



AIR Discussions (June 1st Week)

AIR SPOTLIGHT: BRICS FOREIGN AFFAIRS MINISTERS MEETING

CONTEXT:

- The **Meeting of the BRICS Ministers of Foreign Affairs under India's Chairmanship** was held in virtual format.
- In February, the **Ministry of External Affairs** launched the website on **BRICS 2021**. India is set to launch the **2021 BRICS Summit** which will be the 13th summit of the grouping.
- **BRICS 2021 will mark the 15th anniversary of the international grouping**. India has earlier hosted BRICS Summit 2012 and 2016.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MEETING:

- They expressed support for strengthening intra-BRICS cooperation in **three pillars - political and security, economy and finance, people-to-people and cultural exchanges**.
- They expressed **grave concern over COVID-19** and emphasized the value of bilateral and multilateral cooperation among States to combat the pandemic and its impacts effectively.
- They called for timely establishment and effective operationalization of the **BRICS Vaccine Research and Development Centre in South Africa** and the need for further work on the proposal for **BRICS Integrated Early Warning System for Preventing Mass Infectious Diseases Risks**.
- They issued a **Joint Statement on Strengthening and Reforming the Multilateral System**.
- They reaffirmed their commitment to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Kyoto Protocol, Paris Agreement and United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity Conference.
- They looked forward to comprehensive implementation of the **Strategy for BRICS Economic Partnership 2025** through all means for its effective realization.
- They appreciated the **role of the New Development Bank in infrastructure and sustainable development financing and the Emergency Assistance Facility to combat the pandemic**.
- They welcomed the establishment of NDB's Eurasian Regional Centre in Russia and looked forward to the **opening of NDB's regional office in India in 2021**.
- They reaffirmed their support for an open, transparent, inclusive, non-discriminatory and rules-based multilateral trading system with WTO at its centre. Another important agreement was to **support negotiations at the WTO for the waiver of TRIPs for vaccines** to tackle the pandemic.
- There is a need to **cooperate on disarmament and non-proliferation matters and reaffirmed the importance of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Biological and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction**.
- The Ministers commended the finalisation of the text of the Agreement among BRICS space agencies on **Cooperation on BRICS Remote Sensing Satellite Constellation**
- The Ministers **expressed their concern at continuing conflicts and violence in different parts of the world which impact international and regional peace and security**. (Middle East and North Africa, Gaza, Syria, Yemen, Afghanistan, Korean Peninsula, Myanmar).
- They expressed **strong condemnation of terrorism in all its forms**.
- They expressed **deep concern about significant increase in illicit production of and trafficking in all types of drugs worldwide**.



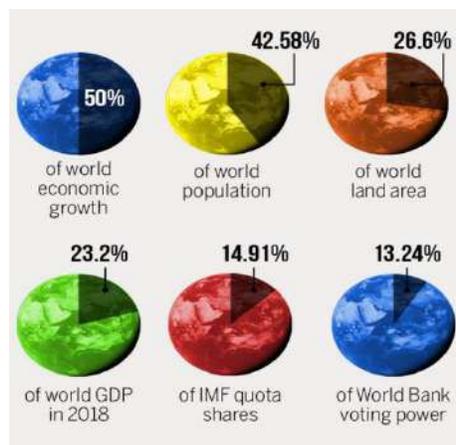
- The Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to **promote international anti- corruption cooperation** and strengthen BRICS collaboration on issues related to anti-corruption law enforcement, including asset recovery.
- They reiterated the need of a **comprehensive and balanced approach to ICTs development and security** of safeguarding the security of States and public interests, and of respecting the right to privacy of individuals.
- They acknowledged that innovation was one of the key driving forces of global sustainable development and look forward to the adoption of the **Innovation Cooperation Action Plan for 2021-24 this year.**
- They welcomed the launch of the **BRICS Part NIR Innovation Center in China.**
- They reiterated the need for all countries to cooperate in **promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms under the principles of equality and mutual respect.**

BRICS 2021:

- The **chair of BRICS 2021 is India.**
- The theme of the 13th BRICS Summit is, **'BRICS @ 15: Intra-BRICS Cooperation for Continuity, Consolidation and Consensus.'**
- The discussion in the BRICS Summit 2021 will be around three pillars:
 - Political and Security: Reform of the Multilateral System, Counter-Terrorism Cooperation
 - Economic and Financial: BRICS Economic Partnership Strategy 2020-25, BRICS Agriculture Research Platform, Cooperation on Disaster Resilience, Innovation Cooperation, Digital Health and Traditional Medicine
 - Cultural and People to People.

