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EDITION 2026

PYQ Vault

560 questions	**50** days	**10** years of PYQs

DAY 44 **India & the Global South** · 8 questions

Every question carries a Flow Snapshot — and a handwritten model answer on the channel. **By Day 50, no PYQ will be unfamiliar.**

PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTION

UPSC 2017 · 20 marks

Suggest measures so that India's partnership with Africa becomes a true symbol of South-South Cooperation, delivering clear-cut economic and political dividends to both sides of the equation.

FLOW SNAPSHOT — how the answer moves

Intro routes

R1 SSC promises partnership of equals, not a donor relationship → difference is obligation, not warmth → can the weaker side press a claim? R2 India's Africa policy runs on what India may grant or withhold at will → so the demand is not more generosity but more obligation

Body flow

convert discretion into obligation → *regularity*: 2008 / 2011 / 2015 → eleven-year lapse → fourth set for May 2026, postponed without a new date → **Bhatia**'s count, nine Japanese since 1993, nine Chinese since 2000 → fixed cycle + standing review body ends dependence on Delhi's convenience → *delivery*: **Sachdev**, India promises, China delivers → $10bn pledged 2015 against a whole portfolio near $12bn across 42 countries → publish disbursement against commitment, project by project → Africa audits → *trade content*: **Gandhi**, ideas and services not manufactures against raw materials → ~$100bn in 2024-25 still leaning on crude and minerals → AfCFTA rules of origin + processing sited in Africa → value added where the ore is mined → *actors and politics*: **Bhattacharya**, episodic and state-centric, governments not firms and citizens → companies and universities in under binding rules on land, labour, environment → AU's G20 seat as the method, India spent capital, Africa gained a permanent place → permanent African UNSC seat returns that weight to India's reform agenda

Counter-view

Taylor, interest in Southern solidarity falls as a power rises → guarantee must be institutional, not sentimental

Conclusion routes

R1 a true symbol of South-South cooperation the day Africa can hold India to it
R2 obligation is what pays both sides — Africa gains a claim it can press, India gains a constituency that treats it as reliable

South-South cooperation promises a partnership of equals & not a donor relationship. The difference lies in obligation, not warmth.

India's Africa policy rests on what India may grant or withhold at will. The forum summit met in 2008, 2011 & 2015, then lapsed for 11 years; the fourth, set for May 2026, was postponed without a new date. Rajiv Bhatia argues 9 Japanese summits since 1993 & 9 Chinese since 2000.

Mahesh Sachdev's charge is that India promises while China delivers. India's whole African credit portfolio today stands near 12 billion across 42 countries. Publishing disbursement against commitment, project by project, would let Africa audit the partnership.

Mahatma Gandhi hoped for commerce in ideas & services, not manufactures against raw materials, but trade near a 100 billion dollars in 2024-25 leans on crude & minerals.

Samir Bhattacharya states that the partnership episodic & state-centric & runs between governments rather than firms & citizens. Widening it, will bring companies and universities in under binding rules on land, labour & environment.

The African Union's G20 seat shows that India spent capital & Africa gained a permanent place. Backing a permanent African security council seat returns that weight to India's reform agenda.

Ian Taylor argues that interest in Southern solidarity falls as a power rises. The guarantee must be institutional, not sentimental.

Therefore, the partnership becomes a true symbol of South-South cooperation the day Africa can hold India to it.

PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTION UPSC 2021 · 10 marks

Write about the growing significance of QUAD.

FLOW SNAPSHOT — how the answer moves

Intro routes

R1 revived 2017 → no treaty, no defence obligation → significance from function, not form R2 grouping matters by output → supplies what no member builds alone

Body flow

agenda widens, maritime → economic security → **Raja Mohan**: strategic + economic security inseparable → May 2026 Delhi ministerial as proof → minerals framework (up to US$20bn) + energy security + first Fiji port → India's practical return → MDA live at Gurugram → next Quad-at-Sea mission → no alignment demanded → BRICS + Quad together, a position no other Southern state occupies

Counter-view

Grieco: limits structural, divergent national interests → announcements outrun delivery → US$20bn a target, not committed money → chair year closed without a leaders' summit

Conclusion routes

R1 significance real but conditional → judged by what is built, not announced R2 the non-alliance form is exactly its use to India → delivery of regional public goods is the next test

Revived in 2017, the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue rests on no treaty and no defence obligation. Its significance has grown because of what it does and not what it formally is.

Its agenda has widened from maritime security to economic security. C. Raja Mohan argues that strategic & economic security are becoming inseparable in the Indo-Pacific. The May 2026 New Delhi ministerial matched that shift. It launched a critical minerals framework to mobilise up to US $ 20 billion, an energy security initiative, and a first joint port project in Fiji.

Indo-Pacific maritime domain awareness is now operational at the Gurugram fusion centre and India will host the next Quad-at-sea mission.

