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About Global Up-to-Date

CGS Global Up-to-Date is an initiative of the Centre for Governance Studies (CGS), designed to serve as an analytical platform for understanding contemporary global issues. In response to a rapidly changing global landscape marked by armed conflicts, geopolitical shifts, socio-economic challenges, and evolving security dynamics, the initiative addresses critical and emerging questions relevant to policymakers, researchers, students, and wider policy audiences.

The initiative provides regular analytical briefs on pressing international developments, focusing on international politics, economy, security, human rights, development, and environment. In addition to regular online updates, CGS Global Up-to-Date publishes a monthly edition that brings together selected briefs on important contemporary global issues.

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Beijing Summit Signals a G-2 World



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Abstract: *The Beijing Summit highlights the possibility of a global order increasingly shaped by U.S.-China competition and cooperation. A potential G-2 framework could reshape international politics, trade, and security dynamics while narrowing the strategic space available to smaller and middle powers. The evolving power structure underscores the importance of preserving an inclusive and balanced multilateral system.*

The May 14-15 meeting between Donald Trump and Xi Jinping in Beijing should not be remembered only as another high-level diplomatic encounter. It was not a clean reset in U.S.-China relations. It was something more revealing, a rehearsal for a world in which Washington and Beijing may try to manage global affairs between themselves while the rest of the world adjusts to their bargains and rivalries.

The atmosphere in Beijing was carefully designed. Xi received Trump with the full weight of Chinese state ceremony. The setting, the language and the optics all suggested parity. For China, that mattered. Beijing has long wanted the United States to treat it not as a challenger to be contained, but as an equal power whose interests must be accommodated. In that sense, the summit gave Xi something valuable before any agreement was signed: the image of China standing level with the United States.

Trump also seemed comfortable with that image. His language around a possible G-2, meaning the United States and China as the two central powers of the global system, may sound practical to some. The two countries dominate trade, technology, manufacturing, finance, military planning and climate diplomacy. If they talk, tensions may ease. If they stop talking, the world becomes more dangerous.

But this is where the problem begins. A G-2 world can offer stability, but it can also shrink the space for everyone else. Smaller and middle powers do not want a war between Washington and Beijing. Yet they also do not want a private arrangement in which their security, markets, supply chains and diplomatic choices become bargaining chips.

That is why the Beijing summit matters beyond the headlines. It did not deliver a grand bargain. It did not solve the technology war, the tariff dispute, the rare earths problem, the Taiwan question or the

conflict around Iran. Some limited economic understandings emerged, including a framework for tariff reductions on selected non-sensitive goods and a Chinese purchase commitment involving Boeing aircraft. But the larger disputes remained in place. Advanced chips, export controls, critical minerals and strategic distrust were not resolved by ceremony.

"The Beijing summit matters beyond the headlines, but it did not deliver a grand bargain".

The Taiwan issue showed the limits of warmth most clearly. Xi warned that mishandling Taiwan could lead to serious conflict. Trump avoided giving a firm public commitment either way. That ambiguity may be useful for diplomacy, but it is unsettling for Taipei and for the wider Indo-Pacific. If Taiwan becomes part of a larger U.S.-China management formula, the danger is not only conflict. The danger is also miscalculation born from unclear signals.

This is the real lesson of the summit, great powers often call it stability when they are really negotiating the terms of rivalry. China's preferred language after the meeting, "constructive strategic stability," sounds calmer than "strategic competition." But the phrase should be examined carefully. Stability for whom? Constructive for whom? If stability means fewer accidents at sea, better military communication and more predictable trade rules, the world should welcome it. But if it means accepting spheres of influence, pressure on smaller states and silence on hard questions, then it becomes a different kind of risk.

The current world is already moving in that direction. Globalization has not ended, but it has become more political. Supply chains are being redesigned around security, not only efficiency. Semiconductor rules are treated as national security tools. Rare earths are no longer just industrial inputs. Shipping lanes, ports, data centers, energy routes and undersea cables are now strategic assets. In this environment, every U.S.-China meeting sends signals far beyond the two capitals.

For countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Middle East, the message is complicated. They need Chinese investment, American markets, Western technology, Gulf energy, multilateral finance and strategic flexibility. They cannot afford to choose one camp permanently. Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Vietnam, Saudi Arabia, Brazil and many others are trying to preserve room for maneuver. A G-2 mindset threatens that room, because it assumes the world's most important questions can be settled by the world's two most powerful capitals.