ABOUT BRICS:

- In 2001, **Goldman Sachs' Jim O'Neill authored a paper called "Building Better Global Economic BRICs"**, pointing out that future GDP growth in the world would come from China, India, Russia and Brazil.
- In **2006, leaders of the BRIC countries met on the margins of a G8 summit in St. Petersburg, Russia**, and BRIC was formalised that year. In 2009, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh met with Presidents Hu Jintao, Dmitry Medvedev and Lula da Silva for the **first BRIC summit in Yekaterinburg.**
- **South Africa was added in 2010.**
- BRICS Nations account for



- In 2020, the New Development Bank approved a **USD 1 Billion Project called "Covid-19 Emergency Program Loan for Supporting India's Economic Recovery"**.



- **Starting essentially with economic issues of mutual interest, the agenda of BRICS meetings has considerably widened over the years to encompass topical global issues** such as international terrorism, climate change, food and energy security, international economic and financial situation, reform of the Bretton Woods Institutions, trade protectionism and the WTO etc.
- **BRICS cooperation has two pillars** – consultation on issues of mutual interest through meetings of Leaders as well as of Ministers of Finance, Trade, Health, S&T, Education, Agriculture, Communication, Labour, etc. and practical cooperation in a number of areas through meetings of Working Groups/Senior Officials.
- **Few initiatives:**
 - **New Development Bank** set up with an initial capital of \$100 billion: 62 large projects are being implemented in the BRICS countries
 - **Contingent Reserve Arrangement:** to provide mutual financial support, and as a contribution to the global financial safety net.
 - Over the past five years, intra-BRICS exports grew by 45% and the share of intra-BRICS exports in total BRICS international trade increased from 7.7% to 10%.
 - **BRICS Payments Task Force:** cooperation between central banks and other financial institutions on national payments systems.
 - **BRICS Rapid Information Security Channel** to promote the exchange of information on cyber threats among their central banks

Sr No	Year	Host Country/Important features
1st Summit	2009	Russia
2nd Summit	2010	Brazil
3rd Summit	2011	China: South Africa joins the association.
4th Summit	2012	India: Establishing the BRICS Bank. India mooted the idea for a New Development Bank.
5th Summit	2013	South Africa: The BRICS Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA) with a total capital of \$100 billion was introduced. BRICS Think Tank was set up. This was known as the eThekweni Declaration.
6th Summit	2014	Brazil: NDB set up.
7th Summit	2015	Russia: Accepting constituting agreements of the CRA and the New Development Bank. Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) joint summit.
8th Summit	2016	India
9th Summit	2017	China
10th Summit	2018	South Africa
11th Summit	2019	Brazil: The theme was "Economic Growth for an Innovative Future." The Brasilia Declaration was adopted by BRICS.
12th Summit	2020	Russia: Theme for XII BRICS Summit – "BRICS Partnership for Global Stability, Shared Security and Innovative Growth"
13th Summit	2021	India

CHALLENGES AND CRITICISM:

- The grouping bring together a **mix of democratic and authoritarian regimes, with very different societal structures, resource bases, developmental trajectories, and historical traditions.**
- Despite the opportunities and the potential, **intra-BRICS trade and investment flows are very low.**
- **Increasingly tested by tensions between members like India and China.**
- In recent months, it seems, **India's membership of the Quadrilateral Strategic Dialogue (Quad)** is taking a higher profile.



- India, Brazil and South Africa have equal, if not stronger, **strategic ties with western powers today**, prompting to ask whether BRICS is a bridge between the east and west or whether it is being positioned as a bulwark against them.
- **China has grown increasingly aggressive**, and impatient about the other underperforming economies in the group, as it became the U.S.'s main challenger on the global stage.
- **South Africa's debt-laden economy and negative current account** has led some to predict an economic collapse in the next decade.
- **Brazil's poor handling during the Covid19 crisis** has ranked it amongst the world's worst affected countries, and its recovery is expected to be delayed.
- **India's economic slowdown was a concern even before Covid19 hit.**
- Meanwhile, concerns about **aggressions from Russia in Ukraine and Eastern Europe and China in the South China Sea, the border with India and internally in Hongkong and Xinjiang**, as well as **creeping authoritarianism in democracies like Brazil and India** have made investors question long-term prospects of the group.
- In the market, BRICS has been mocked for being "broken", while others have suggested it should be expanded to include more emerging economies like Indonesia, Mexico and Turkey, called the "**Next11**". Others suggested **BRICKS** (including South Korea).
- In an article, to mark the idea of "BRICs at 20", **Mr. O'Neill said he was disappointed by the group's performance.**

WAY AHEAD:

- There is a need for **increased intra-BRICS cooperation in areas like health, science and technology, finance, trade etc.**
- BRICS should **remain an important arena for 'discussing the prospects of geopolitical evolution.'**
- The future of BRICS will depend on how much the leaders have agreed to **stand collectively against trade protectionism, increase investments and share a global political agenda**
- BRICS nations need to **move towards a bottom-up approach to increasing private sector and citizen involvement.**
- There is a **need to induce increased collaboration among researchers.**
- **Establishment of the BRICS vaccine research and development centre needs to be accelerated.**

https://mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/BRICS_02_may_2016.pdf

