



OAS HUB



IDEAL FOR
UPSC, OPSC and Other
Competitive Examinations

English

DAILY CHRONICLE CURRENT AFFAIRS

NEWS CREDIT

PIB/ PTI/ News On Air/ The Hindu/ IANS/ Business Standard/ Times Of India/ Deccan Herald/ Hindustan Times/ BBC News/ Aljazeera/ Mirror.Uk/ Times Now/ Economic Times/ Financial Express/ Indian Express...

NEWS COVERED

Business News, financial news, economy news, company news, politics news, India news, breaking news, Indian economy, International News, Sports News, and many more topics...



Tuesday, September 15, 2026



TABLE OF CONTENT

- **International Criminal Court Faces Growing Withdrawals and U.S. Pressure, Raising Questions over Global Criminal Accountability:** *International Criminal Court / International Criminal Justice / Global Governance / State Sovereignty (GS-II)*
- **India's Growth Challenge: Avoiding the Middle-Income Trap Through Jobs, Productivity, Skills and Innovation:** *Middle-Income Trap / Employment Generation / Productivity / Skill Development / Innovation (GS-III)*
- **BRICS@20: India's Push for Local-Currency Trade, Payment Integration and a More Resilient Global South:** *BRICS / Local-Currency Trade / Payment Systems / Global South / Economic Diplomacy (GS-II / GS-III)*
- **India Tightens E-Commerce Rules to Strengthen Price Transparency, Algorithmic Fairness and Consumer Protection:** *E-Commerce Regulation / Consumer Protection / Price Transparency / Algorithmic Fairness / Digital Economy (GS-III)*
- **BRICS New Delhi Declaration 2026: India Builds Consensus on Security, Trade, Finance, AI and Global South Cooperation:** *BRICS / Global Governance / International Cooperation / Artificial Intelligence / Global South (GS-II / GS-III)*

IMPORTANT INSIGHTS

International Criminal Court Faces Growing Withdrawals and U.S. Pressure, Raising Questions over Global Criminal Accountability

Recent Developments:

- The **International Criminal Court (ICC)** is facing renewed institutional pressure as **Venezuela, Chad, Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger** have announced steps towards withdrawal from the Rome Statute, although the legal process of withdrawal takes time. The developments have raised concerns about weakening international accountability.
- In July 2026, **U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio** announced a government-wide campaign to counter what Washington describes as an unacceptable threat posed by the ICC to U.S. sovereignty. The United States has also expanded sanctions against ICC officials.
- **Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger**, governed by military regimes, have criticised the ICC over alleged selective justice and perceived Western or neo-colonial influence, while **Chad** has specifically pointed to U.S. diplomatic pressure.
- Despite these withdrawals, the ICC continues to receive support from some states. **Ukraine became the 125th State Party in January 2025**, demonstrating that the institution continues to be viewed by some governments as an important accountability mechanism.

International Criminal Court: Background:

Establishment and Mandate:

- The **International Criminal Court** is a permanent international criminal tribunal established by the **Rome Statute of 1998**, which entered into force on **1 July 2002**.
- Its headquarters are located in **The Hague, Netherlands**, and it prosecutes individuals rather than states for the most serious international crimes.
- The ICC has jurisdiction over four core crimes: **genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and the crime of aggression**.
- The Court represents the principle that individuals, including senior political and military leaders, may be held personally responsible for grave violations of international law.

Principle of Complementarity:

- **Complementarity** is a foundational principle of the ICC, under which national courts retain primary responsibility for investigating and prosecuting crimes.
- The ICC generally becomes relevant when a state is **unwilling or genuinely unable** to conduct appropriate national proceedings.
- This principle attempts to balance **national sovereignty** with the need to prevent impunity for serious international crimes.

Dependence on State Cooperation:

- The ICC does not possess an independent police force and therefore depends heavily on **state cooperation** for arrests, evidence collection, witness protection and enforcement of judicial decisions.

- This structural limitation makes the Court particularly vulnerable when governments refuse to cooperate or powerful states oppose its investigations.

Present Crisis Facing the ICC:

Growing U.S. Pressure:

- The United States has never become a State Party to the Rome Statute and has historically raised concerns about the Court's potential jurisdiction over U.S. nationals.
- In July 2026, Secretary of State **Marco Rubio** announced a campaign aimed at weakening the ICC's ability to operate, investigate U.S. personnel and officials, and challenge American sovereignty.
- Washington has also used **sanctions, visa restrictions and diplomatic pressure** against ICC personnel and has encouraged countries dependent on U.S. assistance to reconsider their relationship with the Court.
- In August 2026, the United States additionally designated **ICC President Tomoko Akane and Senior Trial Lawyer Abdoulaye Seye** under its sanctions regime.

Withdrawal of States:

- **Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger** have moved towards withdrawal while criticising the ICC's record and its perceived treatment of African states.
- **Chad** initiated its withdrawal process in July 2026 and became the fifth country in the recent wave of departures or withdrawal announcements.
- **Venezuela** has also initiated withdrawal proceedings amid longstanding criticism of international scrutiny of its domestic situation. The Assembly of States Parties has expressed concern that such withdrawals could weaken collective efforts against impunity.
- These developments are significant because the ICC's legitimacy depends not only on its legal framework but also on sustained **political support and cooperation from States Parties**.

Key Legal Principle: Withdrawal Does Not Erase Earlier Obligations:

Article 127 and Continuing Jurisdiction:

- Withdrawal from the Rome Statute does not automatically erase obligations or legal consequences arising during the period when a state was a party.
- The **Assembly of States Parties** has specifically recalled that withdrawal does not relieve states of obligations arising while they remained parties to the Statute.
- This principle is important for understanding ICC investigations involving states that subsequently withdraw because withdrawal cannot simply be used as a mechanism to eliminate all accountability for earlier conduct.

Philippines and Rodrigo Duterte:

- The **Philippines withdrew from the Rome Statute effective 17 March 2019**, but the ICC's investigation concerns alleged crimes committed between **1 November 2011 and 16 March 2019**, when the Philippines was still a State Party.
- In March 2025, former Philippine President **Rodrigo Duterte** was surrendered to the ICC after his arrest by Philippine authorities pursuant to an ICC warrant.
- The ICC proceedings concern alleged **crimes against humanity**, illustrating how withdrawal does not necessarily extinguish jurisdiction over conduct falling within the Court's jurisdiction before withdrawal.

Venezuela:

- The ICC's investigation into the situation in Venezuela was authorised to resume in **2023** after judicial proceedings concerning Venezuela's request to defer the investigation to domestic authorities.
- The Appeals Chamber confirmed the resumption of the investigation in 2024, demonstrating the importance of the complementarity framework in assessing whether domestic proceedings are sufficient.

Why the Crisis Matters for International Relations:

Sovereignty versus International Accountability:

- The present crisis highlights a fundamental tension between **state sovereignty** and the principle of **individual international criminal responsibility**.
- States may regard external judicial scrutiny as interference in domestic affairs, while international institutions argue that sovereignty cannot provide immunity for genocide, war crimes or crimes against humanity.
- The controversy therefore reflects a broader debate over the limits of sovereignty in a rules-based international order.

Selectivity and Legitimacy:

- The ICC has faced longstanding criticism that its early investigations disproportionately focused on **African situations**.
- Although the Court's contemporary docket has become geographically broader, allegations of selective enforcement continue to affect its political legitimacy.
- The criticism creates a challenge for the ICC because **legal impartiality must also be accompanied by perceived institutional fairness**.

