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BRICS 2026



BRICS countries adopt New Delhi Declaration

Last-minute compromise on language about war in West Asia enables a consensus in the grouping; declaration calls for 'maximum restraint' in war with no specific mention of strikes, rebukes Israel

Suhasini Haidar
NEW DELHI

India forged a consensus of BRICS countries on Saturday, after Iran and the United Arab Emirates agreed to a last-minute compromise on the language used about the war in West Asia, allowing the 11-member grouping to adopt the New Delhi Declaration at a meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The statement, which did not directly mention the attacks against Iran by the United States and Israel nor Iran's subsequent strikes on its Persian Gulf neighbours, including the UAE, called for "maximum restraint" in the war. It made no separate mention of the Russian war in Ukraine.

Common ground

The New Delhi Declaration adopted at the 18th BRICS summit reaffirmed members' commitment to the bloc's spirit of mutual respect, sovereign equality, and democracy

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- Iran, UAE **back down** from tough positions as text on West Asia **omits direct references** to U.S.-Israel attack on Iran and Iran attack on UAE
- Support for Palestinian state and strong **8-para criticism** of Israel for strikes on Gaza and Lebanon, and displacement of Palestinians
- It condemns imposition of **unilateral coercive measures** like tariffs and sanctions
- Call for comprehensive reform of UN, support for **greater role** for Brazil, India in UNSC
- Support for BRICS trade mechanisms, including **intra-BRICS payments** through national currencies



- It strongly **condemns terrorism** in all forms, including the 2025 Pahalgam attack

The meeting was attended by the leaders of eight member countries, including Russian President Vladimir Putin, Chinese President Xi Jinping, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, and the leaders of Indonesia, Ethiopia, Egypt, and South Africa. Brazil

and the UAE sent high-level representatives.

Significantly, given India's close ties with Israel and Mr. Modi's own visit to Jerusalem in February, the grouping declared its strong criticism of the country for its bombardment of Gaza. It expressed

support for South Africa's case against Israel in international courts, calling for the provision of humanitarian aid in Gaza.

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BRICS countries adopt New Delhi Declaration

The New Delhi declaration called for “comprehensive reform” of the United Nations, including support for Brazil and India to get a bigger role in the Security Council. It also stressed the need to protect civilians and expressed “deep concern” over attacks on civilian infrastructure and nuclear facilities in West Asia, in a reference to the U.S. and Israel’s missile strikes in Iran.

Addressing the leaders, Mr. Modi said that 20 years after the grouping of emerging economies was originally formed, BRICS was “coming of age” with a “distinct identity” not aimed against others on the global stage. “We respect each other’s perspectives and move forward through consensus. We strive to move ahead with an approach that is not against anyone but instead seeks to take everyone along,” the Prime Minister said, in a possible reference to the criticism of BRICS in the U.S. as an “anti-western” grouping.

Mr. Modi suggested that BRICS build a “troika” system like the G-20, so incoming and outgoing Presidents of the grouping bring continuity to discussions. He also proposed a road map for global governance reform, a seafarer distress network, and a BRICS global south mechanism for skill development in new technologies.

Chinese President Xi Jinping, who held an hour-long bilateral meeting with Mr. Modi after the session, announced that China would take over the presidency of BRICS for the next year.

The declaration also criticised the U.S. blockade of Cuba, and expressed concern over violence in Sudan.

Compromise and consensus

Previous ministerial meetings of BRICS this year had failed to issue joint statements on the Iran-UAE tussle. Sources privy to the negotiations said that Iran had wanted a strong condemnation of the U.S. and Israel for starting the war with strikes that assassinated its Supreme Leader, similar to the statement issued by the SCO grouping, which does not include the UAE. The UAE wanted “equal condemnation” of Iran’s attacks against its neighbours. Eventually, the text agreed to include non-specific references to the conflict.

The consensus was achieved through months of “threadbare” discussions, according to Sudhakar Dalela, Indian Sherpa at the talks and Secretary (Economic Relations) in the Ministry of External Affairs. He was addressing a media briefing after the closed BRICS session on the future of global governance and strengthening multilateralism. Side-stepping a question from *The Hindu* on whether India had asked for support from other leaders in BRICS to help convince Iran and UAE to agree to the draft language, he said that the cooperation and collaboration of all members was “key”.

He also underlined BRICS countries’ consensus against cross-border terrorism, with a specific reference to the Pahalgam terror attack in 2025.

