



BAJIRAO IAS ACADEMY

THE HINDU ANALYSIS

**23th JANUARY
2026**



BOARD OF PEACE FOR GAZA

**Is Asia-Pacific on track towards elimination
of Malaria by 2030?**

**BRICS India summit needs a green and
resilient agenda**

**Officials coercing us to surrender land
:Nicobar tribals**

**India absent as Trump rolls out his board
of peace**

Is Asia-Pacific on track towards elimination of Malaria by 2030?

Is Asia-Pacific on track towards elimination of Malaria by 2030?

World Malaria Report 2025, launched in December, provided a mixed bag, while fall in estimated cases in southeast Asia offer hope, rising cases of resistance to artemisinin-based frontline treatment and reduction in funding for malaria programmes raise concern

Barbara Korman

The World Malaria Report 2025, launched in December, provided a bag of mixed news, five years ahead of the 2030 malaria elimination deadline. While the decline in estimated cases in southeast Asia provided definite hope, of serious concern were rising cases of resistance to artemisinin-based frontline treatment for malaria, and falling funding for malaria programmes.

Notably, it is the Asia-Pacific region that posted most of the good news. The significant reduction was driven by 10 of the region's 17 malaria endemic countries, bringing estimated cases down from over 165 million in 2020 to approximately 100 million in 2024. The major reductions occurred in Cambodia, Laos, PNG and Vietnam, the second year running. Among the success being celebrated, apart from the most crucial ongoing threat against malaria treatment also comes from this region, with the Greater Mekong Subregion's success in tackling antimalarial drug resistance, finding malaria in the report.

The Asia Pacific Leaders Malaria Alliance (APLMA), across 22 governments that are committed to the goal of eliminating malaria by 2030. Indeed this, CEO, APLMA, says the "Asia Pacific region has made tremendous progress over the past decades, but is not entirely on track to meet the 2030 malaria elimination target".

He goes on to explain the current position: "Progress continues to stay strong – while some countries have experienced a resurgence of cases, others reported substantial declines, and several have successfully attained malaria-free status. Sri Lanka, China, and most recently, Timor-Leste have demonstrated that malaria elimination is achievable with sustained political commitment and consistent delivery".

However, Dr Das points out that these successes contrast with a concerning plateauing of progress and, in particular, renewed in larger, more complex settings. He explains that significant risks still persist, primarily due to the major challenges, securing sustainable long-term financing and ensuring last-mile execution in high-burden countries. "The challenges more often are in ensuring distribution-led programme delivery, which is further compounded by the increasing financing shortfall. The report shows that only about 42% of global malaria financing needs were met in 2024, and funding gaps in 2025 have widened the gap further".

For the elimination goal within target itself, in fact, India has not met the target



Need the action: If malaria is to stay a fading malice, it takes as part of proven disease control and testing to meet the 2030 goal.

of achieving zero indigenous cases of malaria by 2027, ahead of the 2030 target. Dr Das says India's target is ambitious, but achievable. "India has made extraordinary progress since 2015, achieving early reductions in cases and deaths, with many districts sustaining zero transmission for multiple years. India has also demonstrated proof of concept for elimination through indigenous projects," he said. However, recent data shows that progress has plateaued and cases have even rebounded in parts of the country, indicating that India is currently off its elimination trajectory required to meet the 2030 milestone, he points out.

Dr Das explains that to make the leap from cases of elimination, there shifts are essential. "First, surveillance must become the central layer operation. India needs routine, case-based surveillance everywhere – including community reporting from the private sector, clinics, services, railways and urban health systems, so that every infection is detected, classified and responded to rapidly".

Secondly, he adds, "Today, the States and the northeast account for nearly 90% of the malaria burden. Success will depend on focused, project mode execution in these remaining hotspots, while case elimination states must invest in preventing resurgence".

Thirdly, the central government and operational discipline must be restored. India must treat malaria elimination as a time-bound national mission, with

the requisite efficacy studies, strengthening pharmacovigilance, and rapidly updating national treatment policies when early warning signals emerge". India's emphasis on universal parasitological diagnosis, strict adherence to combination therapy, and avoidance of oral monotherapy in the frontline has been central to preserving drug efficacy at scale, he adds.

Early detection through routine efficacy monitoring, strict regulation of antimalarial use, strong community level case management – and critically – regional coordination to prevent cross-border spread are the need of the hour, Dr Das notes. Assistance cannot be managed country by country, it requires collective action. Forgetting elimination is not just a technical task – it is a strategic imperative for global malaria elimination, he adds.

Funding constraints

The greatest threat today to the success of the malaria elimination programmes, however, is not cases with artemisinin. It is dwindling financing. Dr Das says, "We are a time when malaria programs are entering the most difficult and expensive phase of elimination, overall international funding has declined. This shortfall is already forcing countries to scale back proven interventions, increasing the risk of resurgence and reversing hard-earned gains".

In Africa, the impact is especially pronounced in high-burden areas that face persistent social and logistical challenges, including those prevalent among mobile and migrant populations and geographically remote communities. Large-scale pilot implementation in Africa has shown that RTS,S, when delivered through robust transmission systems, can reduce severe malaria and contribute to measurable declines in child mortality. But that doesn't come with a higher efficacy in controlled trials.

These vaccines have understandably been practised for malaria in Africa, where the burden of Plasmodium falciparum malaria and childhood mortality is higher. The countries in the Asia-Pacific and the APLMA are actively evaluating how these vaccines could complement existing tools for targeted implementation.

