 2005 roll or, where applicable, apply afresh during the claims and objections period.

Chief Electoral Officer Bhagyashree Banayat said the claims and objections window would remain open from September 20 to October 20. Genuine electors left out of the draft roll can seek inclusion

through Form-6 along with the prescribed declaration and supporting documents.

The same process is available to new eligible voters who turn 18 by the October 1, 2026 qualifying date.

Banayat said the SIR enumeration covered 13,57,208 electors between August 16 and September 14, of whom 11,99,456, or 88.38%, submitted their Enumeration Forms. The exercise identified 29,944 deceased electors, accounting for 2.13%; 1,23,749 electors, or 9.12%, under the absent, permanently shifted or other categories; and 5,069, or 0.37%, enrolled at multiple locations. The absent or shifted category includes voters who had enrolled in another state or Union Territory, could not be traced, did not submit their forms by September 14 or were unwilling to register.

Names found at multiple locations will be retained at only one place, Banayat said.

Hearing camps will be organised by EROs at their offices, district headquarters or polling-station level to facilitate verification. The process is expected to be completed by November 18. On Aadhaar, Banayat said submission of the number in SIR enumeration forms was voluntary and that Aadhaar by itself was not proof of citizenship. She also clarified that Aadhaar seeding was not being carried out in the electoral roll. At the district level, Dimapur recorded the highest number of uncollectable Enumeration Forms at 36,629, followed by Choumoukedima with 28,626, Kohima with 24,178 and Wokha with 11,500. A total of 3,297 electors had not returned their Enumeration Forms.

Agartala to host ‘Mayer Gaman’ on October 23, security and tourism in focus

AGARTALA

Tripura’s annual ‘Mayer Gaman’ ceremony will be held in Agartala on October 23, with the area in front of Maharani Tulsiabati Higher Secondary Girls’ School set to serve as the main venue.

The date and arrangements were reviewed at a high-level meeting chaired by Chief Minister Manik Saha at Mukta-hara Auditorium on Monday. The meeting, organised by the Department of Information and Cultural Affairs, brought together officials and representatives of Durga Puja committees to discuss preparations for the Sharad Samman and ‘Mayer Gaman’ celebrations. Security, traffic management and public safety emerged as key areas of discussion. Saha directed the concerned departments to complete roadside tree pruning and shift electrical wires ahead of the festivities. He also asked police to ensure uninterrupted movement of ambulances during the Puja days and make adequate security and law-and-order arrangements.

Representatives of several Puja committees urged the authorities to prohibit DJs during the festivities and idol immersion processions.

The chief minister also called for ‘Mayer Gaman’ to be promoted beyond Tripura and suggested inviting visitors from other countries to witness the event. He asked officials to explore special tourism packages linked to Durga Puja and ‘Mayer Gaman’ to attract more visitors to the state.

Agartala Municipal Corporation Mayor and MLA Dipak Majumder said the government was working with all stakeholders to ensure the smooth conduct of the celebrations. He stressed the importance of maintaining security and law and order during the festivities.

FMD outbreak kills 267 mithuns in Arunachal’s Dibang Valley

ITANAGAR

Foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) has killed 267 mithuns in Arunachal Pradesh’s Dibang Valley district over the past two months, with the outbreak spreading to 21 villages and affecting 1,402 animals, officials said on Monday.

According to the district Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Department, 1,225 of the affected mithuns have been treated so far. The outbreak was first reported in the district in the last week of July, District Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Officer Dr Dammo Riba said.

The department’s status report as of September 20 recorded 267 deaths among the 1,402 affected animals.

Following reports of increased mithun mortality, veterinary teams were deployed with medicines and sample-collection kits. A subject-expert team from the Centre also visited the affected areas

to assess the situation.

Laboratory tests conducted by the National Institute of Foot and Mouth Disease (NIFMD), Odisha, confirmed that the outbreak was caused by FMD serotype O.

A four-member rapid response team (RRT), assisted by local veterinary personnel, is currently conducting treatment, surveillance and awareness activities in the affected villages.

