



AIR Discussions (November 3rd Week)

ALL INDIA RADIO SUMMARY (16-22 NOVEMBER 2020)

SPOTLIGHT (17 NOVEMBER, 2020)

THE 12TH BRICS SUMMIT-GLOBAL STABILITY, SHARED VALUE AND INNOVATIVE GROWTH

Context: The BRICS countries annual Summit, held virtually this time. The 2020 BRICS summit was the **twelfth** annual BRICS summit, an international relations conference attended by the heads of state or heads of government of the five member states Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.

- Two pillars of this year's summit are the **economy and counterterrorism**.
- Two most of the pressing issues – the **coronavirus-shackled economies and sprawling terrorist networks**.

Theme: "BRICS Partnership for Global Stability, Shared Security and Innovative Growth."

Hosted by: Russia's President Vladimir Putin.

- **India will be taking over the Chairship of the BRICS, which would be the third BRICS Presidency for India since its inception (after 2012 and 2016) and will host the 13th BRICS Summit in 2021.**

Topic of discussion: The event witnessed discussions around intra-BRICS cooperation and other key issues including the reform of the multilateral system (i.e. UN Security Council), measures to mitigate the impact of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, cooperation in counter-terrorism, trade, health, energy and people to people exchanges.

Moscow Declaration

- It adopted the extensive Moscow Declaration **"The BRICS Counterterrorism Strategy and BRICS Economic Partnership Strategy 2025"**.
- The BRICS Counterterrorism Strategy is designed to **provide law enforcement authorities with real cooperative mechanisms** for timely information exchange and to facilitate concerted measures against the masterminds of terror attacks.
- It also highlighted the urgency of agreeing on an extension of the 2010 Russia-U.S. Treaty on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms without delay.
- The Moscow Declaration reaffirms the **strategic spirit of BRICS states' unanimity to set long-term goals rather than pursue short-term benefits**.
- They've called for a **comprehensive global governance model** based on reviewing the UN and its Security Council, IMF and WTO mechanisms and bringing in more representativeness and efficiency into these organizations.



What is BRICS? How did these countries come together?

- It is an **informal group** of states comprising the Federative Republic of **Brazil**, the **Russian Federation**, the **Republic of India**, the **People's Republic of China** and the **Republic of South Africa**.
- The BRICS is actually rather a forum than a traditional-type organization with rigid membership and regulations.
- Originally the first four were grouped as "BRIC" (or "the BRICs"), before the **induction of South Africa in 2010**.
- The growing economic might of BRICS countries, their significance as one of the main driving forces of global economic development, their substantial population and abundant natural resources form the foundation of their influence on the international scene and are the driving forces behind the grouping.
- At the **Fortaleza Summit (2014)**, in Brazil, important institutions were created: the **New Development Bank (NDB)** and the **Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA)**.
- Among other areas of collaboration, matters pertaining to **drug trafficking** is an important area of cooperation among the BRICS member states.





BRICS and COVID-19:

- Most of its programs and mechanisms proved to be effective during the pandemic.
- The **BRICS Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) Framework Programme** pioneered in 2015 helped scientists and researchers to stay connected and effectively exchange their findings to better facilitate a common response to COVID-19.
- BRICS looks better than other global governance institutions amidst the ongoing COVID crises.
- There is no blame-game or pointing fingers within BRICS, rather there is only a common vision for intensifying cooperation, including in sectors like healthcare, social welfare.
- BRICS has progressed on developing a common position on the most important matters of the global economy and security and also got institutionalised with the setting up of the BRICS New Development Bank in 2015.

Financial cooperation

- The **New Development Bank (NDB)** has demonstrated high efficiency during the crisis by undertaking "timely measures" through its Emergency Assistance Program – offering a **\$10 billion pool of emergency loans** to its member states, split in half between support for healthcare and economic recovery.
- The significance and growing scope of the bank's operations are depicted by the increasing number of regional offices, three of which are already in operation in Shanghai, Johannesburg and San Paulo, complemented by a newly opened facility in Moscow and an upcoming one in India.
- BRICS states created **BRICS Payments Task Force** as a step towards cooperation on national payments systems.
- Establishment of the **BRICS Rapid Information Security Channel** is done to promote the exchange of information on cyber threats among their central banks.
- New domains to be explored by BRICS in the future – **digital medicine, cooperation in space, COVID-19 vaccine research and production and green finance** among them.