The recent WHO report indicated that while artemisinin resistance has emerged as a serious threat to global malaria control, it has not yet been established in India. Artemisinin-based combination therapies remain the go-to first line of treatment as they are still highly effective. India, which otherwise has a large artemisinin-based resistance burden on the other hand, "has taken a precautionary approach by maintaining regular

THE GIST

While the Asia-Pacific region posted good news, experts say that significant risks persist, primarily due to the major challenges, securing sustainable long-term financing and ensuring last-mile execution in high-burden countries.

India has not met the target of achieving zero indigenous cases of malaria by 2027, India's target is ambitious, but achievable, say experts. They add that India has not met the target to make the leap from cases of elimination.

Experts say that a fundamental shift in how malaria is financed and sustained is required. That includes more of the up to fill the existing funding gaps. Underestimated at the stage in the course response, they say.

Why in the News?

- The World Malaria Report 2025 presents mixed signals for the **Asia-Pacific region**, showing declining malaria cases alongside rising **artemisinin resistance** and shrinking global financing.
- Raising doubts over achieving the **2030 malaria elimination target**, particularly in high-burden and last-mile settings.

About Malaria

Malaria is a life-threatening febrile illness caused by Plasmodium parasites, transmitted through the bites of infected female Anopheles mosquitoes.

The disease is not contagious, but can be spread through infected blood or contaminated needles.


The most dangerous species are Plasmodium falciparum and Plasmodium vivax.

Symptoms and Risks


- Symptoms appear 10–15 days after infection and include fever, chills, and headache.
- Severe symptoms can include seizures, difficulty breathing, jaundice, dark urine, and death if untreated.
- Partial immunity can develop in endemic regions, making diagnosis difficult in some patients.

World Malaria Day




It is observed to **raise awareness** about malaria, increasing **public understanding** of malaria & promoting **prevention measures**. Malaria is a **preventable** and **treatable** disease.











Theme 2023 "Time to deliver zero malaria: invest, innovate and implement"



Did You Know?

-  **247 M**
New cases of malaria in **2021**
-  **95%**
Malaria cases in **WHO African region**
-  **6,19,000**
Malaria-related deaths in **2021**

Symptoms

 High Fever	 Diarrhoea
 Chills	 Muscle Pain
 Headaches	 Nausea & Vomiting
 Sweating	 Dry Cough

What should you keep in mind?