Dr Riba urged residents and agencies to rely on official departmental records while reporting livestock populations and mortality figures, cautioning against the circulation of inaccurate or misleading information.

FMD is a highly contagious viral disease that affects cloven-hoofed animals, including mithuns and cattle. The disease can spread rapidly among livestock, making early detection, treatment and preventive measures important for containing outbreaks.

Guwahati bookie arrested in ED probe into alleged Northeast IPL betting network

GUWAHATI

The agency alleges the accused handled illegal bets through on-line platforms and encrypted messaging channels, with nearly Rs 28 crore credited to an account linked to a firm in which he was a partner.

Guwahati, September 22: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has arrested a Guwahati-based bookie in connection with a money laundering probe into an alleged illegal cricket betting network that operated across Assam and other parts of the Northeast during the Indian Premier League (IPL) season.

The accused, identified as Deepesh Bajoria, was arrested from Zoo Road in Guwahati on September 19 under Section 19(1) of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), the ED’s Guwahati zonal office said.

The probe follows an Enforcement Case Information Report (ECIR) registered by the agency



based on an FIR filed by the Guwahati Crime Branch, along with related cases registered at Tinsukia and Panbazar police stations.

The FIRs invoke Sections 120B, 406 and 420 of the Indian Penal Code, besides Sections 13 and 14 of the Assam Game and Betting Act, 1970.

According to the ED, Bajoria allegedly operated as a principal bookie in the network and used on-line betting platforms, including skyexchange.com and winner7.io, along with encrypted messaging

channels to facilitate the acceptance and settlement of bets.

The agency further alleged that proceeds from the betting operations were routed through the bank account of M/s DRM Coke, a partnership firm in which Bajoria was an admitted partner.

Although the firm was described as non-operational, its bank account recorded credits of around Rs 28.12 crore and debits of approximately Rs 28.03 crore between April 19, 2022, and May 15, 2026, the ED said.

The agency had earlier searched premises linked to Bajoria on May 26, 2026. During the searches, officials recovered property documents, records related to luxury vehicles and digital data from email accounts and mobile devices, according to the ED.

The agency said its investigation indicated that funds linked to the alleged betting operations were moved through multiple individuals and entities. It also alleged that explanations given for some financial transactions did not match evidence subsequently gathered during the probe.

Following his arrest, Bajoria was produced before CBI Court No. 3 in Guwahati, designated as the Special PMLA Court. The court remanded him to six days of ED custody.

The allegations are part of the ongoing investigation, and further action by the agency is expected as the probe into the alleged betting network continues.

Khandu orders action against officials opposing Siang hydropower project

GUWAHATI

Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu has directed the state Chief Secretary to take action against government employees and officials allegedly involved in opposing or creating disturbances over the proposed 11,000-12,500 MW Siang Upper Multipurpose Project (SUMP).

Khandu issued the direction during a meeting with officials from Siang and Upper Siang districts on Monday, as resistance to the proposed mega hydropower project continues in parts of the region. “We have issued instructions to the Chief Secretary to take action against all those employees and officials who have been trying to cause disturbances and opposition against the project. Government employees are bound to follow what the government instructs,” Khandu said on the sidelines of the meeting. Describing SUMP as a project of national importance, Khandu said government officials and employees had a role in explaining its significance to local communities. He said the government would intensify its awareness campaign and that he would soon visit Siang and Upper Siang to interact with residents and government employees. Deputy Chief Minister, who also holds the hydropower

portfolio, would organise camps in the two districts if required, he said. Khandu also urged residents to raise their concerns and seek clarification about the project. “We urge people to come forward and raise questions on every doubt or suspicion they have over the project. We are open for discussion and we will be answerable,” he said.

On the deployment of security forces amid protests, Khandu said the concerns of local residents had to be taken into account as they were the “ultimate owner” of the land. While acknowledging opposition in some areas, he claimed the government’s assessment showed that around 75% to 80% of people were supporting the project. The SUMP is proposed to be executed by the National Hydroelectric Power Corporation (NHPC) in the Siang belt, which is predominantly inhabited by the indigenous Adi community. The project has faced opposition from local groups over concerns about ecological damage, seismic risks and possible displacement of villages and agricultural land.

