

INTERNSTIONAL RELATIONS|| LAW|| DIPLOMACY

Potential Crash: Renewable energy growth is pushing liquefied natural gas markets toward oversupply, threatening severe downturns by 2030

A simple cartoon drawing of a stick figure on the left, looking up and pulling a rope. The rope goes diagonally up to a pulley (a circle with a dot in the center) at the top. From the pulley, the rope goes diagonally down to a rectangular box on the right. Inside the box is a globe of the Earth, showing continents and oceans. The stick figure is standing on a horizontal line representing the ground.

Widespread demonstrations erupted following the shooting and later death of a youth leader in Dhaka, leading to clashes, property damage, and opposition rallies. Tens of thousands joined marches demanding accountability, and the unrest spread across key urban area.

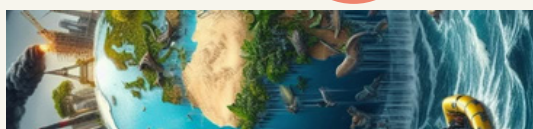
A powerful winter storm brought heavy snow from the Great Plains to the Northeast U.S. and Atlantic Canada, causing travel disruptions, power outages, and at least six fatalities.

in South Africa: The Johannesburg meeting, the first on African soil, highlighted economic cooperation and global policy issues.

Team Vitality wins the 2025 CS2 Championship, marking a landmark event in esports for December.

ISIS in Nigeria: The U.S. military struck Islamic State militants in northwest Nigeria, signaling continued counter-terror operations in Africa.

India commissioned its first home-grown water-soluble fertilizer pilot plant in Nagpur, boosting self-reliance in agricultural inputs.



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Letter from the Editorial Board

With the release of this edition of our newsletter, we are delighted to be a part of a dialogue that is growing and ever so relevant to this day. What started as a group idea has instead emerged at a meaningful dialogue platform within the realm of International Law, Relations, and Diplomacy.

This mirrors our dedication to change and a sense of continuity. These articles that are being featured today tackle the current global events, the rising legal issues, and the story that is being crafted in the world of diplomacy that make up the world that we are living today.

As the editorial board, we take the stance that knowledge is an entity that flourishes when shared. It is not the intent of this newsletter to simply be an assortment of writings, but also an opportunity to mull, discuss, and indulge our curiosities. It is our hope that this newsletter inspires readers to challenge accepted knowledge, investigate alternative perspectives, and stay abreast of the ever-changing realm of global governance.

We remain grateful for the support of all those who contributed towards this edition. Your encouragement is what drives us to improve and revamp this space with every edition.

We eagerly await continuing this journey together.

-The Editorial Board

MAJOR NEWS



The G-20 Leader's Summit: First Ever on the African Continent

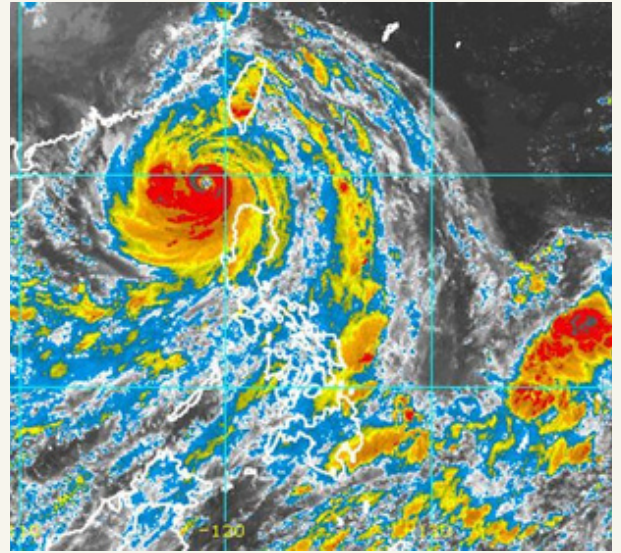
On November 22-23, 2025, the G-20 Leaders Summit was held in Johannesburg, South Africa, with the theme 'solidarity, equality, sustainability.' The summit was hosted for the **first time on African soil**, advancing the notion of 'Global South' by emphasizing the African spirit of Ubuntu (recognising shared global responsibility and interconnectedness) and strengthening multilateral cooperation. The 122-paragraph Johannesburg Leaders' Declaration adopted during the Summit focused on several crucial issues of the contemporary world order. Starting with the issue of transforming the United Nations Security Council for better representation, the declaration condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, along with focusing on strengthening global disaster resilience and response, advancing debt sustainability for low-income countries, and enhancing climate flows (from billion to trillion) for a just energy transition under the Paris Agreement.

A major unfortunate highlight of the Summit was the US presidential boycott citing the so-called 'genocide of white South Africans.' Although the South African government rejected the claims categorically, the boycott highlighted the growing complexity of the 21st-century global order. Touted as the largest gathering of the developed and emerging economies, the 2025 G20 Summit became "a platform for non-Western agenda setting."

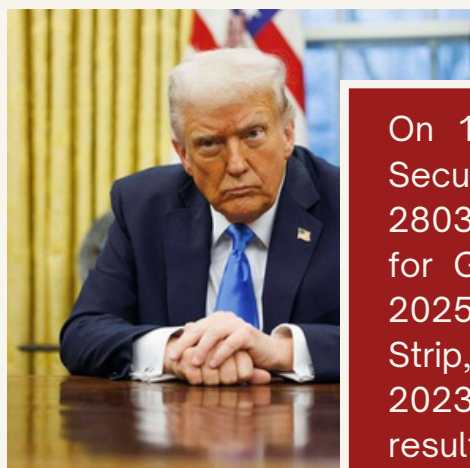


Deadly Storms in South and Southeast Asia: Rising Climate Risks and Human Impact

The countries of South and Southeast Asia – Indonesia, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Thailand, the Philippines, and Malaysia – were hit by major cyclones and storms in mid-November, which left millions of people displaced, hundreds missing, and over 1800 killed. The scale of destruction was unprecedented as torrential monsoon rain, landslides, and flooding ravaged entire towns and villages. Scientists are of the view that although these disasters are partially fueled by natural causes, a major role has been played by anthropogenic actions. Climate change-induced global warming, deforestation and rapid urbanisation, along with weak infrastructure, have intensified the catastrophic impact of these disasters. In Sri Lanka, Cyclone Ditwah affected nearly the entire Island by landslides and severe flooding. A report by UNDP highlights that over 1200 landslides were triggered and about 20% of the Island was affected by flooding, leaving behind a trail of devastation as more than 100,000 houses were destroyed and 230,000 people displaced. In Indonesia, Cyclone Senyar severely impacted the Island of Sumatra as “entire villages have been submerged, bridges washed away and roads cut off, isolating communities and slowing rescue efforts.” Flash floods due to extreme rainfall and landslides killed more than 830 people and left 880,000 displaced. While the Tropical Cyclone Koto triggered landslides across Vietnam, Thailand and Malaysia were also affected by intensified monsoon rains. These frequent disasters are an indication of rising temperatures and heat across Asia and the Pacific, as highlighted by a recent report of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. The report says that “disaster risks are expanding and intensifying as temperatures rise with serious consequences not only for human health but also for socio-economic-environment systems.”



