



BRICS Astronomy Working Group (BAWG) Meeting

Why in News

Recently, India virtually hosted the **7th meeting** of the **BRICS Astronomy Working Group (BAWG)** under the **Science, Technology, and Innovation track of the BRICS 2021**.

- The Inter-University Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics (IUCAA), Pune, and [Department of Science and Technology \(DST\)](#) coordinated the meeting.

Key Points

▪ BRICS:

- **BRICS** is an acronym for the grouping of the world's leading emerging economies, namely **Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa**.
- In **2001**, the **British Economist Jim O'Neill** coined the term BRIC to describe the four emerging economies of Brazil, Russia, India, and China.
 - The grouping was **formalised** during the first meeting of BRIC Foreign Ministers' in **2006**.
 - **South Africa** was invited to join **BRIC in December 2010**, after which the group adopted the acronym **BRICS**.
- **India** has assumed the **BRICS Presidency** from **January 2021**.

▪ Structure:

- BRICS **does not exist in the form of organization**, but it is an **annual summit** between the **supreme leaders of five nations**.
- The **Chairmanship** of the forum is **rotated annually** among the members, in accordance with the acronym B-R-I-C-S.

▪ Cooperation Mechanism: Cooperation among members is achieved through:

- **Track I:** Formal diplomatic engagement between the national governments.
- **Track II:** Engagement through government-affiliated institutions, e.g. state-owned enterprises and business councils.
- **Track III:** Civil society and People-to-People engagement.

▪ Areas of Cooperation:

◦ Economic Cooperation:

- Agreements have been concluded in the areas of Economic and Trade Cooperation; Innovation Cooperation, Customs Cooperation; strategic cooperation between the BRICS Business Council, Contingent Reserve Agreement and the **New Development Bank**.

◦ People-to-People Exchange:

- This seeks to forge new friendships; deepen relations and mutual understanding

between BRICS peoples in the spirit of openness, inclusiveness, diversity and mutual learning.

- Such People to people exchanges include the **Young Diplomats Forum, Parliamentary Forum, Trade Union Forum, Civil BRICS** as well as the **Media Forum**.

- **Political and Security Cooperation:**

- This is aimed at achieving peace, security, development and cooperation for a more equitable and fair world.
- BRICS is utilised as a driver for South Africa's foreign policy priorities including the pursuit of the African Agenda and South-South Cooperation.

- **About BRICS Astronomy Working Group:**

- It provides a platform for BRICS member countries to collaborate in the field of **astronomy**, recommending that the focal points in each country **should present the scientific results of the work being carried out in each country**.
- This will **help seek funding support** to realize the flagship project whenever funding opportunities are announced by BRICS funding agencies.
- At the **meeting**, the members indicated future directions of research in this area such as building network of intelligent telescope and data network, study of transient astronomical phenomena in universe, **big data**, **artificial intelligence**, machine learning application to process the voluminous data generated now a days due to enhance multi-wavelength telescope observatory.

Way Forward

- BRICS did well in its first decade to identify issues of common interests and to create platforms to address these issues.
- For BRICS to remain relevant over the next decade, each of its members must make a realistic assessment of the initiative's opportunities and inherent limitations.

[Source: PIB](#)

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