

# CREATIVE FORMULAS: THE HINDU EDITORIAL ON INDIA, G20 AND THE UKRAINE CONFLICT

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After the conclusion of two key G20 ministerial meetings, of the [Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors \(FMCBG\)](#) in Bengaluru and [Foreign Ministers Meeting \(FMM\)](#) in Delhi, without consensus over the [Ukraine war](#), diplomats and [G20](#) officials must pause for a stock-taking exercise on the government's strategy for its G20 presidency. The FMCBG is part of the key "Finance track" of the 20 most advanced economies, set up in 1999 to help global economic coordination after the Asian financial crisis. The other, the "Sherpa track", works on the G20's goal setting process. With the experience India gained in Indonesia last year to bridge the Russia-West divide, the challenges for India's presidency, amid dynamic geopolitical changes, should have been clear. In Bengaluru, however, the surprise was when Russia and China refused to accept the language on the Ukraine war that they had agreed to just three months ago. As a result, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman was constrained to issue only a Chair's summary and outcome document, rather than a joint communique. The government also decided to include the paragraphs that Russia and China had objected to, naming them in the document. This is something of a precedent, as last year, the Indonesian chair's joint communique at the Leader level and FMCBG expressed the sentiments of "many" and "most" countries. After the brinkmanship in Bengaluru, it was ambitious, if not a bit surprising, that the government chose to attempt negotiations for a joint statement for the FMM. Eventually, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar issued a Chairman's summary and outcome documents too, citing differences over the two Bali paragraphs. This was a first, as FMMs have not attempted to issue statements at all.

While the two meetings have given India's G20 process a rocky start, there is a long road ahead to the Leaders' summit in September. Mr. Jaishankar has pointed out that the bulk of the statements that pertain to the critical issues for the Global South, such as food and energy security and debt management, have been ironed out. Second, there is clarity that India cannot bank on the language of the Bali Summit, and Sherpas will need to iron out a new consensus language on Ukraine. This will require a keen ear and creative formulas that take into account Russian grievances with the language, as well as the western desire to retain its successes in condemning Russia's actions in the Bali document. As host, India is in the 'hot-seat' and will benefit from enlisting those countries in the grouping other than the entrenched camps of the G7, U.S.-led developed world, and the now-strengthened Russia-China combine, to ensure that a middle path is found.

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