Because membership demands no alignment, India sits in BRICS and the Quad together, a position no other Southern state occupies.

Kelly Grieco holds that the Quad's limits are structural, set by divergent national interests and that its announcements outrun delivery. That US $ 20 billion is a target, not committed money and India's year in the chair passed without a leaders' summit.

Its significance is therefore real but conditional. What the Quad builds will settle it instead of what it announces.

PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTION

UPSC 2022 · 20 marks

Discuss the relevance of the demand for New International Economic Order (NIEO) in the present era of globalisation.

FLOW SNAPSHOT — how the answer moves

Intro routes	R1 1974 Declaration → one claim: rules framed before Southern independence → form changed, grievance unchanged R2 the five asks (sovereign equality, decision-making, policy space, TNC regulation, technology) → globalisation as the new setting → relevance is about the ground, not the wording
Body flow	finance first: IMF 16th Review (Dec 2023), quotas +50%, shares untouched, realignment deferred → **Engel** & **Mabefam**: voice + resource flows recur from NAM → G20 → Bridgetown; response slow, aims unmet → trade: unfinished Doha (agriculture, SDT, public stockholding) = policy space today → technology: TRIPS waiver = sharpest North-South line → corporate power: **Raja Mohan** (states cannot regulate MNCs) → **Mikler** (value-chain control; free trade ≠ free markets) → NIEO's regulation demand still missing
Counter-view	**Bhagwati**: trading system delivers markets, investment, technology → **Happymon Jacob**: integration diluted the collective agenda; NAM's decline removed the vehicle
Conclusion routes	R1 demand survives in narrower form → rule-reform + new instruments (AIIB, NDB, DPI) R2 inter-country gaps widened → equity case stronger, not weaker

The 1974 UNGA declaration on a New International Economic Order rested on one claim. The rules of the world economy were framed when most of the Global South was not independent.

It sought sovereign equality, participation in decision-making, policy space, regulation of transnational corporations & tech transfer. Globalisation has changed the form of this demand and not the grievance behind it.

The IMF's 16th General Review of Quotas, concluded in 2023, raised quotas by half but left shares unchanged and realignment stands deferred. Susan Engel & Matthew Mabefam trace the NEIO's call for voice & resources through NAM, the G20 & the Bridgetown Agenda.

The unfinished Doha agenda on agriculture, special and differential treatment & public stockholding is that policy space demand today.

C. Raja Mohan argues to the continuing difficulty developing states face in regulating multinationals within their borders. John Mikler states that transnational corporations now control global supply & value chains & free-trade advocacy protects their dominance rather than open markets. Global regulation as the NIEO proposed is still missing.

Jagdish Bhagwati holds that the trading system gives developing countries larger markets, investment & technology. Happymon Jacob argues that integration has diluted the collective economic agenda & NAM's decline removed its political vehicle.

It now works through rule-reform and new instruments i.e the AIIB, the NDB, Digital Public Infrastructure.

Globalisation has widened the gap between countries and therefore the case for equity is stronger, not weaker.

PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTION UPSC 2023 · 10 marks

What diplomatic steps has India taken to articulate the interests of the Global South in International Politics?

FLOW SNAPSHOT — *how the answer moves*

Intro routes R1 symbolic participation → institutional leadership → two levers: the room, and the agenda R2 2023 as the turn → a forum India convened + a seat India delivered → every later step sorts into presence or agenda

Body flow PRESENCE: VOGSS, three editions since 2023, 120+ countries → AU into G20, September 2023 → permanent African UNSC seat, Ezulwini Consensus → AGENDA: TRIPS waiver with South Africa → food security + public stockholding via G33 → ITEC training, digital public infrastructure → agenda widens to technology: India AI Impact Summit, February 2026, first in the Global South

Counter-view **Narlikar**'s test: agenda-setting power, not token representation → **Mawdsley**: summits as stages for pageantry and promises → permanent solution on public stockholding refused again, Yaoundé, March 2026

Conclusion routes R1 room widened, agenda shaped, rules unmoved R2 presence secured; conversion of consensus into rules is the unfinished step

India's global south engagement has moved from symbolic participation to institutional leadership. Its steps work on two levers i.e. who sits in the room, and whose demands set the agenda.

The Voice of the Global South summits, 3 editions since 2023, drew over 120 countries. Under India's presidency the African Union entered as a permanent member in 2023. India also presses for a permanent African seat on the UNSC under the Ezulwini Consensus.

India moved the TRIPS waiver proposal with South Africa, pressed food security & public stockholding through the G33 & offers ITEC training and DPI.

The agenda has widened to technology: Delhi hosted the India AI impact summit in February 2026, the first global AI summit in the Global South.

Amrita Narlikar argues the South seeks agenda-setting power and not token representation. Emma Mawdsley views such summits as stages for pageantry & promises and a permanent solution on public stockholding failed again at Yaounde in March 2026.

