India & the Global South

Day 44. Africa, Latin America, IBSA, the WTO and the New International Economic Order — the entire Southern account in one pass. ***Revise → write a little → don't break the chain.***

Exam load on this unit (UPSC 2016–2025): ***6 × 10-markers · 9 × 15-markers · 3 × 20-markers.***

A The Global South & South-South Cooperation

1 The Global South — the idea and the setting

> *"The commerce between India and Africa will be of ideas and services, not of manufactured goods against raw materials after the fashion of Western exploiters."* — **Mahatma Gandhi**

Working definition

The Global South is not only a geographical label. It is a political and ideological position built on **postcolonial solidarity**, **developmental justice** and a demand for reform of global governance.

- India's engagement rests on shared histories of colonial rule, comparable developmental challenges and a common interest in a more equitable global order.
- Foundational role in the **Non-Aligned Movement**; consistent support for **South–South cooperation**.
- Movement over time → from **symbolic participation** to **institutional leadership**, marked by proactive diplomacy, strategic partnerships and a reformist agenda.
- Three theatres in this unit → **Africa**, **Latin America**, and the **multilateral trade order** centred on the WTO.

> *"The world system is a world of unequal relations."* — **Immanuel Wallerstein**

This remains the structural setting within which India's Southern engagement operates.

2 South-South Cooperation — meaning, basis, importance

Meaning

Collaboration among developing countries across various fields, especially **economic development**.

Basis

- Shared histories of colonialism and economic exploitation.
- Common challenges → inadequate infrastructure, illiteracy, unemployment, poverty, lack of technology.
- Treated by developing countries as a **self-reliant alternative** to traditional aid from developed nations.

Importance	Content	Scholar / instance
Unified strategy	Developing countries act together on common challenges; NAM is the classic instance, uniting them against colonialism and for collective interests	**Frantz Fanon** · **Gopalika Arora** and postcolonial scholars — a collective approach to counter colonial legacies and neo-colonial influence
Mutual understanding	Similar historical experience builds trust; the India–Africa Forum Summit is institutionalised cooperation	**Edward Said** — **contrapuntal thinking**, moving past the traditional North–South divide
Historical injustices	Pressure for a fairer global economic order and fairer trade practices	The **G77**, established in **1964**
Collective self-reliance	Trade, investment, technology transfer and knowledge sharing	**African Continental Free Trade Area** — raising intra-regional trade, reducing dependence on external markets

3 India in South-South Cooperation — instruments, challenges, assessment

Instruments

ITEC · Development assistance · Lines of credit · IBSA · BRICS · SAARC · BIMSTEC · Technology transfer

- **ITEC** → technical assistance and training for professionals from developing nations.
- **Development assistance** → grants, concessional loans and project support to Least Developed Countries in agriculture, healthcare, education and infrastructure. **C. Raja Mohan** acknowledges India's effort here.
- **Lines of credit** → favourable terms, low interest, for critical development projects.
- **Technology transfer** → information technology, agriculture, healthcare, space technology.

Challenge	Content	Scholar
Neo-colonial influence	Developed countries retain economic dominance and unequal trade relations, weakening the autonomy of developing states	**P. Stobdan** — the major obstacle
Impact of globalization	Integration into the global economy shifts national priorities and dilutes the economic agenda of South–South cooperation	**Happymon Jacob**
Decline of NAM	Once the principal vehicle of collective self-reliance, now less effective	—
Dominance of global financial institutions	World Bank and IMF dominated by developed countries; limited space for developing-country priorities	—
Regulation of MNCs	Developing states struggle to control multinationals within their borders → exploitation and unfair distribution of benefits	**C. Raja Mohan**
Economic disparities	Gains from globalization have been uneven; the gap between countries has widened	—

Assessment

- Traditional approaches have run into difficulty; mechanisms such as **IBSA** still hold promise.
- As some Southern states succeed in growth and technology, they can share that experience with others.
- Diversification of economic activity opens newer areas → the ground for a revitalised South–South agenda.

UPSC 2018 · 10m "India's Research and Information System for Developing Countries" (RIS) is a major initiative in the area of South-South Cooperation. Discuss.

B India & Africa

4 The resurgence — why Africa returned to the front rank

As per **Rani D. Mullen**, keeping certain controversies aside, the Indo-African relationship has experienced a **resurgence**, particularly since the turn of the twenty-first century. The economic as well as strategic importance of the continent to India has risen.

Voice	Formulation
Manmohan Singh · Milan Vaishnav	India's relations with Africa are rooted in the history of solidarity against colonialism and apartheid; he noted the distance travelled since the days of Mahatma Gandhi
Constantino Xavier	Traces the relationship to centuries of exchange across the Western Indian Ocean; ties have recently **entered a new phase**
S. Jaishankar	Connections go beyond mere transactions; they embody solidarity born of a common struggle. Indian support has been **without conditionality or hidden agenda**
Narendra Modi	Warmth and depth of these connections as a pillar of India's foreign policy, producing a "strong emotional link"
Tony Blair	Once described the continent as a "scar on the conscience of humanity"; Africa has since moved from *a hopeless continent* to *a hopeful continent* — demographics, resources, market potential

Shared civilisational vocabulary → **Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam** and **Ubuntu** (I am because we are). The days of Africa as a "dark continent" are over.

