

08th July DSC

Declaration at BRICS summit mirrors India's worries about terrorism and governance reforms

At the 17th BRICS Summit (2025) held in Rio de Janeiro, India leveraged the platform to underline the inadequate presence of the Global South in influential global bodies. Prime Minister Modi demanded reforms in international governance structures and denounced cross-border terrorism, positioning BRICS in alignment with India's fundamental diplomatic priorities.

Relevance: *GS 2 (International Relations)*

Reforming Global Governance

Prime Minister Modi stressed that nearly two-thirds of the world's population remain insufficiently represented within outdated 20th-century global institutions. He called for inclusive and credible reforms of entities like the UN Security Council. The BRICS declaration demonstrated Russia and China's backing for India and Brazil's bids to secure UNSC membership.

Championing the Global South

PM Modi pointed out the "double standards" often imposed upon developing countries. He argued that fair representation isn't just about equity but about improving the effectiveness of global decision-making.

BRICS Enlargement

BRICS welcomed Indonesia as a new member, showcasing the bloc's adaptability and contemporary significance.

Stance on Counter-Terrorism

BRICS leaders unequivocally condemned the terror attack in Pahalgam. They pressed for the swift adoption of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT) at the UN level. The declaration recognized cross-border terrorism as a persistent threat, resonating with India's enduring security concerns.

International Law and Conflict Resolution

BRICS condemned the joint Israel-U.S. military assaults on Iran, asserting that these actions violated international law and the principles of the UN Charter. They reiterated their dedication to resolving conflicts peacefully through multilateral frameworks.

BRICS: An Overview

BRICS refers to Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, five prominent emerging economies.

Initially formed in 2009 as BRIC, South Africa joined in 2010.

In 2024, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE were added after a decision at the 15th BRICS Summit.

Although Argentina received an invitation in 2023, it ultimately declined.

BRICS was created to promote a multipolar world, overhaul the global financial order, and enhance South-South collaboration.

Its primary objectives include economic growth, political coordination, multilateral institution

reforms, climate action, and sustainable development.

The group operates through annual summits, the New Development Bank (NDB), and various sectoral forums covering health, education, and innovation.

BRICS and the Global South

The term Global South broadly describes developing nations across Asia, Africa, Latin America, and Oceania.

BRICS sees itself as an advocate for these countries, challenging the dominance of Western-led institutions.

It promotes a fair global system, equitable trade, technology sharing, and dismantling the colonial legacy embedded in development financing.

BRICS also supports reforms of the UN Security Council, IMF, and World Bank to align with current geopolitical dynamics.

Why Global South Representation Is Essential

Many global bodies such as the UNSC and IMF were established in the post-World War II era and don't reflect modern power balances.

Despite housing over 70% of the world's people, the Global South continues to lack proportionate influence in global decision-making forums.

As PM Modi remarked, "Representation is not only about fairness—it's also about strengthening the credibility and functionality of global institutions."

The Decline of Tuberculosis That Wasn't

Historical Background

By the mid-20th century, tuberculosis cases declined sharply across the U.S. and Europe due to:

Better nutrition and living conditions, coupled with the introduction of antibiotics during the 1950s.

By the 1980s, TB mortality in the U.S. had plummeted by over 90%.

In 1972, the U.S. Congress discontinued direct funding for TB control, assuming the disease had been almost eradicated.

However, from the late 1980s into the 1990s, TB made a resurgence globally, including in wealthier nations.

Relevance: GS 2 (Health, Governance, Social Issues)

Three Major Factors Behind TB's Comeback in Developed Nations

HIV/AIDS Epidemic

HIV-induced immunosuppression reactivated dormant TB infections.

In 1993, U.S. figures showed that HIV-positive individuals—although less than 0.5% of the population—accounted for half of all TB deaths.

Even by 2000, HIV remained a principal driver of TB-related mortality.

The lesson: surveillance of comorbidities is crucial—HIV and TB must be managed together.

Drug-Resistant TB (DR-TB)

Inconsistent treatment and poor adherence fostered Multi-Drug Resistant TB (MDR-TB).

MDR-TB treatment is more expensive, takes longer, and yields poorer outcomes.

By the 1990s, rising numbers of patients failing to respond to conventional drugs indicated escalating resistance.

The takeaway: early diagnosis, patient adherence, and continuous drug development are vital.