UNSC Approves Trump's Peace Plan for Gaza



On 18 November 2025, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) adopted Resolution 2803 and approved the US-backed peace plan for Gaza. The plan announced in September 2025 came amid intensified conflict in the Gaza Strip, which was triggered by the October 7, 2023, Hamas attack on Israel. The conflict has resulted in the displacement of more than 90% Palestinians, and over 70,000 have been killed. The peace plan follows a phased approach. The first phase focuses on a temporary ceasefire, the release of hostages and partial withdrawal of Israeli troops from Gaza. And the next phase is all about reconstruction, establishment of transitional governance, and demilitarization to create a “deradicalized and terror-free zone.” A major highlight of the plan is the establishment of a Board of Peace (BoP), which will be chaired by the United States President Donald Trump. The BoP will act as a ‘transitional administration’ in Gaza and will coordinate the reconstruction efforts. Besides, the Board is also authorized “to establish a temporary International Stabilization Force (ISF) in Gaza to deploy under unified command acceptable to the BoP.”

Although the plan appears to have lofty goals, everything will depend on its proper implementation, which requires coordination from all the stakeholders, including the Palestinian Authority and Hamas.





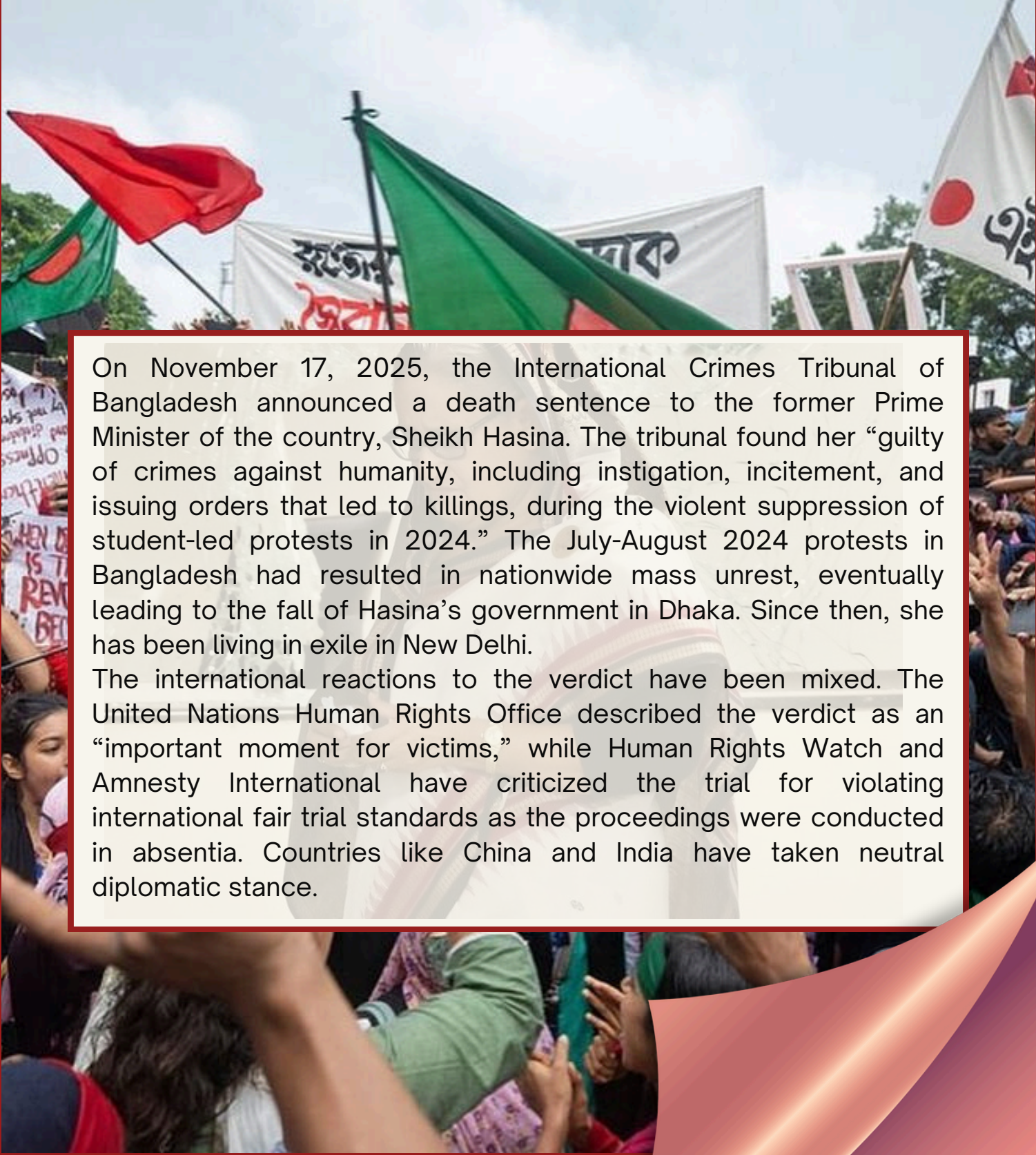
COP30 in Brazil amid Escalating Climate Crisis

In November 2025, the 30th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP30) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, convened in Belém, Brazil, concluded with a set of 29 negotiated outcomes that reflect both progress and persistent challenges in global climate governance. Parties adopted what has been informally referred to as the 'Global Mutirão agreement,' underscoring a collective effort to accelerate implementation of the Paris Agreement, including enhanced cooperation on mitigation, adaptation, and finance. The accelerator will prioritize actions with the best potential for scale and speed in the climate fight, including methane emission reduction and carbon removal through nature-based solutions. A central achievement was the reinforced emphasis on scaling up climate finance, with commitments articulated to mobilize significantly increased public and private resources to support developing and vulnerable countries, particularly through the tripling of adaptation finance by 2035. It is like a landmark to support the most vulnerable populations—those least responsible for climate change but most affected by its impacts.

Negotiators also agreed to strengthen mechanisms for tracking adaptation and to promote inclusive climate action through the expanded engagement of women, Indigenous Peoples, and subnational authorities, as well as to adopt the voluntary indicators to measure progress in building resilience, within the framework of the global goal on adaptation. Although consensus was not reached on binding language to phase out fossil fuels, the COP30 presidency announced voluntary roadmaps for transitioning toward low-carbon economies and for halting deforestation, reflecting political compromises on contentious issues. The summit thus reaffirmed global commitment to the Paris goals while highlighting the complexities of multilateral diplomacy amid divergent national interests.

COP30 concludes with clear manifestations of renewed political commitment and the strengthening of climate multilateralism. The decisions adopted in COP30 offer concrete instruments to intensify global action, reinforce the centrality of climate justice, and reaffirm the conviction that only through international cooperation will it be possible to ensure a safe, resilient, and sustainable future for generations to come.

Bangladesh's ICT Verdict on former PM Sheikh Hasina



On November 17, 2025, the International Crimes Tribunal of Bangladesh announced a death sentence to the former Prime Minister of the country, Sheikh Hasina. The tribunal found her “guilty of crimes against humanity, including instigation, incitement, and issuing orders that led to killings, during the violent suppression of student-led protests in 2024.” The July-August 2024 protests in Bangladesh had resulted in nationwide mass unrest, eventually leading to the fall of Hasina’s government in Dhaka. Since then, she has been living in exile in New Delhi.