M
Make people aware of symptoms

A
Always use mosquito nets

L
Long sleeve clothes- Go for protective clothing

A
Apply Mosquito repellents

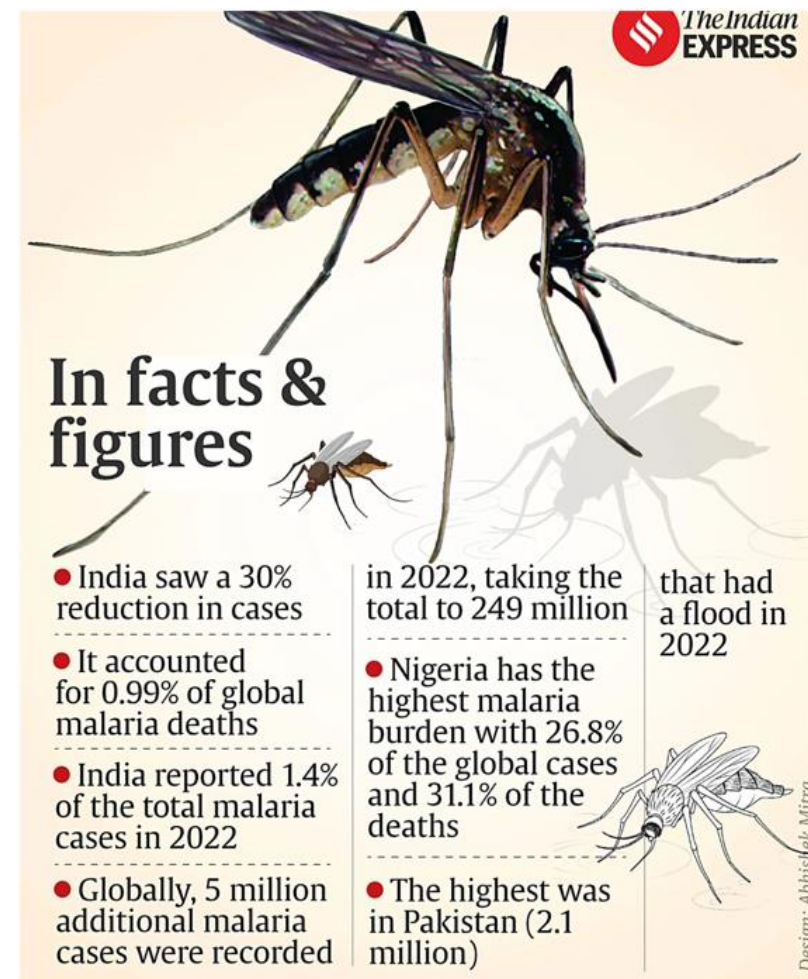
R
Remove Standing Water

E
Implementing and accepting GOI guidelines against malaria

I
Avoid travelling to areas with a malaria outbreak

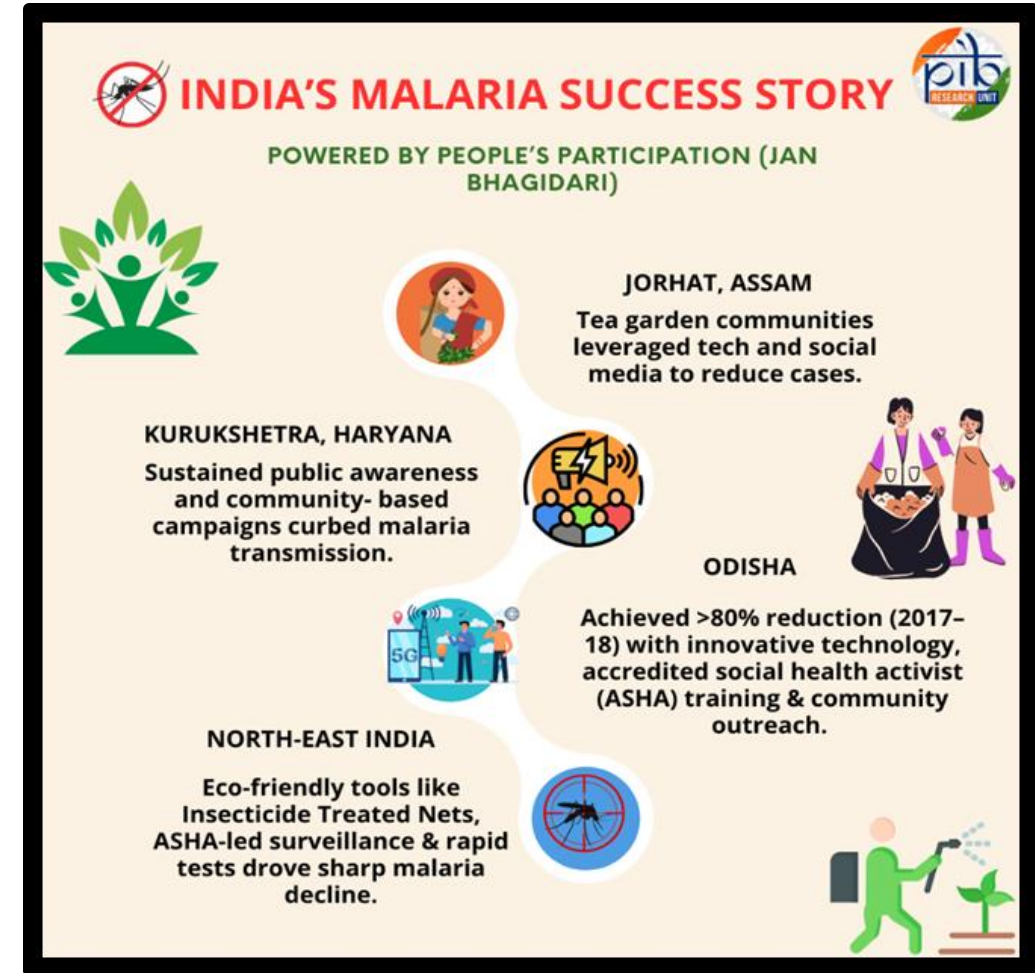
REGIONAL PROGRESS AND POSITIVE TRENDS

- Asia-Pacific recorded a **reduction from 9.6 million to 8.9 million cases**, driven by sustained interventions across ten malaria-endemic countries.
- **Pakistan, Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Vietnam** reported major declines, with some achieving **historic lows**, reflecting effective surveillance and targeted control strategies.
- **Sri Lanka, China, and Timor-Leste** demonstrate that malaria elimination is achievable through **political commitment, system strengthening, and uninterrupted programme delivery**.
- The **Greater Mekong Subregion's** containment of **antimalarial resistance** highlights the value of **regional coordination and early warning systems**.



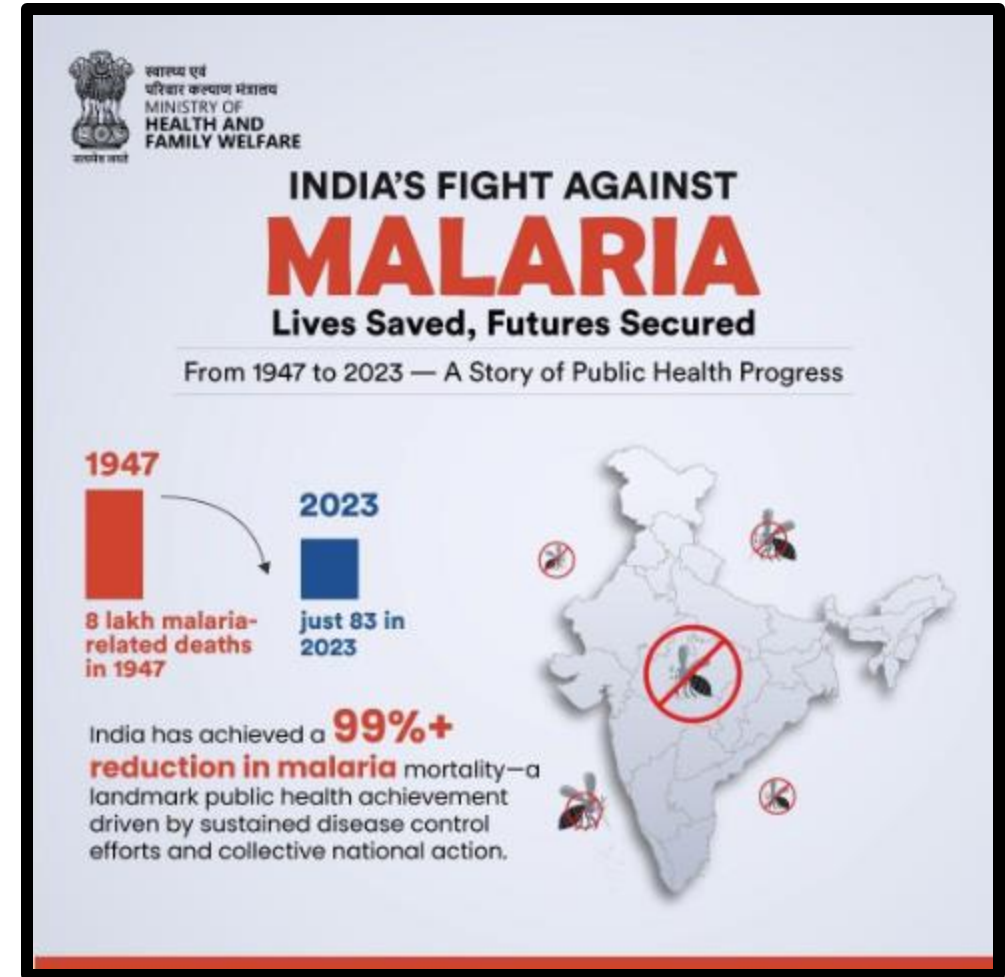
INDIA'S ELIMINATION AMBITION: OPPORTUNITIES AND RISKS

