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.