The international reactions to the verdict have been mixed. The United Nations Human Rights Office described the verdict as an “important moment for victims,” while Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International have criticized the trial for violating international fair trial standards as the proceedings were conducted in absentia. Countries like China and India have taken neutral diplomatic stance.

Lebanon-Israel Truce Talks Expand Amid Hezbollah Disarmament Deadline

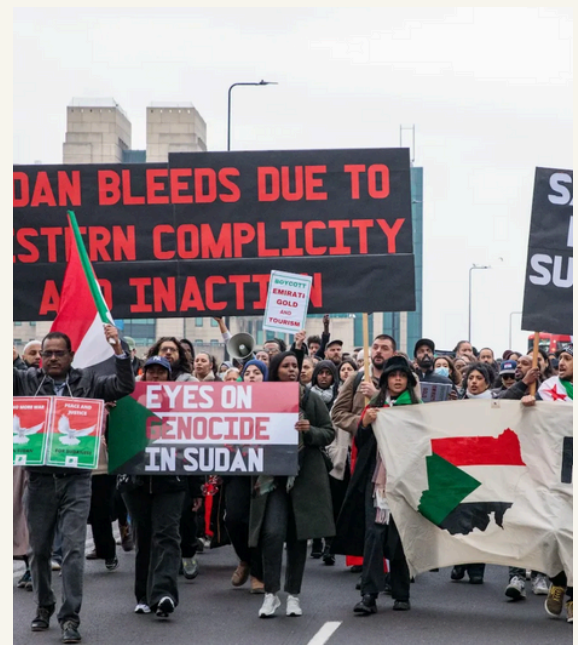
As negotiations proceed in Naqoura, the Lebanon-Israel truce committee's talks on December 19 took a broad turn, covering issues of civilian rebuilding and displacement. The discussions indicate the willingness to secure long-term stability beyond the 2024 ceasefire scenario. The talks are largely concentrated on the disarmament of Hezbollah and the elevation of the Lebanese state's security presence south of the Litani River, which is a continuously raised demand by Israel.

The President of Lebanon talked about the economic recovery and the restoration of the community, while Israel brought forth the removal of the armed presence of Hezbollah as their point. Israeli and Lebanese negotiating teams have travelled to the US to meet US officials for discussions on the ceasefire. Peace remains tenuous, and the next meeting is expected to take place in January.



Sudan: Renewed Violence and Strategic Shifts.

Sudan's domestic war kept escalating with the RSF, the paramilitary group, seizing crucial locations like Babanusa and the Heglig oilfield, as well as hitting civilian facilities such as hospitals and causing the death of over a hundred people. The United Kingdom imposed sanctions on high-ranking RSF officials for their involvement in the genocide, whereas UN peacekeeping forces were killed during another drone strike. Moreover, South Sudanese troops stepped in to safeguard power assets following a triple security agreement, which is a sign of growing instability in the region.

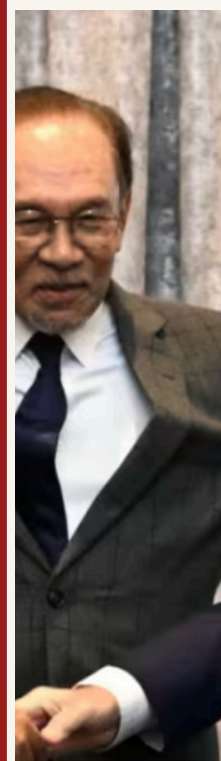


India-Africa Diplomacy Intensifies – P.M. Modi visits Ethiopia

The Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, made a trip to Ethiopia, where he particularly placed importance on peace, education, and technology as areas of strategic collaboration. He signed new MOUs for the training of UN peacekeepers and data-centre development. At the same time, Ethiopia presented Modi with its highest civilian award, which is a sign of increasing South-South cooperation and India's growing diplomatic presence in Africa. India's diplomatic expansion into Africa is a clear indication that the developing powers are now practically influencing the global governance, security partnerships, and development cooperation to a significant extent and doing it in a non-Western way.



China and U.S. Push for Thailand-Cambodia Ceasefire



Before the ASEAN summit, the U.S. and China had together increased their diplomatic activities to bring back the ceasefire between Thailand and Cambodia. The highest-ranked diplomats from both nations were in touch with the rulers of Bangkok and Phnom Penh to request a decrease in tensions after the most severe fighting outbreak in years. The chair of ASEAN, notwithstanding Cambodia's reluctance and overlapping land claims, gave a hint of optimism for the peace talks. Such an unusual occasion of synchronised China-U.S. diplomacy reveals that the superpowers can rely on each other, though never completely, when it comes to defusing regional security flashpoints through their rivalry.





Rising Anti-Immigrant Rhetoric and Policy Debates in Europe

In a number of European countries, anti-immigrant political rhetoric and measures have escalated from protests in London to parliamentary discussions reflecting deeper concerns regarding migration, national identity, and the funding of public services. Not only are the right-wing parties becoming more vocal, but also the mainstream ones are becoming more active in controlling immigration and creating cultural discourse, all this before the European elections are near, thus affecting the politics in the respective countries and the whole bloc. This process has consequences for the unity of the European Union and its relations with the neighbouring areas.



AUSTRALIA'S GUN CONTROL DEBATE SHARPENS AFTER BONDI BEACH ATTACK.



A mass shooting that killed several people at a Jewish celebration in Bondi Beach, the incident, which was connected to alleged Islamic State influence, has started to break the agreement among Australian politicians on the strict regulation of firearms. The Prime Minister Albanese is advocating for more stringent national control over guns, and at the same time, some right-wing and populist groups are opposing it, saying the problem is with security rather than regulation. This confrontation is stirring up wider discussions on terrorism, social unity, and individual freedoms, and it will have an impact on Australia's approach to counterterrorism both at home and abroad.