This is why the summit should worry even those who support dialogue. Dialogue is necessary. U.S.-China military communication is necessary. Trade talks are necessary. Cooperation on AI safety, energy security and global finance is necessary. But dialogue becomes dangerous when it turns into hierarchy. The world needs U.S.-China engagement, not U.S.-China supervision.

That makes the coming years more fragile, not less. If the United States and China compete without rules, the world faces confrontation. If they cooperate only to divide influence, the world faces exclusion. The better alternative is a broader order where other powers, regional institutions and smaller states have a voice in shaping rules on trade, technology, climate, security and finance.

The Beijing summit was therefore not a reset. It was a preview. It showed how the twenty-first century may be governed if other countries remain passive: two giants managing tension, trading concessions and defining stability in their own image. The rest of the world should not reject U.S.-China dialogue. But it should reject the idea that peace is safest when power is concentrated in two hands.

The real question after Beijing is not whether Trump or Xi won. The question is whether the world is prepared to live inside a G-2 arrangement, or whether it still has the imagination and courage to build something wider, fairer and more durable.

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BJP's Bengal Breakthrough and the Uneven Future of Indian Democracy



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Abstract: *Bharatiya Janata Party is a major political party in India, founded in 1980. It is associated with Hindu nationalist ideology and has emerged as one of the country's two dominant national parties, alongside the Indian National Congress. The BJP has been led nationally by figures such as Narendra Modi and has been the ruling party of India since 2014. Its political agenda emphasizes national identity, economic development, security, and cultural issues.*

On May 04, 2026 held elections in five Indian states and the results shocked everyone. Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has now become the single dominant party in India after the Indian National Congress party with Indira Gandhi as prime minister in the 1970s. Even twelve years ago, the BJP held power in seven states. But now, it governs 22 states out of 28, and the alliance it leads is responsible for the lives of roughly 72% of India's 1.4 billion people. In Tamil Nadu, a long-standing BJP rival—the regional DravidaMunnetraKazhagam party—was stunned by a new party, TamilagaVettriKazhagam. The party is led by actor turned politician Thalapati Vijay. In Kerala, the main opposition of BJP, Congress led United Democratic Front (UDF) won. But elsewhere, it was an astounding victory for the BJP. In Assam, the ruling party (BJP) maintained its hold on power in the state legislature, and it also triumphed in the union territory of Puducherry. But maybe the most shocking was the result of West Bengal, where BJP was able to defeat All India Trinamool Congress (AITC) party led by Mamata Banarjee from her 15 years of rule. West Bengal has always resisted BJP's advance in their state. But something has shifted now. Analysts argue that BJP's campaign strategy in the states and Mamata's failure to bring something new was the big factor in this election result.

With over 90 million people and 42 seats, West Bengal is a powerful state with the third-largest representation of any state in the Lok Sabha, the country's lower house of parliament. Mamata was ousted largely for her anti-incumbency sentiments. There were allegations that Mamata's party had turned hostile to people who opposed their ideology. She silenced critics and jailed opponents. They could not recognize the people's needs, aspirations

or economic needs. People also accused the party of corruption, rape and extortion. Companies had to pay bribes for licenses and land. In other parts of India the economy was booming, but for West Bengal (4th largest in population) it was stagnating. On the other hand, Modi took strategic decisions to breach the wall West Bengal has made. The BJP's fundamental formula, which combines nationalism, welfare service, religious identity, and a disciplined grassroots organization has been proven successful.

"BJP took the controversial SIR (Special Intensive Revision) process, which first started in 2025"

Analysts point out that key to BJP's success is their focus on grassroot campaigns, increased use of welfare handouts and determination to stay close to voter concerns. They became an alternative to AITMC. BJP gave their utmost importance to West Bengal, which is why, Modi dispatched his home affairs minister Amit Shah to personally supervise the campaign. The party also strengthened its booth-level presence, focusing sharply on local issues rather than national narratives, and tightening alliance management in states where it could not win alone. The victory in West Bengal is also very important for the BJP since Shyama Prasad Mukherjee, a native of the state, formed the Bharatiya Jana Sangh, the BJP's predecessor, in 1951.

