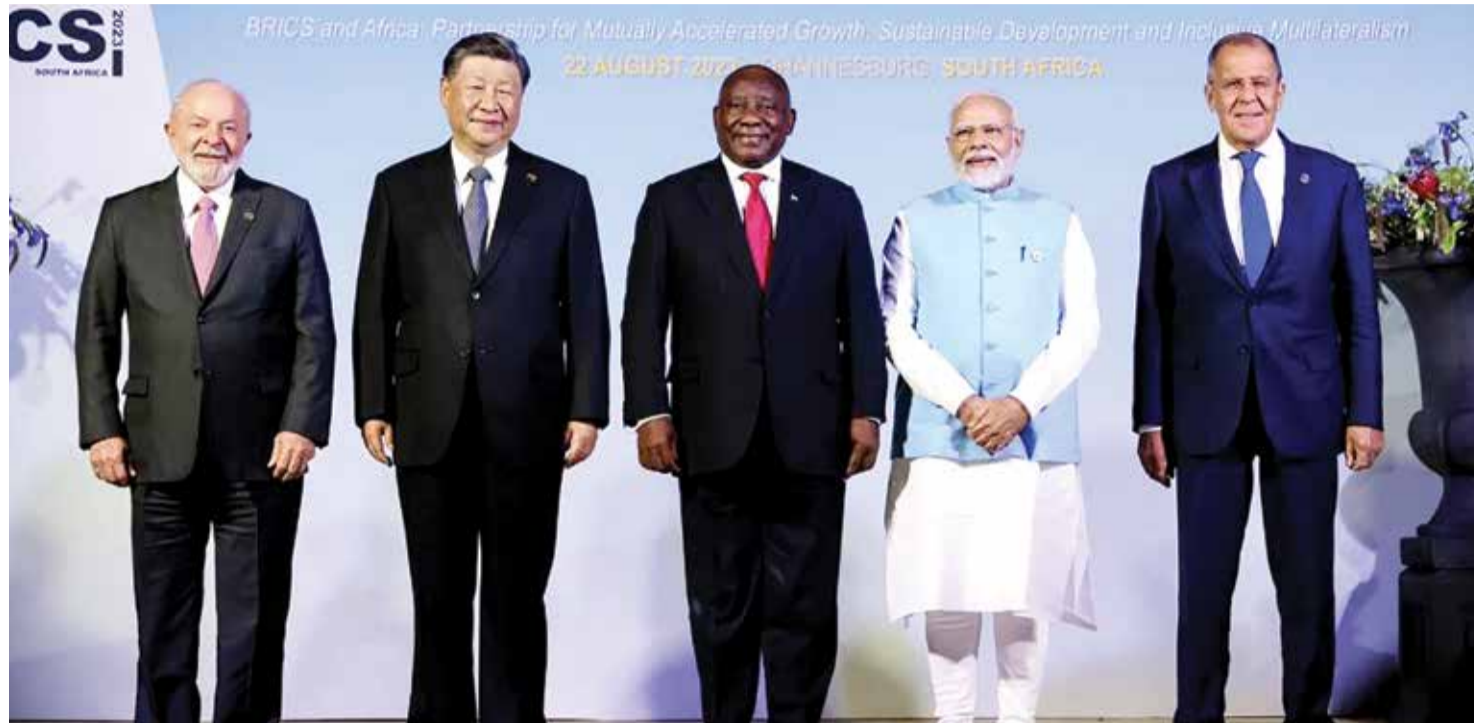


# Spotlight on Expansion to Change Global Geopolitics



In this photo released by the Russian Foreign Ministry Press Service, Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, Chinese President Xi Jinping, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov pose for a photo on the sideline of the BRICS group of emerging economies three-day summit in Johannesburg, South Africa, on Aug. 22, 2023.   
● Russian Foreign Ministry Press Service via AP

## International Desk

The BRICS summit commenced in Johannesburg, South Africa, on Wednesday, bringing together the leaders of the current members – Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa with a significant focus on expanding the membership. The discussions around potential new members are poised to reshape global dynamics, as BRICS continues to seek to push for a shift in global geopolitics with Chinese President Xi Jinping calling on the bloc of emerging markets to fast-track a plan to expand its members at the summit in South Africa.

"I am glad to see growing enthusiasm from developing countries about participating in BRICS," Xi said in a speech at the event on Wednesday, as his country leads a push to give the group more clout on the world stage, Bloomberg reported. The bloc should "accelerate the BRICS expansion process to bring more countries into the BRICS family," he added. The BRICS club presents a potential to challenge the existing global order and the dominance of unipolarity. Some 20 nations have formally applied to join the grouping – these are reported to include Saudi

Arabia, Indonesia and Egypt. Iran is also among dozens of countries seeking membership in BRICS and has submitted a formal request to join the body. At least 40 countries have shown interest in becoming members, with 23 having submitted their applications. Going into the summit, there was some disagreement over the plan, and how it should be executed. While South Africa and Russia backed the addition of new members, Brazil was worried about alienating the West. Addressing the summit, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi suggested several areas, -- including

New Development Bank of BRICS – where the BRICS partners could cooperate and work together, Times of India reported. "India fully supports the expansion of BRICS membership and we welcome moving forward based on consensus," Modi said. Shortly after, Xi added that an expanded BRICS would "make global governance more equitable." Modi hoped that India's proposal to make the African Union a permanent member of the G20 will be supported by BRICS member nations. Modi welcomed the move to give special importance to countries of the Global South under the South

African presidency of the BRICS and said "We wholeheartedly welcome the move to give special importance to countries of global south under South Africa's BRICS presidency." "New Development Bank of BRICS playing important role in development of Global South," he added. Russian President Vladimir Putin also participated remotely in the three-day meeting of the bloc. He took multiple shots at the West on the opening day of an economic summit in South Africa, using a prerecorded speech that was aired on giant screens Tuesday to rail at what he called "illegitimate sanctions" on his coun-

try and threaten to cut off Ukraine's grain exports permanently, AP reported. The five BRICS countries are already home to 40% of the world's population and responsible for more than 30% of global economic output, and more than 20 nations have applied to join, according to South African officials, including Saudi Arabia, Iran and the United Arab Emirates. Iranian President Ebrahim Raeisi and Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan planned to attend the summit. The five current member countries will have to agree on the criteria for new members before any countries are admitted.