Explaining the resurgence — the 'levels of analysis' approach

- **Systems level** → end of the Cold War; globalization; growing interdependence; rise of non-state actors; newer challenges such as terrorism and climate change.
- **Domestic politics** → India's opening of the economy through the LPG reforms.
- Cooperation runs at **bilateral, plurilateral and multilateral** levels, across economic, developmental and politico-strategic fields.

Hamid Ansari's four imperatives for cooperation

Common historical experience & cultural links | Complementarities in strengths | Common approach to development | Convergence on global matters

5 India's interests in Africa

Interest	Content	Scholar
Geopolitical	African states hold large and increasing diplomatic weight where India's core interests are at stake — trade and investment regulation, migration, intellectual property, environmental policy. The absolute weight of **50+ states** matters for global governance, UNSC reform and a permanent seat, competition with China, and cooperation on terrorism, climate and WTO reform	**Constantino Xavier**
Economic	Search for resources, especially minerals and energy, and market access for Indian exports. Some of the fastest growing economies are African; **16 countries** have recorded over five per cent growth. India must recognise the weight of rising economies and **emerging middle-classes** for its export-intensive sectors	**Rajiv Bhatia**

Energy security	Oil, coal and other resources feed India's energy mix; Nigeria, Angola, Egypt and Algeria reduce dependence on the Gulf and West Asia. ONGC, and private groups such as Reliance, Tata and Jindal, have made unprecedented forays into Nigeria, Angola, Mozambique and Sudan, often with governmental support. Between **2004 and 2013, 33 per cent** of India's operative lines of credit for Africa were in the energy sector. Uranium from Niger, South Africa and Namibia	**Constantino Xavier**
Strategic	"For India, the rise of Africa is key to **global rebalancing**"	**S. Jaishankar**
Security	East Coast African countries matter for peace and prosperity in the **Indian Ocean region**, for trade, and for the diaspora. Piracy, transnational crime, safety of sea lanes, protection of expatriate citizens and strategic investments → India must fulfil its role as a **net security provider**	**Constantino Xavier**
Indo-Pacific	IOR littoral African states are important for India's regional aspirations; strengthen the QUAD and develop a similar security arrangement with East African nations. For India to become a regional hegemon, cooperation with African countries is *sine qua non*	—
Countering China	The Sino-Indian competitive dynamic at the structural level affects relations in **third spaces**, beyond Asia. To move from regional to global power India must displace China from its dominant position. The **Maritime Silk Road** and **Belt and Road Initiative** carry huge influence; China is developing **47 ports** in sub-Saharan Africa. India must shed its inhibitions → joint infrastructure, military involvement, continued developmental work; **hard power and soft power together**, soft power alone will not work	**Constantino Xavier**
Soft power	Developmental work under **Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam**; the approach has not been that of a *white man's burden* or a neo-colonialist one, but of sharing knowledge and developmental experience for mutual benefit	—

UPSC 2021 · 15m Identify the drivers of India's new interest in Africa.

UPSC 2023 · 15m Discuss the major drivers of India's interests in Africa.

6 Chronology of India–Africa relations

Year	*Landmark*
1893	Mahatma Gandhi goes on an assignment to Africa
1927	Indian National Congress, at its Calcutta session, decides to open offices overseas including Africa. Jawaharlal Nehru participates in the **League against Imperialism** in Brussels — this shapes India's attitude to Africa's struggle and to **Afro-Asian solidarity**
1937	'Ethiopia Day' observed by the Congress against Italian imperialistic aggression (Mussolini attacked Ethiopia in 1936)
1946	India cuts ties with **South Africa** over the **Ghetto Act**; not revived till 1994, when apartheid is abolished
1955	**Asian-African Conference** at Bandung, Indonesia; India among the key organizers
1964	India takes up the fight against apartheid in the UN, which resonates across Africa
1964	NAM Summit at Cairo; African nations do not support Indian resolutions against China on renouncing the use of force and on nuclear disarmament
1964	Launch of the **Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC)** programme
1981	The Caracas Program of Action
1982	India accords full diplomatic status to SWAPO (Southwest Africa People's Organisation)
1986	India establishes the **AFRICA Fund** for material assistance against apartheid in South Africa and Namibia
1990	Establishment of the **Africa-India Development Association** by India and Kenya
1995	Creation of the **Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC)**, 18 members, including four East African states (South Africa, Mozambique, Tanzania, Kenya) with Madagascar and **Mauritius**, which hosts the permanent secretariat
2002	**Focus Africa Programme** — financial assistance to trade associations, export promotion councils and trade promotion organizations
2003	India, Brazil and South Africa form the **IBSA Dialogue Forum**
2008	First **India-Africa Forum Summit (IAFS)**, held once every three years
2008	Launch of the **Indian Ocean Naval Symposium** with officials from 35 countries, 13 of which form its East African littoral sub-group
2010	**Pan-Africa e-Network Project** — satellite-based connectivity for health and education
2011	2nd India-Africa Forum Summit at Addis Ababa
2013	**Africa Dialogue Forum**
2015	3rd India-Africa Forum Summit in New Delhi
2017	**Asia-Africa Growth Corridor (AAGC)** proposed by India, Japan and African countries