With China on board, BRICS calls for boosting transport

Dheeraj Mishra

New Delhi, September 12

BRICS NATIONS, in a joint statement issued on Saturday, reaffirmed their commitment to enhance transport potential, including in civil aviation, while also respecting the “sovereignty and territorial integrity” of all member states.

India, China, Russia, and Brazil are among the top five countries in the world with the largest railway and road networks.

The joint declaration is also significant as India and China are often at the loggerheads in developing high-altitude roads, tunnels, and bridges along the Line of Actual Control (LAC), particularly in region like Arunachal Pradesh.

“We welcome the outcomes of the BRICS Transport Ministers’ Meeting held in Nagpur and look forward to further promoting transport

dialogue, including in civil aviation, to meet the demand of all stakeholders and to enhance the BRICS countries’ transport potential while also respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all member states, while carrying out transport cooperation,” the statement said.

The joint declaration further said the BRICS countries will deepen cooperation in the sector with a view to develop sustainable and resilient transport infrastructure as it plays a critical role in economic growth.

“We acknowledge the importance of embedding circular economy principles into the development and maintenance of transport infrastructure across BRICS countries, and promoting sustainable aviation fuels and low-carbon aviation fuels as means for reducing carbon emissions in international avi-

ation,” said the intergovernmental body.

While welcoming the different BRICS forums such as Urban Mobility Hub, Logistics Supply-Chain Cooperation Framework and low carbon aviation fuel, it also called for the discussion on the BRICS Railway Research Network proposal.

Regarding digital connectivity, the declaration highlights “submarine cable infrastructure” as an essential foundation for international digital connectivity and network resilience.

A dedicated Task Force finalised the ‘BRICS Cable Requirements: directive brief’ and is progressing toward a technical and economic feasibility study for establishing a high-speed communication network linked by submarine cables across BRICS nations.

FULL REPORT ON
WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM

India-China flight services to resume after a gap of 6 years

Press Trust of India
BEIJING

China Southern Airlines on Saturday announced that it will resume regular passenger services on the Guangzhou-New Delhi route from September 21, restarting the service after a six-year suspension.

With the resumption, the airline will operate more than 100 weekly flights across eight round-trip routes in South Asia, the carrier said.

China Southern Air-

lines, headquartered in Guangzhou in China's southern Guangdong province, is one of the country's major carriers.

The carrier's announcement coincides with Chinese President Xi Jinping's visit to India. The flight services between India and China were suspended following the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and were not restored amid the over four-year military stand-off between the two countries in eastern Ladakh, which ended in October last year.

Bin Laden considered targeting India and other countries in 1998: CIA papers

Sriram Lakshman
LONDON

India features among the list of countries that former al-Qaeda chief Osama bin Laden had at one point considered targeting, as per the U.S.'s Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

The revelation is part of the CIA's release on Friday, of more than 100 pages of material across 69 intelligence briefs to former U.S. Presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush, to mark the 25th anniversary of the World Trade Center attacks by al-Qaeda on Sep-

tember 11, 2001 in New York City.

The August 28, 1998 memo says Bin Laden and other terrorist leaders survived the U.S. strike (in Afghanistan).

It adds that the al-Qaeda leader was intending to conduct attacks in Egypt, the Arabian Peninsula – especially Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Yemen – India, Pakistan, Uganda, and possibly Nigeria.

The documents demonstrate that the CIA had warned the Presidents, multiple times, of a possible attack from Bin Laden

during the September 1998-September 2001 period for which documents have been released.

That attacks were being planned is not a new revelation, rather the CIA documents confirm the major conclusion of the 2004 '9/11 Commission' report. The report had concluded that al-Qaeda was planning attacks on the U.S.

Warnings not heeded

Those warnings were not heeded for a combination of reasons, including a lack of capabilities, imagination as well as management and

policy priorities.

A September 1998 brief released on Friday says Bin Laden's preferred target was U.S. soil and included a potential plan to "fly and explosive packed-plane into a U.S. city".

The same September 1998 brief says "the Kashmir militant group Harakat ul-Mujahedin (HUM) is coordinating with Osama Bin Laden to attack U.S., British and French interests", with the location redacted.

An August 2001 memo is titled 'Bin Ladin [sic] Determined to Strike in U.S.'

