

India and multilateralism of BRICS

Mains: GSII - International relations

Why in News?

The 18th BRICS Summit, held in New Delhi on September 12-13, 2026, highlighted BRICS' role in promoting multipolarity, strategic autonomy and global governance reforms amid growing geopolitical rivalries.

How BRICS contribute to a more multipolar global order?

To know about **BRICS** in detail, click [here](#)

- **India's Strategic Autonomy** - BRICS enables India to pursue multi-alignment by engaging the U.S., China, Russia and the Global South simultaneously.
- **Consensus Despite Contradictions** - Despite internal differences, members cooperate on global governance, climate, technology and opposition to unilateralism.
- India-China tensions and Iran-UAE differences illustrate these contradictions.
- **India-China Engagement** - BRICS provides a platform for India-China dialogue, helping manage mistrust and promote competitive coexistence.
- **West Asia Diplomacy** - BRICS enables India to engage with Iran and Gulf countries while maintaining wider strategic partnerships, supporting diplomatic flexibility.
- **Emerging Multipolar Order** - BRICS promotes global governance reforms, Global South representation and cooperation on trade, finance, climate and technology, supporting multipolarity.

Why BRICS Matters for India?

- **Strategic Autonomy** - It enables India to diversify its strategic partnerships rather than becoming dependent on a single power.
- **Global South Leadership** - BRICS strengthens India's ability to articulate the concerns of developing countries on development, finance, technology and climate change.
- **Economic Opportunities** - The grouping provides avenues for cooperation in trade, investment, infrastructure, energy and financial systems.
- **Diplomatic Balancing** - India can simultaneously engage the U.S., Russia, China, Iran and other major powers.
- **Reform of Global Governance** - BRICS supports India's longstanding demand for greater representation in institutions such as the UNSC and international financial institutions.

What are the Challenges before BRICS?

- **Internal contradictions** - India-China strategic competition, divergent interests among members and regional rivalries can restrict deeper integration.
- **Divergent geopolitical orientations** - Members do not necessarily share common positions on every international conflict or strategic issue.
- **China's economic weight** - China is considerably larger economically than most other members, creating concerns regarding asymmetry within the grouping.
- **Institutional limitations** - BRICS remains primarily a coordination platform rather than a deeply institutionalised organisation with binding decision-making mechanisms.
- **Expansion-related complexity** - The growing membership increases the diversity of interests and can make consensus-building more difficult.

What is the Way Forward for India?

- **Interest-based engagement** - India should pursue a balanced and interest-based engagement with BRICS rather than an alternative to its Western partnerships.
- India can:
 - Preserve strategic autonomy through multi-alignment.
 - Strengthen BRICS cooperation on development and Global South priorities.
 - Use BRICS and SCO platforms to maintain dialogue with China and Russia.
 - Deepen economic and technological cooperation without compromising national interests.
 - Promote reforms of global governance institutions.
 - Encourage consensus-based cooperation despite bilateral disputes.
 - Simultaneously strengthen relations with the U.S., EU, Japan, Australia and other partners.

What lies ahead?

- BRICS should not be viewed simply through the lens of pro-West versus anti-West politics.
- Its importance for India lies in the diplomatic space it creates for pursuing strategic autonomy in an increasingly contested international environment.
- Its internal contradictions may limit its ability to become a cohesive geopolitical bloc, but those very differences can prevent domination by any single member and preserve its character as a plural multilateral platform.
- For India, the objective should therefore be to use BRICS as pathways towards a multipolar, representative and while retaining productive partnerships across geopolitical blocs.

Reference

[The Hindu| India and the plausible multilateralism of BRICS](#)



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