

## **Illegal Immigration and National Security**

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## **Illegal Immigration and National Security: A Closer Look**

**Context:** The Border Security Force (BSF) reported that **three Bangladeshi nationals** were apprehended over two days attempting to cross into Indian territory by circumventing the border fence.

## **Background:**

- 1. Enhanced Vigilance in Tripura: The BSF has intensified surveillance along the Tripura border to counter illegal entries.
- 2. Illegal Immigration and Internal Security Threats:
  - Militant Infiltration: Concerns have risen over the presence of militants among illegal immigrants, including groups like NSCN and KUFLA, suspected of entering India to execute terrorist activities.
  - **Human Trafficking: Human trafficking** and smuggling, particularly involving women, have become increasingly common across the borders in recent decades.
  - Social Tensions: The Commission on Integration and Cohesion noted that high migration levels, coupled with social issues like poverty and inadequate housing, often lead to community tensions.
  - Strain on Resources: Immigration has added pressure on government resources, requiring increased spending on education and healthcare services for immigrants.
  - Electoral Impact: Many illegal immigrants have unlawfully enlisted as voters, claiming citizenship status and affecting electoral rolls.
  - Identity Crisis: The influx has created an identity crisis among the region's indigenous communities, with widespread encroachment on forestland by immigrants for settlement and farming, leading to resource-based conflicts with local populations.

## 3. Indian Laws Addressing Illegal Migration:

- The Foreigners Act of 1946 empowers the central government to deport illegal foreign nationals.
- The Passport (Entry into India) Act of 1920 allows state governments to remove illegal foreigners by force.
- The Citizenship Act of 1955 outlines the processes for obtaining and determining Indian citizenship.
- 4. Proposed Measures:

- **Refugee Policy:** A significant issue in managing illegal immigration is the **absence of a structured refugee policy**; a comprehensive approach by the central government is essential.
- **Diplomatic Cooperation:** India should seek **diplomatic solutions to encourage cooperation** from neighboring countries, as **illegal migration** is challenging to address without support from origin nations.
- Identity Cards for Border Residents: Introducing identity cards for border residents who frequently cross for legitimate reasons would enhance control.
- Border Fencing Completion: Completing the fencing along unprotected border areas would help curb illegal entries.
- **Regional Cooperation:** Forums like **BIMSTEC** could foster **regional dialogue on illegal migration** and strengthen support among member nations.
- **Reinforced Border Security: Reinforcing border security forces** such as the BSF and ITBP, along with establishing a **secondary defence line** via state police, would enhance security measures at the border.

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