2017	4th India-Africa Hydrocarbons Conference — oil exploration, refining, drilling technology; new strategy announced as "**Africa for Bharat and Bharat for Africa**" (**ABBA**)
Feb 2020	First **India-Africa Defence Ministers' Conclave**, with **DEFEXPO INDIA**, institutionalising defence cooperation
Jan 2021	The **African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)** comes into force

7 Three phases — the levels-of-analysis frame

Rani D. Mullen uses the '**levels of analysis**' approach — systemic factors, domestic factors, and the role of individual leaders — and divides the relationship into three phases.

Three phases of India–Africa relations

I · To 1947
Anti-colonial struggles in India and Africa

→

II · 1947 – early 1990s
Support for African independence movements, till the end of the Cold War and the opening of the economy

→

III · Early 1990s onward
Western ideology dominant, NAM's relevance wanes; India as a democratic, growing alternative to China's expanding presence

India–Africa relations are rooted in cultural and historical ties. As per **S. Jaishankar**, connections are strongest with societies on the eastern coast, nurtured by the monsoon-driven ecosystem of the Indian Ocean. Western imperialism intensified these connections in paradoxical ways: Indian labourers were recruited for colonial infrastructure and business, producing cultural exchange and a modern diaspora, while shared oppression fed a collective aspiration for freedom.

8 Phase I — history up to independence, 1947

Systemic factor: colonialism

- **Rani D. Mullen**: the relationship rests on **pre-colonial trade** dating back at least to the fourteenth century, and on forced and indentured labour sent to Africa from India in the nineteenth century.
- The **shared experience of colonial subjugation** by the Portuguese, French and particularly the British was the most important systemic factor.
- **Woodrow Wilson's** Fourteen Points speech of 1918, arguing **democracy** and **self-determination** as war aims, inspired India's nationalist leaders to champion the rights of others under imperial rule.
- **Jawaharlal Nehru** organised and served as the sole Congress delegate at the League against Imperialism conference, Brussels, 1927.
- Through the 1930s Congress resolutions denounced imperialism including in Africa; 'Ethiopia Day' was observed against Italian aggression. By the Second World War, India's interactions with African nations were rooted in its own quest for independence.

Domestic factors — negligible in this phase

- Slavery was abolished in British territories in 1870; thereafter Indian workers were sent in thousands to British Africa on **indentured servant contracts**, often differing little from slaves.
- The presence of Indians in Africa gained national attention only after the First World War and Mahatma Gandhi's return from South Africa in 1915.
- India–Africa trade was minimal, perhaps less important than in the pre-colonial period, since both British India and African colonies traded mainly with the metropolitan colonizer.

Individual level

- **Mahatma Gandhi** → worked primarily for the Indian community in South Africa; his later sympathy for subjugated Africa made him a hero across the continent. Became the earliest link between nationalist leaders in Africa and India; his struggle inspired African leaders of the twentieth century, notably **Nelson Mandela**. His South African experience broadened the worldview of the Indian freedom movement.
- **Jawaharlal Nehru** → where Mahatma Gandhi approached the colonial histories of India and Africa from the perspective of **individual rights**, Jawaharlal Nehru viewed them through the lens of a **collective struggle against global imperialism**. He argued that international peace could not coexist with colonial oppression: so long as one nation dominates another, there will be persistent attempts to undermine the established structure, and lasting stability will remain unattainable. Peace can never emerge from systems of imperialism and capitalism.

9 Phase II — 1947 to the early 1990s

As per **Rani D. Mullen**, most of Africa was still under colonial rule at the time of India's independence. **Decolonization** and the **emergence of NAM** were the two decisive systemic factors.

Supporting the decolonization of Africa

- **Franklin D. Roosevelt's** push for anti-colonialism and self-determination strengthened the Congress argument. Indians in the British Indian army fought the Italians in Ethiopia and the Italians and Germans in North Africa during the Second World War → this cemented post-independence ideological support for decolonization.
- **M. Ayoob**: support for decolonization also rested on the practical concern that India's own foreign affairs could be autonomous only if it interacted with fully independent states.
- India established formal relations with independence movements and set up diplomatic representation in **Ghana, Nigeria and Kenya** even before independence; it sent non-combatant troops and a special representative to Congo during its civil war.
- From the early 1950s India focused on South–South cooperation; in 1955 it played a significant role at the **Asian-African Conference** in Bandung.