- India aims for **zero indigenous malaria cases by 2027**, positioning itself ahead of the **global 2030 elimination deadline**.
- Since 2015, India achieved **steep reductions in cases and deaths**, with multiple districts sustaining **zero transmission for consecutive years**.
- .
- Recent data shows **plateauing progress and localised rebounds**, indicating India is **off the ideal elimination trajectory**.
- **Five States and the Northeast account for nearly 80% of malaria burden**, necessitating sharply focused interventions. This concentration of challenges mirrors environmental hotspots that require targeted conservation efforts.



THREE SHIFTS REQUIRED FOR ELIMINATION

- India requires **real-time, case-based surveillance**, integrating **private sector**.
- High-burden States need **project-mode execution**, while near-elimination regions must invest aggressively in **resurgence prevention mechanisms**.
- Malaria elimination must be treated as a **time-bound national mission**, with clear accountability, financing continuity, and outcome monitoring.
- Elimination success hinges on **consistent last-mile delivery**, not merely policy intent or aggregate funding commitments.
- Health systems must synchronise **surveillance, treatment, vector control, and migration tracking** for rapid containment.



BRICS India summit needs a green and resilient agenda

BRICS India summit needs a green and resilient agenda

The next BRICS Summit will be held in India this year. Having hosted the G-20 (2023), infrastructure and organisational processes are in place, but India must quickly hone in on the Summit's focus. This should obviously resonate with India and BRICS, but critically be an issue that is of vital importance for the Global South.

Given its vastly increased vulnerabilities to climate change, resilience is a top priority for the South, and also underscores India's and Prime Minister Narendra Modi's global leadership on an inclusive green agenda.

Need for a stabilising force

In the Trump polar world, collaborative multilateralism is under immense stress, with climate change being particularly singled out by the United States and being called a hoax along with a visible push for more fossil fuel use. The Donald Trump administration has said that it will withdraw the U.S. from 66 international organisations, which includes the India-helmed International Solar Alliance. In fact, the U.S. stayed away from the COP30 in Belém, Brazil, in November 2025 – something that possibly ensured a continuation of the COP process. With the Europeans, who for long positioned themselves as climate champions, facing domestic climate fatigue and external national security priorities, there is a certain space for a stabilising force for collaborative action on sustainability and resilience. BRICS can endeavour towards this.

The acronym, BRICS, however, raises the hackles of President Trump who thinks that it is anti-American and an attempt to dislodge the dollar. Given the vast gamut of India-U.S. ties, including the imperative of an acceptable trade deal, staying clear of massive tariffs relating to



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Shailiv Kedia

is Senior Fellow, TERI, and Curator, World Sustainable Development Summit

It is a critical imperative for the Global South and under an expanded BRICS

Russian oil imports and ensuring a certain presidential happiness in Washington DC will certainly need a certain adroitness on the part of India at the BRICS Summit. Such diplomatic capacity was on display during the G-20 Summit in Delhi that saw a successful balancing of global geopolitics with Indian interests, including protecting its strategic autonomy through multi-alignment and leadership of the Global South.

Climate change is a common concern

At the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the old grouping of BASIC (Brazil, South Africa, India, China) has been useful and will continue to have its role but a larger grouping of major developing country players may add greater heft. This was seen in Belém to ensure that the handling of fossil fuels did not stymie development imperatives of developing countries. Climate impacts, while varying in form and intensity, are a common concern across BRICS, ranging from risks to infrastructure, health, livelihoods and ecosystems arising from permafrost thaw, pressures on the Amazon and the Himalayas, and growing vulnerabilities in coastal and riverine regions. It is in their own interest to collectively advance a stronger international agenda on adaptation, resilience, equity and sustainable development.

This role is further reinforced by several BRICS members having shouldered responsibility for steering the global climate process after the Paris Agreement came into force. Brazil, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) have presided over climate conferences in the post-COVID-19 pandemic period, helping safeguard momentum on climate action. A BRICS act would also be useful on a unilateral side-stepping of UNFCCC principles such as the European Union's Carbon

Border Adjustment Mechanism. An opening of a broader climate debate, including trade, was initiated at Belém.

A major outcome of the July 2025 BRICS Summit in Rio de Janeiro was BRICS Leaders' Framework Declaration on Climate Finance, a matter where India has been strong in articulating the demands of the Global South.