Hong Kong's Last Opposition Party Disbands Under China's Pressure

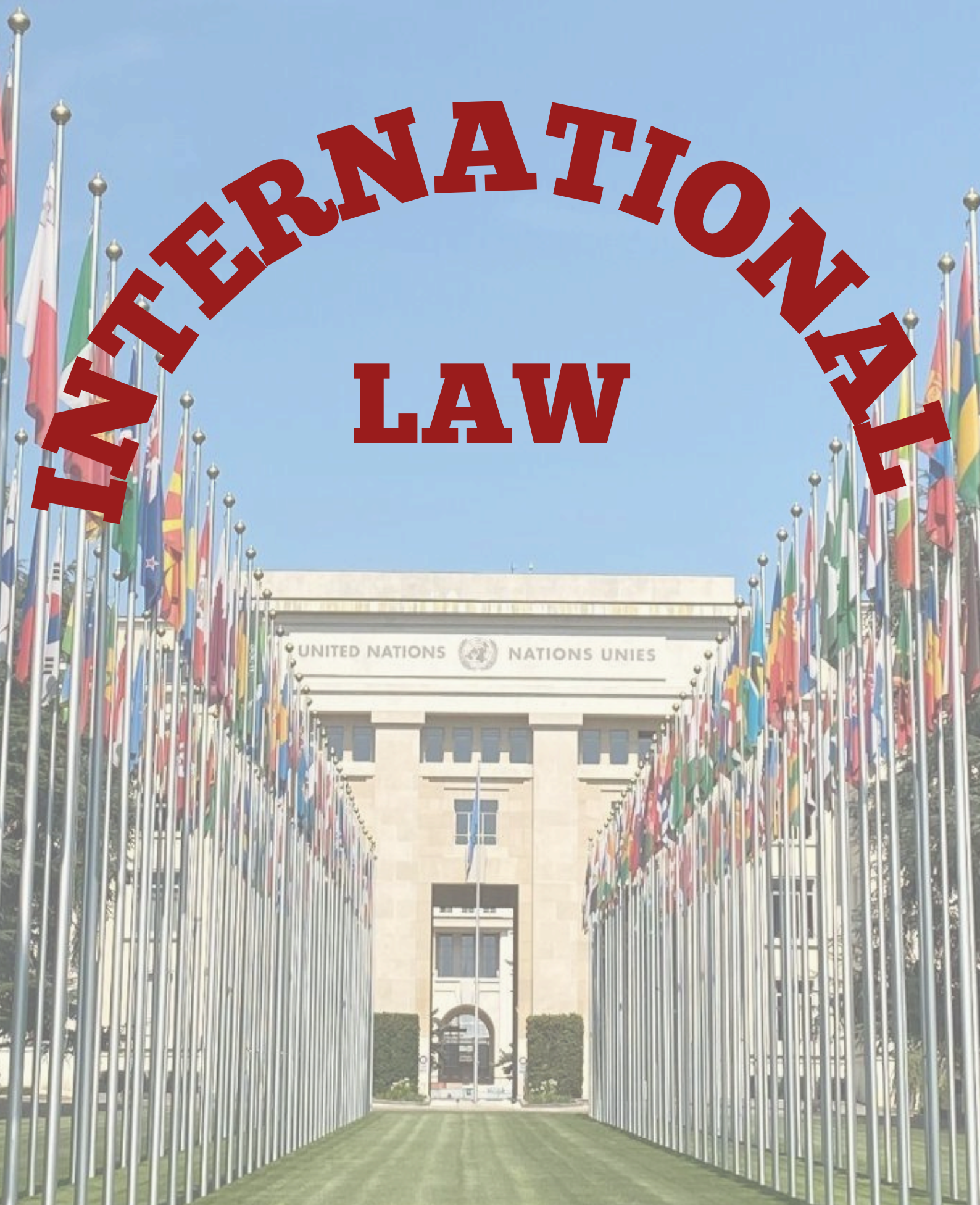
The vote to dissolve the last official opposition party in Hong Kong came amid heavy political pressure from Beijing and the city's national security measures. The party stated that due to the already existing hindrances, it was impossible to be vocal under the recently imposed security laws. Thus, the city witnessed a further decline of political diversity following the handover, as one of the few remaining institutional opposition players was eliminated from the political arena of Hong Kong.



The dissolution of the party was an event that greatly contributed to the establishment of Beijing's complete control over Hong Kong's political and civil life, while at the same time, the latter was seen as weakening the space for organised protests. Besides, it had an impact on the way the world viewed China's governance model and the relations with the Western democracies that have been criticising Beijing's human rights record were also affected



INTERNATIONAL LAW



Operation Sentinel & the New Era of International Cybercrime Enforcement

In the digital age, cybercrime has become one of the biggest risks to international security. Cybercrimes are not limited by national borders, in contrast to traditional crimes. A single ransomware assault may be conceived in one nation, carried out via servers in another, and target victims dispersed throughout several legal jurisdictions. Because cybercrime has no geographical boundaries, it is very challenging to enforce and clearly requires strong international collaboration. Recent INTERPOL operations, particularly Operation Sentinel, demonstrate the effectiveness of concerted international action in severely destroying cybercriminal networks.

INTERPOL oversaw Operation Sentinel, a massive, international campaign against cybercrime that was conducted throughout 19 African nations. The program concentrated on some of the most costly cybercrimes, such as digital extortion, business email compromise schemes, and ransomware attacks. Law enforcement officials detained more than 500 persons connected to organized cybercrime gangs throughout the operation. Additionally, thousands of malicious domains, servers, and digital infrastructures used in cyber-attacks were demolished, and nearly three million US dollars in criminal earnings were recovered. The tremendous economic impact of cybercrime was further demonstrated by investigators' estimation that the illicit activities targeted throughout the investigation had resulted in financial losses well into the millions.

Operation Sentinel was a component of a larger trend of stepping up international cybercrime enforcement rather than a stand-alone operation. Operation Serengeti 2.0, another significant INTERPOL-coordinated operation, resulted in the neutralization of over 11,000 malicious infrastructure components and the arrest of over 1200 alleged cybercriminals. These kinds of operations have brought to light several instances of highly coordinated, international, and technologically advanced cybercrime networks. Additionally, they demonstrated that organized criminal organizations functioning like multinational corporations are increasingly involved in cybercrime, which is no longer the purview of isolated people.



The growing importance of private sector cooperation in these enforcement initiatives is particularly intriguing. Law enforcement authorities were able to find command-and-control servers, identify ransom ware variants, and trace attack vectors thanks to the technical competence, malware analysis, and threat information given by cyber security organizations. One of the significant changes in cyber law enforcement is highlighted by this collaboration between public and commercial organizations, where outside knowledge is essential in combating sophisticated cybercrimes.



From the standpoint of international law, these activities show how current legal frameworks, such as the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime, are put into practice, enabling governments to share evidence, extradite one another, and provide reciprocal legal support. However, the activities also highlight a number of flaws in the existing regimes. Investigations are frequently delayed by variations in country cyber laws, data protection regulations, and procedural requirements. This has increased calls for stronger international legal frameworks, like the recently ratified United Nations Cybercrime Convention, to further strengthen international collaboration and harmonize legal norms.

The scope of the cybercrime issue is highlighted by the data that emerges from these activities. An estimated hundreds of billions of dollars are lost annually as a result of cybercrime worldwide; ransom ware assaults are becoming more frequent and more severe. Due to the frequent attacks on hospitals, financial institutions, and vital infrastructure, public safety and national security are more important than just economic harm. Operation Sentinel and associated international cybercrime enforcement initiatives are essentially a major shift in the way the world responds to cyber threats. It demonstrates that effective enforcement does not always need to be borderless, even though cybercrime may be. Even the most advanced cybercriminal networks can be disrupted by coordinated international cooperation, intelligence sharing, and public-private partnerships. Maintaining accountability and safeguarding the integrity of the global digital ecosystem will require strengthening the international rule of law and cooperative structures since cyber threats are always changing.

International Law and Human Rights: Protecting Dignity in a Fragmented World

International law and human rights form the cornerstone of global justice, establishing norms for state conduct and protections against power abuses. In an interconnected yet polarized world, these frameworks are vital for promoting accountability amid rising political, technological, and environmental threats. Significant advancements have occurred since World War II, yet ongoing armed conflicts, digital surveillance, climate-induced displacement, and authoritarian trends continue to challenge the effectiveness of these protections.