The 1962 turn

- **A. Ghosh**: despite the rhetoric of decolonization, India's effort at Afro-Asian solidarity suffered a setback when, during the Sino-Indian War of 1962, only **Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria and Libya** expressed support.
- Some prominent African leaders, particularly in Kenya, openly supported China. India's approach of peaceful methods for attaining independence began losing appeal against China's open support for armed liberation. **India's defeat weakened its soft power in Africa.**
- After Jawaharlal Nehru's death in 1964, policy continued to support decolonization and South–South cooperation but became **selective and pragmatic**. **ITEC** was launched in 1964 as the main instrument of **bilateral foreign assistance**, resting on economic foundations.
- By the late 1980s nearly all African countries had achieved independence. India continued the campaign against apartheid, while post-independence idealism gave way to a pragmatic approach built on economic cooperation. ITEC built up generations of civil servants and policymakers from African countries trained in India.

The Non-Aligned Movement

- **S.B. Bhattacharya**: NAM was largely the idea of Jawaharlal Nehru and took shape at the **1955 Bandung Conference**. The first NAM conference of 1961 established the common ideological ground between India and Africa, visible in the **anti-colonial and anti-racism** agenda.
- **Rani D. Mullen**: non-alignment was initially successful, meeting fertile ideological ground in newly independent African countries trying to ward off external political interference. In 1986 NAM helped set up the **Action for Resisting Invasion, Colonialism, and Apartheid (AFRICA) Fund**; India was a large contributor, and Indo-African cooperation produced many UN General Assembly resolutions condemning racism and apartheid.
- Indirect outcomes → diplomatic status to the **African National Congress** in 1967 and to **SWAPO** in 1985; indirect funding of African independence movements through the **Organization of African Unity** and various **United Nations funds**.
- The critical counterpoint (**Rani D. Mullen**) → most newly independent African countries did not adhere to non-alignment and instead aligned with a superpower to secure development and military financing.
- NAM became increasingly **factionalized** and even **radicalized** during the 1970s and 1980s, while India in the post-Nehru era turned to domestic issues.

Domestic and individual factors

- **Rani D. Mullen**: domestic factors played **no significant role** in shaping India's Africa policy, at least until the 1990s. Trade with Africa between the 1950s and 2010 accounted for less than **11 per cent** of both exports and imports; since 2010 exports rose faster, though the total remained below 11 per cent in 2014-15. India's closed economy kept domestic economic factors marginal.
- Nehruvian policy on the diaspora instructed non-resident Indians in Africa that their **loyalties should reside with their African homelands** and that they should not seek privileges at the cost of opportunities for Africans.
- **Jawaharlal Nehru** enjoyed a virtual carte blanche in foreign policy; he viewed Africa as a neighbour across the ocean, even a sister continent. Friendships with **Kwame Nkrumah** of Ghana and **Gamal Abdel Nasser** of Egypt cemented that commitment.
- **Indira Gandhi**, from 1966, directed attention towards a few nations that had backed India in 1962, prioritising economic cooperation while keeping domestic matters primary. By the time **Rajiv Gandhi** became Prime Minister in 1984, Africa policy was no longer associated with any individual.
- **S.B. Bhattacharya**: relations did not break down. The 1971 war, the 1974 nuclear test and the Green Revolution raised India's prestige in Africa; through the 1970s and 1980s a rising sense of shared development challenges renewed the articulation of South–South cooperation.

> *'Afro Asian countries became the principal arena for India's policy and diplomacy during the 1950s'* — **Muni (1991:862)**

10 Phase III — India and Africa since the early 1990s

Systemic factors — the geopolitical realignment

- With the end of the Cold War in 1989-90, India's policy towards sub-Saharan Africa changed. Reach extended from traditional Anglophone Africa to **Francophone** and **Lusophone** countries; closer politico-military engagement was sought to counter rising regional threats, including China.
- **Rani D. Mullen**: the end of the Cold War left the US as sole superpower; in a **unipolar world order** India had to reposition itself in Africa and seek new friends, and to differentiate its policies from China.
- New embassies were opened; the **India-Africa Forum Summit** was started. India sought **more adequate representation in the voting and management mechanisms** of the UNSC, the World Bank and the IMF.
- The NAM forum of the Cold War era was replaced by **regional organizations** addressing particular issues → ECOWAS, NEPAD, TEAM-9, and the **IBSA Dialogue Forum** (2003).

Economic imperatives

- The 1991 crisis led to neoliberal LPG reforms, which reshaped the relationship. India needed new resources and markets. **Focus Africa** (2002) provided financial assistance to trade bodies and export promotion councils.
- For much of the **twentieth century** Indian assistance took the form of **technical assistance** and training slots through ITEC and its corollary, the **Special Commonwealth African Assistance Programme**, along with grants largely to Anglophone countries.
- In the **twenty-first century**, development cooperation is increasingly focused on **lines of credit** through the **Export-Import Bank of India**. Indian economic diplomacy now covers all sub-Saharan African countries; China has engaged similarly since the turn of the century → rivalry between the two rising Asian powers for primacy.