Xi, Modi welcome 'steady progress' in India-China ties

Kallol Bhattacharjee

NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday met Chinese President Xi Jinping on the sidelines of the BRICS Summit in New Delhi, where the two leaders welcomed the "steady progress" in India-China relations since their last meeting in August 2025.

"We reviewed the full range of India-China relations. Also conveyed best wishes for China's BRICS presidency that commences next year," said Mr. Modi in a message after the meeting.

"The two leaders welcomed the steady progress in India-China bilateral relations since their last meeting in Tianjin in August 2025. They reaffirmed that both countries should take a strategic and long-term perspective of their ties. Differences should not become disputes," the External Affairs Ministry said in a statement after the



Prime Minister Narendra Modi greets Chinese President Xi Jinping on the sidelines of the BRICS Summit in New Delhi on Saturday. PTI

talks. Mr. Modi stressed the importance of "peace and tranquillity" in the border areas, describing the matter as "essential basis for development of bilateral relations".

Chinese state media reported that Mr. Xi said the two countries have "different national circumstances", but "China and India can learn from each other's strengths and achieve shared development".

Mr. Xi outlined four

points on how to ensure the long-term, steady development of India-China relations and emphasised "rational strategic understanding", "cooperation through mutual benefit", "mutual respect and understanding", and "openness and inclusiveness through multilateral cooperation" in UN, SCO, BRICS, and G-20.

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Modi urges BRICS leaders to pitch in for global reform

T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan

NEW DELHI

Highlighting the current imbalance between decision-makers and those impacted by their decisions, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday made a strong pitch for global reform and called for BRICS to transition from "rule-takers to rule-shapers".

He proposed that the leaders of the BRICS nations gathered in New Delhi use the opportunity to arrive at 10 proposals for global governance reform, which can be developed into a BRICS Reform Roadmap. While delivering his welcome address, Mr. Modi took note of the fact that the BRICS grouping was now 20-years-old and, as such, was entering a new phase of maturity and responsibility.

FULL REPORT ON

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AMID GLOBAL TRADE POLICY UNCERTAINTY

BRICS condemns unilateral tariffs, backs WTO reforms

Ravi Dutta Mishra

New Delhi, September 12

THE BRICS countries Saturday flagged the rise of unilateral tariff and non-tariff measures in the backdrop of a slew of protectionist measures taken by the US and the European Union.

These measures “distort trade and are inconsistent with the World Trade Organisation’s rules”, the New Delhi Declaration 2026 issued at the BRICS summit said. It also said that the countries would work together to enhance the WTO’s responsiveness to the needs and priorities of emerging markets and developing economies and support outcomes that strengthen the multilateral trading system and address evolving global challenges.

BRICS members said the proliferation of trade-restrictive actions is inconsistent with WTO rules. Raising “indiscriminate” tariffs and non-tariff measures, or protectionism under the “guise of environmental objectives” threaten to reduce global trade, disrupt global supply chains, and introduce uncertainty, potentially exacerbating existing economic disparities and hurting global economic development, they said.

BRICS against sanctions

This comes in the backdrop of sweeping tariffs imposed by the US for over a year under various US trade provisions, which have targeted exports from across the world. While the US has relied on tariffs to limit exports, the EU has imposed carbon tariffs on carbon-intensive products, ignoring the Special and Differential Treatment (S&DT) provisions of WTO agreements that advocate giving a longer window to developing nations to address the climate change issue.



BRICS members warned that protectionism could reduce global trade and disrupt supply chains. REUTERS

The declaration also condemned imposition of unilateral coercive measures in the form of economic sanctions and secondary sanctions, which it said had negative implications for human rights, including the rights to development, health and food security, of the general population of targeted states. These affected the poor and people in vulnerable situations disproportionately, deepened the digital divide and exacer-



bated environmental challenges, the declaration said.

WTO reforms

The BRICS declaration said that the members support reform of the WTO and to strengthen a non-discriminatory, open, equitable, transparent, fair, inclusive, predictable and rules-based multilateral trading system, with the WTO at its core. Amid a deep divide within developed and developing nations, BRICS backed four-

dational principles, such as Most-Favoured-Nation Treatment and Special and Differential Treatment for developing members, particularly LDCs.

“We will ensure the implementation of the MC14 outcomes and continue to engage constructively towards the resolution of outstanding issues. We will engage constructively in the WTO reform to enhance the WTO’s authority, effectiveness, inclusiveness, and relevance, and build an open world economy. In this regard, we recognise that it is important to identify appropriate pathways for plurilateral initiatives into the WTO legal framework, including on development-oriented issues, and to explore the formulation of forward-looking rules in the WTO,” the declaration said.