India has widened the room and shaped the agenda but the rules have yet to move.

PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTION UPSC 2023 · 15 marks

Discuss the major drivers of India's interests in Africa.

FLOW SNAPSHOT — how the answer moves

Intro routes
R1 policy born political: decolonisation, anti-apartheid solidarity, AFRICA Fund → drivers now generated at home R2 Africa as an input into India's own transformation → every major interest traces to a domestic need

Body flow
energy first (Nigeria, Angola, Algeria vs Gulf dependence; **Xavier** — a third of African lines of credit, 2004-13, to energy) → search widens to critical minerals (**Gurjit Singh** — electric mobility, semiconductors, defence rest on cobalt/copper/manganese) → market (trade near $100 bn; **Bhatia** — 2030 target of $200 bn against a decade of sharp fluctuation) → security follows commerce (**Xavier** — East African coast inside India's Indian Ocean interest: sea lanes, investment, diaspora; piracy → net security provider) → AIKEYME 2025 gives it operational form → diplomatic weight (50+ African votes on UNSC and WTO reform) → China competition in third spaces sets the pace

Counter-view
drivers do not convert on their own → **Singh**'s paradox: Indian-origin firms in African copper, cobalt, tantalum, output moves to China → fragmented engagement against an integrated state-backed system

Conclusion routes
R1 the drivers are Indian needs, which is itself the risk → **Vaidyanathan**: move beyond extraction-led engagement to co-developer R2 interest matures into partnership only when African priorities count as drivers too

India's Africa policy began as a political project focusing on decolonisation, anti-apartheid solidarity, the AFRICA Fund. Africa is now an input into India's own transformation and major interest traces to a domestic need.

Nigeria, Angola & Algeria reduce dependence on the Gulf, and Constantino Xavier records that a third of India's African lines of credit between 2004 & 2013 went to energy. Gurjit Singh ties electric mobility, semiconductors & defence manufacturing to secure access to cobalt, copper & manganese. Trade near $100 billion adds the market. Rajiv Bhatia sets the 2030 target of $200 billion against a decade of sharp fluctuation.

Xavier places the East African coast inside India's Indian Ocean interest of sea lanes, investment & diaspora, where piracy makes net security provider a working obligation. AIKEYME, India's first multilateral exercise with African navies, off Tanzania in 2025, gave that form.

More than 50 African votes weigh on UNSC & WTO reform, and competition with China, which Xavier locates in third spaces beyond Asia, sets the pace.

Singh points to the paradox that Indian-origin firms work in African copper, cobalt & tantalum while the output moves to China. India's engagement fragmented against an integrated, state-backed system.

Veda Vaidyanathan argues for moving beyond extraction-led engagement to the role of co-developer. Until African priorities count as drivers too, interest will not mature into partnership.

PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTION UPSC 2024 · 10 marks

"Nothing is going to move within the WTO negotiations unless India is on board." Discuss the main reasons behind India's increased clout in the WTO.

FLOW SNAPSHOT — how the answer moves

Intro routes

R1 consensus rule + seat in the inner circle → the rule is old, the seat is recent R2 any member can block → only India's block halts the organisation → what changed is position, not procedure

Body flow

Hopewell, 2004 → Brazil and India displace Japan and Canada → old Quad becomes US / EU / Brazil / India → market + coalitions → G20 agriculture, G33 food security → **Narlikar**: punching above weight → TRIPS waiver with South Africa, 2020, eighteen months

Counter-view

the strength is the strength to refuse → Yaoundé, March 2026, India alone against 165 of 166 on investment facilitation → public stockholding still undelivered since Bali 2013 → **D'Souza**: leverage, not principle

Conclusion routes

R1 can hold the organisation still → moving it is another matter R2 veto secured, rule-making not yet → the clout is real but one-directional

India's weight at the WTO rests on a rule that requires consensus and a seat in the small group where bargains are settled.

Kristen Hopewell dates the shift to 2004. Brazil and India then displaced Japan and Canada from the WTO's inner circle. The old Quad became one centred on the US, the EU, Brazil and India.

India reached that table through its market & its coalitions. The G20 on agriculture & the G33 on food security put numbers behind its positions. Amrita Narlikar views this as developing countries punch above their weight. The TRIPS waiver proposal, moved with South Africa in 2020, took 18 months to settle.

At Yaounde in March 2026 India alone withheld consensus on the Investment Facilitation for Development Agreement, which 165 of 166 members supported. The permanent solution on public stockholding, pending since Bali in 2013, was not delivered. Shanthie Mariet D'Souza doubts the principle, reading the block as leverage.

Therefore, India can hold the organisation still but moving it is another matter.

PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTION UPSC 2024 · 15 marks

Discuss the potential role that India could play as the leader of the Global South in realising the goal of establishing a new international economic order in the 21st century.