On September 13, the Upper Siang district administration directed the village headman of Geku to convene an all-stakeholder peace meeting amid the continuing resistance.

Meghalaya’s wettest regions face rising drought risk as rainfall patterns change

SHILLONG

Meghalaya’s Mawsynram and Sohra, among the wettest places on Earth, are facing a growing risk of drought as climate change alters rainfall patterns, bringing more intense rain over fewer days and raising temperatures, according to a new study.

Published recently in Theoretical and Applied Climatology, the study analysed projected climate and hydrological data for Meghalaya and adjoining areas for 1981-2100 to examine why increasing rainfall intensity could coincide with rising drought vulnerability.

Researchers Ashesh Rudra Paul and Pankaj Kumar Roy found that rainfall is increasingly concentrated in intense spells, while light rainfall and the number of rainy days are declining. The study recorded a rise in the Simple Daily Intensity Index (SDII), with the maximum local increase reaching 0.08 mm per day per year.

At the same time, the number of rainy days declined by an average of 0.40 days per year. SDII measures the average amount of rainfall received on a wet day over a specified period.

“Contrary to the conventional expectation that increased precipitation alle-



viates drought,” the researchers said, the findings showed “a clear tendency toward elevated drought risk” in Meghalaya.

The findings are also reflected in observations from the region. Residents of Sohra and Mawsynram reported that several waterfalls and waterbodies have been drying up earlier this year, with the trend becoming visible by mid-September.

“Many waterfalls in Sohra area are

getting dried, and I am seeing this as early as mid September,” said P Hujon, a resident of Mawkisiyiem who runs a guest house.

The changing rainfall pattern poses a particular challenge for Meghalaya because of its steep terrain and shallow soils. Intense rainfall can quickly run off the surface instead of infiltrating the soil, limiting groundwater recharge.

“Such rainfall concentration enhances surface runoff and reduces infiltra-

tion,” the study said.

This means that even heavy monsoon rainfall may not ensure adequate water availability during prolonged dry periods.

Rising temperatures are adding to the pressure by increasing evapotranspiration—the loss of water from soil, vegetation and other surfaces. The study found minimum temperatures rising by as much as 0.08 degrees Celsius per year.

The researchers used the Standardized Precipitation Evapotranspiration Index (SPEI) over a three-month period to assess drought conditions. Their analysis indicated an increasing frequency and intensity of moderate, severe and extreme drought events, particularly under the high-emission SSP585 scenario.

The study also projected changes in river flows. Hydrological modelling of the Sari-Gowain and Surma-Meghna river basins showed a possible maximum decline of 9.8% in mean annual streamflow in the Sari-Gowain basin in the far future under SSP585. The projected decline for the Surma-Meghna basin was as high as 11.6% under the same scenario.

The researchers cautioned that the analysis did not account for human-induced factors such as deforestation, urban expansion, land-use changes and groundwater extraction, all of which can further influence water availability.

The findings highlight a growing paradox for Meghalaya: a region known for extreme rainfall could increasingly face water stress if rain becomes more concentrated, temperatures rise and longer dry spells emerge.

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Jaishankar calls first Visegrad Group-India foreign ministers’ meet a ‘historic occasion’



NEW DELHI

India and the four-member Visegrad Group of Central European countries on Monday agreed to step up political, economic and defence cooperation at their first foreign ministers’ meeting, with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar describing it as a “new historic occasion”.

The meeting between India and the Visegrad Group, comprising the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia, was held on the margins of the 81st session of the UN General Assembly.

Jaishankar joined Poland’s Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Radek Sikorski, Hungary’s Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Anita Orban, Slovak Foreign and European Affairs Minister Juraj Blunar and Czech Foreign Minister Petr Macinka for the meeting.

“It was, in a sense, a new

historic occasion,” Jaishankar said in remarks after the meeting.

“It was a very, very productive meeting. What we agreed was that since India’s relationship with the European Union itself is deepening, with the V4 we would take some special initiatives to create an annual business forum,” he said.