This comes amid a push for radical reforms by the US, such as a rethink on the Most Favoured Nation (MFN) principle that ensures non-discriminatory trade practices, incorporating a plurilateral agreement in WTO architecture, which is seen as a contrast to long-established consensus-based decision-making. New Delhi is primarily pursuing policy space due to its relatively low share in global trade but large scope for future growth.

FULL REPORT ON

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‘Fossil fuels will still play an important role’: Declaration opposes carbon border tax

Nikhil Ghanekar

New Delhi, September 12

AMID DISRUPTIONS to global supply chains and energy security due to the West Asia conflict, the New Delhi Declaration adopted at the 18th BRICS Summit unequivocally acknowledged that fossil fuels will still play an important role in the world’s energy mix, particularly for developing economies, and opposed European Union’s carbon border tax.

The declaration reaffirmed the commitment of BRICS to tackle climate change and called upon all countries to uphold their existing commitment to the Paris climate agreement, including its provisions related to climate mitigation, adaptation, loss and damage and the principles of equity.

However, it underscored the importance of nationally determined just transitions — which refers to shift to cleaner fuels for producing electricity and in energy use. It called upon developed countries to provide additional, adequate, predictable and accessible financial resources along with technological transfer to developing countries for climate adaptation.

The declaration framed energy security as a crucial foundation for social and econ-

E. EXPLAINED

Leading coal consumers

BRICS MEMBER countries China, India, Indonesia and Russia are among the leading coal consumers in the world. Even as they have made rapid strides in the expansion of renewable energy, coal continues to be among the mainstays of sources for electricity production and energy use.

omic development. “We acknowledge fossil fuels will play an important role in the world’s energy mix, particularly for emerging markets and developing economies, and we recognize the need to promote just, orderly, equitable and inclusive energy transitions and reduce GHG (greenhouse gas) emissions in line with our climate goals and observing SDG7 (sustainable development goals), the principles of technological neutrality and common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities taking into account national circumstances, needs and priorities,” the declaration stated.

BRICS member countries China, India, Indonesia and Russia are among the top five largest coal consumers with the US being the only non-BRICS bloc country. They have also made rapid strides in the expansion of renewable energy, but coal continues to remain one of the largest sources for electricity production and energy use.

The declaration recognised the key role of critical minerals for development of zero-and low-emission energy technologies, energy security, and resilience in supply chains.

On the EU’s carbon border tax, an import levy on carbon-intensive goods, the declaration said that it opposed “unilateral, punitive, discriminatory and protectionist measures that are not in line with international law”. “...Such measures undermine efforts by countries, specifically developing countries, aimed at addressing the adverse impacts of climate change, increasing adaptive capacity and resilience.”

In the backdrop of the Nepal flash flood last month, the BRICS declaration also acknowledged the growing complexity of disaster risks, including those related to climate change, and especially for the Global South. The guidelines for Disaster Management Early Warning Data Integration were welcomed.

NIMHANS to be nodal body for BRICS Centres of Excellence

Anonna Dutt

New Delhi, September 12

THE NEW Delhi Declaration adopted during the ongoing 18th BRICS Summit agrees to support the establishment of a network of training hubs and Centres of Excellence (CoEs) for mental health, with Bengaluru-based National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences (NIMHANS) being the coordinating centre.

“The Network of CoEs could also serve as a platform to facilitate collaborative research, policy dialogue, exchange of best practices, and the co-development of evidence-based mental health promotion strategies across BRICS countries,” the declaration states.

According to the Declaration, a designated group of representatives from each BRICS member state will jointly govern the network and ensure “balanced decision-making and shared accountability” towards achieving scientific and technical cooperation for sustainable and scalable integration of mental well-being into primary healthcare.

“We also welcome the Compendium of Best Practices on Promotion of Mental Wellness,” the declaration says.

It adds: “We emphasise the importance of addressing the

mental health consequences of crises and are committed to providing timely, accessible, and sustained mental health and psycho-social (MHPSS) interventions to affected populations, particularly people in vulnerable situations, including children and adolescents.”