The contemporary human rights system emerged post-World War II, responding to widespread atrocities. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1948, outlined universal standards of dignity and equality, though non-binding. It paved the way for binding treaties, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), collectively known as the International Bill of Human Rights. These affirm inherent rights such as freedom from torture, fair trial, expression, and access to education for all individuals. Regional instruments, like the European Convention on Human Rights (1950) and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (1981), offer localized enforcement. Monitoring and accountability rely on UN treaty bodies, which review state reports and, where permitted, individual complaints.

The Human Rights Council's special procedures, including Special Rapporteurs, investigate thematic issues like torture or religious freedom, issuing public reports to influence state behaviour. Judicial mechanisms include the International Criminal Court (ICC), established by the Rome Statute (1998, entered into force 2002), prosecuting genocide and war crimes, and regional courts like the European Court of Human Rights, which bind states to comply with rulings. Enforcement, however, depends on state cooperation, leading to inconsistencies where jurisdictions are rejected or judgments ignored.

Current challenges strain the system. Prolonged conflicts in Ukraine, Yemen, Sudan, and Myanmar involve widespread violations of international humanitarian and human rights law, including civilian attacks, displacement, and aid denial.



In Ukraine, Russian forces have committed systematic torture and war crimes in Sudan, both parties engage in arbitrary detention and killings; Yemen sees arbitrary detentions and restrictions on women; Myanmar involves ongoing abuses against Rohingya. Technological advances enable mass digital surveillance, threatening privacy and expression, with limited binding international regulation. Authoritarian resurgence features repressive laws and judicial erosion, hindering redress. Climate change drives displacement through disasters and slow-onset effects, yet refugee frameworks provide inadequate protection for non-persecution-based migrants.

To bolster protections, states should ratify more treaties, accept court jurisdictions, and enable individual complaints. Human rights must integrate into climate agreements, recognizing environmental impacts as rights issues. Binding norms on digital privacy and expression are essential. Supporting civil society, including youth and grassroots groups, enhances monitoring and advocacy.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, international law and human rights are essential for justice, dignity, and freedom in a divided world. Despite enforcement gaps rooted in state sovereignty, political will, and resource limits these frameworks have driven progress through norm-setting, monitoring, and accountability. Renewed multilateral cooperation, innovative reforms like expanded court access and climate-human rights linkages, and empowered civil society can address emerging threats from conflicts, technology, authoritarianism, and environmental crises. Sustained commitment will fulfill universal rights as a tangible reality, fostering resilience and equity globally.



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INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS





India's Strategic Diplomacy: Strengthening the Global South in the WTO Framework

The World Trade Organization (WTO) is at a critical juncture, not least for developing countries. With the restructuring of global supply chains, the explosion in digital trade, and shifts in geopolitical tensions that have reshaped economic partnerships, many developing countries are under new pressure. "They need a sufficient policy space to be able to support their own development, they need fair access to global markets and trade rules which acknowledge social and economic realities."

For the bulk of the Global South, where the majority of the world's people reside, the WTO remains relevant. Despite its flaws and current debates on reform, this remains one of the few multilateral forums in which developing countries can voice concerns collectively, negotiate rules and push against discriminatory trade practices. In such a scenario of increasing recourse to unilateral trade actions and power-based negotiations, the WTO remains an institution with a rules-based architecture protecting weak and small economies.

In recent decades, with the changing world order, India situated itself as a key partner and voice of developing / least developed countries. India's trade diplomacy is a manifestation of its long-standing adherence to development-oriented multilateralism. From steering the Doha Development Agenda to engaging in developing-country coalitions, India has consistently maintained that trade rules must promote growth, livelihoods and social welfare, not just market efficiency.

This week's update takes an in depth look at India's changing role at the WTO & what this means for the Global South. Key themes that it addresses include trade justice, coalition building of developing countries and the imperative for meaningful reform of the multilateral trading system. In issues like food security, digital governance, fisheries subsidies and dispute settlement, India's positions remain at the centre of debates crucial to the future of global trade.

INDIA'S STRATEGIC TRADE DIPLOMACY: VOICE OF THE GLOBAL SOUTH

India has become vocal about the interests of the developing world in WTO talks. India has argued that development should be at the heart of international trade talks since the start of the Doha Development Agenda. Instead of relegating development to the back burner, India has maintained that trade rules will have to reflect the economic pluralism and structural constraints in developing economies.

One of India's most evident gifts has been in the domain of agriculture and food security. India has resisted the dismantlement of public stockholding programmes and small-producer subsidies, for millions: Staying alive during a global food emergency. At least one role in task forces put together to ramp up countries' institutional capacity, and the need to safeguard domestic food systems and rural livelihoods by defending public stockholding. These issues are even more pertinent in the developing world, where agriculture is a major employer and food security can be tied to social stability.

India's WTO strategy has been fundamentally based on the idea of coalition-building. India, as part of the G-33, has been a leading voice for a permanent solution on PSH (Public Stockholding for Food Security). Its experience in the group of G-20 (around trade) enables it to participate actively in talks on agricultural and industrial policy reform. Outside of the WTO, India has further employed South-South platforms such as the IBSA and BRICS to forge an alignment between the developing and emerging economies on global economic governance issues.

Safeguarding policy space still forms an integral part of India's strategy. India also maintains that SDT (Special and Differential Treatment) is essential to fix the gaps in development.

It has also been a backer of issuing TRIPS flexibilities where possible, especially as related to public health, in order to maintain access to affordable drugs. In the digital trade sphere, India has taken a cautious approach, citing worries over data sovereignty and cautioning against a hasty imposition of binding e-commerce rules that may constrict future development choices.

India's proposals for reform of the WTO concentrate on rebalancing and trust in the system. It has insisted that the Appellate Body be brought back to life, negotiations be more transparent and rule-making processes should include all members' interests, not those of the most powerful.

This has characterised recent Ministerial Conferences, such as MC12 and MC13. India's hard line on fisheries subsidies was designed to thwart rules that might unfairly burden fishers in developing countries, while its stance on the e-commerce moratorium underscored the necessity of talking about digital disparities before making permanent commitments.

NATIONS WHICH TOOK AID IN INDIA'S LEADERSHIP

India's active participation at the WTO has significantly contributed to the enhanced bargaining power of several countries in the Global South. Through coordinated postures and common approaches, several developing countries have secured more visibility and negotiating room in global trade negotiations.

African countries, including Kenya, have closely aligned with India on matters such as fisheries subsidies and agricultural reform, where options for policy space are critical for coastal communities and small farmers. Indonesia, a fellow G-33 member, ensures this, too, has been indicated on numerous occasions.

India's defence of TRIPS flexibilities is primarily also significant for countries such as Nigeria, where access to affordable medicines and technology transfer are still major issues. Bangladesh, which is ready to graduate from LDC status, has gained as India stood up to defend Special and Differential Treatment, which protects export competitiveness for it during this phase.

With the increasing attention being paid to digital trade and data governance, South Africa and India have made common cause in emphasizing the need for sovereignty and fair rule-setting in the digital economy. In the WTO, India has allowed a collective identity to be formed of developing countries through joint statements, coalitions and coordinated stances.

