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Building blocks: On the 16th BRICS Summit in Kazan

Russia's hosting of the 16th BRICS Summit in Kazan had several messages, watched closely by particularly the western countries. This was the biggest such conference in Russia since the Ukraine war began in 2022. With leaders of nine countries (and Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister) arriving as BRICS and BRICS partner countries, and about 30 leaders of the Global South attending a special BRICS outreach conference, Russian President Vladimir Putin **dispelled** any notion that Russia had been "isolated" due to Ukraine. The summit agenda and the Kazan Declaration sent a **concerted** message on strengthening economic bonds within the group that together represents a third of global GDP, in a signal that **unilateral sanctions** against members — Russia and Iran, for instance — are not acceptable to all. Among the agreements, the push for an interbank cooperation mechanism, a grain exchange, a cross-border payment system and insurance company, and growth of the BRICS New Development Bank, indicate the intent to seek alternatives to the prevailing international governance structures. The induction of members, Iran, Egypt, Ethiopia, the UAE and Saudi Arabia, is another sign that the counter-balancing arrangement of emerging economies that BRICS was **envisaged** as, cannot be mocked.

While many BRICS countries have strong ties with the U.S. And Europe, it is clear that they feel that the present institutions of global governance are **skewed** unfairly towards the “old guard” of the West.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's statement at the closed **plenary** sought to **allay** some concerns about this challenge, describing BRICS as an inclusive, “not a divisive organisation but one that works in the interest of humanity”. Given that India is the only member of BRICS that is also a part of U.S.-led arrangements (the Quad and the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework), this is a necessary balance. His oft-repeated phrases, that India supports “dialogue and diplomacy, not war”, and that there are “no solutions on the battlefield”, were a necessary reminder that all members do not completely align on geopolitics. It was significant in this context that India backed the strong paragraphs in the Declaration on Israel in Gaza and support for the state of Palestine. Apart from the substance of the summit, the BRICS grouping also affords its members a stage to discuss thorny bilateral issues, given differences between members, including Iran-UAE and Egypt-Ethiopia. The détentes between India and China over Doklam, and agreement on resolving the four-year LAC standoff, were both held in meetings between Mr. Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping on the side-lines of BRICS summits.

Summary –

The 16th BRICS Summit in Kazan, Russia, showcased the country's international engagement despite Western isolation attempts over the Ukraine war. Key themes included economic cooperation, an interbank system, and alternatives to Western-dominated global governance. The addition of Iran, Egypt, Ethiopia, the UAE, and Saudi Arabia highlighted BRICS's growing influence. Prime Minister Modi emphasized BRICS's inclusive, non-divisive approach, advocating dialogue and diplomacy. India also supported strong statements on Israel and Palestine, while meetings addressed various bilateral issues, including progress on India-China border discussion.

Vocabulary –

1. Dispelled (verb) (दूर करना)

Meaning: make (a doubt, feeling, or belief) disappear

Synonym: Disperse, dissipate

Antonym: Gather, accumulate

Example: The sunshine dispelled the morning mist.

2. Concerted (adj) संयुक्त

Meaning= jointly arranged or carried out; coordinated

Synonym: Cooperative, collaborative

Antonym: Individual, solitary

Example: The team's concerted efforts resulted in a successful project launch.

3. Sanctions (noun) प्रतिबंध

Meaning: Measures taken by a country to restrict trade and official contact with a country that has broken international law.

Synonym: Embargo, penalties.

Antonym: Approval, endorsement.

Example: Economic sanctions were imposed to pressure the regime to change its policies.

4. Envisage (verb) कल्पना करना)

Meaning: contemplate or conceive of as a possibility or a desirable future event.

Synonym: Foresee, anticipate

Antonym: Disregard, ignore

Example: The architect envisaged a modern design that would complement the city's skyline.

5. Plenary (adj) संपूर्ण

Meaning: unqualified; absolute.

Synonym: Full, complete

Antonym: Limited, restricted

Example: The committee has plenary authority over the budget.

6. Allay (verb) शांत करना

Meaning = diminish or put at rest (fear, suspicion, or worry

Synonym: Reduce, alleviate

Antonym: Aggravate, intensify

Example: The report served to allay the community's fears.

7. Détente (noun) शीतलता

Meaning: The easing of hostility or strained relations, especially between countries

Synonym: Relaxation, thawing

Antonym: Tension, hostility

Example: The two nations entered a period of détente that lasted several years.

8. Standoff (noun) गतिरोध

Meaning : A deadlock between two equally matched opponents in a dispute or conflict.

Synonym: Impasse, stalemate

Antonym: Resolution, agreement

Sentence: The standoff between the strikers and the management continued for weeks.

9. Sanctions (noun) प्रतिबंध

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Synonym: Embargo, penalties

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Example: Economic sanctions were imposed to pressure the regime to change its policies.

10. Skewed (Verb) झुका होना

Meaning – something that is not aligned or is tilted in some way, either physically or metaphorically.

Synonyms – Twisted, Slanted.

Antonyms – Straight, Symmetrical, Aligned.

Example- The data was skewed by the outlier.