Migration and Global Mobility

TB incidence among immigrants in the U.S. was quadruple that of native-born residents.

The 1965 Immigration Act facilitated greater migration from high TB-burden regions.

A majority of TB cases in migrants were diagnosed within five years of arrival.

The insight: health screening prior to migration and early intervention are essential.

A Global Alarm Bell

Data from the 1990s revealed 8 million new TB infections and 3 million deaths every year—more than twice the WHO's reported numbers.

In 1993, WHO classified TB as a “Global Health Emergency.”

This signalled to health systems worldwide that TB was far from obsolete and remained a shifting global threat.

Data-Driven Policy Changes

Detailed epidemiological data uncovered links between HIV, resistance, and migration behind TB's resurgence.

Timely access to such data enabled precisely targeted health measures, preventing further deaths.

The lesson: real-time data gathering, disease modelling, and open-access databases are indispensable tools in public health strategy.

Impact Since 2000

TB fatalities declined from 2.6 million in 2000 to 1.3 million by 2022.

This success can be credited to:

Wider adoption of integrated TB-HIV treatment models.

Scaling up DOTS and securing global funding via instruments like the Global Fund.

Enhanced surveillance of drug resistance and deployment of second-line therapies.

India's Relevance

India continues to hold the world's largest TB burden.

Coinfection with HIV, drug-resistant TB, urban poverty, and mass internal migration all mirror the conditions the U.S. faced in the 1990s.

Strategies India should employ include:

Scaling integrated TB-HIV programs nationwide.

Guaranteeing universal drug susceptibility testing (DST) for all TB patients.

Utilizing Aadhaar-linked health data for tracking mobile populations.

Combating malnutrition and inadequate housing to address underlying vulnerabilities.

Investing significantly in innovative vaccines, diagnostics, and treatments.

Policy Insights

TB control isn't just a medical concern—it is also intertwined with social, economic, and data governance issues.

The complacency seen in the U.S. during the 1970s underscores how neglect can trigger expensive public health crises later.

Sustained, integrated, and well-funded public health surveillance is essential for containing TB.

The greatest threat lies in overlooking and underestimating disease trends rather than the pathogen alone.

Tuberculosis (TB) Overview

TB is caused by *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, mainly impacting the lungs but also affecting other organs.

It spreads through airborne droplets when infected individuals cough or speak.

Latent infections may remain dormant for years, becoming active if the immune system weakens (e.g., due to HIV).

Globally in 2022, around 10.6 million people contracted TB and about 1.3 million died, per WHO estimates.

India accounts for roughly 27% of these cases.

Drug-resistant TB types (MDR-TB and XDR-TB) are much harder to cure.

Treatment usually entails a six-month course of multiple antibiotics.

WHO aims to end TB as an epidemic by 2030 as part of the SDGs.

India's Pradhan Mantri TB Mukh Bharat Abhiyan has set an even earlier goal—elimination by 2025.

Why Are Bihar's Electoral Rolls Being Updated?

In preparation for the Bihar Assembly elections, the Election Commission initiated a Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of voter rolls to ensure accuracy and weed out ineligible names. This process comes after twenty years marked by rapid urban migration, duplicate registrations, and contentious debates over verifying citizenship status.

Relevance: GS 2 (Elections – Reforms)

Legal and Constitutional Foundation of Electoral Rolls

Article 324 grants the Election Commission the authority to prepare and manage electoral rolls.

Article 326 stipulates that all citizens aged 18 and above are entitled to be registered as voters.

Under the Representation of the People Act (RP Act), 1950:

Section 16 disqualifies non-citizens from voter registration.

Section 19 requires voters to be over 18 and ordinarily resident.

Section 20 defines “ordinarily resident,” excluding absentee property owners but including temporarily absent individuals.

Section 21 empowers the EC to conduct special revisions for justified reasons.

Reasons for Bihar's SIR in 2025

The last such revision in Bihar occurred in 2003.

Enormous shifts in population due to urbanization, migration, and unverified entries have occurred since.

The EC aims to guarantee that the electoral rolls contain only authentic citizens before the Assembly polls.

Key Elements of the 2025 SIR

The qualifying date has been set as July 1, 2025.

Eligible voters must submit enumeration forms to Booth Level Officers (BLOs).

Voters registered before 2003 are exempted from providing fresh documentation and can use extracts from the 2003 roll.