With finance being the key enabler for climate action, there is a need to include the World Bank and International Monetary Fund chiefs in the BRICS Summit. It is not the time not to treat them as "theirs (G-7 or G-20's)" and not just confine BRICS to the New Development Bank. Any global push on climate finance without them is hardly possible, given the U.S.'s antipathy to climate change – a fact also reflected in how their corporates and private monies are reacting, including pulling back from Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) requirements and even 'green' bonds and other funds.

BRICS is now about Egypt, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Iran, and the UAE, together comprising half of the global population, around 40% of global GDP, and around 26% of global trade. Its voice and heft are considerable.

A chance for Indian to drive change

As the helmsman of BRICS this year, India is in a pivotal position to push for collaborative global action, at least as among much of the world that will join, on resilience and an inclusive green agenda. This will be in its interest as well as a critical imperative for the Global South.

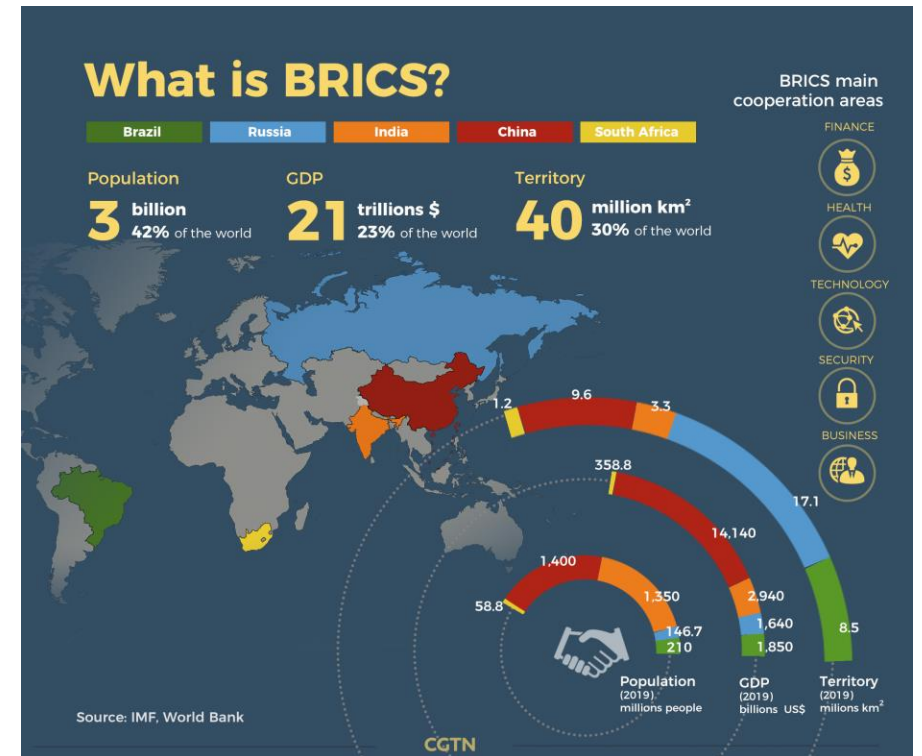
Moreover, geopolitically for India, a BRICS push keeps Chinese ambitions on global leadership on a green agenda in check. India's green agenda focusing on resilience at the BRICS Summit 2026 would also resonate with Ethiopia, the host of COP32 in 2027.

Context

- The forthcoming BRICS Summit to be hosted by India offers a critical opportunity to align national priorities with the urgent needs of the Global South.
- With the successful organisation of the G-20 Summit in 2023, India already has the infrastructure and diplomatic capacity required.
- The growing climate crisis and the need for enhanced resilience provide a unifying and strategic agenda, particularly for developing countries that are disproportionately affected by climate impacts.

The Global Context :A Leadership Vacuum in Climate Governance

- Global multilateralism is under severe strain amid heightened geopolitical polarisation.
- The United States, under the influence of Trump-era policies, has deprioritised climate action, promoted increased fossil fuel usage, and withdrawn from multiple international initiatives.
- This retreat has weakened global momentum on sustainability, especially as the U.S. has distanced itself from climate forums and institutions central to collective action.
- At the same time, European countries that previously positioned themselves as climate leaders are experiencing domestic fatigue and shifting their attention toward security and economic concerns.
- Within this context, BRICS has the potential to emerge as a stabilising platform capable of sustaining cooperation on climate action and development-oriented responses.