Enforcement Deficit:

- The ICC can issue arrest warrants but generally depends on states to execute them.
- Consequently, the effectiveness of an international criminal tribunal is closely connected with **political cooperation, diplomatic legitimacy and domestic enforcement capacity**.
- Powerful states that refuse cooperation can therefore expose the gap between formal international law and practical enforcement.

ICC and Ukraine: Continuing Relevance:

Ukraine's Membership:

- Ukraine deposited its instrument of ratification of the Rome Statute on **25 October 2024**, and the Statute entered into force for Ukraine on **1 January 2025**.
- Before becoming a State Party, Ukraine had already accepted ICC jurisdiction through **Article 12(3)** declarations covering alleged crimes committed on its territory.
- Ukraine's accession demonstrates that states facing grave security crises may view the ICC as a mechanism for strengthening accountability for international crimes.

Contradictory Trend:

- The simultaneous withdrawal of several states and accession of Ukraine demonstrate two opposing trends: **institutional disengagement by some governments and renewed reliance on international justice by others.**
- This contradiction suggests that the ICC's future will depend on whether States Parties can preserve its independence while addressing legitimate concerns regarding consistency, accountability and institutional reform.

Major Challenges Before the ICC:

Institutional and Political Challenges:

- **Dependence on state cooperation**, particularly for arrests and evidence collection, limits enforcement.
- **Non-universal membership** restricts the Court's reach and creates jurisdictional complexities.
- **Opposition from powerful non-member states** can generate diplomatic and financial pressure.
- **Allegations of selective justice** can weaken legitimacy among states and affected populations.
- **Resource and institutional constraints** can slow investigations and judicial proceedings.
- **Political polarisation** may increasingly affect international support for the Court.

Way Forward:

Strengthening International Criminal Justice:

- The ICC should apply **consistent and transparent legal standards** irrespective of the political status, nationality or geographical location of suspects.
- States Parties should strengthen cooperation on **arrests, evidence sharing, witness protection and domestic implementation** of Rome Statute obligations.
- The Assembly of States Parties should provide stronger institutional mechanisms for addressing concerns raised by member states without compromising judicial independence.
- Greater **transparency in prosecutorial and administrative decision-making** can improve public confidence and reduce allegations of politicisation.
- Domestic judicial systems should be strengthened so that the principle of **complementarity** functions effectively rather than leaving the ICC as the only realistic avenue for accountability.
- Broader ratification and implementation of the Rome Statute can improve the universality of international criminal law.

India and the ICC: UPSC Relevance:

India's Position:

- **India is not a State Party to the Rome Statute** and has historically expressed concerns regarding the ICC's jurisdiction, definition of certain crimes, and relationship with national sovereignty.
- India's approach reflects the broader tension between supporting international accountability and protecting **sovereign decision-making and jurisdiction of domestic courts.**
- For UPSC, the ICC should therefore be studied in connection with **international law, sovereignty, human rights, multilateralism, global governance and reform of international institutions.**

Value Addition for UPSC:

Key Concepts:

- **Rome Statute:** Foundational treaty establishing the ICC.
- **Complementarity:** ICC intervenes when national jurisdictions are unwilling or unable to genuinely prosecute serious crimes.
- **Four Core Crimes:** Genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and crime of aggression.
- **Article 12(3):** Allows a non-State Party to accept ICC jurisdiction through a declaration.
- **Article 127:** Governs withdrawal from the Rome Statute and preserves relevant legal obligations.
- **State Cooperation:** Essential for arrests, evidence, investigations and enforcement.
- **Sovereignty–Accountability Tension:** Central normative issue underlying debates over the ICC.

UPSC Mains Linkage:

- The ICC illustrates the evolution from **state-centric international law** towards **individual accountability for mass atrocities**.
- Its current crisis demonstrates that the effectiveness of international institutions depends not only on legal authority but also on **political legitimacy, state cooperation and institutional credibility**.
- The future of international criminal justice therefore requires a balance between **sovereignty, universality, impartiality and accountability**.

India's Growth Challenge: Avoiding the Middle-Income Trap Through Jobs, Productivity, Skills and Innovation

Recent Developments:

- The **World Bank's World Development Report 2024** has renewed global attention on the middle-income trap and proposed the **3i strategy—Investment, Infusion and Innovation** as countries move towards higher-income development.
- India has maintained relatively strong economic growth, but concerns over **weak private investment, subdued consumption, employment quality, stagnant real wages and inadequate productivity growth** indicate that growth alone may not guarantee a transition to high-income status.
- India's challenge is increasingly about the **quality of growth**: converting investment into productive employment, improving human capital, enabling firms to scale up and accelerating technology diffusion and indigenous innovation.
- The **India Employment Report 2024** highlights the continuing mismatch between educational attainment, youth employment and market-relevant skills, making employment-intensive growth a central development priority.

Understanding the Middle-Income Trap:

Definition and Core Mechanism:

- The **middle-income trap** describes a situation in which a developing economy achieves middle-income status through low-cost labour, capital accumulation and basic industrialisation but subsequently experiences difficulty sustaining productivity growth and reaching high-income status.
- The trap emerges when **wages rise faster than productivity**, reducing competitiveness against lower-wage economies, while domestic firms lack the technology, skills, institutions and innovation capabilities required to compete with advanced economies.
- The experience of **South Korea, Taiwan and Singapore** demonstrates that countries can escape the trap, but this generally requires sustained investment in human capital, technology, productive capabilities and innovation.

World Bank's 3i Framework:

- The World Bank identifies three progressively sophisticated stages of development: **Investment** to build productive capacity, **Infusion** to absorb and adapt technologies from global frontiers, and **Innovation** to develop new technologies and move the frontier itself.
- For an economy approaching the upper-middle-income stage, continued capital accumulation alone becomes insufficient; **technology absorption, creative destruction, competition and innovation** become increasingly important.

Why India Faces Middle-Income Trap Risks:

Premature De-industrialisation and Weak Manufacturing:—

- India has not experienced the scale of **labour-intensive manufacturing expansion** that characterised several successful East Asian transitions, limiting the ability of industry to absorb surplus agricultural labour.
- Manufacturing's relatively stagnant contribution to economic output, combined with continued dependence on low-productivity employment, constrains productivity growth and broad-based income gains.
- A stronger manufacturing ecosystem requires competitive infrastructure, reliable logistics, skilled workers, easier firm expansion and integration into **global value chains**.

Service-Led Growth and Employment Mismatch:

- India's services sector has generated substantial output and exports, but high-productivity segments such as information technology cannot by themselves provide mass employment for the entire working-age population.
- The economy therefore requires greater expansion of **employment-intensive manufacturing, construction, modern services and labour-intensive export sectors**.
- The youth employment challenge is not simply a shortage of jobs; it also reflects a mismatch between **education, skills and the requirements of emerging industries**.

Stagnant Wages and Weak Consumption:

- Slow growth in real wages can weaken household purchasing power and constrain **Private Final Consumption Expenditure**, reducing the strength of domestic demand.
- Weak consumption can discourage private firms from undertaking fresh capacity expansion, creating a cycle in which insufficient demand and weak investment reinforce each other.

- Sustained high growth therefore requires productivity gains to translate into **higher real incomes and wider consumption opportunities**.

Skill Deficit and Vocational Training:

- India continues to face inadequate formal vocational training, outdated training infrastructure and a mismatch between conventional degrees and industry requirements.
- Greater emphasis is required on **industrial apprenticeships, technical education, vocational mobility and employer-linked skill development**.
- Germany and Switzerland demonstrate how dual apprenticeship systems can connect classroom education with workplace-based training and improve the transition from education to employment.