In addition, the declaration also focuses on the emerging challenges of non-communicable diseases and endorses the launch of BRICS Mission for Healthy Lifestyle and the BRICS Roadmap for the Joint Initiative on Healthy Lifestyle Promotion (2026-29). “We also welcome the Compendium of Replicable Best Practices on Healthy Lifestyle,” it says.

The declaration also talks about the growing relevance of traditional and integrative medicine (TCIM). “We welcome the proposed establishment of the BRICS Expert Working Group on TCIM under the BRICS Health Track as a platform for dialogue, collaboration and exchange among Member States.”

The platform will coordinate research on medicinal plants and herbal preparations for therapeutic and preventive uses. It goes on to add that importance will be laid on ensuring the quality, safety, and efficacy of these TCIM practices and products with an evidence-informed approach.

Amid wars in sea lanes, PM proposes seafarers' emergency support network

Divya A

New Delhi, September 12

AT THE BRICS Leaders' Summit on Saturday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi proposed establishing a 'Seafarers' Emergency Support Network' to provide timely assistance and ensure the safety of personnel working at sea. Modi said that "global trade can move forward only when sea lanes are secure, supply routes remain open, and seafarers are safe."

The safety of Indian seafarers has emerged as a recurring focus of New Delhi's recent engagements. He proposed that the support network should provide distress alerts, medical aid, family communication and



Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi (left) with his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi in New Delhi on Saturday. ANI

evacuation support for seafarers.

"Seafarers make a significant contribution to global trade, but

they often find themselves without adequate support during difficult times. My proposal is – can we create a Seafarers Emergency Support Network?" Modi said during his opening remarks at the summit.

"Through this, maritime authorities and missions of the concerned countries can be connected. It can provide support for distress alerts, medical assistance... informing families and evacuation," he said.

India supplies a massive share of the global maritime workforce. In fact, India provides over 12% of all trained seafarers around the world, with thousands of Indian families depending on those working aboard commercial vessels.

However, in the wake of the conflict in West Asia, Indian crew members have come under attack, often becoming unintended casualties. As per official figures, 15 Indian seafarers have lost their lives while two remain missing due to attacks in West Asia and the Black Sea.

India presently has over three lakh active seafarers. A total of 173 Indian seafarers remain in the Persian Gulf, according to a Directorate of Maritime Administration report.

The safety of Indian seafarers and freedom of navigation through the Hormuz were discussed during PM Modi's bilateral with Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian in New Delhi a day earlier as well.

Four agricultural initiatives announced, aimed at climate resilience, productivity

Harikishan Sharma

New Delhi, September 12

THE BRICS nations on Saturday announced four new agriculture initiatives, including the establishment of Agroecology and Regenerative Agriculture for Climate Resilience and Productivity and Digital Agriculture.

In a significant breakthrough for India, the BRICS grouping adopted the New Delhi joint declaration with consensus, in which the leaders also agreed to the establishment of a collaborative, non-binding, and farmer-centric BRICS AGRIN (Agro-Inputs, Genetic Resources, and In-

• 4 AGRICULTURE INITIATIVES

BRICS AGRIN (Agro-Inputs, Genetic Resources, and Information Network)

GLOBAL FORUM on Farmers' Rights in Seed Systems

BRICS NETWORK of Centres of Excellence on Agroecology and Regenerative Agriculture for Climate Resilience and Productivity

BRICS NETWORK on Digital Agriculture, including agroforestry, fisheries, and aquaculture

formation Network), while welcoming the launch of a Global Forum on Farmers' Rights in Seed Systems.

"We welcome the outcomes of the 16th BRICS Agriculture Ministers' Meeting, held in Indore. We agree to the establishment of a collaborative, non-binding, and farmer-centric BRICS AGRIN (Agro-Inputs, Genetic Resources, and Information Network), drawing upon relevant national, regional, and international practices. We also welcome the launch of a Global Forum on Farmers' Rights in Seed Systems to address shared challenges, promote effective policies, and encourage the documentation and exchange of traditional knowledge related to agriculture and seed systems," the New Delhi Dec-

laration stated.

It also welcomed the strengthening of cooperation in agriculture through the establishment of a BRICS Network of Centres of Excellence on Agroecology and Regenerative Agriculture for Climate Resilience and Productivity, and a BRICS Network on Digital Agriculture, including agroforestry, fisheries, and aquaculture. We also encourage further cooperation under the BRICS Dialogue on Development of Fisheries and Aquaculture, it said.