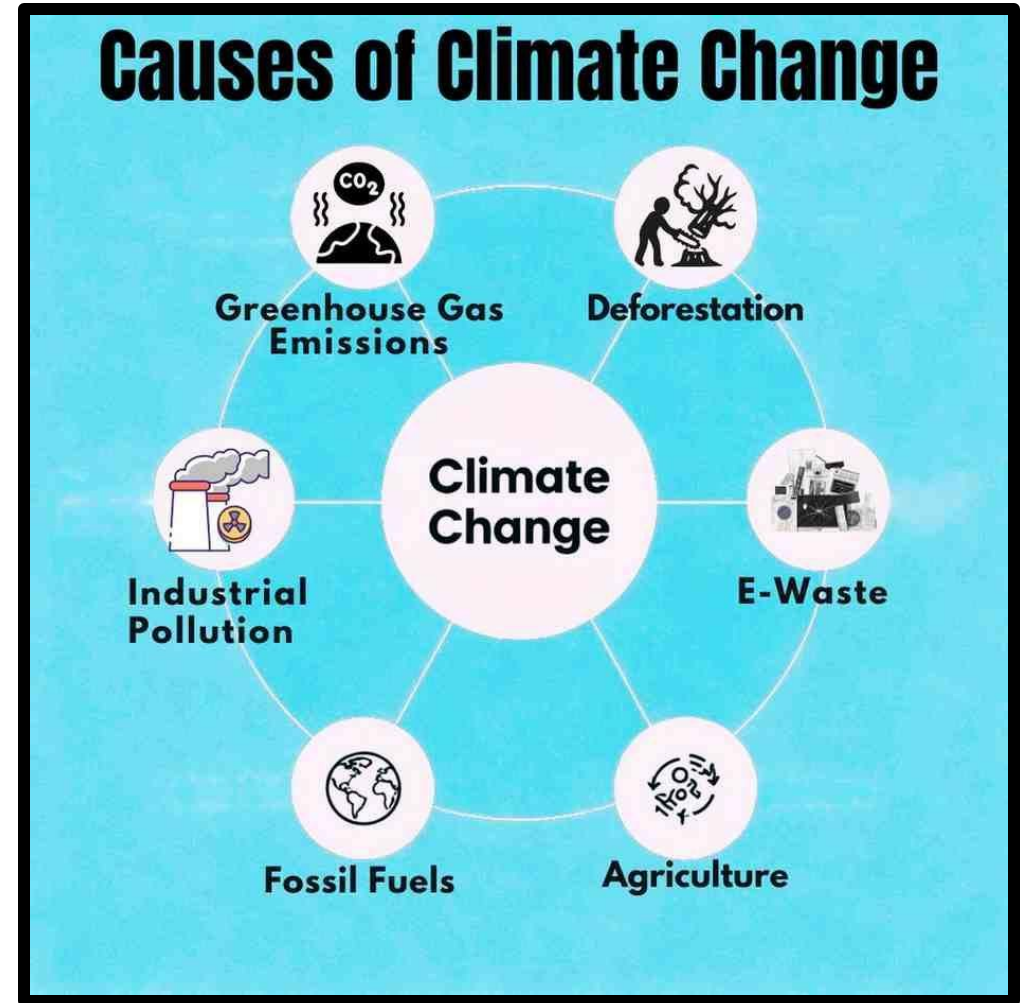
BRICS as a Platform for Collective Climate Action

- While BRICS is often viewed with suspicion in Washington, India's diplomatic strength lies in its ability to balance competing interests.
- Its performance during the G-20 Summit demonstrated a capacity to navigate complex global geopolitics while preserving strategic autonomy through multi-alignment.
- A similar approach at the BRICS Summit can advance climate cooperation without undermining crucial bilateral relationships.
- Climate impacts affect all BRICS countries, though in diverse ways.
- These include risks to infrastructure, public health, ecosystems, and livelihoods across varied geographies.



India's Strategic and Geopolitical Opportunity

- The expanded BRICS grouping now represents a significant share of the global population, economic output, and trade flows.
- As chair, India is uniquely positioned to shape a collective agenda that prioritises climate resilience and inclusive growth.
- Such leadership would reinforce India's global standing while addressing the pressing vulnerabilities of developing nations.
- Geopolitically, a strong BRICS-led climate initiative also serves to balance competing ambitions, particularly those of China, in shaping the global climate leadership
- By advancing a development-centric green agenda that emphasises resilience and cooperation, India can ensure that climate action remains inclusive, equitable, and aligned with the long-term interests of the Global South.



Officials coercing us to surrender land : Nicobar tribals

Officials 'coercing' us to surrender land: tribals

Great Nicobar Island project includes forest lands where Nicobarese lived before 2004 tsunami; 'it is our ancestral land, we will have nothing for the future generations,' says council member

Abhinav Lakshman
NEW DELHI

With some sections of the ₹92,000-crore Great Nicobar Island mega-infrastructure project "nearing approval", members of the Tribal Council in Little and Great Nicobar on Thursday alleged that they are being pressured by the district administration to "surrender our ancestral lands" to make way for the project.

Parts of the project in Galathea Bay, Pemimaya Bay, and Nanjappa Bay require the diversion of forest lands on which the indigenous Nicobarese people had been living before the 2004 tsunami.

In an online briefing to journalists, Tribal Council members said they had been called for a January 7 meeting with Nicobar district administration officials, where they were orally asked to sign a "surrender certificate", giving up their ancestral tribal lands. Hours after the briefing, they were summoned for another meeting where they were asked if they would give up their



Tribal Council members say they were asked to sign a surrender certificate, giving up their ancestral lands. FILE PHOTO

claims on a portion of their lands if they were allowed to relocate to a different section of the coast.

Deputy Commissioner of Nicobar Amit Kale Marutirao, and Assistant Commissioner (Campbell Bay) Keshav Narendra Singh, have not responded to *The Hindu's* requests for comment.

"At [the January 7] meeting, a few officials of the district were present along with a representative of the administration's Andaman Adim Janjati Vikas Samiti. We were shown various maps regarding the project

and we were asked about our opinion on the development project. And then we were asked to sign the surrender certificate," Tribal Council chairman Barnabas Manju said, adding that the meeting, held at the Andaman Public Works Department guesthouse in Nicobar's Campbell Bay, lasted about 10 minutes. The Tribal Council members told the officials that they would have to discuss it amongst themselves.

At the press briefing, Titus Peter, 1st Captain of Puklobhavi village and a member of the Council, said,

"We cannot sign a surrender document like this. It is our ancestral tribal land. We will have nothing for the future generations." Mr. Manju noted that it had been 21 years since they were displaced by the 2004 tsunami and are yet to hear from the administration about their requests to return to the location of their ancestral villages that had been destroyed by the tsunami.