## Sudan fighting leaves about 500 children dead from hunger: *Charity*

About 500 children have died from hunger in Sudan – including two dozen babies in a government-run orphanage in the capital of Khartoum – since fighting erupted in the East African country in April, a leading aid group said Tuesday. Save the Children also said that at least 31,000 children lack access to treatment for malnutrition and related illnesses since the charity was forced to close 57 of its nutrition centers in Sudan, AP reported. Sudan was plunged into chaos after months-long tensions between the military and a rival paramilitary force exploded into open fighting on April 15. The conflict has turned Khartoum and other urban areas into battlefields. Many residents live without water and electricity, and the country's health care system has nearly collapsed. "Never did we think we would see children dying from hunger in such numbers, but this is now the reality in Sudan," said Arif Noor, Save the Children's director for Sudan. "We are seeing children dying from entirely

preventable hunger." The violence in Sudan is estimated to have killed at least 4,000 people, according to Liz Throssell, a spokesperson for the UN human rights office. Activists and doctors on the ground, however, say the death toll is likely far higher. Mamadou Dian Balde, the UN East Africa regional refugee chief and coordinator for Sudan, told a UN press conference that 947,000 people have fled Sudan including South Sudanese, Ethiopian and Eritrean refugees who had sought shelter there -- and 3.6 million Sudanese are displaced within the country. Speaking from Sudan's White Nile state, Balde praised neighboring Chad, Egypt, South Sudan, Ethiopia, and Central African Republic for



● AFP

opening their borders to those fleeing the fighting. But he expressed concern that recently "we started seeing and witnessing bureaucratic barriers as well as challenges into admission." Balde urged all countries to keep their doors open. He also urged donors to give generously to the \$566m appeal for Sudanese refugees, which is only 35% funded. Save the Children said that between May and July, at least 316 children, mostly under 5 years of age, died of malnutrition or associated illnesses in the southern White Nile province. More than 2,400 more children have admitted to hospitals in the past eight months with severe acute malnutrition – the deadliest form of malnutrition, it added.

## Pakistan's PM declares resolute against terrorism



By Syed Ali Hassan  
Iran Daily's correspondent in Pakistan

Pakistan's caretaker Prime Minister Anwarul Haq Kakar has reaffirmed the country's unyielding commitment to combat extremism and terrorism in the face of growing terrorism within the country's borders. Kakar's resolute stance comes after a clash between security forces and terrorists in the tribal district of South Waziristan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, which resulted in the tragic loss of six soldiers. Prime Minister Kakar's message, delivered in the wake of this deadly encounter, emphasizes Pakistan's refusal to surrender to the threats posed by terrorism, extremism, and intolerance. He staunchly declared,

"We will not surrender to extremism, terrorism, and intolerance under any circumstances. No matter what happens, we will fight." This assertion reflects the sentiment that Pakistan's battle against terrorism is not a mere fleeting endeavor but a sustained commitment. The clash in South Waziristan, which claimed the lives of the brave soldiers, highlights the grave security challenges the nation faces. The outlawed Tehreek Taliban Pakistan and Daesh terrorists have been reported to have established roots within the country, particularly in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa region. The support of the Taliban rulers in Kabul has reportedly emboldened the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan, according to Pakistan's government and security agencies. While Pakistan remains

resolute in its fight against terrorism, it grapples not only with the security threats but economic hardships. The weakening economy, exacerbated by factors like the uncontrollable value of the dollar and the burden of IMF loans, has put additional strain on the country. This economic instability has further underscored the urgency for Pakistan to tackle terrorism and create an environment conducive to growth and stability. As the prime minister emphasizes Pakistan's determination to stand firm against terrorism, his words reflect the sentiment of a nation unwilling to be cowed by threats to its peace and security. With ongoing discussions about the way forward, the country remains committed to restoring order and prosperity within its borders.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### 'US does not support Ukrainian strikes inside Russia'



REUTERS – The US does not encourage or enable attacks inside Russia, a US State Department spokesperson said after Russian authorities said they downed drones that tried to attack Moscow early on Wednesday.

It is up to Ukraine to decide how it chooses to defend itself from the Russian war that began in February last year, the State Department spokesperson said, adding Russia could end the war any time by withdrawing from Ukraine.

### S Korea holds rare air raid drill



REUTERS – Sirens wailed on Wednesday as South Korea held its first nationwide air defence drills in six years to counter what it called North Korea's growing nuclear and missile threats, but many people appeared to ignore calls to seek shelter. The government has reintroduced the drills into the annual Ulchi civil defence exercises, held alongside the Ulchi Freedom Shield drills, which South Korean and US troops began on Monday.

### Greek fires rage after migrant tragedy



BBC – Fires that have claimed 20 lives in Greece are still burning out of control in foothills near Athens and the Evros region near the border with Turkey. Eighteen of those killed are thought to be refugees and migrants who crossed the border recently, hiding in forests north of the city of Alexandroupolis. For five days, fires have burned near the city and west along the coast.

● AP