The BRICS nation also reiterated their commitment to advancing agriculture negotiations at the WTO.

UAE PRINCE, PEZESHKIAN MEET

Six months into war, Iran and UAE find consensus in BRICS joint declaration

Bloc calls for restraint, flags sovereignty, threat to civilians, infra, smooth oil flows

Shubhajit Roy

New Delhi, September 12

AS THE six-month-long West Asia war flares up with US and Iran exchanging strikes, India achieved the much-anticipated — and the much-fraught — consensus at the BRICS summit between UAE and Iran after hectic negotiations paving the way for the joint declaration adopted Saturday.

Against this backdrop, UAE's Sheikh Khaled bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, who is the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, met Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian on the margins of the BRICS summit.

In paragraph 28 of the joint declaration, the BRICS leaders said, "We express deep concern over the continued escalation of tensions in Middle East/West Asia and, recalling our respective national positions, call for exercising maximum restraint, as well as avoiding actions that

Business as Usual

By EP UNNY



could further aggravate the situation."

The declaration acknowledged the sensibilities of both sides by flagging territorial sovereignty and the need to secure civilians and infrastructure. UAE has been at the receiving end of a series of Iranian strikes on its cities with Tehran calling

»CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Iran, UAE

it a proxy of the United States. In addition, the declaration underscored dialogue and diplomacy and smooth flow of energy — all important issues and challenges faced by all the countries from the developing countries.

“We urge to ensure the protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations in their entirety and interconnectedness, including respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the States,” the declaration said. “We encourage increasing efforts, through dialogue and diplomacy, towards a long-term understanding that will contribute to lasting peace, security and stability in the region. We stress the need to work together to maintain smooth flow of global trade, supply chains and energy, in accordance with applicable international law.”

The phrasing of the war in West Asia had divided Iran and UAE in the last six months. Incidentally, barely three months ago, in May, there was no consensus on the paragraph at the BRICS Foreign ministers meeting.

At that time, Delhi had issued a chair statement and an outcome document, trying to reflect the divergences between Iran and the UAE over the war. The statement had underlined “differing views among some members” over the West Asia situation, and that BRICS members had expressed their “respective national positions”. In contrast, there was a much more expansive paragraph in the BRICS declaration.

Said Secretary (economic relations) in the Ministry of External Affairs Sudhakar Dalela, who is also the BRICS Sherpa: “The adoption of New Delhi Declaration was among the defining outcomes of India's chairship, demonstrating that BRICS members can forge consensus on matters of global importance.”

The negotiators were able to achieve this in the last few days of hectic negotiations. With the war in West Asia flaring up following the exchange of strikes between the US and Iran, the BRICS Sherpas, the most senior negotiators from the 11 member countries of the grouping, have been burning the midnight oil to hammer out the joint declaration. With UAE and Iran, new members of the BRICS since 2024, part of the negotiations, Indian officials worked to bridge the gap between the two sides.

New Delhi Declaration focuses on MSMEs, raises concerns over rise of unilateral tariff measures

T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan
NEW DELHI

The New Delhi Declaration, adopted by the BRICS nations at their 18th summit in New Delhi on Saturday, devoted significant focus to the needs of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and ways to help them move up the global value chain. India is the chair of BRICS in 2026, with China taking over the chairship in 2027.

The latest declaration also carried forward most of the economic issues raised during the last summit in Rio de Janeiro, including concerns about the “rise of unilateral tariff and non-tariff measures”, the “imposition of unilateral coercive measures”, trade in local currencies, and the need for reforms in the World Trade Organization (WTO), International Monetary Fund (IMF), and World Bank.

The BRICS nations also advocated for the accession of Ethiopia and Iran to the WTO.

MSMEs in focus

The declaration acknowledged the initiatives by the SME Working Group and commended India's Chairship for convening the inaugural BRICS SME Forum



All ears: South African President Cyril Ramaphosa at the 18th BRICS Summit in New Delhi. AFP

in Agra and releasing a report titled “Advancing MSME Competitiveness in BRICS: Strengthening Access to Finance & Technology and Sustainable Growth”.

It further recognised this report for its potential to foster cooperation, exchange best practices and promote inclusive growth among MSMEs across BRICS countries

“We reaffirm our commitment to strengthening the internationalisation of MSMEs as a driver of economic growth and prosperity,” the declaration said. “We acknowledge that access to affordable finance remains a primary bottleneck and structural constraint, limiting MSMEs’ participation in trade and integration into

Global Value Chains (GVCs),” it said.