Jaishankar said there was also “consensus” that foreign ministers of the five countries would meet annually.

“We would also explore in technology and innovation whether we could be doing more. We have a very strong history with all the V4 countries in defence. We want to refresh and take forward that record and that cooperation,” he said.

The discussions also covered space, connectivity and people-to-people mobility, besides major global issues, including the Ukraine conflict and developments in the Gulf.

In a post on X, Jaishankar said the V4+India format had agreed to closer political cooperation, including annual meetings of foreign ministers, and deeper economic engagement through an Annual Business Forum.

The countries also agreed to strengthen cooperation in technology, innovation, research and education, reinvigorate defence ties, deepen cultural and people-to-people relations, and work together to support multilateralism.

Jaishankar said India has “very good” relations with the V4 countries.

“These are countries with a very strong, very distinctive capability. These are industrial economies, economies with great innovation and technology talent, and I think how the V4 come together is for them to decide. But we certainly welcome the opportunity to work with the V4 together,” he told reporters.

‘Why are big fish being protected?’ Congress questions delay in Ayodhya temple donation case



NEW DELHI

The Congress on Tuesday questioned the delay in filing the chargesheet in the alleged donation embezzlement case at the Ram temple in Ayodhya, and demanded a forensic audit of the temple trust’s financial and management systems.

Congress general secretary in-charge of communications Jairam Ramesh said the Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing the case should ensure complete transparency and take strict action against those responsible.

His remarks came a day after Solicitor General Tushar Mehta told the Supreme Court that the SIT would file its first chargesheet on or before September 25.

The deadline marks the completion of the statutory 90-day period

from the first arrest in the case, after which the accused could become eligible for default bail if the chargesheet is not filed, Ramesh cited a media report stating that forensic examination of CCTV footage from the temple premises had revealed 105 instances of alleged donation theft, against 70 incidents reported in the preliminary probe.

In a post on X, he used a play on the lyrics of the 1971 Hindi film song Ram ka naam badnaam na karo to attack the BJP over the alleged theft.

“Chanda chori, Aastha dhokha. ‘Dekho o BJP walon, tum ye kaam na karo, ram ka naam badnam na karo, badnam na karo!’” he said.

Ramesh alleged that the delay in filing the chargesheet had raised questions about whether the “big fish” in the case were being protected. He also questioned the alleged

silence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and demanded to know why the temple trust had not been dissolved.

“The question now is not just about the accused, but also about the accountability of those under whose watch this all happened,” he said.

The Congress has sought a forensic audit of the entire system, action against those responsible and a transparent investigation. It has also sought a probe under the supervision of the Supreme Court.

On Monday, the Supreme Court, hearing pleas seeking an investigation into alleged irregularities in the management of donations at the temple, was informed that the SIT would file its chargesheet by September 25.

Mehta told a Bench headed by Chief Justice Surya Kant that the 90-day period from the first arrest would expire on September 25 and

that the chargesheet would have to be filed to prevent the accused from claiming statutory bail.

The court also perused the SIT’s detailed status report submitted in a sealed cover and had earlier directed the agency to complete the investigation expeditiously.

Under Section 167(2) of the Code of Criminal Procedure, an accused may claim statutory bail if the investigating agency fails to file a chargesheet within the prescribed period of 60 or 90 days, depending on the offence.

The allegations of irregularities in the management of donations at the temple had led several petitioners, including RJD MP Sudhakar Singh, to approach the Supreme Court seeking a CBI probe and a forensic audit of the finances of the temple trust.

INTERNATIONAL

Worsening El Nino threatens Asia with drought, potentially raising food prices globally

BANTEN

All signs are pointing toward a record-breaking El Nino this year, which experts say may cause severe drought in Asia and other extreme weather across the world, threatening food security for millions of people.

El Nino is part of a natural climate cycle of warming ocean temperatures, but this year’s is expected to reach new extremes of drought, heat waves, flooding and other climate-related disruptions in South America, Africa and Asia.

