

EXPLAINED – BRICS 2026 : DECODING THE NEW DELHI DECLARATION

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India held the BRICS Summit from September 12 to 13, 2026, under its chairmanship in New Delhi. The outcome of this summit was the issuance of the New Delhi Declaration that contained the viewpoints of the BRICS group on various issues. The purpose of this explainer is to highlight the salient features of this declaration and its importance for India.

BACKGROUND

The term BRIC was coined in 2001 by an economist at Goldman Sachs, Jim O'Neill, to describe the emerging economies of Brazil, Russia, India, and China and their potential in the world economy. The first BRIC summit was held in Russia in 2009. After the entry of South Africa in 2010, the acronym became BRICS (O'Neill, 2001; Kremlin, 2009; Pinto & Modi, 2012; EFSAS, 2023).

KEY PROVISIONS OF THE NEW DELHI DECLARATION

The New Delhi Declaration was adopted on September 12 during the BRICS Summit in New Delhi. Its unanimous adoption was widely described as a significant diplomatic achievement for India, particularly given the divisions characterising the contemporary international system (ANI, 2026).

Several provisions of the declaration have direct relevance to India's diplomatic, strategic and economic interests. One of the most significant is the renewed commitment to reform of the United Nations Security Council. The declaration recognises the aspirations of Brazil and India to play a greater role in the UN, including its Security Council, while China and Russia reaffirmed their support for both countries. This provides further diplomatic support for India's longstanding demand for greater representation in global decision-making institutions.

The declaration also has significance from the perspective of India's national security. BRICS leaders condemned the terrorist attack in Jammu and Kashmir on April 22, 2025, which resulted in the deaths of 26 civilians, while also expressing opposition to cross-border terrorism, terrorist financing and the provision of safe havens to terrorist organisations. The emphasis on zero tolerance towards terrorism and opposition to double standards in counter- terrorism provides India with an additional diplomatic platform to highlight concerns relating to international terrorism in multilateral forums.

From an economic perspective, the declaration reiterates the commitment to advancing the Strategy for BRICS Economic Partnership 2030. It also supports continued efforts towards developing cross-border payment mechanisms, including payments in the national currencies of BRICS members. Such mechanisms could provide India with greater flexibility in conducting intra-BRICS trade while reducing excessive dependence on the US dollar without necessarily requiring India to pursue an explicitly de-dollarisation-oriented geopolitical strategy (Zerodha, 2026).

The declaration also recognises several initiatives undertaken during India's 2026 BRICS chairmanship. These include the proposed establishment of the BRICS Risk Lab in Gujarat's GIFT City, which could strengthen the financial ecosystem surrounding India's International Financial Services Centre. The declaration also welcomes the creation of India's BRICS Task Force on Growth and Development, providing an institutional platform through which India can contribute to discussions on development finance, digital transformation, artificial intelligence and structural reforms.

India's role in emerging technologies is similarly acknowledged. The declaration congratulates India on hosting the AI Impact Summit and recognises its contribution to international cooperation on artificial intelligence. It also welcomes the establishment of the India Centre for BRICS Industrial Competencies and acknowledges India's initiatives relating to MSMEs and technology-led industrial development. Collectively, these initiatives strengthen India's ability to project itself as a significant contributor to the institutional and economic agenda of BRICS.

WHAT NEXT?

The unanimous adoption of the New Delhi Declaration represents an important diplomatic outcome of India's BRICS chairmanship. However, the long-term significance of the summit will depend less on the adoption of the declaration itself and more on the implementation of its commitments. India will therefore need to sustain diplomatic engagement with other BRICS members and build consensus around areas where implementation remains politically or institutionally difficult.

Particular attention will be required to translate commitments on Security Council reform, payments among members of BRICS, development cooperation, artificial intelligence and institutional initiatives into measurable outcomes. India's challenge will be to maintain consensus within an increasingly diverse BRICS while ensuring that the grouping remains capable of producing practical cooperation rather than merely issuing broad diplomatic commitments. The success of India's chairmanship will ultimately be reflected in the extent to which the priorities articulated in the New Delhi Declaration are carried forward through sustained institutional cooperation and concrete policy outcomes.

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