“We understand the importance of promoting innovative financing mechanisms, including digital and platform-based multisakeholder solutions for facilitating easier access to trade finance for MSMEs,” it added.

It further welcomed the Jaipur Consensus to study the establishment of an Invoice Discounting Mechanism for BRICS members aimed at facilitating invoice discounting, which would help MSMEs unlock working capital and strengthen their participation in international trade.

The declaration also mentioned several initiatives of cooperation between the BRICS nations in areas of Special Economic

Zones, manufacturing, value addition, diamonds and precious metals, customs facilitation, logistics, railways, aviation, and industrial upgrade.

Trade concerns

“We voice serious concerns about the rise of unilateral tariff and non-tariff measures which distort trade and are inconsistent with WTO rules,” the declaration said.

It noted that such measures threaten to further reduce global trade, disrupt global supply chains, and introduce uncertainty into international economic and trade activities, which could potentially exacerbate existing economic disparities and negatively affect prospects for global economic development.

The declaration added that BRICS would work together to enhance the WTO's responsiveness to trade disruptions and the needs and priorities of emerging markets and developing economies.

“We condemn the imposition of unilateral coercive measures that are contrary to international law, and reiterate that such measures, *inter alia* in the form of unilateral economic sanctions and secondary

sanctions, have far-reaching negative implications for the human rights, including the rights to development, health and food security, of the general population of targeted states, disproportionately affecting the poor and people in vulnerable situations, deepening the digital divide and exacerbating environmental challenges,” the declaration said.

Global bodies' reform

The BRICS nations re-declared their “unwavering support” for reform of the WTO and for strengthening a “non-discriminatory, open, equitable, transparent, fair, inclusive, predictable and rules-based multilateral trading system”, with the WTO at its core.

“Echoing the aspirations of the Global South to fully integrate into the multilateral trading system, we strongly support Ethiopia and Iran's bid for accession to the WTO,” the declaration said. “We acknowledge China for expanding its zero-tariff treatment to cover 53 African countries with which it has diplomatic ties.” The declaration also went on to call for reforms of the World Bank, the United Nations (UN), the UN Security Council, and the IMF.

Houthi tighten their control on Red Sea shipping

Mohammed Ghobari,
Eman Abouhassira
& Yasmine Ghania

Aden, Dubai, September 12

SAUDI ARABIA has shut down its East-West pipeline, after the vital oil conduit came under aerial attack in the widening West Asia war, threatening to send energy prices even higher.

The world's largest crude oil exporter said it temporarily closed the pipeline as a precaution after a drone attack that both Baghdad and Riyadh said had originated in Iraq, where Iranian-backed militias operate. Iraq dismissed a military commander on Saturday in response to the attack.

The 1,200-km pipeline running across the Arabian Peninsula has served as the main route out for global supplies of Middle East oil for the past six months while the Strait of Hormuz has been largely shut by war.

It has been moving 4 million to 5 million barrels per day, amounting to 4% to 5% of global supply, sparing Saudi Arabia the brunt of the disruption that has crippled other Gulf oil and gas exporters.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the strikes. Satellite images showed black smoke rising from an area of the pipeline south of Medina. The attack resulted in some injuries and damage that was being assessed, the Saudi Foreign Ministry said without detailing the impact on exports.

US President Donald Trump, visiting Ireland to attend a golf tournament at one of his resorts, said Iran was probably to blame.



Houthi fighters raise slogans atop a military vehicle in Dhubbab district, Taiz province. (Right) Satellite image shows damage to the East-West pipeline facility in the Hejaz Region, Saudi Arabia. AP/REUTERS

Oil prices shot up over the past week and the retail price of diesel in the United States surged past a record \$6 a gallon, as the United States and Iran both fired on tankers and the Iran-aligned Houthis in Yemen advanced along the Red Sea, potentially extending disruption to another major oil route.

Saudi Arabia's de facto ruler, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, phoned Trump on Thursday and asked for U.S. military help fighting the Houthis, three sources told Reuters. They said the prince was told that Washington would not intervene directly for now but would help with intelligence.

Trump confirmed on Saturday that he had spoken to the crown prince, and said the Houthis had also phoned his administration and asked Washington not to become directly involved in the conflict.