Firm Dwarfism and Low Productivity:

- A major structural problem is the persistence of numerous **small and informal enterprises** that fail to grow into productive medium and large firms.
- Limited managerial capabilities, restricted access to finance, informality, regulatory barriers and weak technology adoption can prevent firms from achieving economies of scale.
- Encouraging firms to grow is important because larger productive enterprises generally possess greater capacity for **technology adoption, worker training, formal employment, exports and innovation**.

Low Research and Development Intensity:

- India's **Gross Expenditure on Research and Development** remains modest relative to major innovation-driven economies, limiting the transition from technology adoption to technological leadership.
- The growing participation of private industry in research spending is encouraging, but stronger university-industry collaboration and commercially relevant research are required to improve technology diffusion.
- India must increasingly move from being a large market for imported technologies to becoming a **producer, adapter and exporter of advanced technologies**.

Unequal Recovery and Informality:

- Post-pandemic economic gains have been uneven, with large formal firms and digitally enabled sectors generally better positioned to capture productivity gains than informal enterprises.
- Since informal employment remains extremely significant, limited productivity growth among micro-enterprises can prevent aggregate economic growth from translating into sufficiently broad-based prosperity.
- Formalisation should therefore be accompanied by **access to credit, technology, markets, skills and social security**, rather than being treated only as a compliance exercise.

Social and Technological Constraints:

- Social preferences for conventional white-collar careers can reduce the attractiveness of technical and vocational occupations despite their importance for industrial development.
- Automation and artificial intelligence can further reduce demand for some routine cognitive and coding tasks, making **continuous reskilling and adaptable human capital** essential.
- India's objective should be technology-led productivity growth with labour complementarity rather than technology adoption that merely displaces workers without creating new productive opportunities.

Measures Needed to Avoid the Trap:

Promote Employment-Intensive Productivism:

- India should pursue a **productivist development model** that prioritises the real economy, productive investment, manufacturing capacity and employment rather than relying excessively on financial or asset-led expansion.
- Industrial policy should focus not merely on attracting capital but on creating **productive firms, quality employment, export capacity and technological capabilities**.
- Incentives under schemes such as the **Production Linked Incentive** framework can increasingly incorporate measurable employment, domestic value addition, productivity and export outcomes.

Modernise Vocational Education:

- Industrial Training Institutes should be upgraded through **Public-Private Partnerships**, modern equipment, industry-designed curricula and stronger apprenticeship arrangements.
- Skill programmes should be evaluated through **placement rates, post-training wages, productivity and career progression**, rather than enrolment alone.
- Technical occupations should receive stronger social recognition through credible certification, career progression and wage premiums.

Increase R&D and Technology Diffusion:

- India should progressively raise **R&D expenditure** while strengthening private-sector participation, university research and mission-oriented technological programmes.
- Research policy should focus not only on frontier discoveries but also on **technology diffusion to MSMEs**, enabling smaller firms to adopt productivity-enhancing technologies.
- Public procurement, research grants and innovation ecosystems can help convert domestic research capabilities into commercially scalable technologies.

Strengthen Human Capital:

- Investment in **early childhood development, foundational literacy and numeracy, public health, higher education and technical skills** should be treated as productivity-enhancing economic investment.
- Human-capital policy must connect education more closely with industry requirements while promoting lifelong learning and reskilling.
- Better health, nutrition and learning outcomes can increase labour productivity and improve India's long-term demographic dividend.

Enable Firm Growth and Global Integration:

- Policy should reduce barriers that discourage firms from expanding beyond micro-enterprise status.
- Easier access to finance, logistics, technology, skilled labour and export markets can encourage firms to achieve economies of scale.
- Integration with **global value chains** should be accompanied by domestic capability building so that India captures greater value rather than remaining primarily an assembly destination.

Way Forward:

From High Growth to High Productivity:

- India's central challenge is not merely to sustain a high GDP growth rate but to ensure that growth generates **productive employment, rising real wages, technological capability and broad-based prosperity**.
- The country should combine the World Bank's **3i strategy—Investment, Infusion and Innovation** with employment-intensive industrialisation, human-capital development and institutional reforms.
- The transition requires a coordinated strategy in which government creates enabling conditions, private firms invest and innovate, universities generate knowledge, and workers acquire industry-relevant skills.
- Avoiding the middle-income trap ultimately depends on moving from **capital accumulation to productivity-led growth**, from technology adoption to innovation, and from informal low-productivity employment to productive formal work.

Value Addition for UPSC:

Key Concepts:

- **Middle-Income Trap:** Persistent difficulty in moving from middle-income to high-income status because productivity growth slows before an economy develops advanced technological and institutional capabilities.
- **3i Strategy: Investment + Infusion + Innovation**, the World Bank's framework for progressively upgrading productive capabilities.
- **Premature De-industrialisation:** Declining or stagnant industrialisation before an economy has created sufficient manufacturing employment and productivity.
- **Firm Dwarfism:** Persistence of very small firms that fail to scale up, limiting productivity, formal employment and technological adoption.
- **Productivity-Led Growth:** Growth driven primarily by improvements in output per worker through skills, technology, capital efficiency and innovation.

UPSC Mains Linkages:

- **Essay:** *"High growth is necessary, but productivity and inclusion determine whether growth becomes development."*
- **Core Argument:** India can avoid the middle-income trap only when **growth, employment, productivity, innovation and human-capital development reinforce one another** rather than progressing in isolation.

BRICS@20: India's Push for Local-Currency Trade, Payment Integration and a More Resilient Global South

Recent Developments:

- India's **2026 BRICS Chairship** has placed greater emphasis on economic integration, resilient supply chains, payment connectivity, local-currency trade and practical cooperation among members and partner countries. India's chairship theme is **"Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability."**

- The **18th BRICS Summit** is being hosted in **New Delhi in September 2026**, marking 20 years of BRICS-level cooperation and providing India an opportunity to strengthen the grouping's economic and developmental agenda. Recent discussions have also highlighted secure maritime routes and the safety of seafarers as important conditions for uninterrupted global trade.
- India has advocated **opening markets, reducing non-tariff barriers, linking payment systems and expanding trade in local currencies**, particularly for critical minerals, raw materials, manufactured goods and services. This approach seeks to convert BRICS' economic complementarities into greater intra-group trade.
- India's approach does not imply an immediate replacement of the US dollar. Instead, it seeks **greater currency diversification, payment-system autonomy and resilience** against external financial disruptions while retaining the WTO at the core of the multilateral trading system.
- BRICS has become substantially larger since its expansion. **Indonesia joined as a full member in 2025**, taking total membership to 11 countries. The grouping now has a broader representation of the **Global South**, strengthening its economic and geopolitical significance.

Trade in Local Currencies and De-dollarisation:

Meaning and Concept:

- **Trade in local currencies** refers to settling cross-border transactions directly in the currencies of the trading countries rather than converting them into an intermediary or vehicle currency such as the US dollar. It can reduce dependence on third-country currencies and associated conversion costs.
- **De-dollarisation** refers to reducing excessive dependence on the US dollar in **trade invoicing, cross-border payments, foreign-exchange reserves and international finance**. It does not necessarily mean eliminating the dollar from international transactions.
- For BRICS, the broader objective is **currency diversification and payment-system autonomy**, allowing members to increase the use of national currencies while developing mechanisms for efficient settlement.