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/brics-the-coming-together-of-the-powerful-five/article34740143.ece>

https://www.mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/33887/Media_statement_Meeting_of_the_BRICS_Ministers_of_Foreign_AffairsInternational_Relations

<https://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/33889/Meeting+of+BRICS+Ministers+of+Foreign+AffairsInternational+Relations>

https://mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/BRICS_02_may_2016.pdf

<https://www.pressenza.com/2020/11/brics-2020-achievements-and-future-challenges/>



PRELIMS SPECIAL: NEWS IN BRIEF

World Milk Day

- **June 1** is observed as World Milk Day.
- In 2001, World Milk Day was established by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations to recognize the importance of milk as a global food, and to celebrate the dairy sector.
- The theme and focus of World Milk Day 2021 is: **sustainability in the dairy sector with messages on nutrition.**

<https://newsonair.gov.in/News?title=Today-is-World-Milk-Day&id=418522>

Research Design & Standards Organization (RDSO)

- **RDSO becomes the first institution to be declared SDO (Standard Developing Organisation) under the “One Nation One Standard”** mission of BIS (Bureau of Indian Standards).
- The idea is to develop one template of standard for one given product instead of having multiple agencies set it.
- RDSO is an **ISO 9001 research and development organisation under the Ministry of Railways, functioning as a technical adviser and consultant.**

<http://newsonair.com/2021/06/04/rds-of-indian-railways-becomes-first-standard-developing-organization/>

PLI Scheme for Telecom & Networking Equipment

- Telecom Department announced Operational Guidelines for PLI Scheme for telecom & networking equipment.
- The scheme **envisages creating global champions out of India who have the potential to grow in size and scale using cutting edge technology and thereby penetrate the global value chains.**
- The PLI Scheme **will be implemented within the overall financial limits of ₹ 12,195 Crores for implementation of the Scheme over a period of 5 years. For MSME category, financial allocation will be ₹1000 Crores.**
- **Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) has been appointed as the Project Management Agency (PMA) for the PLI scheme.**

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/info-tech/govt-issues-guidelines-for-pli-scheme-of-telecom-products/article34719642.ece>

INS Sandhayak

- Indian Navy's **oldest Hydrographic Survey Ship INS Sandhayak Decommissioned.**
- INS Sandhayak **undertook over 200 major hydrographic surveys** in the Western and Eastern coasts of the Indian peninsula, the Andaman Sea, and surveys in neighbouring countries including Sri Lanka, Myanmar and Bangladesh.

<http://newsonair.com/2021/06/04/ins-sandhayak-to-be-decommissioned-after-40-years-of-service/>



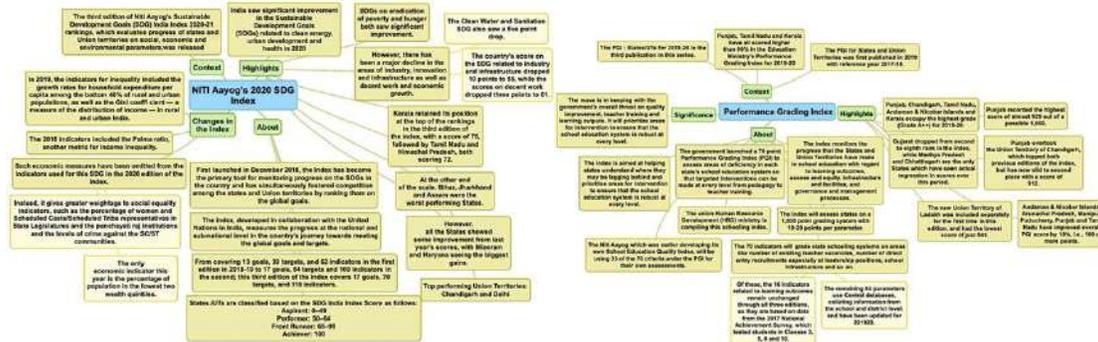
World Environment Day

- It is celebrated on **June 5**.
- It is one of the biggest annual events organised by the United Nations to generate awareness about the significance of nature.

The United Nations Gen Despite the opportunities and the potential, intra-BRICS trade and investment flows are very low.

- The United Nations General Assembly established World Environment Day in 1972, which was the first day of the Stockholm Conference on the human environment. It was first observed in 1974.
- The theme of this year's World Environment Day is **'Reimagine. Recreate. Restore.'** as this year marks the beginning of the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.
- This year's **host is Pakistan**.

<http://newsonair.com/2021/06/05/world-environment-day-being-celebrated-across-world-today-pm-modi-to-participate-in-the-event-this-morning/>



<http://newsonair.com/2021/06/03/niti-aayog-to-launch-3rd-edition-of-sustainable-development-goals-index/>

<https://www.google.com/search?q=performance+grading+index+newsonair&og=performance+grading+index+newsonair&aq=chrome..69i57j0l2.6749j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8>