

AIR Spotlight - BRICS Summit 2021

AIR Spotlight is an insightful program featured daily on the All India Radio Newsonair. In this program, many eminent panelists discuss issues of importance which can be quite helpful in the [IAS exam](#) preparation. In this article, the discussion is the BRICS Summit 2021 that was held under India's chairship.

Participants:

1. Ashok Sajjanhar, Former Diplomat
2. Nilova Roy Chaudhury, Journalist

Context

- The 13th BRICS summit was held under India's Chairship on 09 September 2021. It was the third time that India was hosting the BRICS Summit after 2012 and 2016.
- The virtual summit chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi was attended by Russian President Vladimir Putin, Chinese President Xi Jinping, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, and Brazil's Jair Bolsanaro.

BRICS Summit 2021

The theme for India's chairship was 'BRICS @ 15: Intra-BRICS Cooperation for Continuity, Consolidation, and Consensus'.

- Cooperation across three pillars was identified. They are:
 - Political and Security
 - Economic and Financial
 - Cultural and People to People
- The major issues of interest were the political and security implications of the latest developments in Afghanistan, the economic impacts of the pandemic, and cooperation to fight the pandemic and other current and future health challenges.
- The member countries have condemned the terror attacks and underscored the need to prevent the use of Afghan territory as a terror sanctuary and for drug trafficking. They also stressed the need for an inclusive intra-Afghan dialogue, to address the humanitarian situation and to uphold human rights, including those of women, children, and minorities.

- In order to deal with the global health challenges and [COVID-19](#), the countries have furthered their cooperation towards an early launch of the BRICS Vaccine Research and Development Centre.

Read more about [BRICS](#) in the linked article.

Significance and Uniqueness of BRICS

- BRICS has consistently been the voice of the developing economies by putting forward their views and aspirations.
- BRICS brings together five of the largest developing countries of the world, representing 41% of the global population, 24% of the global GDP, and 16% of the global trade.
- The member countries have worked towards addressing their unique needs and achieve concrete outcomes. Some of the initiatives in this regard are:
 - The [New Development Bank](#) has played a key role in addressing the health and economic consequences of the pandemic. NDB is also exploring the possibility of financing more social infrastructure projects in the countries.
 - The BRICS Counter-Terrorism Action Plan was adopted by the respective National Security Advisors. It is aimed at implementing the BRICS Counter-Terrorism Strategy and defines the approach and actions of the BRICS countries towards counter-terrorism cooperation.
 - Use of Digital and Technological Solutions to Achieve SDGs has been one of the key priorities identified for better implementation of the [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#).

Challenges

- Significant differences and lack of consensus on important issues of common interest.
- On the issue of Counter-Terrorism Cooperation, there is divergence in the approach towards the Taliban. Many members of the Taliban are part of the United Nations Security Council Sanctions List. While China has furthered its support to Afghanistan and the Taliban by announcing USD 31 million as aid, India has followed a more cautious approach.
- Consensus on the issue of reform of multilateral institutions has also not been possible. China has consistently blocked India's efforts to become a permanent member of the [UN Security Council](#) and has called for evolving a "package solution" that is acceptable to all to reform.

Conclusion

While there are differences on some issues, it is undeniable that BRICS has aided the comprehensive cooperation among the leading developing countries of the world. The New Delhi Declaration which was adopted aims to further strengthen the partnership among the member states.

