

# African Union to join G-20, as Sherpas reach a deal

Membership of the AU in the grouping appears to be a major breakthrough, with both Russian and Chinese officials backing the move; it is unclear whether the forum will be renamed 'G-21'

**Suhasini Haidar**  
**Ananth Krishnan**  
NEW DELHI

**T**he African Union (AU) is set to join the G-20 as negotiators agreed on clearing its membership, according to sources privy to the discussions at the Sherpa meeting at a resort on the outskirts of Delhi.

This will mean the 55-member AU will join the European Union as the only two regional bodies in the G-20.

While it still unclear whether the G-20 will be renamed as the "G-21" after the induction of the AU, Indian officials said the announcement would help "leave a lasting imprint" of the work the Indian Presidency has done in bringing in the Global South's ambi-



**On alert:** Security personnel keep strict vigil near the G-20 venue at Pragati Maidan in New Delhi on Thursday. R.V. MOORTHY

tions to the economic grouping.

As talks paused on Thursday afternoon, Sherpas, who are the personal representatives of each of the G-20 leaders, will move their discussions to the Delhi G-20 venue next, but negotiations will continue until there is agreement for

a draft declaration, the sources said.

No G-20 summit has ended without a joint statement, and Indian officials who hope to avoid such an outcome say they hope to fill the gaps by the time the summit ends on Sunday afternoon. Much of the effort is on resolving the "geopol-

itical issue" paragraph, one of two paragraphs that were agreed to in the Bali G-20 document last year, that Russia and China have opposed in the Indian draft. The most significant differences are over "Paragraph 6" of the latest draft, that seeks to quote United Nations General Assembly resolutions condemning the Russian invasion of Ukraine, but there remain others, the sources said.

For the past month, Sherpas have been burning the midnight oil, with negotiations on a draft declaration continuing until the early hours of the morning. Even on Thursday, the latest version of the draft was circulated close to 3 a.m.

**CONTINUED ON**  
**» PAGE 12**

## **AU to join G-20, as Sherpas reach a deal**

The sources said that while “much ground has been covered” in the past few days, differences remain in the language over climate financing and debt restructuring as well. In addition, the developing countries continue to push back on deadlines to phase out fossil fuels and cut carbon emissions. In particular, China’s delegation has been opposed to many of the wordings and initiatives proposed by India, with more than one diplomat present at the meeting speaking about the constant confrontations going “back and forth” between the Indian and Chinese delegates.

Membership of the AU, however, appears to be one point of agreement, and both Russian and Chinese officials on Thursday backed the move even as they appeared to claim credit for it.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning told reporters “China is the first country that explicitly expressed its support for the African Union’s membership in the G-20”. “At the China-Africa Leaders’ Dialogue last month, President Xi Jinping again stressed that China will work actively to support the AU’s full membership in the G-20. China and the AU are important partners in building a high-level China-Africa community with a shared future and safeguarding international fairness and justice. China supports the AU in playing a bigger role in global governance,” Ms. Mao said.

Russia’s G-20 Sherpa was also quoted as saying by Russian media that Moscow was among the first to support the AU’s membership.



# Modi presents a 12-point proposal to expand India-ASEAN cooperation

**Press Trust of India**  
JAKARTA

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday presented a 12-point proposal to expand cooperation between India and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in areas such as connectivity, trade, and digital transformation even as he called for building a rules-based post-COVID world order, at the annual ASEAN-India Summit here.

Mr. Modi also announced the establishment of a multi-modal connectivity and economic corridor linking Southeast Asia, India, West Asia, and Europe and offered to share New Delhi's digital public infrastructure stack with ASEAN partners.



**Standing together:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi with ASEAN leaders during the ASEAN-India Summit in Jakarta on Thursday. ANI

The 12-point proposal included the Prime Minister's call for a collective fight against terrorism, terror financing and cyber-disinformation and for raising issues being faced by the Global South in multilateral fora.

Also addressing the East Asia Summit, a forum in

the Asia-Pacific region to deal with issues relating to security and defence, Mr. Modi called for joint efforts to strengthen sovereignty and territorial integrity of all nations even as he said India believes a code of conduct for South China Sea should be effective and compliant with the UN

Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

Referring to geopolitical conflicts, he reiterated that "today's era is not of war", and dialogue and diplomacy were the only path to resolution of conflicts.