Why Local-Currency Trade Matters for BRICS:

- **Lower transaction costs:** Direct settlement can reduce repeated currency conversions, intermediary charges and dependence on correspondent banking channels.
- **Greater financial resilience:** Alternative payment channels can reduce exposure to disruptions in international payment networks and excessive dependence on a single dominant currency.
- **Higher intra-BRICS trade:** Easier settlement mechanisms can help countries convert complementary economic structures into stronger commercial partnerships in energy, agriculture, minerals, manufacturing and services.
- **Greater strategic autonomy:** Wider use of national currencies can provide emerging economies with additional policy space during periods of geopolitical tension, financial sanctions or external monetary tightening.
- **Digital integration:** Interoperable payment systems can enable faster and cheaper cross-border transactions and can expand financial inclusion among smaller firms and consumers.
- **Supply-chain diversification:** Efficient settlement can support trade in **critical minerals, energy resources, agricultural commodities, intermediate goods and manufactured products**, thereby strengthening resilient supply chains.

Significance for India:

Economic and Strategic Benefits:

- India can benefit from greater use of local currencies by reducing some **foreign-exchange conversion costs and settlement risks**, particularly in trade with major BRICS partners.
- Greater payment connectivity can complement India's **digital public infrastructure**, particularly the experience gained through the **Unified Payments Interface**, and create opportunities for cross-border digital payments.
- Local-currency settlement can support Indian exporters and importers when conventional dollar-based settlement becomes expensive or difficult, while also strengthening India's position as a provider of **digital payment and financial-technology solutions**.
- BRICS cooperation can facilitate Indian exports of **pharmaceuticals, engineering goods, electronics, automobiles, agricultural products and services**, while improving access to energy, raw materials and critical minerals.
- The Department of Commerce identifies BRICS as an important economic platform for India. Its recent data indicate that BRICS countries accounted for around **40% of global GDP, nearly 49.5% of the world population and more than 18% of global merchandise trade in 2024**.

Challenges and Limitations:

Financial and Macroeconomic Constraints:

- **Exchange-rate volatility** can create risks for exporters and importers because fluctuations between local currencies can affect the value of contracts and settlement receipts.
- Many emerging-market currencies have **limited convertibility, liquidity and international acceptability**, which can restrict their use for large-scale trade settlement.
- Persistent **trade imbalances** can create difficulty in maintaining balanced holdings of partner currencies, particularly when one country consistently exports more than it imports from another.
- Local-currency arrangements may require deeper foreign-exchange markets, hedging instruments and reliable settlement mechanisms to manage currency risk effectively.

Institutional and Technological Constraints:

- Differences in **financial regulations, payment standards, data governance and banking infrastructure** can make interoperability difficult.
- Greater digital connectivity also creates risks relating to **cybersecurity, data protection, fraud, operational resilience and financial stability**.
- Excessive fragmentation of payment systems could increase transaction complexity if countries develop multiple incompatible platforms rather than interoperable standards.
- The US dollar continues to enjoy major advantages in **market depth, liquidity, convertibility and global acceptability**, meaning that local currencies are unlikely to displace it rapidly.
- De-dollarisation therefore faces a structural constraint: successful diversification requires not only political agreement but also **deep financial markets, credible institutions, stable currencies and efficient payment infrastructure**.

India's BRICS Economic Agenda:

Linking Payment Systems and Expanding Market Access:

- India has advocated **interoperable payment systems, local-currency trade and easier market access** as practical instruments for strengthening economic cooperation among BRICS members and partner countries.
- India's **UPI experience** provides an important model for digital payment interoperability, although cross-border expansion requires compatible regulatory frameworks, settlement arrangements, cybersecurity safeguards and data-protection mechanisms.
- Market integration should extend beyond financial connectivity to **trade facilitation, logistics, customs cooperation, standards recognition and affordable finance for micro, small and medium enterprises.**

Critical Minerals and Resilient Supply Chains:

- BRICS can become an important platform for cooperation in **critical minerals, energy resources, agricultural commodities and strategic industrial inputs**, particularly as global supply chains become more vulnerable to geopolitical disruptions.
- India has stressed the need for markets to remain open to each other's products, particularly **raw materials and critical minerals**, while developing supply chains that are diversified and resilient.
- Cooperation in this area can support India's requirements for **renewable energy technologies, electric vehicles, semiconductors, batteries and advanced manufacturing**, where secure access to minerals is strategically important.

Reducing Non-Tariff Barriers:

- **Non-tariff measures** such as technical regulations, sanitary and phytosanitary requirements, certification procedures and conformity assessments can significantly affect the cost and speed of international trade.
- BRICS cooperation should therefore focus not only on reducing tariffs but also on **simplifying customs procedures, improving transparency, promoting mutual recognition of standards and reducing unnecessary regulatory barriers.**
- This would be particularly valuable for MSMEs, which generally have fewer resources to manage complex export compliance requirements.

BRICS Economic Cooperation Architecture:

Institutional Mechanisms:

- The **BRICS Economic Partnership Strategy 2030** provides a framework for strengthening cooperation in trade and investment, while initiatives involving business networks, innovation and entrepreneurship can deepen private-sector participation.
- The **BRICS Business Council, BRICS Women's Business Alliance, startup and innovation networks and sectoral cooperation mechanisms** can connect enterprises across member economies and promote investment, technology transfer and market access.
- India's emphasis on women-led enterprises is significant because greater participation of women entrepreneurs can broaden the productive base of BRICS economies and strengthen inclusive growth.

WTO and Multilateral Trading System:

- India's approach to BRICS economic cooperation should remain consistent with a **rules-based, open and inclusive multilateral trading system** centred on the WTO.

- BRICS can advocate reform of global economic governance while avoiding excessive fragmentation of international trade rules.
- Cooperation should therefore seek **greater representation for developing economies in global institutions**, reform of international financial institutions and a stronger voice for the Global South in rule-making.

About BRICS:

Composition and Objectives:

- **BRICS** is a major platform of emerging economies and the Global South that promotes cooperation in **economy, finance, trade, technology, development and global governance**.
- The grouping originated with **Brazil, Russia, India and China**, while **South Africa joined in 2011**, leading to the adoption of the BRICS name.
- The 2024 expansion added **Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates**, while **Indonesia became a full member in 2025**, taking the membership to 11 countries.
- BRICS has evolved from a primarily economic grouping into a broader platform for **strategic autonomy, development cooperation, institutional reform and a more representative multipolar international order**.

Historical Evolution:

- **2001:** Economist **Jim O'Neill** coined the term **BRIC** to describe Brazil, Russia, India and China as major emerging economies.
- **2009:** The first BRIC Summit was held at **Yekaterinburg, Russia**, establishing the grouping as a formal leaders-level platform.
- **2010–2011:** South Africa was invited to join, and its participation transformed BRIC into **BRICS**.
- **2014:** BRICS established the **New Development Bank** and the **Contingent Reserve Arrangement**, strengthening financial cooperation and providing additional institutional mechanisms for emerging economies.
- **2024:** Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates became part of the expanded BRICS framework.
- **2025:** **Indonesia joined as a full member**, further increasing BRICS' representation of the Global South.
- **2026:** India assumed the BRICS Chairship and hosted the **18th BRICS Summit in New Delhi**, placing resilience, innovation, cooperation and sustainability at the centre of its agenda.