What challenges BRICS is facing?

- Disagreements between its members and slow progress shown on the ground when it comes to implementation of initiatives make it quite vulnerable to criticism.

What can be done?

- The pandemic has highlighted that the five countries need to pay more attention to speeding up the practical implementation of the projects and decisions that are being agreed on.
- There is going to be very serious lack of money as all the countries in the BRICS are going to be economically affected because of COVID.



- BRICS should focus on what is achievable, making sure it uses the crises time to find a common vision, lack of which has always been one its weaknesses.

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/for-brics-challenges-and-opportunities/article31433942.ece>

OTHER NEWS

Central Council of Indian Medicine (CCIM)

Context: CCIM issues notification to streamline provisions of regulations concerning Post Graduate Ayurveda Education.

- The notification has added clarity and definition.
- The notification relates to the **Shalya and Shalakya** streams of Post Graduate Education in Ayurveda.
- Shalya and Shalakya are independent Departments in Ayurveda colleges, performing such surgical procedures.
- It clarified that all scientific advances including standardized terminologies are inheritances of the entire mankind.
- The purpose of all modern scientific terminology is **to facilitate effective communication and correspondence among the different stake-holders.**

About Central Council of Indian Medicine (CCIM):

- It is a **statutory body** that regulates the Indian Medical systems of Ayurveda, Siddha, Sowa-Rigpa and Unani Medicine .
- CCIM is deeply committed to maintaining the authenticity of Indian systems of medicine.

<http://newsonair.com/News?title=CCIM-issues-notification-to-streamline-provisions-of-regulations-concerning-Post-Graduate-Ayurveda-Education&id=404766>

India International Cherry Blossom Festival

Context: India International Cherry Blossom Festival, the calendar event of Meghalaya, which attracts record number of tourists annually in Shillong, has been cancelled this year in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic.

- The capital, Shillong hosts the **only Cherry Blossoms festival** in India.
- These beautiful flowers can be spotted across Meghalaya during this time of the year.
- The beautiful hill station Shillong in Meghalaya has turned pink with blooming cherry blossoms.



- Every year, the Cherry Blossom Festival in Shillong hosts a plethora of events like fitness art, fashion show, rock concerts and much more.

<http://newsonair.com/News?title=Annual-India-International-Cherry-Blossom-Festival-in-Shillong-cancelled-due-to-COVID-19-pandemic&id=404786>

All India Presiding Officers' Conference

Context: A two-day All India Presiding Officers' Conference organized at Kevadia in Gujarat.

- **Theme** of this year conference is **Harmonious Coordination of Legislative, Executive and Judiciary - Key to a Vibrant Democracy.**
- It highlights the collective efforts to **maintain the constitutional sanctity which is very important for mutual co-existence between the three organs of governance** and the sustenance of democracy in the country.
- On 26th November which is celebrated as Constitution Day, Prime Minister addressed the valedictory session of the conference.

<http://newsonair.com/News?title=2-day-All-India-Presiding-Officers%26%2339%3b-Conference-to-be-organized-at-Kevadia-in-Gujarat-on-Nov.-25&id=404739>

Technologies in drinking water, sanitation for field level solutions to States

Context: A multi-disciplinary Technical Committee in the Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Ministry of Jal Shakti has recommended five technologies in Drinking Water and Sanitation to provide Field Level Solutions to the States.