Individuals enrolled after 2003 must present documents confirming both their own and their parents' birth details and locations.

Major Debates and Disputes

Time and Process Challenges

More than 8 crore voters are expected to fill out forms, with over 3 crore needing to submit multiple documents.

Critics label the exercise as unwieldy and prone to errors.

Proponents counter that the 2003 revision was accomplished in 31 days without modern technology, while the 2025 exercise involves 1 lakh BLOs, 4 lakh volunteers, and 1.5 lakh booth agents.

Aadhaar Exclusion Controversy

The EC excluded Aadhaar from the list of acceptable documents, citing its legal disclaimer that it does not establish citizenship or place of birth.

Critics point out that Aadhaar serves as a vital identification document, particularly for economically disadvantaged populations, and its exclusion creates avoidable hardship. Although Form 6 under RER 1960 mentions Aadhaar, the SIR guidelines supersede it by imposing stricter requirements.

Migrant Worker Issues

The EC has maintained that only citizens "ordinarily resident" in a constituency should be enrolled.

Opponents argue that migrants are merely "temporarily absent" and should still qualify; many prefer to vote in their home constituencies.

While the EC proposed remote voting mechanisms for migrants in January 2023, these have yet to be implemented.

Suggested Path Forward – Balanced and Inclusive Measures

The EC should consider extending deadlines and adopting a phased implementation to prevent wrongful exclusions.

The claims and objections phase can be optimized to help genuine voters who lack full documentation.

Revived Aadhaar seeding (as of March 2025) could be used to identify duplicate entries, though not as the sole basis for eligibility.

Exclusion of eligible voters should be treated with the same seriousness as inclusion of ineligible ones, as both undermine democracy.

Environmental Impact Study for Nicobar Project Understates Earthquake Risks

The ₹72,000-crore Great Nicobar Infrastructure Project has sparked intense concerns about an insufficient assessment of seismic hazards in this highly active geological zone. Experts caution that the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) has played down the significant risks of future mega-earthquakes and tsunamis, despite the region's known vulnerability.

Relevance: GS 3 (Infrastructure, Environment and Ecology)

Project Details

Estimated Cost: ₹72,000 crore

Components include:

A transshipment port

An international airport

Development of a township

A 450 MVA power plant utilizing gas and solar energy

Approvals: Received environmental and preliminary forest clearances from the central government.

Legal Developments: The National Green Tribunal (NGT) ordered a reassessment due to ecological and tribal livelihood concerns.

Primary Issues Raised

EIA Study Shortcomings

Prepared by Vimta Labs, relying mainly on secondary data sources.

Minimized the likelihood of mega-earthquakes comparable to the 9.2 magnitude event in 2004.

Used a 2019 IIT-Kanpur study as its main reference without carrying out site-specific fieldwork.

Did not include key warnings from the IIT report on stress accumulation and unpredictable seismic behaviour.

Seismic Risk Profile

The Andaman-Sumatra fault zone has a documented history of catastrophic quakes.

Estimated return intervals:

Mega-quakes (≥ 9): every 420–750 years.

Large earthquakes (> 7.5): every 80–120 years.

Earthquake recurrence is inherently irregular—long periods of calm may precede devastating shocks.

Expert Opinions

Prof. C.P. Rajendran of NIAS, Bengaluru, stated that the project sits in a “highly geo-dynamic” zone, featuring localized fault lines and unstable land levels.

Prof. Javed Malik from IIT-Kanpur emphasized the necessity of site-specific studies, pointing out that seismic impact varies dramatically depending on the quake’s epicentre (e.g., Nicobar versus Banda Aceh).

Sediment samples indicate that seven tsunamis have occurred in the past 8,000 years, underscoring the area’s volatility.

Missing Data and Omitted Evidence

The EIA omitted several critical insights from the IIT study, such as:

Evidence of built-up tectonic strain.

A 2,000-year gap in the sedimentary record, adding to uncertainty.

No field-based seismic studies were conducted for this project, casting doubt on the reliability of the risk evaluation.

Government’s “Calculated Risk” Approach

The Ministry of Earth Sciences concedes that no site-specific seismic investigations have been completed.

It also acknowledges that predicting earthquakes is inherently uncertain.

The government advocates a “calculated risk” strategy—designing infrastructure to seismic safety standards while proceeding with development plans.