Key Proposals and Priorities Under India's 2026 Chairship:

Economic and Trade Priorities:

- India has promoted **market opening, lower non-tariff barriers, payment-system connectivity and local-currency trade**, particularly in sectors involving critical minerals, agriculture, pharmaceuticals, engineering goods, electronics, automobiles, auto components and services.
- The objective is to move BRICS from broad declarations towards **practical economic integration**, including easier business-to-business transactions, stronger supply chains and greater participation by MSMEs.
- India has also emphasised that resilient global trade requires **secure maritime routes, open supply chains and protection of seafarers**, linking economic cooperation with wider geopolitical and maritime security concerns.

Digital and Innovation Cooperation:

- BRICS can use digital technologies to reduce transaction costs through **interoperable payment systems, digital trade facilitation and common technical standards**.
- Cooperation in **artificial intelligence, fintech, cybersecurity, digital public infrastructure and emerging technologies** can help developing countries avoid technological dependence and strengthen domestic innovation capabilities.
- Digital cooperation must be accompanied by safeguards for **data protection, consumer rights, cybersecurity and financial stability**.

Way Forward:

From De-dollarisation to Diversified Financial Architecture:

- BRICS should pursue **currency diversification rather than an abrupt attempt to replace the US dollar**, because the dollar's global role is supported by deep financial markets, liquidity and international confidence.
- The immediate priority should be building **interoperable payment systems, currency-swap arrangements, transparent settlement mechanisms, efficient foreign-exchange markets and common digital standards**.
- Local-currency trade will become more viable when supported by **stable macroeconomic policies, credible central banks, adequate liquidity and effective risk-management instruments**.

From Declarations to Implementation:

- BRICS must convert political consensus into **measurable economic outcomes** through improved logistics, trade facilitation, standards harmonisation, affordable MSME finance and stronger business-to-business linkages.
- India should use its chairship to promote a balanced agenda that combines **strategic autonomy with open trade**, digital innovation with cybersecurity, and de-dollarisation with financial stability.
- The long-term objective should be a **more diversified, resilient and inclusive global economic architecture** in which developing countries possess greater agency without creating excessive fragmentation.

Conclusion:

Best Institute for OAS/IAS

- India's 2026 BRICS Chairship provides an opportunity to strengthen the grouping's economic relevance through **local-currency trade, interoperable payment systems, resilient supply chains, critical-mineral cooperation and easier market access**.
- The success of this agenda will depend less on reducing the role of one currency and more on creating **credible alternatives, efficient institutions and interoperable financial infrastructure**.
- For India, BRICS can serve as a platform for combining **digital public infrastructure, strategic economic autonomy, Global South leadership and rules-based multilateralism**, thereby contributing to a more resilient and multipolar global economy.

Value Addition for UPSC:

Key Concepts:

- **De-dollarisation:** Reduction in excessive dependence on the US dollar for trade, payments, reserves and international finance.

- **Local-Currency Settlement:** Direct settlement of bilateral trade using the currencies of the participating countries.
- **Currency Diversification:** Greater use of multiple currencies to reduce concentration risk in international transactions and reserves.
- **Payment-System Interoperability:** Ability of different national payment systems to communicate and settle transactions efficiently across borders.
- **Non-Tariff Measures:** Regulatory or procedural measures other than tariffs that can influence the cost, quantity or conditions of international trade.
- **Strategic Autonomy:** Capacity of a country to pursue independent foreign and economic policies while maintaining diversified international partnerships.
- **Global South:** Broad grouping of developing and emerging countries seeking greater representation, development space and influence in global governance.

UPSC Relevance:

- **Essay:** “A multipolar world requires not only political representation but also diversified economic and financial institutions.”
- **Key Argument:** India’s BRICS strategy should aim not for **de-dollarisation at any cost**, but for **diversification, interoperability, resilience and greater strategic autonomy** within an open and rules-based global economic system.

India Tightens E-Commerce Rules to Strengthen Price Transparency, Algorithmic Fairness and Consumer Protection

Recent Developments:

- The **Department of Consumer Affairs** has notified the **Consumer Protection (E-Commerce) (Amendment) Rules, 2026**, amending the Consumer Protection (E-Commerce) Rules, 2020 under the **Consumer Protection Act, 2019**.
- The amended framework strengthens safeguards relating to **price transparency, search-result manipulation, sponsored listings, dark patterns, seller disclosures and grievance redressal**.
- The amended rules will come into force from **1 January 2027**, giving e-commerce entities time to align their platforms and compliance systems with the new requirements.
- The National Consumer Helpline received **17,71,622 grievances during 2025**, of which **5,11,196, or around 29%, were related to e-commerce**, highlighting the growing importance of effective digital consumer protection.

E-Commerce Market in India:

- India’s e-commerce industry was valued at around **US\$125 billion in FY2024** and is projected to reach nearly **US\$345 billion by FY2030**, reflecting strong expansion driven by digital adoption and rising consumption.
- The expansion of **internet penetration, affordable mobile data, digital payments, rising incomes and smartphone adoption** has widened the consumer base beyond metropolitan cities.
- The growth of **Tier-2 and smaller cities**, quick commerce, digital marketplaces and platform-based retail is making e-commerce an increasingly important component of India’s consumption economy.

- However, rapid digital expansion also creates concerns relating to **information asymmetry, misleading discounts, algorithmic ranking, data use, fake reviews, dark patterns and weak grievance redressal**, requiring an adaptive regulatory framework.

Key Provisions of the Amended Rules:

Price Transparency and Fake Discounts:

- Whenever an e-commerce entity or seller announces a price reduction, it must display both the **reduced price and prior price**.
- The **prior price** has been defined as the **lowest price at which the good or service was offered during the preceding 30 days**, strengthening safeguards against artificially inflated reference prices.
- This provision seeks to make discounts more meaningful and enable consumers to assess the **actual extent of price reductions**.

Search Results and Sponsored Listings:

- E-commerce entities cannot manipulate **search results or search indexes** in a manner that misleads consumers or adversely affects the relevance of results to their search queries.
- **Sponsored listings** must be clearly and prominently identified so that consumers can distinguish paid placements from organic search results.
- Marketplace entities must also publicly explain the **main parameters determining the ranking of goods or sellers** and their relative importance in clear and intelligible language.

Dark Patterns and Platform Accountability:

- E-commerce entities must comply with the **Guidelines for Prevention and Regulation of Dark Patterns, 2023**.
- Platforms must conduct a **yearly self-audit** to ensure that their interfaces are free from prohibited dark patterns and must prominently display a certificate confirming such compliance.
- The measure addresses manipulative interface practices that may influence consumers into making choices contrary to their original intention.

Consumer Grievance Redressal: Best Institute for OAS/IAS

- Every e-commerce entity must ensure that its grievance officer **acknowledges a consumer complaint within 48 hours**, provides the complainant with a copy of the complaint as recorded, and redresses it within **one month**.
- Every e-commerce entity must become a partner in the convergence process of the **National Consumer Helpline**, strengthening integration between private digital platforms and the public grievance-redressal mechanism.

Seller and Product Disclosures:

- Marketplace entities must provide consumers with relevant seller information, including the **business name, address, website, customer-care details, email address and available ratings or aggregated feedback**.
- Product information must cover **country of origin, best-before or use-before dates, return and refund policies, exchange provisions, warranty, guarantee, delivery, shipping costs, payment modes and grievance-redressal mechanisms**.
- For imported goods, platforms must disclose the **importer's details and complete country of origin**, improving traceability and informed purchasing.

- Sellers must also provide relevant government-issued identification numbers, including **GSTIN or MSME registration numbers**, where applicable.

Consumer Data and Platform Conduct:

- Marketplace entities cannot use information collected from consumers for certain sales or promotional activities involving sellers associated with the marketplace without obtaining **express and affirmative consumer consent**.
- Platforms are also restricted from imposing **bundled charges for unrelated services**, subject to specified exceptions such as loyalty or membership programmes.