- The recommendation by the Committee would help the States and Union Territories to use these technologies depending on their requirement and suitability.
- These technologies were appraised at different levels before consideration and recommendation by the Technical Committee.
- The first of the five technologies that have been recommended is **Grundfos AQpure, a solar energy based water treatment plant based on ultra filtration.**
- The Second is **Janajal Water on Wheel**, an IoT based electric vehicle based on GPS location to enable delivery of safe water to the doorstep of households.
- Another technology is **Presto Online Chlorinator**, a non-electricity dependent online chlorinator for disinfection of water for removal of bacterial contamination.
- **Johkasou technology** recommended is an inbuilt sewage and Kitchen and bath water treatment system having advanced anaerobic-aerobic configuration that can be installed underground.



- The last innovative technology is **FBTec®**, a site assembled in a decentralised sewage treatment system using fixed filter media.
- The Ministry of Jal Shakti gives primacy to the infusion and deployment of innovative technological solutions to realize the ambitious objective of the **Jal Jeevan Mission to provide Functional Household Tap Connection to every rural home by 2024.**

Multi-disciplinary Technical Committee

- To address these challenges and to consider and recommend innovative 'field level solution' technologies, a multi-disciplinary Technical Committee, chaired by the Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India with members including from NITI Aayog, Department of Science and Technology, CSIR, DRDO, IIT, National Institute of Ocean Technology, and States was constituted.
- The Committee focussed on application of Science and Technology for providing field level solutions, which would be helpful to the implementing agencies in the States.

<http://newsonair.com/News?title=Jal-Shakti-Ministry%26%2339%3bs-multi-disciplinary-Technical-Committee-recommends-technologies-in-drinking-water%2c-sanitation-for-field-level-solutions-to-States&id=404767>

Awaas Diwas

Context: Rural Development Minister virtually interacted with Rural Development Ministers and officials of the States on the occasion of "Awaas Diwas" celebration.

- Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana -Gramin is not only credited with the task of providing houses to beneficiaries, but it also serves in protecting the dignity of the households.
- Awaas Diwas is not just a day to celebrate a scheme, but a day to connect with crores of rural households, who have been greatly benefited by this scheme.

Rural Housing Scheme

- The Rural Housing Scheme, Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana - Gramin (PMAY-G) was launched by the Prime Minister on 20th of November 2016 at Agra, Uttar Pradesh.
- To commemorate the launch of PMAY-G, which **aims to provide "Housing for All" by 2022**, it was decided to celebrate 20th November every year as Awaas Diwas.
- The program envisages the completion of 2.95 crore houses with all basic amenities by the year 2022.
- In the first phase of the scheme from 2016-17 to 2018-19, a target for construction of one crore pucca houses were set.

<http://newsonair.com/News?title=Awaas-Diwas%3a-Union-Minister-Narendra-Singh-Tomar-virtually-interacts-with-state-officials&id=404663>



PMs of India and Bhutan to virtually launch RuPay Card phase-2 in Bhutan

Context: Prime Ministers of India and Bhutan launched RuPay Card phase-2 in Bhutan.

- The implementation of phase-1 of RuPay cards in Bhutan has enabled Indian visitors in Bhutan to access ATMs and points of sale terminals across Bhutan.
- The phase-2 will now allow Bhutanese cardholders to access RuPay network in India.

<http://newsonair.com/News?title=PMs-of-India-and-Bhutan-to-virtually-launch-RuPay-Card-phase-2-in-Bhutan-on-tomorrow&id=404589>

Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut Rapid Transit System Project

Context: The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, National Capital Region Transport Corporation Limited and the New Development Bank signed a loan agreement for lending 500 million dollars for the 'Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut Regional Rapid Transit System Project'.

- The Rapid Transit System will provide a fast, reliable, safe and comfortable public transport system in the National Capital Region.
- Due to lack of efficient public transport options, the number of private vehicles in NCR has increased.
- It can take about 3 to 4 hours to travel between Delhi and Meerut in Uttar Pradesh by road during peak hours.
- Rapid growth in vehicular traffic has made NCR one of the most polluted regions in the world.
- Fast transit system will support in achieving the goal of sustainable urban development in NCR region including National Capital Territory of Delhi.
- It will activate processes, which will enable sustainable economic and social development with environmental protection, for future generations.