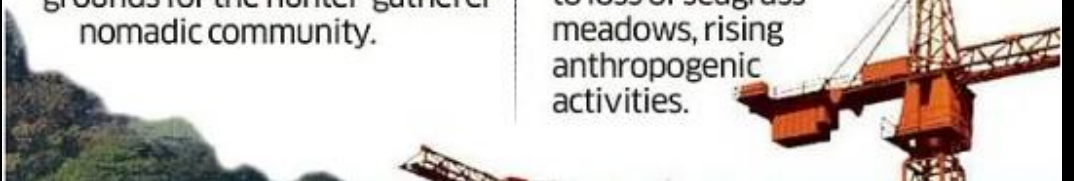
Council members said they were not told any specifics about the "surrender certificate", though Mr. Manju noted that "the officials said they would help us draft it if needed." The Tribal Council is the apex representative body of the Nicobarese community, which is recognised as a Scheduled Tribe.

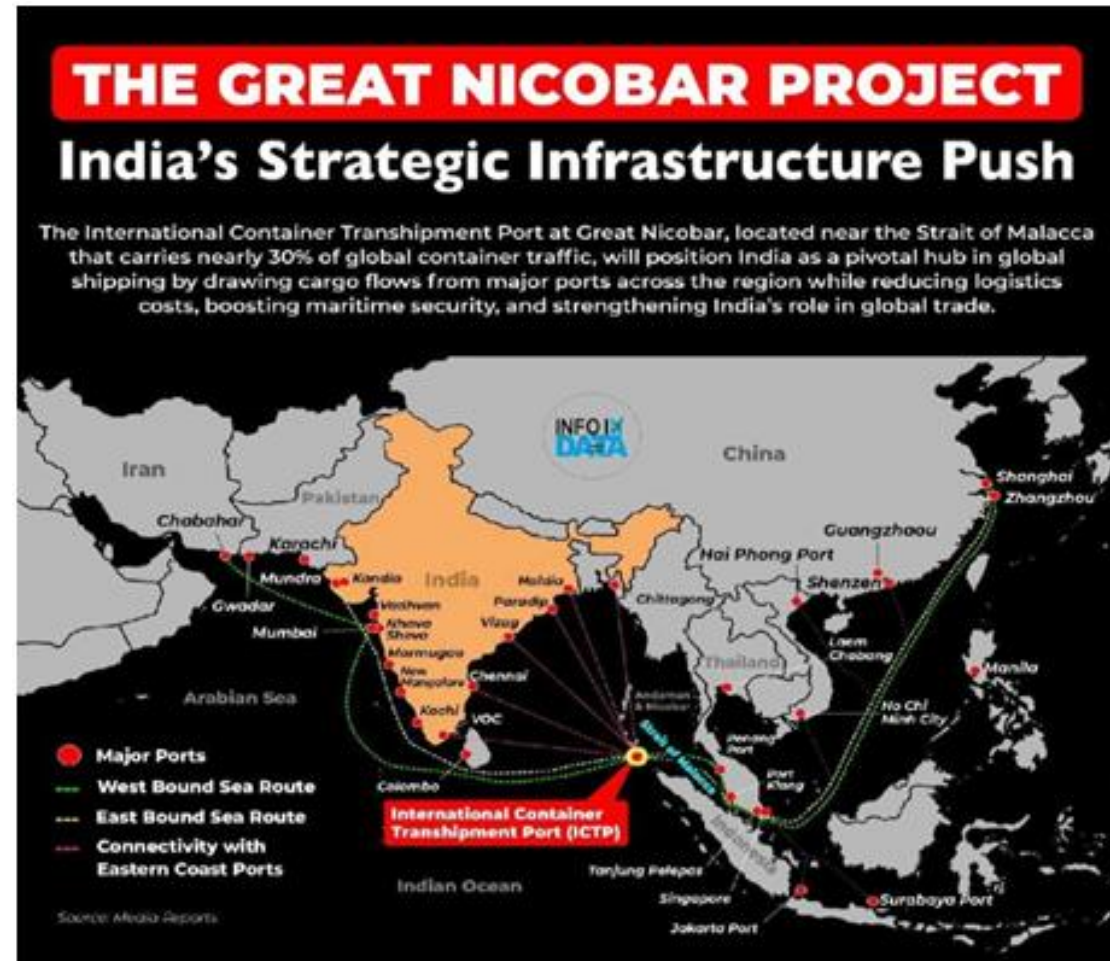
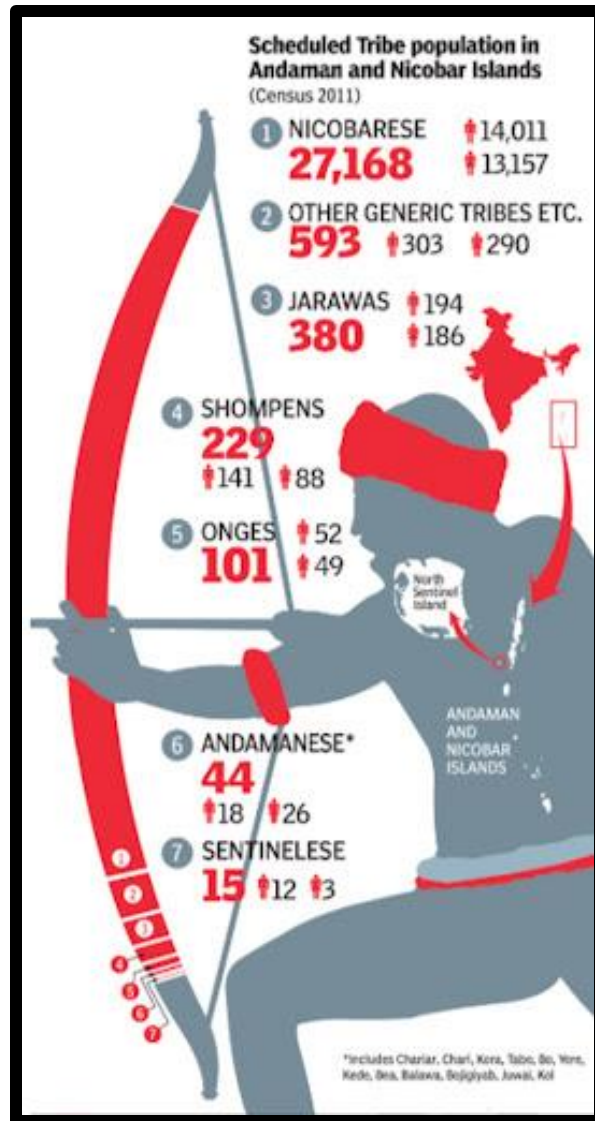
"It is not clear what parts of our ancestral land the officials are referring to. Our understanding is that they want the surrender certificate to mention areas that are covered under what used to be our villages before we were displaced by the tsunami," said Mr. Peter, pointing to the west coast on a map of Great Nicobar Island.