Also, BJP took the controversial SIR (Special Intensive Revision) process which first started in 2025 in Bihar and later expanded to 9 states and 3 union territories which includes West Bengal as well. Local election officials conducted house - to - house verification of voters. Citizens were required to reestablish their eligibility for citizenship through proper documentation in a very tight deadline. Failure to do so risked removing one from the voter list. Migrant laborers were harmed by the process. Bihar and Bengal are India's biggest suppliers of labor and are employed in far-off regions. The short verification time prevented many from returning home. Many had trouble with inconsistent spelling, missing legacy papers, changing their last name after getting married, or inconsistent government records. Poor women and Muslims were particularly affected by these issues. Many complained that their names had been removed from the voter list. The BJP presented it as an effort to eradicate "illegal infiltrators," mainly undocumented Muslim migrants from Bangladesh. In the end, around 2.7 million Bengali voters were formally removed off the lists. Therefore, even if the ECI is required by the constitution to operate as an impartial body, it is fair to argue that there are grounds to assume the decision was "stolen" with the help of the state apparatus.

BJP also took advantage of religious polarization. A Hindu majoritarian campaign that greatly inflated the TMC's purportedly "pro-Muslim" position also contributed to the BJP's triumph. They constantly painted Mamata giving more opportunities to Muslims. This strategy has put TMC in a difficult position. Muslims in West Bengal always voted for Mamata and talking against them meant losing vast numbers of voters. Also taking pro-Muslim stance also made it harder for her to ensure the Hindu majority voters. BJP framed itself as the defender of Hindu interests. This strategy helped consolidate Hindu voters across caste and class lines. In addition, the Modi administration sent a record 2,400 companies of paramilitary personnel to West Bengal for the polls. According to the federal government, this was done to let election authorities conduct the process without worrying about political violence. Voter removals were most prevalent in districts with sizable Muslim populations. Mamata argued that the election commission did not play its impartial and neutral role properly; rather favored the central government. And argued that deploying that much paramilitary force has created fear among the voters to vote against BJP, a claim which BJP has rejected as they have only deployed the forces to protect the voters from being intimidated by TMC.

BJP's long-awaited goal to make India Congress free by 2047 is near. But it also creates uncertainty about democracy. On one hand, the defeat of chief ministers in West Bengal, Kerala and Tamil Nadu shows that the citizens still have power to change leaders, indicating that electoral competition still works. On the other hand, the dominance of one party in the majority of the states, role of election commission, deployment of paramilitary forces, using religious diversity suggest that the democratic field is becoming increasingly uneven. Strong administrations can endure in a democracy, but when institutions seem weak and political rivalry becomes unfair, it becomes susceptible.

All things considered, the BJP's win in West Bengal goes beyond a state-level election triumph. It portends the increasing nationalization of Indian politics, the erosion of regional opposition, and the spread of Hindutva into new political spheres. It also highlights the conflict at the core of modern Indian democracy: elections are still competitive, but concerns about the system's impartiality are growing. Whether electoral successes will be backed by institutional restraint, minority rights protection, and respect for democratic principles is India's biggest issue. Managing ties with an India where Hindu nationalist ideologies, border security, and internal politics are becoming more intertwined would be a problem for Bangladesh.

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From Scotland to Wales: A Shift Beyond Two-Party Politics



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Abstract. *The changing political landscape of Scotland and Wales reflects a gradual shift away from traditional two-party dominance towards a more fragmented and competitive political environment. The rise of regional parties and new political forces highlights evolving identities, public priorities, and demands for greater representation within the United Kingdom's democratic system.*

The elections held across England, Scotland and Wales on 7 May 2026 marked a significant juncture in the United Kingdom's political landscape. The votes took place at different levels of government, including devolved parliamentary elections in Scotland and Wales and local and mayoral elections in England. However, the consolidated outcome pointed to one trend: the weakening of the traditional two-party order and the rise of a more fragmented, multipolar political system.

The UK's electoral system reflects its devolved electoral structure, with different voting systems used across England, Scotland and Wales. In Scotland, voters elected 129 Members of the Scottish Parliament through the Additional Member System, casting one vote for a constituency candidate and another for a regional party list. In Wales, voters elected 96 Members of the Senedd under a new proportional list system, with 16 constituencies each returning six members. In England, voters took part in local council and mayoral elections, mainly under the first-past-the-post system, where the candidate with the highest number of votes wins, even without securing an absolute majority. The voting age was 16 in Scotland and Wales, while voters in England had to be 18 or above.

In Scotland, the Scottish National Party emerged as the largest party and secured its fifth consecutive election victory, winning 57 seats, while turnout stood at 53%. However, the result also showed a more competitive political environment. Labour and Reform UK each won 17 seats, while other parties continued to play a role in shaping the parliamentary balance. SNP leader John Swinney pledged to improve public services and the NHS.

