13th BRICS Summit under India's chairmanship

What is the issue?

With the 13th BRICS summit to be held under India's chairmanship (in digital format), here is a look at its various achievements andpriorities.

What are the achievements so far?

1. BRICS comprises of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.
2. Launched by a meeting of the Foreign Ministers of Brazil, Russia, India and China in 2006.BRIC turned into BRICS in 2010, with the entry of South Africa.
3. BRICS is chaired by turn by the member countries. It represents 42% of the world's population, 30% of the land area, 24% of global GDP and 16% of international trade.

- Served as a bridge between the Global North and Global South.
- Developed a common perspective on a wide range of global and regional issues.
- Established the New Development Bank.
- Created a financial stability net in the form of Contingency Reserve Arrangement.
- Now, planning to set up a Vaccine Research and Development Virtual Centre.

What are India's immediate priorities?

Multilateral institutions

- Pursue reform of multilateral institutions such as the UN, World Bank, IMF, WTO and now even the WHO.
- But reform needs global consensus which is hardly feasible given the strategic tensions between the U.S. and China.

Combating terrorism

- There is a need to bridge the gap between rhetoric and action in this regard.

- E.g., Chinafeels little hesitation in supporting clear-cut denunciations of terrorist groups. It supports Pakistan, which is enmeshed with a host of international terrorist groups.
- In this context, BRICS is attempting to pragmatically shape its counter-terrorism strategy by crafting the BRICS Counter Terrorism Action Plan.
- It contains specific measures to fight radicalisation, terrorist financing and misuse of the Internet by terrorist groups.

Other goals

- Promoting technological and digital solutions for the Sustainable Development Goals.
- Expanding people-to-people cooperation.
- Creating a better internal trade balance, and diversification and strengthening of regional value chains[remains a challengegiven China's centrality and dominance of intra-BRICS trade flows].
- Increasing intra-BRICS cooperation in diverse areas like agriculture, disaster resilience, digital health, traditional medicine, and customs cooperation.

What are the challenges?

- China's economic rise has created an imbalance within BRICS.
- China's aggressive policy, especially against India, puts BRICS solidarity under exceptional strain.
- Strained relations of China and Russia with the West.
- Serious internal challenges preoccupying both Brazil and South Africa.
- Generally, an era of complex geopolitics.

What lies ahead?

- BRICS countries have not done enough to assist the Global South to win their optimal support for their agenda, which has to be addressed by the BRICS leaders and other stakeholders.
- BRICS negotiators need to master the art of brevity and tight drafting asunduly lengthy communiqués lead to the grouping's weakness, not strength.

Source: The Hindu



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