Four Yemeni government sources told Reuters that the Houthis had seized the strategic

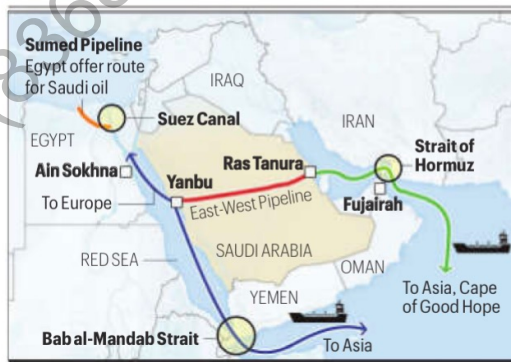
island of Perim on Friday in the middle of the Bab el-Mandeb Strait—the "Gate of Tears" at the mouth of the Red Sea.

There have been no talks between the United States and Iran to end the conflict since a June agreement that collapsed within weeks.

In a post on X on Saturday, Ebrahim Azizi, head of the Iranian parliament's national security committee, said: "As long as the American side does not accept all of Iran's conditions, dialogue and negotiation are of no use."

Iran's foreign ministry announced on Friday that Iran would be attending a meeting with Gulf Arab states in Oman on Monday, at which the future of the Strait of Hormuz would be discussed.

But a senior Iranian official, speaking to Reuters on condition of anonymity on Saturday, played down the chances of a breakthrough, saying the meeting, called at Oman's initiative,



was intended to discuss issues including the strait but was not expected to yield a signed agreement.

An agreement on routes through the Strait of Hormuz between Iran and Oman will be presented at the meeting on Monday, which will also be attended by Iraq, but the strait will not reopen unless seven conditions conveyed by Iran to the US are met, a source told *Tasnim* news agency, without elaborating.

Oman has not officially announced the meeting, and other Gulf countries have remained silent. Bahrain said on

Saturday it would not attend meetings with Iran.

The apparent launch of the attack on the Saudi pipeline from Iraq puts additional pressure on the Baghdad government, which is unique in the region for maintaining close political and military ties with both the United States and Iran.

Iraq dismissed the military commander and police chief in Maysan province near the Iranian frontier, long regarded as an area where Iran-backed Shi'ite militias operate and maintain influence, and shut the main border crossing there. REUTERS

POSITION REMAINS UNCHANGED, SAYS UK

Trump says he would 'love' to see a united Ireland

Reuters

Dublin, September 12

US PRESIDENT Donald Trump said on Saturday he would "love" to see British-run Northern Ireland unify with Ireland, remarks made during a visit to Dublin that drew a sharp response from pro-British unionists in Northern Ireland.

Trump's comments come weeks after new British Prime Minister Andy Burnham said a referendum on Northern Ireland leaving the United Kingdom was "off the table", a position Downing Street on Saturday said remained unchanged.

"Well, I don't want to cause any problems, but I will tell you, I'd love to see it unified," Trump told reporters sitting next to Irish Prime Minister Micheal Martin after the pair met in Dublin. "It's going to happen eventually ... I think it would be a fantastic thing."

"Now the UK will have something to say about it ... but I think it would be a great thing," he added.

The leader of Northern Ire-



US President Donald Trump in Dublin on Saturday. REUTERS

land's largest unionist party, the Democratic Unionist Party, rejected Trump's prediction, saying unification would lead to "the destruction of our country."

"Northern Ireland's constitutional future will be decided by the people of Northern Ireland, not by commentary in London, Dublin or Washington," Gavin Robinson, who has publicly supported Trump in the past, wrote on X.

British PM Andy Burnham's position on Irish unification remains unchanged, a spokesperson for his office said on Saturday, following comments by US President Donald Trump that he would "love" to see a united Ireland.

SEOUL

N. Korea fires missiles toward sea after rivals' trilateral military drill



AFP

North Korea launched multiple short-range ballistic missiles toward the sea on Saturday, a day after the U.S., South Korea and Japan ended their trilateral military drill that North Korea views as a provocation. The U.S. Pacific Command said the North's launch event didn't pose a threat to U.S. territory or to its allies. AP

WASHINGTON

U.S. House of Representatives to take up Russia sanctions Bill



AP

The U.S. House of Representatives is set to take up for vote the Russia sanctions Bill that also seeks to impose tariffs on its trading partners, including India. The Lindsey O. Graham Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act of 2026 will be taken up for vote by the House Rules Committee on Monday, amid strong opposition. PTI