



By: TA | AP Insight

New Delhi Summit confirmed that wars in Ukraine and the Middle East challenge BRICS unity



The **BRICS group** of emerging economies expressed concern over rising tensions in the Middle East and condemned the use of sanctions not authorized by the U.N., as the leaders met in New Delhi to strengthen their position in global affairs seen as dominated by the West.

The meeting, which included Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, voiced concern over “deliberate attacks” on civilian infrastructure and peaceful nuclear facilities under the U.N. atomic energy agency's safeguards, saying nuclear safety and security must be protected during armed conflicts.

The statement was seen as indirect criticism of U.S. and Israeli strikes on Iranian nuclear facilities.

The leaders also took aim at unilateral sanctions not authorized by the U.N. Security Council.

They did not name any countries, but Russia, one of the founding members of BRICS, has faced Western sanctions following its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

“We call for the elimination of such unlawful measures, which undermine international law and the principles and purposes of the U.N. Charter,” the joint statement said.

Wars in Ukraine and the Middle East challenge BRICS unity

BRICS was founded in 2006 by Brazil, Russia, India and China, with South Africa joining in 2010. It has since expanded to 11 members, representing about half the world's population and a significant share of global economic output.

The group has increasingly called for greater representation for developing countries in global institutions.

It has sought to raise its profile by promoting alternatives to Western-dominated financial

institutions and positioning itself as the voice of developing nations and emerging economies.

Concerns have grown that the Iran war may expand

India is hosting this year's summit, attended by Russian President Vladimir Putin, Chinese President Xi Jinping, Pezeshkian and counterparts from the other eight BRICS members.

Concerns have grown that the Iran war, triggered by U.S.-Israeli strikes on Feb. 28, may expand as fighting escalated between **Saudi Arabia and Yemen's Houthi rebels**.

Wars in Ukraine and the Middle East, along with rising **U.S.-China tensions**, are also testing the bloc's ability to find common ground among countries with competing geopolitical interests.

Modi stresses BRICS is not a counter to West

In his address, Modi sought to ease concerns that BRICS was intended to counter Western-led alliances.

“BRICS is not against anyone,” he said, adding that the bloc had reached a “coming of age” moment in which the **Global South** must evolve into a “rule-shaper” in global governance.

It is time for us to translate our unity and consensus in BRICS into concrete outcomes - Narendra Modi

“It is time for us to translate our unity and consensus in BRICS into concrete outcomes,” he said.

Modi also proposed a BRICS seafarers' network

to strengthen the safety and welfare of maritime workers, particularly as disruptions to maritime trade from the war in Iran have heightened risks for mariners.

Russia and China seek to expand influence

China and Russia see BRICS as a way to reduce Western dominance, particularly that of the United States, while strengthening cooperation among developing economies.

Putin called for expanding the U.N. Security Council to give greater representation to Asia, Africa and Latin America, saying it would improve the body's effectiveness, Russian state news agency Interfax reported Saturday.

Speaking at the summit, Putin said the shift toward a multipolar world was facing resistance from countries "accustomed to thinking in colonial categories," accusing them of using tariffs, sanctions and "brute force" to contain rising competitors.

He said the tensions were undermining the international system but stressed that Russia still viewed the U.N. Charter as the foundation of international law.

Iran has pushed for mechanisms that could reduce the bloc's reliance on Western financial systems

Iran has also pushed for mechanisms that could reduce the bloc's reliance on Western financial systems and shield members from economic pressure, as Tehran faces sweeping **sanctions and a U.S. blockade**.

"One of the most important steps is to expand the use of national currencies in trade among the members," Pezeshkian told reporters on Friday.

China, meanwhile, is leveraging the grouping to deepen its influence within the bloc and

position it as a counterweight to U.S. power.

Speaking at the summit, Xi said China will work with BRICS members in playing its "due role" to forge peace in the Middle East, according to Chinese state broadcaster CCTV.

BRICS countries should "serve as vanguards for maintaining peace and stability" and "oppose violations of other countries' sovereignty," Xi said.

India aims to reset ties and balance strategic partnerships

India was hoping the forum would help ease its longstanding strained ties with China as **Modi and Xi met** on the sidelines of the BRICS summit, an effort by the rival neighbors to repair ties strained after border tensions escalated in 2020.

Xi said China has approached relations with India from a "strategic and long-term perspective" and called for the two countries to draw on each other's strengths.



For India, the summit highlights its effort to maintain strategic ties with Russia and Iran while deepening relations with the U.S. and Europe - Narendra Modi

Modi said peace along the disputed border was essential for broader ties and urged both sides to honor existing agreements, a statement by India's Foreign Ministry later Saturday said.

For India, the summit also highlights its effort to maintain strategic ties with Russia and Iran while deepening relations with the U.S. and

Europe.

New Delhi has sought to balance its longstanding partnerships with Moscow and Tehran with efforts to expand economic, defense and technology ties with Washington and other Western nations.

India has maintained close ties with both Moscow and Tehran despite the war in Ukraine and tensions between Iran and the U.S., while calling for dialogue and diplomacy to resolve conflicts. Modi met Putin and Pezeshkian separately in New Delhi on Friday ahead of the summit.

In May, BRICS foreign ministers failed to agree on a **joint statement** over the Iran war, forcing India to issue a chair's summary instead.