FLOW SNAPSHOT — how the answer moves

Intro routes	R1 1974 Declaration → rules written before most of the South existed as states → demand failed for want of power, not justification R2 what the old coalition lacked → capability + a seat where rules are settled → India's potential = supplying both
Body flow	presence first → AU into G20, 2023 → three VOGSS widen the table → BRICS chair 2026 → **Kahler**'s fork: reform inside / build alongside → India in both tracks → second lever, capability → cannot match Chinese depth → offers what can be copied: DPI, ISA, Global Development Compact 2024 → **Narlikar**: veto-player → agenda-setter
Counter-view	agenda-setting ≠ rule-making → 16th IMF review moves no share → two-fifths of votes on three-fifths of output → Yaoundé 2026: public stockholding refused again, pending since Bali 2013 → UN tax rules authored by the Africa Group, not India → **Taylor**: solidarity weakens as a power rises
Conclusion routes	R1 potential is conditional → order moves when convening is spent on rules R2 leadership proved by demands India did not author

The 1974 declaration on a New International Economic Order held that the rules were written before most developing countries were independent states. The demand failed for want of power, not justification.

India's potential rests on supplying what the old coalition lacked i.e. capability and a seat where rules are settled. The African Union became a permanent member of the G20 under India's presidency in 2023. Three Voice of the Global South Summits have widened the table since. Miles Kahler views the choice open to rising powers i.e. reform the order from inside, or build alongside it.

India cannot match Chinese financial depth & it offers what others can copy.

DPI, the ISA & Global Development Compact of 2024 rest on capacity building, tech sharing & concessional finance. Amrita Narlikar calls this as a move from veto-player to agenda-setter.

The 16th IMF quota review moved no member's share, and developing economies hold 2/5 th of the votes on 3/5 th of output. The tax rules being rewritten at the UN came from the Africa Group, not from India. Ian Taylor cautions that interest in Southern solidarity weakens as a power rises.

India's potential is therefore conditional. The order moves when convening power is spent on rules, and on demands India did not author.

PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTION　　UPSC 2025 · 15 marks

Discuss some of the key drivers of India's new interests in Africa which might help in developing long-term comparative advantage over China.

FLOW SNAPSHOT — how the answer moves

Intro routes

R1 China-Africa trade at a record $275bn in 2024 → yet lending under $5bn a year, repayments now exceed disbursements → drivers named: minerals, markets, sea lanes, African votes → scale cannot be matched → build where Chinese money does not reach R2 engagement once carried by solidarity, now by material need → but the stem asks for edge, not interest → edge must rest on assets money cannot buy quickly

Body flow

young African market → generics + IT goods to ordinary households → African pharma still in its infancy → ITEC + Pan-African e-Network leave skills, not debt → **Bhattacharya**: IIT campus Tanzania, forensic sciences campus Uganda → DPI extends the same logic → identity/payments/records as public goods → over twenty countries, six African → no debt, no supplier lock-in → **Xavier**: electoral management, federalism, decentralisation, judicial training → area China cannot enter

Counter-view

nothing converted into position → **Singh**'s paradox: Indian-origin firms in African copper, cobalt, tantalum, output flows to China → fragmented engagement vs integrated state-backed system → **Sharma** and co-authors: longer partnerships, far smaller footprint

Conclusion routes

R1 drivers correct → advantage only through delivery: projects on time, value retained in Africa → earned by record, not claimed by contrast
R2 China's trade at a record while its money recedes → the basis of influence is shifting, not collapsing → India's edge is slow-appreciating and conditional

Africa's trade with China reached a record $275 billion in 2024, but Chinese lending has fallen below $5 billion a year and repayments exceed fresh disbursements.

India's newer drivers are minerals, markets, sea lanes & African votes. None can be pursued by matching that scale & advantage must be built where Chinese money does not reach. Africa's young market draws India's durable strengths. Generic medicines & IT goods reach ordinary households & African pharmaceutical manufacturing is in its infancy.

ITEC training & the Pan-African e-Network leave skills behind, not debt. Samir Bhattacharya points to an IIT campus in Tanzania & a forensic sciences university campus in Uganda.

Constantino Xavier places the deeper edge in India's democratic practice. The electoral management, federalism, decentralisation & judicial training, an area China cannot enter soon.

Gurjit Singh argues that Indian-origin firms work African copper, cobalt & tantalum, but their output flows to China. India's engagement stays fragmented against an integrated, state-backed system. Tilak Raj Sharma & his co-authors find India's people-centred model builds longer partnerships on a far smaller economic footprint.

They become an advantage only through delivery i.e. projects completed on time & more value kept in Africa.

Comparative advantage therefore will be earned by record and not claimed by contrast.

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— Tomorrow — Day 45. Don't break the chain. —