Three domestic drivers

Driver	Content

Energy security	Africa is the world's third largest region of oil production and supply. Political volatility in the Middle East increased India's need to diversify. By 2013 more than **20 per cent** of Indian oil and gas imports came from Africa — mainly Nigeria, South Africa, Angola, Egypt, Algeria and Morocco — and these resources made up nearly **two-thirds** of India's imports from Africa (WTO and CII data)
Search for new markets	Indian trade with African countries rose through 2014-15, growing at **32.4 per cent** between 2008 and 2011, outpacing bilateral trade growth with China. Under the pan-African e-network for tele-education and telemedicine, Indian institutes and hospitals are paid for distance learning and medical advice through a **$125 million** initial grant
Indian Ocean security	The vast majority of Indian trade moves by sea; rising piracy off the eastern African seaboard and dependence on African energy make securing global shipping lanes a domestic priority. The **2008 Mumbai attacks**, where terrorists entered from the sea, made maritime security in the Indian Ocean Rim a large priority

Declining individual factors

- Domestic pressures drove the UPA government to rejuvenate Africa policy in 2004 → a large increase in development cooperation, public and private investment, more regional Indo-African organizations, and more frequent summits.
- **Rani D. Mullen**: the importance of domestic factors has risen since the early 1990s while the impact of individual leaders declined, at least until 2014. Seven governments came to power at the centre between 1990 and 2004; as one-party rule gave way to **multi-party coalition** governments, the weight of any single leader declined.
- The post-2014 majority government created new openings for individual factors, seen in the 2015 **India-Africa Summit** in New Delhi with its large turnout. Indo-African policy from 2004 to 2014 was not associated with one individual; and despite a majority government, PM Modi did not concentrate personally on Africa, preferring to focus on the region.

11 Developments under the Modi government

As per **S. Jaishankar**, PM Modi brought new thinking and energy to these ties through his perspectives on greater equity and sustainable development, devoting a higher degree of attention, resources and capabilities to this account.

- **High-level visits** → since 2014, **34 outgoing visits** by India's President, Vice-President and Prime Minister to Africa; over **100 incoming visits** from African counterparts.
- **Diplomatic footprint** → since 2018, **18 new embassies**, bringing Indian missions and posts on the continent to **49**.
- **IAFS elevated in 2015** through an expanded format with participation of all African states, **41** represented at Head of State or Government level. The Covid pandemic interrupted this momentum and the initiative needs restarting.
- **Ten Guiding Principles** enunciated at the Ugandan Parliament in July 2018.
- Areas of cooperation → health, green and sustainable development, education including skilling, IT, agriculture, and the digital economy with emerging technologies such as AI, AR and blockchain.
- **India-Africa Defence Ministers' Conclave**, 2020, with DEFEXPO INDIA → institutionalised defence cooperation.
- **Vaccine Maitri** → medicines, vaccines and equipment during the COVID-19 pandemic, in the spirit of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam; training of healthcare workers and paramedical staff for pandemic management.

12 The Ten Guiding Principles — and Agenda 2063

Announced by **Narendra Modi** while addressing the **Ugandan** Parliament in **July 2018**; these principles form the bedrock for strengthening relations.

- **Vision** → align India's growth trajectory with **Africa's Agenda 2063** to catalyze mutual resurgence.
- India would address Africa's priorities, demands and needs, rather than impose a unilateral agenda.
- **Core content** → Africa at the top of India's priorities; demand-driven and consultative projects; respect for sovereignty and ownership; human-centric development; security cooperation against common threats; maritime openness; partnership on global challenges including climate and UNSC reform.
- **Operational translation** → no-conditionality development cooperation; capacity building over extractive models; technology and digital public infrastructure sharing; market access through the **Duty-Free Tariff Preference** scheme; multilateral advocacy, including the African Union's G20 seat.

> *Africa's Agenda 2063*
>
> Adopted in **2015**, with the vision of a strong, peaceful, integrated and prosperous Africa by **2063**, marking the 100th anniversary of the African Union. **Rajiv Bhatia**: India's Africa policy aligns with Agenda 2063, reflecting shared goals and vision; as the role of the WTO declines, India should use openings such as the **AfCFTA**, which encompasses all African nations, to widen economic partnership.

