



IBSA and Digital Governance Reform

For Prelims: IBSA Forum, United Nations (UN) Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC), India's Aadhaar biometric ID system, India's G-20 presidency.

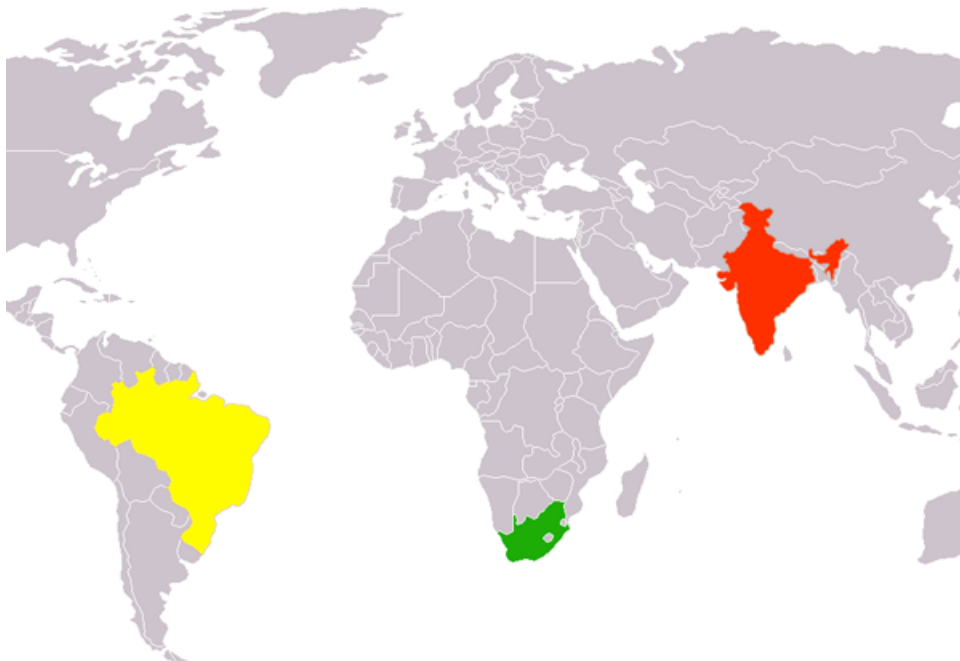
For Mains: Major Issues Related to Global Digital Governance, Initiatives of IBSA Grouping.

Why in News?

According to the **Geneva-based DiploFoundation**, **India, Brazil, and South Africa**, which have together formed the tripartite [IBSA Forum](#), may play a prominent role in the **process of reforming digital governance**.

What is IBSA?

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▪ **About:**

- The IBSA is a trilateral, developmental initiative between **India, Brazil and South Africa** to promote [South-South cooperation and exchange](#).

▪ **Formation:**

- The grouping was formalised and named the **IBSA Dialogue Forum** when the Foreign Ministers of the three countries met in **Brasilia (Brazil) on 6th June 2003** and issued the [Brasilia Declaration](#).

▪ **Collaboration:**

- **Joint Naval Exercise:**
 - [IBSAMAR \(IBSA Maritime Exercise\)](#) is an important part of IBSA trilateral defence cooperation.
- **IBSA Fund:**
 - Established in 2004, **IBSA Fund (India, Brazil and South Africa Facility for Poverty and Hunger Alleviation)** is a unique Fund through which development projects are executed with IBSA funding in fellow developing countries.
 - The fund is managed by the [United Nations \(UN\) Office for South-South Cooperation \(UNOSSC\)](#).

How can IBSA Contribute to Global Digital Governance?

- **Potential of IBSA:**
 - **Digital inclusion:**
 - [Digitalisation](#) is driving growth in the IBSA economies.
 - **The three countries have spearheaded digital inclusion by prioritising affordable access to citizens**, supporting training for digital skills, and creating a legal framework for the growth of small digital enterprises. India leads the way, with a vibrant digital economy.
 - **Data Governance:**
 - [India's G-20 presidency](#) aims to take strategic leadership with practical initiatives, such as a **self-evaluation of nations' data governance architecture**, modernisation of national data systems to regularly incorporate citizen voices and preferences, and transparency principles for governing data.
 - With a big population, **IBSA countries** also see data as a **national resource**.
- **Issues:**
 - **Geopolitical Rivalry:**
 - **Satellite collisions, [cyber-resilience](#) and security of space services, exploration of [space resources](#)** has increased competition between countries with a potential of [weaponization of outer space](#).
 - **Also, [semiconductors](#)** are at the centre of the geopolitical battle between the US and China.
 - **Sovereignty vs Integration:**
 - The Foundation observes that **many countries will have to balance data sovereignty and integration** in the global economy.
 - Free flow of data will **be essential for small and export-oriented economies**.

What is India's Progress in Digital Governance?

- **Aadhar:** [India's Aadhaar biometric ID system](#) is seen by many as a leading digital identity initiative, inspiring similar systems in other countries.
- **MyGov Platform:** It has laid the **robust [foundation for citizen engagement and participatory governance in the country](#)** by providing a **common digital platform**, where citizens can share their views on government programmes and schemes.
- **Unified Payments Interface (UPI):** Launched in 2016, **UPI is a real-time payment system** that enables instant money transfers between bank accounts using a mobile device.
 - UPI has **transformed the way payments are made in India**, making it faster, more convenient, and more secure. **UPI's success has inspired other countries** to tie up with India and adopt similar payment systems.
- **Digital India Act:** Government of India has proposed to come up with **Digital India Act 2023** that envisages to act as **catalysts for Indian economy by enabling more innovation, more startups**, and at the same time protecting the citizens of India in terms of safety, trust, and accountability.

Way Forward

- **Collaborate with Other Countries & Organizations:** IBSA countries should work together and with other nations and **international organizations** to develop **global standards for digital governance**, data protection, and cybersecurity.
- **Develop a Common Strategy:** IBSA countries should develop a common strategy on digital governance and work towards a **shared vision of a global digital economy that prioritizes digital inclusion, data privacy, and security.**
 - This strategy should be based on their shared values and principles, such as **respect for human rights, democracy, and the rule of law.**

[Source: TH](#)

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