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BRICS India 2026 — India's Chairship and the Expanding Global South Forum

14 January 2026

SUBJECTS COVERED

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WHY IN NEWS

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar launched India's official BRICS India 2026 logo, theme, and website (brics2026.gov.in), marking the formal commencement of India's BRICS Chairship after taking over from Brazil. India will host the 18th BRICS Summit in 2026.

WHAT IS BRICS?

BRICS is a grouping of major emerging economies — originally comprising **Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa**. The grouping takes its name from the initials of its five founding members. BRICS coordinates on issues of global governance, economic development, and multilateral reform.

Origins:

The term “BRIC” was coined by **Goldman Sachs economist Jim O’Neill** in a 2001 paper (“Building Better Global Economic BRICs”) to describe the world’s four fastest-growing major economies

The first BRIC Summit was held in **Yekaterinburg, Russia in 2009**

South Africa joined in **2010**, adding the “S” and making it BRICS

First BRICS Summit with South Africa: 2011 (Sanya, China)

BRICS EXPANSION — THE 2023 JOHANNESBURG ENLARGEMENT

The **15th BRICS Summit** (Johannesburg, South Africa, August 2023) marked a historic enlargement:

5 new members invited (effective January 1, 2024):

Egypt

Ethiopia

Iran

Saudi Arabia

UAE (United Arab Emirates)

Argentina was also invited but declined membership after President Javier Milei’s government took office.

BRICS now has **10 full members** — a coalition representing approximately:

~**45% of the world's population**

~**35% of global GDP** (PPP basis)

~**25% of global merchandise trade**

The enlargement brought significant oil producers (Saudi Arabia, UAE, Iran) into the grouping, giving BRICS substantial energy leverage and potential for petrodollar alternatives.

INDIA'S BRICS 2026 CHAIRSHIP

India assumed the **BRICS Chairship for 2026** from **Brazil** (which held it in 2025).

India's BRICS 2026 Theme: *"Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability"* — the initials deliberately mapping to **B-R-I-C-S**.

Logo: Features floral petals in the colours of all BRICS member nations, with a **Namaste gesture** at the centre — symbolising India's cultural spirit of warmth, inclusivity, and respect. The design draws on India's tradition of expressing welcome through joined hands (Anjali mudra).

Website: brics2026.gov.in

Three Traditional BRICS Pillars:

Political & Security Pillar

Economic & Financial Pillar

People-to-People Pillar

India will host the **18th BRICS Summit** in 2026, building on a year of ministerial meetings, working group sessions, and sector-specific forums across these three pillars.

WHY BRICS CHAIRSHIP MATTERS FOR INDIA

1. Setting the agenda: As Chair, India determines the priority issues for BRICS discussions in 2026 — from trade in local currencies and reform of Bretton Woods institutions (IMF/World Bank) to climate finance and digital connectivity.

2. Global South leadership: India has positioned itself as the voice of the Global South — reinforced by its G20 Presidency (2023) with the "One Earth, One Family, One Future" vision. The BRICS Chairship extends this leadership into the post-G20 period, consolidating India's role as a bridge between the developed and developing worlds.

3. New Development Bank (NDB): The BRICS New Development Bank (headquartered in Shanghai; India’s K.V. Kamath was its first president) is the grouping’s development finance institution. India’s Chairship provides an opportunity to shape NDB’s lending priorities toward Indian infrastructure models.

4. Dedollarisation discussions: BRICS members have increasingly discussed reducing dependence on the US dollar in bilateral trade. India has been cautious — the Rupee trade mechanism (with Russia) has faced operational challenges — but the Chairship places India at the centre of these evolving discussions.

5. India-China tensions within BRICS: The expansion of BRICS, China’s dominant economic weight within the group, and India-China border tensions create a complex dynamic. India must balance asserting its leadership within BRICS while managing China’s tendency to use multilateral forums to advance its positions.

BRICS VS OTHER GROUPINGS — UPSC COMPARISON

Feature	BRICS	G20	G7	SCO
Members	10	19 nations + EU	7	10
Character	Emerging economies	Major economies (all)	Developed economies	Eurasian security
Secretariat	None (rotating chair)	None (rotating)	None	Beijing
Development bank	NDB (Shanghai)	None	—	None
India’s role	Member + 2026 Chair	G20 Presidency (2023)	Observer/invited	Member

UPSC RELEVANCE

Prelims: BRICS founding (2009; O’Neill 2001); South Africa joined 2010; 15th Summit Johannesburg 2023; 5 new members (Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, UAE) from Jan 2024; India BRICS Chair 2026; theme; 18th Summit; NDB (Shanghai); India’s V. K. Kamath as first NDB president.

Mains GS-2: India’s multilateral diplomacy; BRICS vs G7 — different visions of global order; Global South leadership; India-China dynamics within BRICS; dedollarisation debate; NDB and alternative development finance.

★ FACTS CORNER — KNOWLEDGEPEDIA
BRICS — CORE DATA:

Original members: Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa
 Term coined: Jim O'Neill, Goldman Sachs, 2001 paper
 First Summit: Yekaterinburg, Russia, 2009 (as BRIC)
 South Africa joined: 2010; first BRICS Summit: 2011 (Sanya, China)
 Current members (10): Original 5 + Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, UAE (from Jan 1, 2024)
 15th Summit: Johannesburg, August 2023 — enlargement announced

INDIA'S BRICS 2026 CHAIRSHIP:

Previous Chair: Brazil (2025)
 Theme: "Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability"
 Logo: Namaste gesture with BRICS member-colour petals
 Website: brics2026.gov.in
 Summit: 18th BRICS Summit; hosted by India in 2026
 EAM: S. Jaishankar launched logo on January 13, 2026

NEW DEVELOPMENT BANK (NDB):

HQ: Shanghai, China
 Established: 2014 (Fortaleza Summit)
 First President: K.V. Kamath (India) — served 2015-2020
 Authorised capital: US\$ 100 billion
 Members: BRICS original 5 + Bangladesh, UAE, Uruguay, Egypt (expansion members)

BRICS ECONOMIC WEIGHT:

~45% of world population; ~35% of global GDP (PPP); ~25% of merchandise trade
 Combined nominal GDP (2024): ~\$28 trillion (vs G7: ~\$47 trillion)

PREVIOUS BRICS SUMMITS:

16th Summit: Kazan, Russia, 2024 (Russia as Chair)
 15th Summit: Johannesburg, 2023 — enlargement
 14th Summit: Beijing, 2022 (virtual)
 India hosted: 9th BRICS Summit, Xiamen (China) — India attended; hosted 13th Summit, New Delhi, 2021 (virtual)
 India last hosted BRICS in-person: 2016 (Goa, 8th Summit)

OTHER RELEVANT FACTS:

BRICS has no permanent secretariat (rotating presidency)
 CRA: BRICS Contingent Reserve Arrangement — \$100 billion emergency fund (like IMF emergency facility)
 BRICS Pay: cross-border payment mechanism being developed (alternative to SWIFT)
 India-Russia trade in Rupees: operational since 2022 (after Russia-Ukraine war sanctions)

Sources: MEA, brics2026.gov.in, PIB

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