Over the past few years, doubts about the WTO's usefulness have been mounting. Backlogs in the negotiation process, malfunctioning mechanisms for settling disputes, and a growing use of bilateral and regional trade agreements as an alternative to entering into multilateral agreements have challenged its effectiveness. Nevertheless, for a number of developing countries, the WTO remains relevant.

The WTO is, unlike other specialised agencies, for example, a multilateral institution. That is to say smaller and developing economies are not left to negotiate alone with more powerful partners. Rather, they participate in a joint venture where the rules apply to all members. For the Global South, this collective arena provides some insulation from lopsided power dynamics and a forum in which to express development concerns.

The WTO also continues to be the forum for dealing with new and emerging trade issues. New trade measures, including digital trade, climate-related actions and sustainability standards, are more likely to be set in such a way that front-runner countries may constrain participation from recently coming countries without an effective voice for the latter. One of the main reasons why active participation in the WTO still counts is to ensure that these rules are not being newly stacked against further development.



FOOD SECURITY AND LIVELIHOODS: A FUNDAMENTAL GOAL

Food security has been one of the most delicate and critical problems for developing countries in the WTO. For numerous economies of the Global South, agriculture is not a sector, it's millions of small farmers and rural farmworkers. That makes measures such as public stockholding and MSPs vital instruments for protecting farmers' incomes and consumers' ability to access food.

The relentless focus that India has maintained on these questions has, at least, ensured that food security is part of the multilateral agenda. Through its insistence that agricultural rules should take into account development needs, India has raised the issue of the unequal subsidies extended by developed countries and the inadequate policy space available to developing ones. This has struck a chord with countries all over Asia, Africa and Latin America who experience comparable setbacks.

Instead of viewing agriculture only from the standpoint of trade liberalisation, India has accentuated its social and developmental aspects. The approach has helped globalize agriculture as a public good in the era of the world food crisis and runaway supply disruptions.



DIGITAL TRADE AND THE ISSUE OF FAIRNESS

The explosive rise of the digital economy has provided exciting opportunities, but it also raises vital questions about fairness and inclusion. Most developing countries do not have the infrastructure, regulatory expertise, or technological capacity to participate on a level playing field in digital trade.

India's careful approach to e-commerce negotiations is representative of these concerns. India has underscored the requirement of digital equity by asking for a thoughtful approach before making any binding commitments. Data localisation, domestic digital industry and access to technology is at the heart of this discussion.

For several Global South nations, India's posture has helped express common concerns about the threat of digital rules being marked by bias in favour of tech-rich economies. By reviving concerns for sovereignty and development-oriented regulation, an opening space has allowed wider discussions on how digital trade can help rather than hinder sustainable development objectives.

SOUTH-SOUTH SOLIDARITY IN A TIME OF FRAGMENTATION

While global trade governance is increasingly dispersed, South-South cooperation has been brought to the fore. The global south is increasingly aware that collaboration is one of the few guaranteed ways to defend its interests inside global organisations.

India's approach to, and its role in establishing and maintaining coalitions, is indicative of this understanding. Forums such as the G-33, G-20 11 (trade), IBSA and BRICS create venues where developing and emerging economies can exchange experiences, coordinate positions and negotiate from a position of greater strength. These are not coalitions to stop advances, but one to make sure they are a fair, inclusive advance.

These alliances helped in forging narratives on development, equity and fairness in global trade that India could claim to have influenced. This has been effective in avoiding the marginalisation of Global South considerations in an ever-more complex trading system.

LOOKING AHEAD: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The future of the WTO will be greatly determined by how effectively it fits into evolving global contexts. For the Global South, the task is not just to defend broader policy space, but also to shape new rules in areas like trade measures related to climate action and digital services, as well as technology access.

India will be crucial in managing these dilemmas of engagement. Its capacity to reconcile the interests of least developed, developing and emerging economies makes it a unique actor in the multilateral system. But credibility will also hinge on navigating between national interest and wider Global South sympathies.

At a time of mounting economic uncertainties and unprecedented new challenges to global integration, the calls for a fair and inclusive multilateral trading system become ever more pressing. To that end, forging unity among developing countries, advocating open and inclusive dialogue, and striving for genuine reform will continue to be the overriding theme of our endeavour.

India's proactive participation in the WTO is a manifestation of its wider commitment to equitable, inclusive and development-focussed global trade. By time and again placing issues such as food security, special and differential treatments, digital sovereignty and a wire working dispute settlement system at the centre of its stance, India has emerged in be seen loudly as a principled representative of the developing and least developed.

Going forward, the Global South has key opportunities to build on collaboration for new rules being discussed in domains such as agriculture, fisheries, digital trade and access to technology. At a time of economic uncertainty and geopolitical instability, we will need the power of the WTO as a tool more than ever before. India's trade diplomacy provides one route to reinforce this cohesion.

The real test will be in delivering WTO reforms that are transparent, inclusive and address development issues. And a more equitable multilateral trading system that truly reflects the interests of the Global South would require continued cooperation, building trust and shared leadership.

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From Kathmandu to Dhaka: Youth Resistance and Regime Crisis in South Asia

Understanding the Background

It is at once a complex and challenging landscape for South Asia's young generation to navigate: at one end, rapid demographic growth runs parallel to some persistent economic uncertainty. While the rates of higher education have seen a steep incline, many graduates either find themselves without jobs or in precarious, low-paying jobs, often outside the formal economy. The gap between expectation and opportunity grows more visible by the day, as luxury cars, designer brands, and vacations juxtapose with elite families via social media when the prospects for youth rest on merit but are often hampered by nepotism or none at all.

This lived experience is reinforced by statistical realities: In Nepal, youth unemployment surpassed 12%, disproportionately affecting university graduates; in Bangladesh, it peaked above 30% for highly educated youth by 2023, while in India, urban youth unemployment hovers close to 17%. These figures reflect more than just cyclical economic hardship. Instead, they represent deep-seated mismatches between education systems and labor market needs, combined with slow job creation and widespread informality. High-profile events, like the viral "Christmas tree" of luxury brand boxes posted by a Nepali politician's son, energized generational campaigns like #NepoBabies that captured young people's anger at entrenched privilege.

Growing frustrations then combined with global trends from 2022 to 2025. Sri Lanka's Aragalaya, Bangladesh's July Revolution, and Nepal's Gen Z protests showed how a digitally savvy, educated youth cohort can mobilize at scale and reshape politics in ways never seen before, challenging legacy frameworks for accountability.

Bangladesh's July Revolution has been a striking demonstration of how digitally coordinated action by youth can upset established regimes. Sparked by protest against government job quotas, the Gen Z activists rapidly scaled up their mobilization. Using social media, encrypted apps, and street action, campus discontent transformed into a wave that toppled the 15-year government in less than two months. The protests underlined how technology-enabled organizing and spontaneous leadership could make youth a decisive force for political accountability.



