

EDITORIALS - 14TH SEP 2026

1. Building consensus (GS Paper II International Relations)

This editorial 'Building consensus' was published in **The Hindu** on 14th Sep 2026, highlights the **18th BRICS Summit's** push for reformed **multilateralism** and **emerging-economy** influence.

Summit Significance

- The **18th BRICS Summit** projected unity despite internal differences and continuing wars involving member countries.
- Success rested on **high-level participation**, stronger intra-BRICS trade mechanisms and consensus on a joint declaration.
- Iran and the UAE attended despite their war, while **Saudi Arabia's membership** remained ambiguous after its Minister left before the declaration.

New Delhi Declaration

- The declaration sought **Security Council reform**, supporting greater roles for India and Brazil alongside new global-governance initiatives.
- BRICS opposed **Western sanctions and tariffs**, while promoting local-currency transactions and expanded intra-group trade.
- It condemned **unilateral wars** without naming members or mentioning U.S.-Israeli attacks, Khamenei's assassination or Iran's retaliatory strikes.
- A last-minute Iran-UAE compromise enabled consensus, while the declaration adopted a stronger position on **Palestine and Lebanon**.

India's Diplomatic Role

- India's fourth **BRICS chairship** reinforced its Global South leadership and ability to engage rival geopolitical blocs.
- Narendra Modi's meeting with **Masoud Pezeshkian** helped ease concerns over India's perceived tilt towards the U.S. and Israel.
- Talks with **Xi Jinping** reaffirmed bilateral normalisation, while engagement with ASEAN and African leaders strengthened India's partnerships.

Beyond Editorial

Reform Agenda for BRICS Institutional Architecture

- **Clear accession rules:** The BRICS partner-country category created at the 2024 Kazan Summit shows the need for transparent distinctions between partners and full members.
- **Permanent secretariat:** BRICS could emulate the SCO Secretariat in Beijing or ASEAN Secretariat in Jakarta to ensure continuity between annually rotating chairships.

- **Flexible decision-making:** The ASEAN-X formula allows willing members to advance selected initiatives without compelling others, offering BRICS a model for overcoming consensus paralysis.
- **Development finance:** The New Development Bank targeted 30% of its 2022–2026 financing in local currencies, reducing exchange-rate risks for borrowing countries.
- **Emergency support:** The \$100-billion Contingent Reserve Arrangement remains largely untested, requiring regular crisis simulations and simpler access during balance-of-payments stress.
- **Payment connectivity:** The 2024 Kazan Declaration's voluntary BRICS Cross-Border Payments Initiative requires common technical standards before it can enable efficient local-currency settlements.
- **Outcome monitoring:** BRICS could adopt an annual implementation scorecard similar to the G20 Mutual Assessment Process, which tracks collective commitments through periodic evaluations.

2. A rising graph (GS Paper II Governance, GS Paper I Society)

This editorial 'A rising graph' was published in **The Hindu** on 14th Sep 2026, highlights India's deep-rooted doping problem and the need for stronger **institutional action**.

Scale and Drivers

- At least **13 doping positives** before the Commonwealth and Asian Games have again embarrassed Indian sport.
- India has led global **doping charts** for three consecutive years, with cases spanning athletics, wrestling, weightlifting, wushu and judo.
- Positive results forced withdrawals from the **Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games** squad, with further cases expected.
- Lucrative **cash incentives** encourage athletes and coaches to seek shortcuts, endangering health, reputation and national pride.
- The AIU's risk downgrade and surprise international tests in Bhubaneswar and Bengaluru confirm the problem's **systemic severity**.

Institutional Weaknesses

- Sports federations express concern but lack strict internal enforcement, leaving primary responsibility with the understaffed **National Anti-Doping Agency**.
- NADA has expanded **testing and raids** using intelligence inputs, but India's vast sporting ecosystem requires wider deterrence.
- Greater **institutional independence** from government control is essential for NADA's credibility and effectiveness.
- Effective implementation of the **National Anti-Doping (Amendment) Act, 2025** is needed to strengthen NADA and allied bodies.

Required Response

- Rising testing costs require additional staff and higher **budgetary support**, reversing the current allocation cut.
- India must disrupt the **supply chain** of imported banned substances, illustrated by an Indian supplier's imprisonment in Kenya.
- Hosting the **2030 Commonwealth Games** and pursuing future Olympics require resolutely eliminating doping from Indian sport.