Ecological and Indigenous Considerations

Potential consequences include:

Severe biodiversity depletion.

Large-scale tree removal from untouched ecosystems.

Disruption of indigenous communities, notably the Shompen tribe.

These concerns prompted the NGT to call for a comprehensive reappraisal.

Strategic Reflections

While the Nicobar Islands hold immense strategic value, planners must not overlook their ecological sensitivity and geological instability.

Long-term security and resilience require:

Thorough, site-specific seismic research.

Transparent and multi-disciplinary environmental assessments.

Stronger engagement of independent scientific bodies instead of relying solely on private EIA contractors.

Nicobar Islands Background

They form part of the Andaman and Nicobar Union Territory in the Bay of Bengal's southeastern reaches.

The group consists of 22 islands, with Great Nicobar being the largest.

They are ecologically delicate, containing designated tribal reserves such as the Shompen homeland.

Located along the active Andaman-Sumatra subduction zone.

Known for rich biodiversity and recognized as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve.

The islands' proximity to the Malacca Strait gives them major strategic significance.

However, environmental laws, tribal rights, and geological threats all limit development prospects.

AI-Based Warfare in the 'Agentic' Era: Energy as a Central Limitation

Background Context

China's People's Liberation Army is making rapid strides in adopting AI for military operations, part of its "intelligentized warfare" doctrine.

AI now permeates every level of their military: autonomous drones, smart surveillance systems, precision strikes, and strategic decision-making.

The emerging "agentic" era refers to autonomous systems independently executing battlefield decisions, disrupting traditional command hierarchies.

Relevance: GS 3 (Technology, Internal Security)

India's Concerns

Technological lag: India is still catching up in developing autonomous AI platforms, while China has embedded AI across multiple domains.

Energy constraints: AI-based warfare demands massive amounts of energy and constant access to resilient power grids and data centers.

Infrastructure gap: India's civilian infrastructure supporting AI—including energy supply, data storage, and cloud services—lags behind major powers like China and the U.S.

Pakistan factor: China's export of AI-enabled military technologies to Pakistan could disrupt the regional power equilibrium.

The Character of AI Warfare

AI capabilities are revolutionizing surveillance, drone operations, ISR (intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance), robotics, and precision-strike assets.

China's advancements include:

DeepSeek AI for autonomous targeting decisions.

Swarm drone tactics designed for overwhelming attacks.

Integration of BeiDou satellite systems for precise navigation.

Deployment of generative AI and closed feedback loops for largely machine-directed warfare.

Energy as a Bottleneck

AI systems require extensive computing power, vast data transfers, and continuous energy inputs.

India's electrical grid is not yet structured to maintain uninterrupted, military-grade operations. The availability and reliability of power will dictate the scale and sophistication of India's future AI military deployments.

Data Volume as the New Frontline

"The volume of information to be processed will surpass what humans can handle."

Superiority in storing, analyzing, and acting upon vast data streams with minimal human input will define future military leadership.

Private Sector and Technology Ecosystem

Success in AI warfare increasingly depends on:

Partnerships with private data centers and energy firms.

Access to advanced semiconductors and cloud-based robotics platforms.

India must pursue civil-military collaboration to build dual-use infrastructure capable of sustaining AI capabilities.

India's Institutional Response

The DRDO's Centre for Artificial Intelligence and Robotics (CAIR), founded in 1986, has been tasked with:

Autonomous mission planning.

Advanced detection and targeting systems.

Sensor integration.

However, progress has remained fragmented and slow.

Senior officials now recognize the urgent need for scale, integration, and accelerated deployment.

Strategic Mandate

India must:

Substantially increase AI investments while addressing energy constraints.

Develop AI-compatible infrastructure such as smart grids and modular nuclear reactors.

Strengthen collaboration among DRDO, ISRO, academic institutions, and private industry.

Acknowledge that merging AI capabilities with robust energy systems will be essential to future national security.

Conclusion

Without a resilient data and power ecosystem, India risks ceding ground in the global AI military competition.

The battlefields of tomorrow will be defined not merely by weapons, but by the ability to harness data and sustain energy.

AI-enabled warfare will be determined as much by logistical readiness as by technological edge.

08th July 2025: Daily MCQs

1. Question

Which of the statements below best reflect India's main diplomatic goals showcased during the 17th BRICS Summit (2025)?