<http://newsonair.com/News?title=NCRTC-and-NDB-sign-USD-500m-for-Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut-Rapid-Transit-System-Project&id=404578>

Japan & Australia sign landmark defence deal

Context: Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga and his Australian counterpart Scott Morrison have signed a landmark defence deal in a bid to counter China's growing influence in the South China Sea and over the Pacific island nations.

Reciprocal Access Agreement (RAA)



- Reciprocal Access Agreement (RAA) comes weeks after foreign ministers of the Quad alliance, which includes the US and India, met in Tokyo.
- The pact allows Japanese and Australian troops to visit each other's countries and conduct training and joint operations.
- The treaty will strengthen their security ties and facilitate cooperation between defence forces.
- The two sides also agreed on the need for a framework to allow Japanese military to protect Australian forces if needed.
- It also expressed serious concern about the situation in the South China Sea and reconfirmed their strong opposition to any coercive or unilateral attempts to change the status quo and thereby increase tensions in the region.

<http://newsonair.com/News?title=Japan-%26-Australia-sign-landmark-defence-deal-to-counter-China%26%2339%3bs-growing-influence-in-South-China-Sea&id=404468>

India, Kazakhstan reviews entire gamut of bilateral cooperation within framework of their Strategic Partnership

Context: The 7th round of Foreign Office Consultations between India and Kazakhstan was held via video-conference.

- During the consultations, the two sides reviewed the entire gamut of bilateral cooperation within the framework of their Strategic Partnership.
- The consultations covered political, economic and commercial, energy, defence, space, consular and cultural matters.
- They also shared views and experiences on combating COVID-19 pandemic.
- The two sides also exchanged views on regional and international issues of mutual interest and agreed to enhance cooperation in the multilateral arena, including during the forthcoming stint of India in the UN Security Council for the period 2021-22.
- An MoU on "Indian Grant Assistance for Implementation of High Impact Community Development Projects in Kazakhstan"

<http://newsonair.com/News?title=India%2c-Kazakhstan-reviews-entire-gamut-of-bilateral-cooperation-within-framework-of-their-Strategic-Partnership&id=404447>



MIB requests compliance of policy on FDI in digital media within a month

Context: Information and Broadcasting Ministry has requested compliance of policy on FDI in digital media within a month.

- The Ministry issued a public notice to facilitate eligible entities involved in uploading and streaming of news and current affairs through digital media, to comply with the decision of Government, which had permitted 26 per cent FDI under Government approval route.
- The entities having foreign investment below 26 per cent may furnish intimation to the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting within one month.
- They have to provide details of the company, entity and its shareholding pattern along with the names and addresses of its Directors and shareholders.
- The names and address of Promoters and Significant Beneficial Owners. Permanent Account Number and the latest audited or unaudited Profit and Loss Statement and Balance Sheet along with the Auditor report.
- The entities are required to obtain security clearance for all foreign personnel likely to be deployed for more than 60 days in a year by way of appointment, contract or consultancy or any other capacity for functioning of the entity, prior to their deployment.

<http://newsonair.com/News?title=MIB-requests-compliance-of-policy-on-FDI-in-digital-media-within-a-month&id=404358>

“Pincer” catalytic systems

Context: A research team of IIT Guwahati has formulated efficient “pincer” catalytic systems that **transform biomass wastes into valuable chemicals**.

- Tiny amounts of these “pincer catalysts” repeatedly convert large amounts of industrial waste such as glycerol into lactic acid and hydrogen.
- Such catalysts also efficiently convert bioethanol, a low-energy density fuel, into high-energy density butanol.
- The conversion of valuable intermediates such as glycerol and ethanol, produced during the processing of biomass, into industrially useful chemicals has elicited much interest worldwide.

<http://newsonair.com/News?title=IIT-Guwahati-formulates-efficient-%e2%80%9cpincer%e2%80%9d-catalytic-systems-that-transform-biomass-wastes-into-valuable-chemicals&id=404350>