13 Areas of cooperation

Head	*Content*
Trade & investment	Bilateral trade grew **9.26 per cent** in FY 2022-23 to almost **$100 billion**, expected to double to **US$200 billion by 2030**. India is Africa's **4th largest trading partner** and its **third largest export destination**. **27 African LDCs** benefit from the **Duty-Free Tariff Preference** scheme on a non-reciprocal basis; FTAs and CEPAs are under exploration. In investment India ranks **fifth**, cumulative commitment **USD 70.7 billion** — oil and gas, mining, banking, textiles, automotive, agriculture. **Focus Africa** (2002), **TEAM-9** (2004) and the **DFTP scheme** (2008) lifted flows; **AfCFTA** (in force January 2021) should raise volumes further
Energy, agriculture, minerals	Collaboration with Nigeria, South Africa, Angola, Egypt, Algeria and Morocco; renewable energy, especially solar and wind, is an added area. Use of Africa's agricultural land for India's food security, with scope in agricultural research, technology transfer and capacity building. Indian industry depends on African iron, copper, aluminium and zinc

Development cooperation	Capacity building and human resource development — scholarships, training, technical assistance. Infrastructure aid and concessional loans for transport, power, telecom and water management. To date India has completed **189 projects**, with **76 in execution** and **68 pre-execution**, financed by lines of credit of over **USD 12 billion** across more than **41 countries**; many are the first of their kind in Africa
Health	Medical expertise, pharmaceuticals, affordable healthcare, R&D collaboration, manufacture and distribution of essential medicines. A **US$10 million India-Africa Health Fund** was announced at IAFS-3 in 2015. **Pan-Africa e-Network** (2010) and **Vaccine Maitri**
Political & diplomatic	Mutual support at the UN and international forums; peacekeeping, capacity building, training and conflict resolution. Most of the **55** African nations want India as a permanent member of the UNSC. India, with NAM countries of Africa, championed the demand for a *New International Economic Order* in the 1970s; cooperation continues through IBSA, IOR-ARC and IAFS
Cultural & people-to-people	Soft power — culture, traditional medicine, yoga. The diaspora acts as a vital link across cultural appreciation, economic partnership and interpersonal bonds
Climate & disaster	Environmental degradation lies at the core of a majority of conflicts in Chad, Sudan, Darfur and Ethiopia; the drying of the Nile, Orange, Zambezi and Kunene has sparked violent clashes; sea level rise threatens littoral states. India committed to solar technology development at IAFS-3 (2015); through the **International Solar Alliance** it has earmarked concessional lines of credit worth **US$2 billion** for largely off-grid solar projects and partnered the **African Development Bank Group** to develop **10,000 MW** of solar power across the Sahel. **Op Sahayata** (cyclone-hit Mozambique, 2019) and **Op Vanilla** (floods in Madagascar, 2020); India is guided by the **SAGAR** doctrine and has often been a first responder in HADR situations
Security & defence	India was associated with the establishment of defence institutions in **Nigeria, Ethiopia and Tanzania**; military training teams in Botswana, Lesotho, Zambia, Uganda, Namibia, Tanzania, Mauritius and Seychelles. Maritime security cooperation centred on Mauritius and Seychelles now extends to coastal African nations. India is the **largest contributor of troops** to UN peacekeeping missions in Africa. The inaugural **India-Africa Defence Ministers' Conclave** (February 2020) produced the **Lucknow Declaration**. **AFINDEX-19** and subsequent AFINDEX army drills, and the **2025 AIKEYME** multilateral maritime exercise co-hosted with Tanzania, focus on anti-piracy, interoperability and information-sharing. Peacekeeping in the DRC and Mozambique; Joint Defence Cooperation Committees and MoUs with key African countries

14 ITEC — the instrument of capacity building

> *Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation*
>
> Established in **1964**; the cornerstone of India's development cooperation with other developing nations. Purpose → **capacity building and skill development** through training and technical assistance for professionals and government officials from partner countries.

Features

Comprehensive capacity building · Support for resource-limited countries · Tailored training · People-to-people diplomacy · Sustainable impact · South-South promotion · Continuous diversification

Impact on India-Africa relations

- ITEC has built strong relations with African nations and established India's reputation as a trusted partner in Africa's development journey.
- Over **37,000 Africans** trained under **ITEC** and **ICCR scholarship** programmes.
- ITEC alumni networks are one of the instruments India uses to differentiate its engagement from China's.
- The Pan-Africa e-Network has transitioned to the **e-VidyaBharati and e-AarogyaBharati (e-VBAB)** project, which continues large-scale enrolments and tele-health services.

UPSC 2018 · 15m "India's capacity building programmes under the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) has earned much goodwill for it in Africa." Discuss.