Southeast Asia is one of the world’s most climate vulnerable regions. It’s already beset by an energy crisis triggered by the war in Iran. El Nino is already fueling wildfires across farmland, depleting water supplies for major cities and hurting fish catches in the region.

Asian governments that have been drawing on their financial reserves to mitigate the war’s ripple effects of higher energy costs and scarce fertilizer supplies have less capacity to cope with this year’s intensifying El Nino, which is forecast to peak in December.

The phenomenon may amplify other crises in Southeast Asia, according to Paul Teng, with Singapore’s ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, who said, “El Nino is only compounding all the other problems that we see.”

During El Nino years, sea surface temperatures in the Pacific Ocean are warmer than usual. This happens every few years and often alters global weather patterns.

This year, the seas already are hotter than average, with global oceans hitting new temperature records in August as the climate warms, said Kareff Rafisura, chief of the Disaster Risk Reduction Division at the U.N. Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific.

This intensifying El Nino may be the “strongest in living memory,” according to the United Kingdom’s national weather and climate service. Similarly, the U.S.’ National Oceanic and Atmospheric



Administration said there is a 69% chance that this will be the strongest recorded El Nino since record-keeping began in 1950.

El Nino’s impact will be felt differently across regions, but it is expected to jeopardize food security worldwide. It could push at least 49 million more people into acute food insecurity by the end of 2027, according to the United Nations’ World Food Program.

The problem will be worst in parts of Central America and southern Africa, with significant effects also anticipated in eastern Africa and South and Southeast Asia, warned the food agency.

In Southeast Asia, wildfires are torching forests and peatlands in Indonesia, sending up plumes of toxic haze. The water level of a major reservoir supplying the bustling capital city of Jakarta — the world’s biggest metropolis — is dropping inch by inch.

As the lake dries, the ruins of one of 11 villages that had been inundated by the reservoir have emerged, as alarm grows over the need for alternative water supplies for the city of 42 million.

“I would have rather not moved. There were plenty of livelihood opportunities here,” said Hussien, who only uses one name, as he ferried people across the receding reservoir.

This is just the beginning, said Erma Yulihastin with Indonesia’s Research Center for Climate and Atmosphere, who

warned El Nino has only just begun its “super phase.”

Less rainfall and hotter temperatures are putting pressure on Southeast Asia’s fisheries, an essential source of protein.

It’s a pressing problem along the Mekong, a river basin that flows through six nations and is being disrupted by mining and construction of hydropower dams. “It’s one punch after another,” said Zeb Hogan, with the University of Nevada, Reno, who runs the research and conservation project, Wonders of the Mekong. “If the river doesn’t catch a break, we will reach a point where it’s no longer going to sustain people in the way that it always has.”

Lower flows are especially hard on communities along the Mekong that depend on predictable water levels for fishing and farming, said Kongmeng Ly, with the Mekong River Commission, an intergovernmental group for Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam.

Southeast Asia’s wet season generally runs from June to October, when rains usually replenish reservoirs, cool overheated cities and supply water for irrigation ahead of the next planting season.

Drought may force farmers to delay planting, reduce acreage or switch crops entirely, said Rafisura, with the U.N. “Agriculture is definitely on the front line,” she said.

Cutbacks in staple crops like rice and palm oil can have global impacts. The world’s top three exporters of rice — India, Vietnam and Thailand — are among the nations most likely to be hit hard by El Nino this year.

North of the Thai capital Bangkok, rice farmers like 55-year-old Boonmark Marksuuk are already facing tough choices. Apart from pricier fuel and fertilizer because of the war, he’s spending most of his days pumping water into his rice fields because he no longer trusts the rain.

El Nino is also bearing down on Indonesia and Malaysia, suppliers of about 85% of the world’s palm oil, which is used in everything from cookies and lipstick to toothpaste and laundry detergent. Malaysia’s prime minister has ordered its Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security to find ways to mitigate El Nino’s impact, which is forecast to hit Malaysia hardest in November.

In Indonesia, farmers rely on rain to dissolve fertilizers into the soil to avoid burning the plants, explained Eddy Martono, chairman of the Indonesian Palm Oil Association.