E-Commerce Models in India:

Major Business Models:

- **Business-to-Consumer (B2C):** Platforms connect businesses directly with individual consumers for retail purchases.
- **Business-to-Business (B2B):** Digital platforms facilitate transactions between businesses involving raw materials, machinery, wholesale products and other supplies.
- **Consumer-to-Consumer (C2C):** Platforms facilitate transactions between individuals by enabling them to list and sell products directly to other consumers.
- **Business-to-Government and Consumer-to-Government:** Digital procurement systems enable businesses and other suppliers to provide goods and services to government institutions.

FDI Framework:

- India permits **100% FDI under the automatic route in the marketplace model of e-commerce**, subject to applicable conditions.
- **FDI is not permitted in the inventory-based model of e-commerce**, reflecting India's policy preference for a marketplace-oriented digital commerce structure.

Government Initiatives Supporting Digital Commerce:

Government e-Marketplace:

- The **Government e-Marketplace (GeM)** has digitised public procurement and improved transparency, competition and participation in government purchasing.
- By November 2025, GeM had processed nearly **3.27 crore orders**, with cumulative Gross Merchandise Value exceeding **₹16.41 lakh crore**, demonstrating the scale of digital public procurement.

Open Network for Digital Commerce:

- The **Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC)** is an open, interoperable network designed to reduce dependence on individual platforms and expand market access for sellers.
- Unlike a conventional marketplace, ONDC provides an **open network architecture** through which buyer and seller applications can interact across platforms.
- Its decentralised architecture can reduce customer-acquisition barriers and promote greater participation of **MSMEs, local retailers and small businesses**.

MSME Digitalisation:

- The **Trade Enablement and Marketing (TEAM) Initiative** under the RAMP programme uses ONDC to support MSMEs through digital storefronts, payments, logistics and onboarding.
- The initiative has an outlay of **₹277.35 crore for 2024–2027** and aims to benefit **5 lakh Micro and Small Enterprises**, with 50% targeted to be women-owned enterprises.

Significance for Governance and the Economy:***Consumer Welfare:***

- Greater disclosure of prices, sellers, product information and sponsored content can reduce **information asymmetry** between platforms and consumers.
- Stronger grievance mechanisms can improve consumer confidence and reduce the transaction costs associated with seeking redress.

Competition and Market Efficiency:

- Greater transparency in ranking and sponsored listings can reduce the possibility of **algorithmic discrimination and preferential treatment**.
- ONDC can promote competition by allowing sellers to reach consumers across multiple interoperable applications rather than remaining dependent on a single platform.

Inclusive Digital Growth:

- E-commerce can provide MSMEs, artisans, women entrepreneurs and local retailers with access to wider markets without requiring extensive physical infrastructure.
- Digital commerce therefore has the potential to contribute to **formalisation, entrepreneurship, market access and regional economic inclusion**.

Key Challenges:***Regulatory and Technological Challenges:***

- Rapidly evolving business models such as **quick commerce, artificial intelligence-driven recommendations and algorithmic pricing** can create regulatory gaps.
- Monitoring dark patterns and search manipulation requires specialised **technical capacity, algorithmic auditing and regulatory expertise**.
- Excessive compliance costs may disproportionately affect smaller e-commerce enterprises if regulatory requirements are not implemented proportionately.

Consumer Awareness and Enforcement:

- Legal safeguards are effective only when consumers understand their rights and platforms comply consistently.
- India therefore needs stronger **consumer awareness, digital literacy, transparent disclosure standards and timely enforcement**.
- Coordination among the **CCPA, Department of Consumer Affairs, Competition Commission of India, Legal Metrology authorities and other regulators** is important for addressing overlapping digital-market concerns.

Way Forward:

Towards a Trusted Digital Marketplace:

- The regulatory framework should maintain a balance between **consumer welfare, innovation, competition and Ease of Doing Business**.
- Algorithmic transparency should be strengthened without requiring disclosure of legitimate proprietary technology or commercially sensitive information.
- Periodic **third-party audits, risk-based supervision and technology-enabled monitoring** can complement annual platform self-audits.

Strengthening Digital Consumer Protection:

- Consumer awareness campaigns should explain **dark patterns, fake discounts, sponsored listings, data-consent practices and grievance mechanisms** in simple language.
- Greater interoperability among grievance-redressal systems can enable faster resolution of consumer complaints.
- India should continue promoting open digital infrastructure such as **ONDC**, while ensuring strong safeguards for privacy, cybersecurity, competition and consumer rights.

Value Addition for UPSC:

Constitutional and Legal Linkages:

- **Article 38:** Promotes a social order based on justice and seeks to minimise inequalities.
- **Article 39(b) and 39(c):** Support equitable distribution of material resources and prevention of concentration of economic power.
- **Consumer Protection Act, 2019:** Provides the statutory foundation for protecting consumers against unfair trade practices and strengthening institutional consumer protection.
- **Central Consumer Protection Authority:** Possesses powers to investigate violations, protect consumer interests and act against unfair trade practices and misleading advertisements.

Important Concepts:

Best Institute for OAS/IAS

- **Dark Patterns:** User-interface or design practices that can deceive, manipulate or unduly influence consumer decisions.
- **Algorithmic Accountability:** The principle that automated systems influencing consumers should operate through transparent, explainable and non-discriminatory processes.
- **Information Asymmetry:** A situation in which one party to a transaction possesses substantially more relevant information than the other.
- **Platform Neutrality:** The principle that digital platforms should not unfairly manipulate visibility, ranking or access to favour particular sellers or products.

UPSC Relevance:

- **Prelims:** Remember **Consumer Protection Act, 2019; Consumer Protection (E-Commerce) Rules, 2020; Amendment Rules, 2026; Dark Patterns Guidelines, 2023; 30-day prior price; 48-hour complaint acknowledgement; one-month grievance redressal; and 1 January 2027 commencement date.**

BRICS New Delhi Declaration 2026: India Builds Consensus on Security, Trade, Finance, AI and Global South Cooperation

Recent Developments:

- The **18th BRICS Summit** was held in New Delhi on **12–13 September 2026** under India's chairship, with the theme **"Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability."**
- BRICS members unanimously adopted the **New Delhi Declaration**, overcoming significant differences over the **West Asia conflict** and other geopolitical issues.
- The consensus was diplomatically significant because the **BRICS Foreign Ministers' Meeting in May 2026** had failed to produce a joint statement due to differences, particularly between Iran and the United Arab Emirates, over the West Asia conflict.
- India's chairship emphasised a **practical, inclusive, development-oriented and people-centred approach**, with more than **400 BRICS meetings and engagements across 30 Indian cities** during 2026.
- The declaration strengthens cooperation under the three established BRICS pillars: **political and security cooperation, economic and financial cooperation, and cultural and people-to-people cooperation**.
- The declaration also marks the **20th anniversary of BRICS**, reaffirming its objective of making global governance more representative, equitable and responsive to the interests of emerging markets and developing countries.

West Asia and Conflict Diplomacy:

Consensus Through Diplomatic Language:

- BRICS adopted broader language on West Asia that enabled members with divergent geopolitical positions to reach consensus without attributing responsibility for the conflict to a particular party.
- The declaration called for **maximum restraint, dialogue and diplomacy**, respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, and avoidance of actions that could further aggravate the situation.
- It also emphasised protection of **civilians and civilian infrastructure**, while stressing the importance of maintaining trade, supply chains and energy flows.