1. Advocating reforms in major global institutions, including the UN Security Council.
2. Calling for global acknowledgment of cross-border terrorism and unified efforts against it.
3. Opposing the inclusion of new members in BRICS to maintain India's influence.
4. Stressing fair representation of Global South countries in international decision-making.

Choose the correct option:

- (a) 1, 2, and 4 only
- (b) 1 and 3 only
- (c) 2, 3, and 4 only
- (d) 1, 2, 3, and 4

Correct Answer: (a) 1, 2, and 4 only

Explanation:

- **Statement 1** is true – India pressed for reform of the UNSC to make it more inclusive and effective.
- **Statement 2** is true – The Summit declaration condemned cross-border terrorism, in line with India's longstanding demand.
- **Statement 3** is false – India welcomed expanding BRICS membership, as seen in supporting Indonesia's inclusion.
- **Statement 4** is true – India highlighted the need for the Global South to get a bigger voice in world affairs.

2. Question

Regarding the global resurgence and management of Tuberculosis (TB), consider the following:

1. WHO declared TB a "Global Health Emergency" in 1993 mainly due to increasing drug-resistant TB in Southeast Asia.

2. India's Pradhan Mantri TB Mukht Bharat Abhiyan plans to eradicate TB by 2030, aligning with the WHO's Sustainable Development Goals.

Which of the above statement(s) is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2

Correct Answer: (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Explanation:

- **Statement 1** is incorrect – The WHO's emergency declaration was driven by factors like underreporting, HIV-TB co-infection, migration, and weak data systems globally, not just drug resistance in Southeast Asia.
- **Statement 2** is incorrect – India's program aims to eliminate TB by 2025, five years before the 2030 SDG target.

3. Question

Regarding the 2025 Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Bihar:

1. The Election Commission has accepted Aadhaar as valid proof of citizenship for voter registration.
2. According to the Representation of the People Act, 1950, "ordinarily resident" includes people temporarily away from their home.
3. All voters registered before 2003 must submit fresh documents verifying their birth and residence.

How many of the above statement is/are correct?

- (a) Only one
(b) Only two
(c) All three
(d) None

Correct Answer: (a) Only one

Explanation:

- **Statement 1** is incorrect – The Election Commission excluded Aadhaar as valid proof, since it doesn't certify citizenship or birth.
- **Statement 2** is correct – Section 20 of the RP Act includes people temporarily absent but excludes non-resident owners.
- **Statement 3** is incorrect – Voters registered before 2003 can rely on extracts from the 2003 roll; no new documents are required.

4. Question

Regarding the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of the Great Nicobar Infrastructure Project:

1. The assessment was based on detailed ground-level seismic surveys done by independent government agencies.
2. The project site is located on the Andaman-Sumatra fault line, known for generating massive earthquakes and tsunamis.
3. The Ministry of Earth Sciences has recognized seismic unpredictability and endorsed a measured risk approach for development.

How many of the above statement is/are correct?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) All three
- (d) None

Correct Answer: (b) Only two

Explanation:

- **Statement 1** is incorrect – The EIA relied on secondary data by a private consultant (Vimta Labs) and didn't carry out specific ground surveys.
- **Statement 2** is correct – The site falls in a high-risk seismic zone with a record of mega-earthquakes like the 2004 tsunami.
- **Statement 3** is correct – The Ministry supported proceeding cautiously by adhering to seismic design standards.

5. Question

Regarding India's challenges in deploying AI-powered military systems:

1. India's infrastructure for energy and data is fully equipped to sustain AI-driven military systems at all times.
2. China has already fielded autonomous AI technologies, including swarming drones and precision targeting, across its armed forces.
3. DRDO-CAIR was set up to advance AI and robotics but has struggled to scale and integrate innovations from the private sector.

How many of the above statement is/are correct?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) All three
- (d) None

Correct Answer: (b) Only two

Explanation:

- **Statement 1** is incorrect – India’s infrastructure is still evolving and not yet fully prepared for 24×7 AI-based military operations; energy supply is a bottleneck.
- **Statement 2** is correct – China has operationalized AI systems, including drone swarms and BeiDou-enabled targeting.
- **Statement 3** is correct – Though DRDO-CAIR was established in 1986, progress has been uneven and integration with private players remains limited.