15 Geo-economic and geo-strategic dimensions

Geo-economic	*Geo-strategic*
Resource abundance — strategic minerals and natural resources	**Maritime security** — cooperation with east coast African countries against piracy
Rapid growth — 3.2 per cent in 2019, with six of the world's fastest-growing economies on the continent	**Net security provider** — India's role in the Indian Ocean, regional stability and crisis response
Reducing dependence on the Gulf — diversification of oil and gas sources	**Peacekeeping** — long engagement, including efforts to prevent mass genocide in South Sudan
Expanding trade — from US$4 billion in 2000 to US$80 billion in 2019, making Africa India's third-largest trade partner; over the longer run from about US$4.5 billion in 2000-01 to approximately US$71.5 billion, a fifteen-fold rise, with exports moving up the value chain into pharmaceuticals, electronics and communication materials	**Security and defence support** — patrol vessels, aerial vehicles and surveillance aircraft, which also counterbalance China's military presence
Critical minerals — cobalt, manganese and copper, essential for India's manufacturing and green transition goals	**Joint global cooperation** — reform of the UN Security Council and the WTO; advocacy for developing-country interests
Agriculture and food security — partnership secures food supplies	**Naval diplomacy** — raising the weight of Kenya, Mozambique, Tanzania, Seychelles, Madagascar and Mauritius. First India-Mozambique-Tanzania Trilateral Exercise (2024); India's first overseas naval base in **Mauritius (2024)** under the "**Necklace of Diamonds**" strategy; India-Africa Army Chiefs Conclave (2023)

16 China in Africa — and the Indian counter-model

- Chinese presence goes back to the Cold War. From the time of **Mao Zedong**, China promoted armed struggle against colonial rule, which appealed to many African states and allowed it to provide economic aid to decolonised nations.
- Post-Cold War, China became aggressive in pushing investments and searching for markets and raw materials, focusing on connectivity infrastructure that eases the transport of resources home. The **Maritime Silk Route** and **Belt and Road Initiative** extend this older strategy.
- The **Xi Jinping** administration uses *chequebook diplomacy* and *debt trap diplomacy* to gain strategic depth in geostrategically important countries.
- **Rani D. Mullen**: China has established a significant presence in infrastructure, mining and energy; India faces stiff competition in investment, trade and influence.
- **Constantino Xavier**: beyond punctual differences of form and style, Indian interests significantly overlap with those of China in Africa, producing an implicit competitive dynamic as both powers seek to satisfy domestic growth rates and rising nationalist expectations by consolidating new zones of influence.
- Besides operating about **47 ports**, China has set up its **first-ever naval base in Africa at Djibouti**, read by Indian strategists as an attempt to encircle India as part of the **String of Pearls** network.
- India's FDI in Africa fell from **$16 billion in 2011-12 to $14 billion in 2016-17**, while China's rose from **$16 billion to $40 billion** in the same period (UNCTAD World Investment Report 2018).

Two models in Africa — the structural contrast

CHINESE MODEL State-driven · resource-centric · enclave firms	↔	INDIAN MODEL Private-sector-led · capacity-building · locally integrated
Industries and factories set up, Chinese labour exported, resources extracted and moved home on the infrastructure built to connect industry to port. The African state gains limited pecuniary profit through taxation; disenchantment follows, and the state supports the Chinese rather than its own people, becoming a rentier state		Strategies that 'result in greater integration into domestic markets and operate extensively through informal channels', against Chinese strategies that 'yield them greater control up and down the production line, resulting in enclave types of corporate profiles, with more limited spillover effects'

Where India's comparative advantage lies

- Respect for African sovereignty; a relationship of *equal partners* engaged for *mutual benefit*. India presents itself as the alternative, older and democratic partner for economic development.
- **Constantino Xavier** locates the advantage in a successful democratic experience — preserving territorial integrity and delivering socio-economic development for one of the world's most ethnically, linguistically and religiously diverse populations with political pluralism. As Africa transitions to democracy and greater political freedom, the sustainability of the so-called **'Beijing consensus'** of authoritarian and dirigiste growth will become unsustainable. India does not support 'democracy promotion', but is ready to share expertise on electronic voting systems, electoral management, federalism, parliamentary procedures, decentralization, local government, and the training and management of an independent judiciary — an area of inter-democratic cooperation China cannot tap into soon.
- Unlike China, democratic India may benefit from the benign image it enjoys in the United States, Europe and Japan as a potential partner in third regions.
- Attractiveness rests on **soft infrastructure** — IT goods and pharmaceutical products — the global presence of corporates such as the TATA Group, Mahindra & Mahindra and ArcelorMittal, and India's increasing donor role.
- Multi-party democracy, the diaspora and ITEC alumni networks are the differentiating instruments.

UPSC 2025 · 15m Discuss some of the key drivers of India's new interests in Africa which might help in developing long-term comparative advantage over China.

17 Areas of concern, contestation and other challenges

Recent controversies over Indian economic investments in sub-Saharan countries such as **Ethiopia**, where **land acquisition** has been associated with forced resettlement without compensation, raise the question of whether Mahatma Gandhi's formulation on commerce in ideas and services holds today.