AND THE PERILS

- **Over 8.5 lakh trees** to be felled over an area of **130 sq kms**
- Destruction of tropical rainforests in Galathea National Park, home to **648 species of flora** and **330 species of fauna**, including Nicobar's **wild pig**, **tree shrew**, the Great Nicobar crested serpent eagle, Nicobar paradise flycatcher and the Nicobar megapode.
- **Threat to the Shompen tribe:** Proposed project areas have been important foraging grounds for the hunter-gatherer nomadic community.

- Threat to nesting sites of iconic species like **Giant leatherback turtle** and the **Nicobar megapode**.
- **Threat to coral and marine ecosystem:** ZSI reported presence of 117 species of scleractinian corals in Galathea. But the Environment Impact Assessment of the project states that there is no coral located in the Galathea Bay region.
- Threat to **Dugongs** due to loss of seagrass meadows, rising anthropogenic activities.





India absent as Trump rolls out his board of peace

India absent as Trump rolls out his Board of Peace with 19 countries in attendance

Associated Press
Press Trust of India
DAVOS

U.S. President Donald Trump on Thursday inaugurated his Board of Peace to lead efforts at maintaining a ceasefire in Israel's war with Hamas, insisting that "everyone wants to be a part" of the body that could eventually rival the United Nations – despite many U.S. allies opting not to participate.

India was among the countries not present at the ceremony. Prime Minister Narendra Modi was among numerous global leaders invited by Mr. Trump to join the Board. India is yet to take a call on it, people familiar with the matter said when asked



New accord: U.S. President Donald Trump holding the founding charter of the Board of Peace in Davos on Thursday. REUTERS

about the invite. Pakistan, Turkiye, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE are among the countries that have accepted Mr. Trump's invitation.

While Mr. Trump said 59 countries have signed onto the board, representatives of only 19 countries

and the U.S. were present at the event at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland.

"You're the most powerful people in the world," Mr. Trump told the group, ranging from Azerbaijan to Paraguay to Hungary.

"This is not the United States, this is for the world," Mr. Trump said, adding, "I think we can spread it out to other things as we succeed in Gaza."

The event also saw Ali Shaath, former Palestinian Authority official from Gaza who is overseeing the Palestinian committee set to govern the territory under U.S. supervision, announcing that the Rafah border crossing, between Gaza and Egypt, will open in both directions next week.

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'GREENLAND FRAMEWORK'

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A New Global Forum or UN Rival? The 'Board of Peace'

Context: Proposed by Donald Trump as part of a 20-point Gaza peace plan, with broader ambitions for global conflict management.

PURPOSE & ORIGIN

-  **Initial Focus:** Implement US-brokered Gaza peace plan, oversee reconstruction, governance transition.
-  **Broader Ambition:** Address global conflicts outside traditional forums.
-  **Key Goal:** Provide strategic oversight, mobilize resources, ensure accountability.
-  **Origin:** US initiative, partly endorsed by UNSC Resolution 2803 (with ambiguities on authority).

STRUCTURE & LEADERSHIP



KEY MEMBERS (EXECUTIVE BOARD)

- | | |
|--|---|
|  Donald Trump
(Chair, US President) |  Marco Rubio
(US Sec. of State) |
|  Jared Kushner
(US Senior Negotiator) |  Steve Witkoff
(US Special Envoy) |
|  Tony Blair
(Former UK PM) |  Ajay Banga
(World Bank President - Indian Origin) |
|  Marc Rowan
(Apollo Global CEO) |  Robert Gabriel
(US Deputy NSA) |
|  Regional Invitees (Gaza context):
Hakan Fidan (Turkey), Ali Al Thawadi (Qatar), etc. | |

ANALYSIS: ALTERNATE TO UN?



- | ARGUMENTS FOR RIVALRY | ARGUMENTS AGAINST/NUANCES |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">Trump's known criticism of UN efficiency & funding.Exclusive, US-led vs. UN's universal, collective nature.Potential to bypass UNSC on war/peace issues.Concerns about "parallel structure" sidelining UN agencies (e.g., UNRWA).Perceived as "neo-imperialist" or "colonial" by critics. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">US claims it's not to replace, but "galvanize" UN.Sought some UNSC backing (Res. 2803) for Gaza plan.Includes some former/current UN figures (e.g., Mladenov, Kaag).Initially focused on Gaza, wider mandate is "aspirational". |



Thank you

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