“If it doesn’t rain, everyone will definitely stop fertilizing,” which will hurt national production, he said.

While the total economic fallout of an extreme El Nino is hard to calculate, losses from past events have reached trillions of dollars, according to HSBC’s Global Investment Research, which warns the numbers could be even bigger this time. Analysts at the investment bank Goldman Sachs estimate this El Nino could push global food commodity prices up more than 15%.

“Whatever happens to agriculture really determines whether people stay below or just slightly above the poverty line,” Rafisura said. “Coming back to Southeast Asia, whatever happens here, the extent to which countries can protect production levels, will have global impacts.”

G7 leaders condemn Houthi strikes on Saudi Arabia



RIYADH

G7 nations called on Yemen’s Houthis Tuesday to halt strikes on Saudi Arabia, offering a show of solidarity with Riyadh as the Tehran-backed fighters have added a new threat to the Middle East war.

The Houthi movement staged a lightning offensive in recent weeks to take over Yemen’s entire Red Sea coast, including Mokha, threatening global trade and pushing up energy prices up.

Gains made by Yemen’s Houthis have cemented Iran and its allies hold over two key waterways, including the Strait of Hormuz, that the wider Gulf and top crude exporter Saudi Arabia rely on to ship out its oil.

G7 leaders representing Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States said in a statement “we call on the Houthis to immediately cease all military actions”.

“All threats and attacks against civilian shipping, and to return to the political process in good faith,” it added.

They also called on Iran “to end its arming of and support for the Houthis,” alleging Tehran is in violation of past

UN Security Council resolutions.

The war in impoverished Yemen, which began in 2014 with the Houthi capture of the capital Sanaa, had been largely frozen since 2022 but resumed in July.

Saudi Arabia has led a coalition backing the internationally recognised government since 2015. Its intervention escalated the war, which has triggered one of the world’s worst humanitarian crises.

A man pushes a pilgrim in a wheelchair past pigeons feeding outside the Grand Mosque Complex in Mecca on September 16, 2026.

Saudi strikes on Yemen’s strategic Red Sea port Mokha killed at least six people and wounded eight others, the Houthi-affiliated news agency Saba reported Tuesday.

The strikes come off the back of a Houthi attack on Riyadh on Saturday which marked the first to target the Saudi capital in years and a major escalation by the pro-Iranian fighters.

Britain agreed to give military support to Saudi Arabia, media reports said Monday, adding that the UK would provide “defensive” air-to-air refuelling for Saudi jets.

France also pledged their support saying it is ready to work on “securing” Saudi energy infrastructure targeted by Iran-backed Houthis, adopting a “strictly defensive approach”, a diplomatic source told AFP Monday.

“This in no way involves taking part in the conflict with the Houthis,” the source added.

The Houthis have carried out attacks against facilities belonging to the Saudi oil giant Aramco in the Red Sea port city of Yanbu. The East-West Pipeline — a crucial crude oil export route — has also been shut down following drone attacks launched from Iraq, according to Riyadh.

The head of Yemen’s governing body Rashad al-Alimi held a call with US President Donald Trump to request American support against the pro-Iranian fighters, a source in Alimi’s office told AFP on Monday.

Trump did not promise military support, the source said, adding that the call that took place on Sunday was intended as a show of solidarity with Yemen’s embattled government.

Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman also urged Trump to strike the Houthis, US media reported.

BRICS Summit pushes for permanent Indian presence in UNSC



NAVA THAKURIA

As the largest democracy on Earth hosted the 18th BRICS Leaders' Summit in New Delhi on 12-13 September 2026, under the theme 'Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability', the world media covered the event with enthusiasm, where a series of discussions took place focusing an aim to resolve many pertinent global challenges. The visiting leaders discussed a host of global issues concerning various conflicts, trades, AI, cooperation and food securities in developing countries. The participating heads of governments & states also unanimously adopted the New Delhi Declaration 2026. While reaffirming commitment to stronger multilateralism and deeper cooperation among BRICS countries, the declaration emphasized on avoiding while standing against anyone, but taking everyone onboard.