Youth-Led Regime Shocks: Bangladesh and Nepal

Events in Bangladesh and Nepal between 2024 and 2025 illustrate just how swiftly and dramatically youth activism can reshape South Asian politics. In Bangladesh, the tipping point came this June, when university students rose in protest after the Supreme Court reinstated a 30 percent quota for descendants of 1971 Liberation War veterans in civil service jobs. The issue quickly became a lightning rod for wider frustrations with what students saw as entrenched favoritism and shrinking merit-based opportunities. Violence mounted after Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina publicly criticized the demonstrators. The state's clampdown grew intense: human rights groups report that security forces killed over 1,400 people between July and August 2024, and thousands more were injured during clashes and crackdowns. What started as a movement about employment policy rapidly surged into a broader call for deep political change, culminating on August 5, 2024, when Hasina—after 15 years in power—fled to India and resigned. An interim government took over, facing for its part the daunting task of addressing the now-rampant political and institutional grievances—from justice for victims to electoral and constitutional reform.

That pivotal moment for Nepal came when, on September 4, 2025, the government announced a ban on 26 social media platforms—including Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and WhatsApp. The official rationale of regulating digital space rang hollow for a generation whose livelihoods and activism were deeply enmeshed with these very platforms. Many young Nepalis earn their livelihood and conduct social outreach through YouTube, TikTok, and similar channels, so the ban was widely seen as a direct economic and cultural attack. This action unsurprisingly triggered an immediate outpouring of dissent: Thousands gathered in Kathmandu on September 8, denouncing the move and demanding greater transparency. The state response was immediate, but by September 9, Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli had resigned; within days, an interim administration was appointed, fronted by former Chief Justice Sushila Karki, and scheduled new elections for March 2026.

What made the movement in Nepal distinctive was its distributed, tech-powered organization. Youth organizers planned protests and declarations with the help of encrypted apps and on Discord—a platform originally used by gamers. This not only helped them avoid government surveillance but also reflected a leaderless yet constantly networked model new to South Asian protest history. Instead of charismatic spokespeople, influence flowed digitally, with distributed networks sustaining momentum and innovation even under pressure.

New Technologies, New Transitions

What differentiates this new wave of South Asian youth movements is their striking digital sophistication. Organizers have used encrypted messaging apps, VPNs, and AI-driven content creation strategies with alacrity not seen before. For instance, in the run-up to Nepal's protests in 2025, students created dozens of short, persuasive videos, some powered through tools like ChatGPT, Grok, and DeepSeek and shared them on TikTok and Discord, outsmarting surveillance to keep their voices in circulation as bans and internet throttling came into effect. Crowdsourced hashtags and streaming content allowed protest themes like anti-corruption, anti-nepotism, calls for accountability, to spread widely and rapidly, uniting disparate demographics and geographies in real time.

This digital-first, leaderless mode is not without its complications. While it makes crackdowns harder and protest movements more resilient, it also presents serious barriers to sustained strategic planning and institutional reform once the initial goals are achieved. In Bangladesh, for example, the post-revolution interim government turned to Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus in hopes of bridging the energy of mass protest with sound policymaking. In Nepal, a similar handover awaits: an interim government faces the challenge of channeling youth demands-articulated mainly online-into long-term legislative or economic action. As many analysts say, the real test for this generation will be whether the passion, skills, and networks built in the digital trenches can lead to concrete, lasting improvements within traditional institutions.

Lessons for India—and for South Asia's Future

Watching such movements play out across Nepal, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka, one cannot help feeling both admiration and frustration. India, for all its size and energy, has faced its own youth crises-widespread unemployment, public anger at corruption, and a nagging sense that the voices and interests of younger generations are never truly front and center. Yet somehow, mass mobilization in India has remained muted, never quite reaching those transformative dimensions we've witnessed next door. It is tempting to ask: Are we less angry, less organized, or simply more patient?

But that feels too simplistic. If anything, Indian youth are at the leading edge: plugged in, hyper-educated, connected across every major digital platform. We watch, analyze, and debate. Some say our diversity and our vast, complex institutions slow the potential for unified action. Others say India's political parties have simply gotten better at absorbing dissent, fragmenting activism into manageable causes, or shifting narratives before they become regime-shaking movements. But "something must change" feels just as palpable here as anywhere else.

The truth is, South Asia's 2020s have shown the world how a generation empowered by digital networks can rethink democracy. These movements have imparted at least three important lessons. First, never underestimate the speed at which digitally connected, educated youth can move when catalyzed by real grievances-bureaucratic inertia, economic hardship, and visible inequality. Second, ignore young people's legitimacy at your peril. When governments lose the trust and optimism of Gen Z, consequences follow-and not just at the ballot box. Third, technology is a force multiplier: it's no longer just the streets, but the virtual commons that define modern protest.

Will these movements bring lasting change, better governments, fairer opportunities, a true meritocracy? The answer isn't clear yet. But one thing is: No power, party or institution in South Asia can afford to ignore the aspirations and frustrations of its youth. India, with the region's largest and most restive generation, faces a historic choice: either to lead the transformation or risk repeating the cycles we now see shaking our neighbors.



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HIGH SCHOOL

WRITE-UP

Geo-Political Aura Farming



WHAT IS POP CULTURE?

In the modern geopolitical spectacle, Popular Culture often shortened as "pop culture" is described as the sum of ideas, viewpoints, attitudes, and phenomena that are regarded favored by an informal consensus within the majority of a particular society. Unlike "high culture," which has historically been associated with aristocratic patronage and institutional gatekeeping, popular culture is distinguished by its widespread accessibility and quick dissemination through digital and commercial means.

HOW IS POP CULTURE SHAPING OUR OPINIONS?

Though we regard diplomacy as an activity of the politician, diplomacy of the most potent form and greatest strength is actually taking place on your smartphone. Pop culture basically provides a 'feel-good' window into the world. It won't tell you what to believe in; rather, it merely alters the people you are interested in. Hooked on a nation's pop or TV? You've unknowingly elevated the value of the said country in your mind

Friend Filter ; Consider this: It sure helps if you've already spent 50 hours watching dramas from that country and/or listened to artists from that country. Then your brain can stop thinking about that place as "a foreign power" and start thinking about that place as "a cultural friend." I mean, you're not just looking at a map; you're looking at a familiar place.

The New "Cool" Standard; What we think a "good life" looks like is determined by pop culture. Whether it be skincare and technology in Seoul, the lifestyle in Lagos, or simply enjoying a Spanish summer, these influence our standards for what we can achieve. By keeping up with what these trends have set, in reality, we're promoting their culture unwittingly.

The Attention Tax; The algorithm on your news feed acts like a news gatekeeper. If a nation appears to be "invisible" to music and films, then we ignore problems happening within that nation. Conversely, if a nation becomes "trending," then we develop an interest in its success. We watch to be viewers; then we invest to be emotionally attached to its triumph and defeat.

CASE STUDIES: CULTURAL INFLUENCE IN ACTION

The Hollywood Standard (USA): For decades, the U.S. has used the blockbuster film as its primary tool. When a Marvel movie breaks records in theaters from London to Mumbai, it exports more than just entertainment; it exports a specific vision of American heroism and technological lead. This creates a default global trust in American brands

The Hallyu Export (South Korea): South Korea's rise is built on tangible exports like skincare products and high-energy music. By making "K-Beauty" a global standard, they've turned a physical product into a diplomatic bridge. When a consumer buys a Korean face mask, they are participating in a lifestyle that makes Korea seem modern, clean, and aspirational.

