



Consortium of Indo-Pacific
Researchers

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Greetings Colleagues,

The Consortium is pleased to share its latest newsletter for the Indo-Pacific. Press reply button for your feedback and comments.

BRICS Summit and its Expansion. Does the Bloc Gives More Power to the Global South?



The major emerging economies-Brazil, Russia, China, India, and South Africa, famously known as BRICS, held their [15th summit in Johannesburg on August 22-24](#), the first in-person meeting after the COVID-19. South African President Cyril Ramaphosa was the gracious host for the heads of the three governments-India's Modi, China's Xi-Jinping, Brazil's Lula Da Silva, and Russia's F.M. Sergei Lavrov. The two major draws of this summit are the expansion of the group, and rival India and China's leaders meeting for the first time after the Galwan border clash in 2020 at the sideline of the summit. Six states, Iran, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Argentina, Egypt, and Ethiopia, are [invited to join the group](#) in January 2024 to make it a bloc of 11 members.

BRICS group has been generating a lot of interest lately as it involves a group of emerging market states seeking to achieve economic growth and expansion. It is worth mentioning that this group represents [40 % of the world population and more than a quarter](#) of global GDP. The expansion indicates an important step toward multilateral collaboration in representing the Global South. However, the group has some differences on inviting new members [over how much and how quickly](#). Additionally, [China is dominating the group](#) and has long desired to expand the group to counterweight Western influence, particularly America, to lead a multipolar world order. Also, Russia and China have 'no limits' partnership relations. At the same time, [some analysts](#) suspect that the expansion plan may be an attempt to counter Western influence. In contrast, India and Brazil have been strengthening their ties with Western countries. Interestingly, it is undeniable that the group holds a significant economic influence through various business programs and initiatives on media, culture, education, sports, arts, youth, civil society, and academic exchange. However, it remains to be seen how effectively they can address the issues and concerns of the Global South.

Moon Moment For India

On August 23, 2023, India's Land Rover successfully landed at the south pole of the moon, making India the [fourth country to land at the surface of the moon](#). India's moon mission, famously known as Chandrayaan, started in 2008, and in its 3rd attempt, it made history by reaching the south pole, where ice deposits could provide water for potential life on moon. India's successful mission has more significance since [Russia's Luna 25 failed to reach on the moon](#) in the same week. On this historic occasion, PM Modi [said](#), "This success belongs to all of humanity and not only to India." Interestingly, *Chanda Mama* is no longer just a bedtime story for 1.4 billion Indians. It has become a reality that will be cherished and remembered for generations. [Read More](#)

U.S.-Australia-Philippines Hold Drill in the South China Sea

The U.S., Australia, Philippines, and Japan [held military drill](#) on August 25, 2023, in the South China Sea off the northwestern Philippine coast. Australian Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Richard Marles [stated](#), "We recommitted to planning bilateral joint patrols in the South China Sea/West Philippine Sea and other areas of mutual interest." It is worth mentioning that China claims the entire region in the South China Sea, and there has been increasing confrontation between the coast guards of the Philippines and China. Besides China and the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei, and Taiwan also have conflicting territorial claims in the region. [Read More](#)

Japan Releases Fukushima Water into the Pacific Ocean

Japan started releasing treated water from Fukushima nuclear plant into the Pacific Ocean on August 24, 2023. The plant was destroyed in a 2011 earthquake and massive tsunami, and water has been accumulating ever since. [Read More](#)

Indo-Pacific Quiz

In which year South Africa became a member of BRICS?

- a. 2006
- b. 2007
- c. 2011
- d. 2010

What is Chandrayaan-3?

- a. A Drone
 - b. AI Generated Image
 - c. Moon Mission
 - d. A Satellite
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Consortium Highlights

Consortium intern Joohyun Ellie Lee talks with Dr. Satoru Nagao on the Future of Korea-Japan relations and Camp David Diplomacy in the Indo-Pacific. [Listen Here.](#)

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