Mr. Modi's comments on the South China Sea came amid increasing global concerns over China's military muscle-flexing in the region, with several countries reacting sharply to Beijing's territorial claim over the South China Sea in its latest edition of the "standard map of China".

The Prime Minister said terrorism, extremism, and geopolitical conflicts are "big challenges" for "all of us".

**CONTINUED ON**  
» PAGE 12

## PM shows proposals to expand ASEAN relation

"It is imperative to adhere fully to international laws; And everyone's commitment and joint efforts are also necessary to strengthen the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries," he said. The ASEAN countries have been insisting on a binding code of conduct (COC) on the South China Sea largely in view of China's consistent attempts to assert its expansive claims over the region. "The need of the hour is an Indo-Pacific, where international law, including UNCLOS, is equally applicable to all countries; where there is freedom of navigation and overflight; and where there is unimpeded lawful commerce for the benefit of everyone," Mr. Modi said.

## What is heat index and why is it important to measure?

How does high humidity impact the human body during a heatwave? At what temperature and humidity levels do heat cramps or heat exhaustion become likely?

Priyali Prakash

The story so far:

Earlier in August, Iran recorded a scorching heat index of 70 degrees Celsius (°C) in the coastal part of the country, a metric at which survival of life is unfathomable, if not impossible. The country had also declared public holidays on August 2 and 3 on account of "unprecedented heat," Reuters reported. This is not the first time this year that Iran is dealing with extreme heat. In July, U.S.-based weather observer Colin McCarthy reported that the Persian Gulf Airport recorded a heat index of 66.7 °C.

What is heat index?

Heat index, also known as apparent temperature, is a measure of how the temperature feels to humans. Relative humidity is an important factor that determines heat index, along with air temperature.

How is the heat index calculated?

A complex formula to calculate heat index was published by Dr. Robert Steadman, a professor in the textiles and clothing department of Colorado State University, in 1979. Dr. Steadman published two papers titled *The Assessment of Sultriness - Part I: A Temperature-Humidity Index Based on Human Physiology and Clothing Science*, and *Part II: Effects of Wind, Extra Radiation and Barometric Pressure on Apparent Temperature*, both describing his calculations of heat index.

Dr. Steadman's study considers a "typical adult human of either sex, with a height of 1.7 metres and a weight of 67 kg."

Dew point, which is the temperature at which gas is transformed into a liquid state, is an important factor in the calculation of heat index. In terms of atmospheric moisture, it's the temperature at which air cannot hold any more water vapour, and droplets of water begin to form. Dr. Steadman used 14 °C as

the dew point in his calculations. Some countries have developed their own corresponding indices to measure heat index instead of using the one developed by Dr. Steadman.

Is it important to measure the heat index?

Hot air can hold more moisture than cold air. Therefore, when temperature rises, the air's capacity to hold moisture also increases, thus affecting the apparent temperature or heat index. Humidity is typically higher during heat waves – which is why the heat index at the time is usually higher than just the temperature because humid air can feel hotter to humans.

How does high humidity impact the human body?

High humidity can lead to heat stress, meaning the body is unable to get rid of excess heat. Humans usually maintain a core temperature in the range of 36.1 to

37.2 °C. When the body is unable to get rid of excess heat, the heart rate increases due to a rise in core temperature, leading to heat-related exhaustion and rashes, among other symptoms. It can also be fatal if not addressed promptly.

At high temperatures, the human body can lose excess heat through perspiration and cool itself. But when humidity is high as well, it is difficult to sweat and then for that sweat to evaporate because the air around is already saturated with moisture. This makes it difficult for the body to lose heat.

On the other hand, if the humidity is low, evaporation of sweat is easier, thus making the apparent temperature feel close to the actual air temperature.

This is why a measure of heat index is more useful than just the temperature to gauge the impact of heat on humans.

What measures can we take to adapt?

A heat index value of 67°C or above can be extremely dangerous for people and animals who have direct and prolonged exposure, said Tashina Madappa Cheranda, senior associate at the Centre for Study of Science, Technology and Policy.

"With climate change, it is likely that we will continue to witness record-breaking heat index values across the world. We will need to prepare and adapt to such extreme conditions by investing in early warning, making changes to work timings, and finding sustainable cooling solutions," she added.