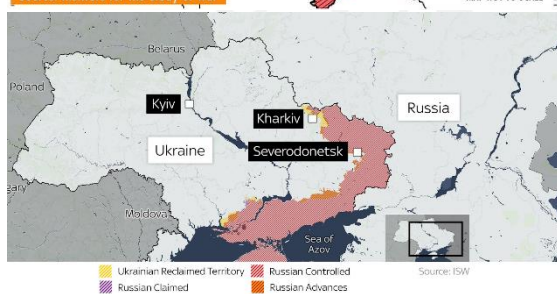


Severodonetsk

- Ukrainian forces will retreat from Severodonetsk after weeks of fierce fighting over the key city, a senior Ukrainian official said, in a major boost to Russia's goal of seizing a swathe of eastern Ukraine.
- The announcement came shortly after the EU granted Ukraine candidate status in a show of support for the former Soviet republic, although there is still a long path ahead to membership.



Source: Institute for the Study of War



THE HINDU

14th BRICS SUMMIT

- V. Parameswaran Iyer, a senior official who helmed the scheme, Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, will be the new Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the NITI Aayog.

- Mr. Iyer replaces Amitabh Kant, who completes his term in the office on June 30.

About NITI AAYOG

- National Institution for Transforming India, better known as NITI Aayog, was formed via a resolution of the Union Cabinet on 1 January 2015.
- NITI Aayog is the premier policy think tank of the Government of India, providing directional and policy inputs. Apart from designing strategic and long-term policies and programs for the Government of India, NITI Aayog also provides relevant technical advice to the Centre, States, and Union Territories.
- The Governing Council of NITI Aayog is chaired by the Hon'ble Prime Minister and comprises Chief Ministers of all the States and Union Territories with legislatures and Lt Governors of other Union Territories.
- The Governing Council was reconstituted vide a notification dated 19 February 2021 by the Cabinet Secretariat.
- The Government of India constituted NITI Aayog to replace the Planning Commission, which had been instituted in 1950.
- This step was taken to better serve the needs and aspirations of the people. An important evolutionary

change, NITI Aayog acts as the quintessential platform of the Government of India to bring the States to act together in the national interest, and thereby foster cooperative federalism.

THE HINDU

National Mobile Monitoring Software (NMMS)

- The 14th BRICS Summit, which concluded on June 24, revealed much about the grouping of five emerging nations.
- That this bloc of five disparate countries has not only made it to its 14th summit but has been able to demonstrate some concrete, albeit modest, outcomes of cooperation, such as the emergence of the New Development Bank (NDB), suggests there remains a strong convergence of interests amid undeniable differences.
- Since the first summit in Yekaterinburg in 2009, BRICS.
- In his address to the summit on June 23, which was hosted by China this year and held virtually, Prime Minister Narendra Modi described the binding glue as “a similar approach to global governance”.
- That approach, according to the lengthy joint Beijing Declaration that followed, was premised on “making instruments of global governance more inclusive, representative and participatory”.
- However, the NDB, which has since its launch in 2015 funded around \$30 billion worth of projects in emerging nations, still remains for the grouping an isolated example of their common interests translating into tangible outcomes.
- That points to another summit takeaway: despite a tall agenda, the bloc remains constrained by differences.
- For instance, on two key issues for the grouping UN reforms and terrorism members India and China have found themselves on opposing sides of the debate. India and Brazil have made common cause in pushing for an expanded UN Security Council, yet China has suggested it is not in favour of a permanent seat for India.
- On terrorism, the recent blocking by China of an attempt by India to sanction the LeT terrorist, Abdul Rehman Makki, at the UNSC sanctions committee, served as a reminder of contrasting approaches.
- On Ukraine, the bloc affirmed a commitment to respect the sovereignty, despite Russia’s actions, and stopped short of condemning NATO, as Russia and China have done, reflecting different views within BRICS.

- These differences certainly cast doubt on the bloc's loftier goals of reorienting the global order.
- They do not, however, suggest that the BRICS countries cannot cooperate on issues where interests align, whether in financing projects, as the NDB has done, working on climate change, as India and China have continued to do despite the LAC crisis, or even on space cooperation, where the five countries have agreed to create a joint constellation of remote sensing satellites.
- Northern European potato farmers will see longer growing seasons. Fields farther south will become increasingly dry.
- West Africa's rich soil and abundant water may support more rice. Parts of East Africa are believed to have great potential to expand production.
- Changes in Asia, with its large population and land area, will affect the most people. India and China will experience major losses of arable land.
- Indonesia's rice production will be largely spared by climate change, but corn will decline as much as 20 percent.

THE HINDU

Climate change and crops

- Climate change may actually benefit some plants by lengthening growing seasons and increasing carbon dioxide. Yet other effects of a warmer world, such as more pests, droughts, and flooding, will be less benign
- Some farmlands may benefit from warming, but others won't
- North America No place grows more corn than the Midwestern United States. Despite a 20 percent drop in production, the region will remain a global supplier.
- South America Many crops will suffer in Brazil. Corn farmers will see crops decline by nearly 16 percent.
- New parts of Australia will become arable, but droughts will require efficient farming if growing wheat is to continue.

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