Nuclear Safety and Regional Stability:

- BRICS expressed serious concern over attacks affecting **civilian infrastructure and peaceful nuclear facilities under International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards**.
- The emphasis on nuclear safety during armed conflicts is significant because damage to safeguarded nuclear facilities can create consequences extending beyond national borders.

Gaza and Palestine:

- BRICS called for **maintenance of the ceasefire, unhindered humanitarian assistance and protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure**.
- It opposed the **forced displacement of Palestinians** and the use of starvation as a method of warfare.
- The grouping reaffirmed support for **United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East**, Palestinian self-determination and a two-state solution based on the **1967 borders**, with East Jerusalem as the capital of Palestine.
- The declaration also supported Palestinian aspirations for **full United Nations membership** and addressed the question of the right of return.

Lebanon and Syria:

- BRICS called for adherence to the **Lebanon ceasefire** and withdrawal from remaining Lebanese territory.
- It also supported an **inclusive political transition in Syria**, reflecting its broader emphasis on sovereignty, dialogue and regional stability.

Terrorism: A Significant Indian Diplomatic Outcome:

Condemnation of Terrorism:

- The declaration strongly condemned the **22 April 2025 terrorist attack in Jammu and Kashmir**, in which **26 people were killed**.
- BRICS reaffirmed **zero tolerance for terrorism** and condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.
- The declaration specifically addressed **cross-border movement of terrorists, terrorism financing, safe havens, extremism and radicalisation**, which directly aligns with India's longstanding counter-terrorism priorities.
- It rejected the practice of associating terrorism with any particular **religion, nationality, civilisation or ethnic group** and called for accountability of those involved in terrorist activities and their support networks.
- The declaration also recognised the role of the **BRICS Counter-Terrorism Working Group** in strengthening practical cooperation.

Significance for India:

- The explicit reference to the Pahalgam attack represents an important diplomatic outcome for India because the declaration was adopted despite divergent strategic interests among BRICS members.
- The emphasis on **terrorist safe havens and cross-border terrorism** strengthens India's effort to place terrorism at the centre of international security discussions.
- However, the declaration does not transform BRICS into a collective-security alliance, and implementation remains dependent on national positions and institutional cooperation.

Trade and Global Economic Governance:

Opposition to Unilateral Protectionism:

- BRICS opposed **unilateral coercive economic measures** that are inconsistent with international law, the United Nations Charter and World Trade Organization principles.
- The declaration supported a **fair, stable, predictable and non-discriminatory trading environment** that facilitates sustainable development.
- BRICS also criticised punitive or discriminatory applications of **Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanisms**, particularly where environmental measures become instruments of protectionism.
- The position reflects developing countries' concerns that unilateral tariffs and environmental trade measures can restrict market access and increase adjustment costs for emerging economies.

WTO and Developing Economies:

- BRICS reaffirmed the importance of a **rules-based multilateral trading system** centred on the WTO.
- The grouping supported reforms to strengthen the WTO dispute-settlement system and called for greater integration of developing economies into **global value chains**.

- The declaration also linked trade cooperation with **MSME financing, digital trade, trade infrastructure and special economic zones**, thereby connecting global trade reform with domestic development.

De-dollarisation and Financial Cooperation:

Local-Currency Payments:

- BRICS did not announce a **common BRICS currency**; instead, it adopted a gradual and practical approach towards greater use of national currencies in trade and investment.
- The principal priorities include **interoperable payment systems, faster and cheaper cross-border payments, local-currency settlement and stronger financial connectivity**.
- The **BRICS Payment Task Force** is studying the interoperability of payment and messaging channels and exploring practical mechanisms for cross-border payments.

Financial Diversification:

- BRICS supported greater **local-currency financing by the New Development Bank**, while continuing discussions on additional investment mechanisms.
- India also proposed exploring a **BRICS Risk Lab at GIFT City**, which could strengthen cooperation on financial risk assessment, resilience and economic policy.
- The approach represents **financial diversification rather than an immediate replacement of the US dollar**, recognising differences in the convertibility, liquidity and international acceptability of BRICS currencies.
- The declaration also reaffirmed the need for stronger representation of **emerging markets and developing economies** in institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

Artificial Intelligence and the Global South:

AI as Opportunity and Governance Challenge:

- BRICS identified **Artificial Intelligence** as both an engine of economic development and a major governance challenge for the Global South.
- The grouping emphasised **inclusive access to AI resources, safety and security, reliability, energy efficiency and trustworthy AI**.
- BRICS called for greater participation of developing countries in shaping global AI governance so that emerging international norms do not become dominated by a limited group of technologically advanced economies.
- The approach is consistent with India's broader effort to promote **inclusive and development-oriented AI governance**.

India's AI Leadership:

- The declaration welcomed India's hosting of the **AI Impact Summit in February 2026**, reinforcing India's position as a major voice in debates concerning responsible and inclusive AI.
- For the Global South, AI governance is closely connected with **digital divides, computing capacity, data access, energy requirements, skills and technological sovereignty**.

Indian Imprint on the New Delhi Declaration:

Digital Public Infrastructure:

- The declaration supports work towards a **BRICS repository on Digital Public Infrastructure**, including pilot projects that could facilitate knowledge-sharing among member and partner countries.
- India can use its experience with **digital identity, digital payments, interoperable platforms and public digital infrastructure** to support scalable digital solutions across the Global South.

Health and Mental Well-being:

- BRICS endorsed cooperation through a **Training Hub Network and Centres of Excellence on mental well-being**.
- **National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro-Sciences, Bengaluru**, has been designated as the coordinating centre for the network.
- The initiative can strengthen research collaboration, policy exchange and integration of mental-health services into primary healthcare.

Industry 4.0 and MSMEs:

- India's participation in the **BRICS Centre for Industrial Competencies** seeks to strengthen manufacturing capabilities and help MSMEs adopt **Industry 4.0 and advanced digital technologies**.
- The National Productivity Council has been designated as India's centre for engagement with the initiative, with technical support from the United Nations Industrial Development Organization.
- This initiative connects BRICS cooperation with **productivity enhancement, advanced manufacturing, technology adoption and industrial competitiveness**. —

Development Cooperation:

- Other India-linked priorities include the **BRICS Task Force on Growth and Development, BRICS–New Development Bank Knowledge Portal, infrastructure cooperation and public-private partnerships**.
- The declaration also seeks to strengthen the **BRICS insurance ecosystem**, which can support financial resilience and risk-sharing across emerging economies.

Global South and Multilateral Reform:

Reforming Global Governance:

- The declaration calls for a more **just, equitable, representative, democratic and accountable international order**.
- BRICS supports greater representation of **Emerging Markets and Developing Countries** in global decision-making institutions.
- The grouping continues to advocate reform of the **United Nations Security Council** and international financial institutions to better reflect contemporary economic and demographic realities.
- This agenda reflects the broader Global South demand for **voice, representation and institutional legitimacy**, rather than simply seeking an alternative bloc to existing Western institutions.

Multipolarity and Strategic Autonomy:

- BRICS seeks to strengthen a **multipolar international system** in which multiple centres of economic and political influence coexist.
- For India, BRICS provides a platform to engage simultaneously with major powers and developing countries while maintaining its **strategic autonomy**.
- The grouping therefore complements, rather than replaces, India's engagement with forums such as the **G20, SCO, Quad and other multilateral institutions**.