Initially began the journey in 2001 as a Global South powerhouse comprising only Brazil, Russia, India and China, the BRIC (later BRICS) expanded its territories with the inclusion of South Africa, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, UAE, Saudi Arabia and Indonesia (altogether 11 major emerging economies). The multilateral forum also has 10 partner nations including Thailand, Malaysia, Vietnam, Belarus, Bolivia, Cuba, Nigeria, Kazakhstan, Uganda and Uzbekistan.

The two-day Delhi summit, virtually presided over by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and attended by Russian President Vladimir Putin, Chinese President Xi Jinping, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, Malaysian Premier Anwar Ibrahim, UAE crown prince Khaled bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan with others expressed concern over growing tensions in West Asia and called for dialogue, diplomacy and conflict prevention so that the civilian casualties can be reduced.

One of the major outcomes included a consensus on comprehensive reforms in the United Nations precisely the UN Security Council with an aim to make the institution more democratic, representative, effective and efficient. Increasing the representation of developing countries in the UNSC membership so that it can adequately respond to prevailing global challenges and support the legitimate aspirations of emerging

and developing countries from Africa, Asia and Latin America, was also insisted. In the presence of UNSC permanent members (China and Russia), the BRICS also agreed that both Brazil and India should play a greater role in the UN including its Security Council.

Ahead of the summit, Modi met with United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres in New Delhi, where both the visionary leaders discussed various issues covering global conflicts, sustainable development, human-centric technology, renewable energy, food security, etc. Guterres congratulated India for the BRICS chairship and admitted that the UNSC needs multilateral reform to reflect the contemporary realities on Earth. To mark two decades of the BRICS, two commemorative postage stamps were also released by the member country leaders.

The declaration expressed strong condemnation of any act of terrorism as criminal and unjustifiable, regardless of their motivation, whenever, wherever and by whomsoever committed. The brutal terrorist attack in Pahalgam of Jammu & Kashmir on 22 April 2025 (where 26 people were killed and many injured) also got space in the declaration. The leaders agreed that terrorism should not be associated with any religion, nationality, civilization or ethnic group, and all those involved in terrorist activities must be held accountable and brought to justice in accordance with relevant national and international laws.

The leaders reaffirmed support for Palestine's full membership of the UN citing a two-state solution where sovereign Palestinian can have East Jerusalem as its capital. They opposed forced displacement of Palestinians and condemned violations of international humanitarian law, including attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure.

Highlighting on universal health coverage, tuberculosis research, pandemic preparedness and early-warning systems, the participants endorsed initiatives on healthy lifestyles and mental wellbeing. On technology, they highlighted artificial intelligence (AI), digital public infrastructure, cybersecurity and cooperation on research and innovation. Describing AI as a significant potential tool for economic growth and sustainable development, the leaders stressed on safety, security, inclusiveness and reliability. Climate change also featured prominently, where they called for a stronger international action on climate finance, adaptation and sustainable development.

Expressing concern over the situation with illicit drug production, trafficking and abuse worldwide, the

leaders identified it as a serious threat to public security, health safety and well-being of humankind that undermines the sustainable development of different countries.

They also welcomed the Guwahati declaration issued by the BRICS heads of anti-drug agencies that facilitates operational and technical cooperation among those responsible agencies. The declaration also covered transport, tourism, anti-corruption efforts, digital connectivity and many other areas of BRICS cooperation.

The declaration also extended full support to Beijing for the 2027 BRICS chairship and 19th summit in China. Bangladesh, neither a member nor partner country, was invited to the BRICS summit as the current chair

of BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation), but Prime Minister Tarique Rahman preferred to reject the opportunity, reasons best known to Dhaka only. Political observers believe it as a lost opportunity for Bangladesh in general and Rahman in particular, because his participation would have helped the poverty stricken county to highlight many relevant issues in the Global South forum that represents 50% of the world population, 40% of global GDP and over 30% of international trade. On the contrary, the current chair of SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) Nepal was not invited for the summit, but unlike Dhaka's outburst, Kathmandu remains silent.



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