In Wales, Plaid Cymru, known as the Party of Wales, became the largest party after winning 43 of the 96 seats in the Senedd, six short of a majority. Its leader, Rhun ap Iorwerth, vowed to "make Wales

the best it possibly can be." Reform UK, led in Wales by Dan Thomas, became the second-largest party with 34 seats. Labour, which had long dominated Welsh politics, fell to only nine seats, prompting First Minister Eluned Morgan to resign. The Conservatives won seven seats, the Greens won two, and the Liberal Democrats won one. This marked the first time since devolution that Labour failed to become the largest party in Wales.

> *"The Scottish National Party emerged as the largest party and secured its fifth consecutive election victory, winning 57 seats, while turnout stood at 53%."*

In England, the elections were local and mayoral rather than national. Voters elected thousands of councilors across local authorities and chose mayors in several areas. Across England, voters elected nearly 5,000 councilors in 134 councils, while six mayoral contests also took place on 7 May in Croydon, Hackney, Lewisham, Newham, Tower Hamlets and Watford.

Nigel Farage's Reform UK made big gains in the English local elections, cementing its position as a major challenger to Britain's traditional main parties. The party successfully gained control of several councils and significantly increased its presence in local government. Farage has prioritized establishing a foothold in town halls as a crucial step leading up to the next UK general election, anticipated in 2029. Meanwhile, the Green Party achieved notable advancements, including mayoral victories in Hackney and Lewisham. The Liberal Democrats maintained their relevance in various local contests, while independent and regional political movements also attracted attention in certain areas. Political movements also attracted attention in certain areas.

Traditionally, the UK's national politics was shaped mainly by Labour and the Conservatives. That structure is now under strain. The elections showed that British politics is becoming more fragmented and multipolar. Labour and the Conservatives no longer dominate the political space as strongly as before, while nationalist parties remain influential in Scotland and Wales. Reform UK is emerging as a major challenger from the right, and the Greens and Liberal Democrats continue to gain support in different areas. The results were also a major setback for Prime Minister Keir Starmer, whose leadership came under pressure after Labour's poor performance. Starmer described the outcome as tough but rejected calls to resign, saying he would not walk awayand plunge the country into chaos.

For countries observing the UK, including those in South Asia, the implication is an important reminder. Democratic stability is not granted. Elections are not only about who wins power. They also reveal public trust, institutional strength, party system changes and the direction of society. The 2026 UK elections show that when citizens feel disconnected from traditional parties, they search for new political vehicles. This is the central message of the vote: the age of automatic party loyalty is fading, and the era of competitive, fragmented and multipolar politics is becoming more visible.

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Global Crises on the Artist's Stage: Glamour, Silence, and Moral Responsibility



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Abstract. *The intersection of art, entertainment, and global crises raises questions about the moral responsibilities of artists in times of conflict and humanitarian suffering. As public figures navigate the tension between glamour and silence, their choices reflect broader debates on activism, accountability, and the role of cultural influence in shaping social awareness.*

Award ceremonies and major cultural events are usually seen as spaces of glamour, achievement, and entertainment. Artists receive awards, audiences applaud, and cameras capture the elegance of clothing, smiles, lights, and red carpets. Yet when the world is shaken by war, occupation, displacement, migrant repression, racism, and climate crisis, can these stages remain only places of celebration? Recent controversies surrounding Eurovision, the Grammy Awards, the Oscars, the Berlinale, and even football stadiums show that artists and athletes are increasingly using their fame and visibility as platforms for political expression. The real question is whether this is a necessary moral responsibility or an unnecessary politicization of entertainment.

The recent Eurovision debate has brought this question into sharp focus. Eurovision rules prohibit political statements, symbols, or the use of the contest for political purposes. The European Broadcasting Union, or EBU, wants the competition to remain a space for music, performance, and artistic identity. But Eurovision has never been completely free from politics. The controversy over Israel's participation in the 2026 Vienna contest shows that the claim of being "apolitical" can itself become a political position. Against the backdrop of Israel's attacks and destruction in Gaza, international media reported that Spain, Ireland, the Netherlands, Slovenia, and Iceland withdrew from the contest or decided to boycott its broadcast.

At the center of this debate are not only states and broadcasters but also artists themselves. Palestinian musicians have argued that when lives, homes, and cultural spaces in Gaza are being destroyed, giving Israel a Eurovision platform amounts to a moral failure. Through the #VoteJustice4Palestine campaign, they urged boycott supporters to share "The

Drone Song." Recorded in Gaza by Ahmed Abu Amsha and based on an old Palestinian folk song, the piece has become a musical act of resistance against the sound of drones. In several reports, Palestinian artists also raised the idea of cultural genocide, arguing that the destruction of cultural life is part of a wider human tragedy.