Challenges and Limitations:

Divergent Geopolitical Interests:

- BRICS includes countries with competing strategic interests, such as India and China, Iran and some Gulf countries, and Russia and several Western-oriented partners.
- The failure of the May 2026 Foreign Ministers' Meeting to produce a joint statement demonstrated the difficulty of maintaining consensus after BRICS expansion.
- The successful adoption of the New Delhi Declaration therefore demonstrates diplomatic flexibility but does not eliminate underlying differences.

Institutional and Economic Constraints:

- Greater use of local currencies faces challenges involving **exchange-rate volatility, currency convertibility, liquidity, payment-system interoperability and regulatory differences**.
- BRICS also needs stronger institutional mechanisms to convert political declarations into measurable outcomes.
- The expanding membership increases BRICS' economic and diplomatic weight but simultaneously makes **consensus-building and policy coordination more complex**.

Way Forward:

From Declarations to Implementation:

- BRICS should develop **time-bound implementation mechanisms, measurable indicators and institutional monitoring** for major summit commitments.
- Payment interoperability, local-currency settlement, digital infrastructure and development financing should move from pilot projects towards scalable systems.
- Cooperation should focus on practical areas such as **trade facilitation, MSMEs, health, infrastructure, critical minerals, food security, energy security and digital technologies**.

Maintaining Strategic Balance:

- BRICS should remain an **inclusive platform for cooperation rather than an exclusive anti-Western alliance**.
- Consensus-based diplomacy should remain central because the grouping's strength lies in bringing together countries with different political systems, economic structures and strategic priorities.
- India can continue playing the role of a **bridge-builder**, connecting the interests of developed and developing economies while advocating a more representative multilateral order.

Conclusion:

- The **New Delhi Declaration** demonstrates BRICS' ability to preserve collective consensus despite substantial geopolitical fragmentation.
- For India, the declaration represents important diplomatic gains in **counter-terrorism, digital public infrastructure, local-currency payments, AI governance, health cooperation and development partnerships**.
- The summit also reinforces India's image as a **consensus-builder and bridge between competing geopolitical interests**.
- BRICS' future influence will ultimately depend not on the number of declarations it adopts but on its ability to transform political commitments into **interoperable institutions, effective financial mechanisms and sustained practical cooperation**.
- The New Delhi Declaration therefore represents an important step towards a **more representative, multipolar and Global South-oriented international order**, while leaving implementation and internal cohesion as its principal tests.

Value Addition for UPSC:

Key Concepts:

- **Global South:** A broad political and economic grouping of developing and emerging economies seeking greater representation and equity in global governance.
- **Multipolarity:** An international system characterised by several significant centres of political, economic and strategic power.
- **Strategic Autonomy:** The ability of a state to pursue national interests independently while maintaining partnerships with multiple powers.
- **De-dollarisation:** The gradual reduction of dependence on the US dollar in international trade, investment and financial transactions.
- **Digital Public Infrastructure:** Open and interoperable digital systems that enable large-scale delivery of public and private services.

Prelims Pointers:

- **18th BRICS Summit:** New Delhi, 12–13 September 2026.
- **2026 BRICS Chair:** India.
- **2026 Theme:** "Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability."
- **New Delhi Declaration:** Adopted in 2026 with **140 paragraphs**.
- **Current BRICS membership:** 11 countries.
- **Three BRICS pillars:** Political and security; economic and financial; cultural and people-to-people cooperation.
- **India's BRICS chairship:** Fourth chairship after 2012, 2016 and 2021.
- **Next BRICS Chair:** China in 2027.

Mains Linkages:

- **Essay:** "The effectiveness of multilateral institutions depends not merely on representation, but on their capacity to convert consensus into collective action."

QUESTIONS

1. With reference to the International Criminal Court (ICC) and its legal architecture, consider the following statements:

- (1) The Court prosecutes individual persons for grave violations rather than adjudicating state-to-state liability.
- (2) The ICC possesses an independent international enforcement division capable of executing arrest warrants without host-nation consent.
- (3) The crime of aggression falls within the core material jurisdiction of the ICC alongside genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity.
- (4) Non-ratification by a sovereign state completely immune-shields its nationals from ICC jurisdiction under all circumstances.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- (A) 1 and 3
- (B) 1, 2 and 3
- (C) 2 and 4
- (D) 1, 3 and 4

2. Consider the following statements regarding national employment and skill strategies:

Statement 1: Formalization of micro-enterprises through digital registration alone does not automatically result in structural productivity gains or quality job creation.

Statement 2: Formalization must be accompanied by targeted access to formal credit, technology diffusion, managerial skill enhancement, and market integration to overcome structural low productivity.

Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above statements?

- (A) Both Statement 1 and Statement 2 are correct, and Statement 2 is the correct explanation for Statement 1.
- (B) Both Statement 1 and Statement 2 are correct, but Statement 2 is NOT the correct explanation for Statement 1.
- (C) Statement 1 is correct, but Statement 2 is incorrect.
- (D) Statement 1 is incorrect, but Statement 2 is correct.

3. Consider the following pairs regarding institutional milestones in BRICS development:

- (1) Yekaterinburg Summit (2009) — First formal standalone summit of the BRIC leaders.
- (2) Fortaleza Summit (2014) — Signing of the agreement establishing the New Development Bank (NDB).
- (3) 2024 Expansion — Admission of Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and UAE.
- (4) 2025 Expansion — Inclusion of Indonesia as a full member.

How many of the pairs given above are correctly matched?

- (A) Only one pair
- (B) Only two pairs
- (C) Only three pairs

(D) All four pairs

4. With reference to India's FDI policy in e-commerce, consider the following statements:

- (1) 100% FDI is permitted under the automatic route in the marketplace model.
- (2) FDI is permitted in the inventory-based model.
- (3) Marketplace entities can exercise ownership over the inventory sold on their platform.
- (4) Multi-brand retail trading through FDI is permitted under the automatic route in e-commerce.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- (A) 1 only
- (B) 1 and 2 only
- (C) 3 only
- (D) 2 and 4 only

5. Consider the following statements regarding the key institutional outcomes of the 18th BRICS Summit (2026) hosted under India's chairship:

- (1) NIMHANS Bengaluru has been designated as the coordinating centre for the BRICS Network on mental well-being.
- (2) National Productivity Council (NPC) serves as India's nodal engagement centre for the BRICS Centre for Industrial Competencies in collaboration with UNIDO.
- (3) The New Delhi Declaration announced the immediate establishment of a unified BRICS single currency backed by sovereign gold reserves.
- (4) India proposed establishing a BRICS Risk Lab at GIFT City to advance collaboration in financial risk assessment.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (A) Only one
- (B) Only two
- (C) Only three
- (D) All four

ANSWER KEY

1 – Answer (A), 2 – Answer (A), 3 – Answer (D), 4 – Answer (A), 5 – Answer (C)



OAS HUB

DAILY CHRONICLE CURRENT AFFAIRS

In today's fast-changing world, staying updated with current affairs is essential for both academic success and professional growth. Awareness of national and international events not only broadens general knowledge but also sharpens critical and analytical thinking skills. It enables individuals to form well-informed opinions, which are crucial for competitive examinations, group discussions, interviews, and impactful essay writing.

Being well-informed reflects adaptability, awareness, and intellectual curiosity—qualities that are highly valued in a competitive environment. A strong grasp of contemporary issues enhances confidence, widens perspective, and prepares individuals to tackle real-world challenges effectively, ultimately opening the door to better opportunities and long-term personal and career advancement.

-  oashub19
-  oashub19
-  OASHUB22
-  oashub19@gmail.com
-  M5/17, Acharya Vihar Bhubaneswar 751022