The Nintendo Effect (Japan): Japan uses interactive media specifically gaming and anime to maintain a massive "halo effect." Because Japan dominates the consoles in our living rooms and the characters on our screens, they have built a reputation as the world's most creative and reliable partner. This Aura protects their trade interests even during political tension.

The F1 Global Tour and Event-Driven Prestige (UAE & Qatar): The 2025 Formula 1 season solidified the Gulf region as a high-aura hub for luxury and elite networking. These races evolved into cultural festivals that overwrite old stereotypes and build a future-rich national brand. This strategy ensures these nations remain at the center of global investment and conversation.

The Desert Future and World Cup Prep (Saudi Arabia): Saudi Arabia is dominating the global narrative by signing major athletes and hosting massive events like the 6 Kings Slam. By hiring famous figures to promote new cities like NEOM, the nation is aggressively building a global lifestyle brand. This strategy uses entertainment to shift perceptions and position the region as a primary destination for the global elite. The approach successfully attracts billions in investment and tourism by making the kingdom a central player in international sports.

Taylor Swift and the Power of Swiftonomics (USA): Taylor Swift has become a central figure in global economics through a phenomenon known as Swiftonomics. In 2025, her latest album dominated the charts while her record-breaking tours continued to generate billions in local spending. This economic impact is so significant that it is now used as a primary case study for market influence and financial power

Conclusion

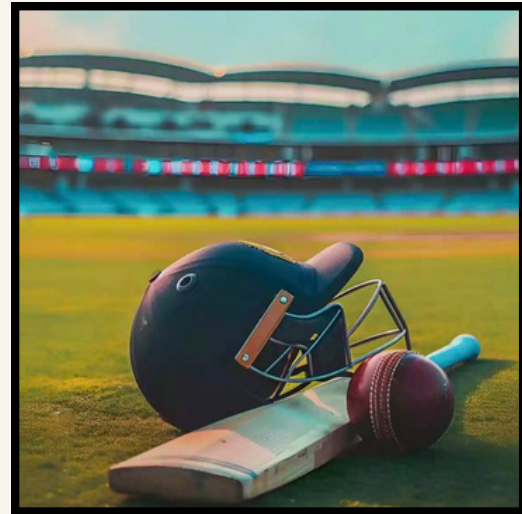
Ultimately, these examples show that a nation's strength is no longer measured only by its borders or its balance sheets. It is built by the stories a country tells and how effectively those stories travel across the globe. When a place feels familiar, innovative, or inspiring, it gains a level of trust that no advertisement can buy. In a world that is more connected than ever, staying relevant is the only way to stay powerful.

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WHERE YOUTH CONNECT WITH DIPLOMACY: ROLE OF CRICKET IN ACTING AS A DIPLOMACY BRIDGE, YOUTH ENGAGEMENT AND FOSTERING RELATIONS WITHIN COUNTRIES

In a world where sports diplomacy has had a major impact on international relations, sports games are becoming increasingly popular among young people. The Olympics, FIFA World Cup, and Cricket World Cup are perfect examples of events that help in understanding between cultures. Considering that all focus has been laid upon football and the Olympics in discussion related to sports diplomacy, cricket should not be overlooked as a diplomatic medium. The respect for cricket among Indian youth runs deep, and it is an important tool to foster cross-cultural interaction and build international relationships.

As cricket is steeped in historical and cultural significance in regions such as South Asia and Africa, the game is far more than a vehicle for sports diplomacy. Cricket easily relates to young people in a meaningful and relevant way



Youth as the Primary Audience for Sports Diplomacy

Cricket has historical and cultural significance in the South Asian and African regions. Therefore, cricket has a significant role in diplomatic relations between countries. Cricket has been employed to serve as sports diplomacy, fostering meaningful engagement among young people in a culturally relevant way.

Youth and sport studies indicate that participation by youth in active sporting activities, as well as involvement in attending sports events, is important in the acquisition of basic social values such as discipline, teamwork, fairness, and respect for game rules. Placed in an international sporting context, such values provide young individuals with rare access to global standards and vibrant intercultural experiences. Cricket competitions-entertaining bilateral series or an exciting world event-offer the young spectator dynamic and image-rich moments within the context of a competitive scenario based not on unfriendliness but fair play and mutual appreciation.



Cricket as a Diplomatic Bridge

Cricket diplomacy has played the role of soft diplomatic bridge during periods of political unease. Major performances and speeches can come as a phase of diplomatic détente signaling willingness to interact without official talks. You can read more on contact sports in our Knowledge section Even in some one-off big events there is diplomacy to be fostered and placed behind the event and it can be done so over a cricket match - That is not something which one get exposed every fortnight.

The Cricket World Cup is one such event, serving as a model for global interaction. It requires flawless activity on the part of governments, sports associations, the media, and civil societies for hosting as well as participating, thus turning it into an area for global activity via informal global interaction. Such events espouse the idea of global interaction and participation in the minds of the younger generation.



India's Role in Youth Focused Cricket

Cultural presence and demographics already provide a prominent role for India in global cricket diplomacy. The young members of Indian society have the second-largest youth population in the world, and cricket has a large role in their perception of the global setting as well as their own country. Aspiring stories are created by the success of Indian cricketers across global platforms, and overseas tours allow young audiences to experience different cultures and patterns of play.

This exposure is also greatly increased by international participation in domestic leagues. This involvement of foreign coaches and players in Indian cricket creates formal yet, more essentially, informal cultural exchanges, and vital interpersonal relationships that are important from a diplomatic perspective in creating long-lasting bonds between countries apart from official state channels.

Evidences

Sports diplomacy is thus considered in academia to provide opportunities for countries to gain soft power in the world by changing their reputation and perceptions of the general public. Various analyses, including those from sociology, political science, and youth development, have shown that because sports engagement makes an emotional connection, it is more relatable and accessible, especially to the younger audience.

Comparative studies illustrate that continuous sports participation, rather than a one-time event, translates into much better diplomatic outcomes. Given the regular calendar of cricket tours and competitions, this continuity is assured, thereby strengthening its potential as a tool for diplomacy.

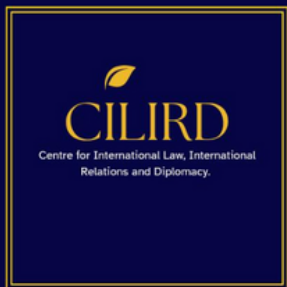
Key Insight

The most important conclusion from this analysis is that the value of cricket as a diplomatic tool rests in the regular interaction, familiarity, and emotional connections it fosters among the global youth. Cricket is an alternative to using official channels to convey diplomatic signals.

Cricket becomes a dynamic instrument in shaping long-term perceptions related to competition, cooperation, and mutual esteem, all crucial ingredients in forming future diplomatic relationships. Herein, sports diplomacy relies less on short-term political outcomes and looks more toward cultivating a long-term perspective on global cooperation.

Conclusion

For India and other nations where cricket is played, viewing cricket as more than just a source of entertainment but as a key element of social infrastructure can strengthen diplomatic relations and promote cultural understanding. In an era characterized by political instability, cricket shows that communication, mutual respect, and connections can be developed well in advance of formal negotiations—often starting with a bat, a ball, and a common enthusiasm.



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