Beyond Editorial

Building a Prevention-Based Sporting Culture

- **Early education:** WADA's ADEL platform trains athletes, coaches, parents and medical professionals, providing a model for compulsory certification before major competitions.
- **Medicine literacy:** NADA India's Know Your Medicine application allows athletes to check medicines against WADA's prohibited list and avoid inadvertent violations.
- **Supplement safety:** Independent batch-testing programmes such as Informed-Sport help identify contaminated supplements, which may otherwise contain undeclared substances prohibited by WADA.
- **Support-personnel liability:** Alberto Salazar's four-year doping-related ban demonstrated that coaches facilitating prohibited practices must face sanctions alongside the athletes involved.
- **Whistle-blower protection:** WADA's Speak Up platform enables confidential reporting, while Yuliya Stepanova's disclosures demonstrated how insiders can expose organised doping systems.
- **Scientific assistance:** Sports Authority of India's National Centres of Excellence provide nutrition, physiotherapy and sports-science support that should reach athletes beyond elite centres.
- **Ethical recognition:** WADA's annual Play True Day promotes clean sport, but federations should also reward compliant academies, coaches and consistently clean athletes.

3. Terror's changing face, India's counter-terror strategy (GS Paper III Security)

This editorial '**Terror's changing face, India's counter-terror strategy**' was published in **The Hindu** on 14th Sep 2026, highlights terrorism's evolution and India's **shift** from **defensive restraint** to **proactive counter-terrorism**.

Changing Threat and Passive Response

- Terrorism has shifted from hierarchical groups to **autonomous cells and lone actors**, increasingly using drones, cyber capabilities and artificial intelligence.
- While **9/11** amplified India's cross-border terrorism concerns, the **26/11 attacks** finally generated wider international solidarity.
- Rajiv Gandhi's assassination, the **1993 Mumbai blasts** and 1998 Coimbatore bombings exposed weaknesses in India's internal security mechanisms.

- The **IC-814 hijacking** forced India to release Masood Azhar and Ahmed Omar Sheikh for over 160 hostages.
- The 2001 Parliament attack triggered **Operation Parakram**, but nuclear escalation risks produced disengagement without directly punishing Pakistan.
- Despite attacks including Akshardham, Varanasi, Pune and multiple Delhi bombings, India largely avoided **decisive retaliation** against Pakistan.

Shift towards Proactive Counter-Terrorism

- After **2014**, India adopted punitive deterrence, treating externally supported terrorism as an **act of war**.
- The 2016 Uri attack prompted **cross-border surgical strikes**, signalling India's willingness to target terrorist infrastructure beyond the Line of Control.
- After the 2019 Pulwama attack, the **Balakot air strikes** marked the first Indian Air Force attack on a Pakistani terror target.
- The 2025 Pahalgam attack triggered **Operation Sindoor**, which destroyed terrorist leadership, headquarters and Pakistani military assets within 96 hours.
- India subsequently declared that restraint had ended, cross-border terrorism would invite war-like retaliation, and **nuclear blackmail** would not deter action.
- **PRAHAAR**, unveiled in February 2026, established India's first comprehensive counter-terrorism framework based on whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches.

Present Strategy and Global Cooperation

- Despite reduced terrorism in Kashmir, continued **cross-border infiltration** requires eliminating surviving networks and strengthening intelligence-led operations.
- India must undertake **pre-emptive action** against emerging threats and terrorist launch pads across the Line of Control.
- Comprehensive **de-radicalisation** should integrate vulnerable youth while making terrorist recruitment socially and materially costly.
- Disrupting **terror financing** requires sustained coordination with friendly countries and stronger international enforcement.
- India used the **SCO Summit** to oppose double standards and state support for terrorism as a strategic instrument.
- The **Delhi Declaration's** specific reference to the Pahalgam attack reflected growing international consensus against terrorism.

Beyond Editorial

Democratic Accountability in Counter-Terror Operations

- **Constitutional proportionality:** The 2017 Puttaswamy judgment requires restrictions on privacy to satisfy legality, legitimate state purpose and proportionality, including during security operations.
- **Surveillance safeguards:** In PUCL v. Union of India, the Supreme Court required senior authorisation, limited-duration interception and review committees for telephone tapping.

- **Speedy justice:** Union of India v. K.A. Najeed held that prolonged incarceration can justify constitutional bail despite restrictive provisions under the UAPA.
- **Legislative scrutiny:** Britain's Intelligence and Security Committee oversees the policies, expenditure and operations of MI5, MI6 and GCHQ, offering a parliamentary oversight model.
- **Traceable coordination:** India's Multi-Agency Centre and State-level subsidiary centres facilitate intelligence sharing, but clear audit trails are necessary to establish institutional responsibility.
- **Independent remedy:** Britain's Investigatory Powers Tribunal receives complaints concerning intelligence agencies, illustrating specialised scrutiny without publicly exposing sensitive operational information.
- **Rights-based security:** The UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy treats human rights and the rule of law as fundamental, a principle also incorporated into India's PRAHAAR framework.