> *"Eurovision rules prohibit political statements, symbols, or the use of the contest for political purposes."*

This raises a deeper question: is a song only a song? When a child wants to stop practicing music because of the sound of drones, and a teacher responds, "We will sing with it," music no longer remains neutral. It becomes a language of survival. In such circumstances, silence on a glittering stage is itself a position. Therefore, when an event like Eurovision allows a state to participate amid such allegations and devastation, it becomes tied to questions of cultural recognition, legitimacy, and moral accountability.

This trend is not limited to Eurovision. Recent award ceremonies have also shown artists using their platforms to make political statements. At the 2026 Grammy Awards, several artists spoke about anti-immigration raids and ICE. Puerto Rican singer-songwriter Bad Bunny defended the dignity of immigrants. Billie Eilish said, "No one is illegal on stolen land," while Kehlani took a direct stance against ICE. Many artists spoke in support of immigrants, and several wore "ICE OUT" pins. Through these words and symbols, the Grammys became not only a celebration of music but also a space where debates over migration, identity, and human dignity became visible.

The same pattern was clear at the Oscars. At the 2026 ceremony, the nomination of The Voice of Hind Rajab, a film inspired by true events in Gaza, brought the Palestinian issue into sharper focus. Artists connected to the film wore red Artists4-Ceasefire pins on the red carpet to express solidarity with calls for a ceasefire in Gaza and with the suffering of the Palestinian people. Javier Bardem also used a "Free Palestine" pin and anti-war symbols. While presenting Best International Feature, he directly said, "No to war and free Palestine." As a result, Gaza, immigration, and anti-war messages became visible throughout the award season, from the red carpet to the main stage.

Politics and protest also became major talking points at the opening ceremony of the Berlinale 2026. Political messages there came mainly from guests, while leading filmmakers were comparatively restrained. This distinction is important because artists do not always speak through speeches alone. Sometimes they communicate through clothing, pins, badges, flags, and symbols. Political language is therefore not limited to spoken words; it is also carried through visible signs.

The same trend can be seen in sports. During Barcelona's La Liga title celebration, Lamine Yamal waved a Palestinian flag. His gesture sparked wide discussion online, and many supporters, activists, and sports figures praised him for his courage. Coach Hansi Flick acknowledged the freedom of personal expression, although he also showed caution about political symbols on a sports stage. This incident shows that stadiums, like red carpets and concert halls, are no longer separate from the moral debates of the wider world.

Should artists and athletes make political statements on such platforms? In my view, they should, but responsibly. They are not merely entertainers; they are influential public figures. A single sentence from them can redirect the attention of millions. Issues that are often pushed aside in mainstream news can re-enter public debate when they are mentioned on an award stage. In the past, artists' positions on HIV/AIDS, racial discrimination, anti-war movements, climate change, and Palestine have

helped shape public opinion and deepen public awareness.

However, there must also be limits. Using a stage should not become a tool for self-promotion. It should turn attention toward people facing injustice. Political statements become powerful when they are connected to an artist's long-term moral position, work, and social responsibility. A sudden slogan used only for publicity can sound hollow. But when Bad Bunny speaks for immigrants, when Kehlani remains consistently vocal on Palestine, or when Palestinian artists sing against the sound of drones, their words become more than statements. They become testimony.

Some argue that award ceremonies are meant for joy and that politics makes audiences uncomfortable. But for people living under war, occupation, exile, hunger, or fear, the world is never purely entertaining. For those whose lives are wounded by politics, silence is a luxury. Speaking about justice on an artistic stage does not destroy joy; it returns art to its human foundation.

Organizers also have responsibilities. If they choose convenient silence in the name of being "apolitical," they lose credibility. Russia was excluded from Eurovision after its invasion of Ukraine. Why, then, is Israel treated differently? If rules exist, they must apply equally to all. Otherwise, cultural platforms become part of power politics.

Artists come from diverse ethnic, cultural, and social backgrounds. Many have achieved fame after long struggles against discrimination and adversity, and some have become voices for their communities. Speaking for their people, culture, and rights is not only their right; in many cases, it is also a moral duty. Award ceremonies give them a global platform to defend peace, justice, and human dignity. Art, creativity, and achievement should certainly be celebrated. But if art is connected to human life, suffering, freedom, and dignity, then silence in the face of injustice becomes a defeat for art itself. No matter how bright the glamour is, if its light turns even for a moment toward people standing amid ruins, that stage finds its true social meaning.

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