Challenge	Content
Limited resources	India's presence remains incomparably small against China and other external actors; it does not have deep pockets like China or the USA and must use soft power more effectively. Indian firms may hesitate to invest because of slower growth, high debt and uncertainties in some African business environments
Lack of connectivity	Adequate city-to-city connectivity is missing, which hinders people-to-people contact
Perception and image	Concerns among African citizens who view Indian investments as neo-colonial or exploitative; **racial attacks on African nationals in India** have damaged India's image. The MEA can designate the diaspora as an unofficial ambassador and publicise good work done in India
Implementation	Slow delivery and low disbursement against commitments; reliance on multilateral agencies for project implementation sometimes leaves India without proper credit
Political instability	Ethnic and religious conflicts, governance failures, fragile state structures and irregular coups make foreign contributors averse; Indian investors are concerned about radicalism, fundamentalism and terrorism
Structural weaknesses	No **unified Africa policy**, unlike Look West, Act East or Central Asia Connect; trade challenges from multilateral agreements such as the RCEP; **trade imbalance** — bilateral trade of **$72 billion** against China-Africa trade of **$200 billion**; absence of a dedicated India-

18 Policy suggestions

Rani D. Mullen: there has been a convergence of systemic and domestic factors likely to continue driving enhanced Indo-African ties in the twenty-first century. This deepening engagement should rest on realist assessments of domestic needs. Reforming international multilateral organizations to reflect current realities, and building a multipolar world in which India plays a larger role, become possible through innovative and consistent engagement with **55 UN-recognized countries**. India can counter China's growing influence by promoting South–South cooperation.

> *'India is the world's largest democracy and has a proud record of regular elections. Many African countries have recently reverted from one party or military to multiparty systems of governments.'* — **Shashi Tharoor**

A coherent multi-actor 'Africa Policy' driven by the state

- Identify key stakeholders — the **State, the private sector and the Indian diaspora** — and assess how each should engage with African countries on their own terms while keeping India's economic diplomacy in view. A coordinating forum should be created.
- Set broad guidelines for private-sector conduct. Indian firms must be obliged to adhere to labour laws and environmental regulations and attend to social issues; the pharmaceutical sector should be more deeply involved with local health issues and the eradication of diseases such as malaria.
- Develop a policy for engagement with **People of Indian Origin** in East Africa. **Harry Broadman**: 'ethnic networks' would enhance trade and investment ties by overshadowing the 'imperfections and asymmetries of market information'.
- Engagement should not be limited to an economic elite with political connections. Indian policy has shifted from complete neglect only to selective engagement. In South Africa, as **Sanusha Naidu** observes, many in the Indian community do not have a political or economic affinity to India; India can use its strengths in education and healthcare to advance this section and strengthen ancestral ties.

Energy policy within sustainable development

- Position energy policy within the wider relationship by linking it to private-sector trade and investment; optimisation should rest on **mutual dependence** — India's need for energy against Africa's need for investment, technology and capacity building.
- Infrastructure development in countries such as Nigeria must be supplemented by transfer of skill and technical knowhow to develop African oil companies themselves. One route is **Petroleum India International**, set up to provide technical, managerial and human resource development services in upstream and downstream sectors globally.
- Help African countries strengthen governance frameworks in the energy sector, working with the **New Partnership for Africa's Development** under its 'Economic and Corporate Governance Programme', applying India's own experience of building energy governance in a complicated domestic environment.

Bilateral and multilateral institutional framework

- Give economic engagement with African Indian Ocean Rim countries as much emphasis as defence ties; increase diplomatic visits and build a detailed strategy for diplomatic, cultural and economic engagement.
- Revitalize the relatively inactive **IOR-ARC**. The disparate nature of its membership and the absence of a strong vision have prevented tangible results; India should capitalize on **China's non-membership** and use it to expand economic and defence engagement with East Africa.
- **Inject bilateralism** → one-on-one interaction with African nations. Morocco, for instance, has initiated a moderate Islamic programme for tackling radicalisation. This requires expanding India's diplomatic strength, currently insufficient.
- **Brand-building** → spend more diplomatic capital publicising the projects India funds and executes. After the Ebola outbreak India emerged as one of the top donors to Africa, but the effort received inadequate publicity; the same holds for Vaccine Maitri.
- **Emerging areas** → green economy, renewable energy, organic agriculture, public health security and counterterrorism. **S. Jaishankar** points to health, digital and green growth as the current emphasis; the private sector has scope in secondary and tertiary hospitals and laboratories.
- **Diaspora as bridge** → **Rajiv Bhatia** calls this link a '**Third Space**'. The diaspora is estimated at **3 million** across **46 countries**, with the largest concentrations in South Africa, Mauritius, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Malawi and Mozambique. India extends **e-visa facilities to 33 African countries** and has emerged as an attractive destination for medical tourism.
- **Four weaknesses to correct** → government and private companies do not keep each other's interests in mind, preventing a coherent policy; policy is not supplemented by a strong and proactive diplomatic thrust; India in some instances emulates China's aid-for-resources strategy, which is not the best approach for long-term relations; and engagement with politically unstable yet resource-rich countries could threaten Indian interests and taint perceptions.
- India needs a long-term vision based on a comprehensive analysis of its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, aligned to African developmental needs and social concerns, which will legitimise its presence in the eyes of African people.

UPSC 2017 · 20m 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.

19 Views of scholars — Africa

Scholar	Position
S. Jaishankar	Africa's rise is key to global rebalancing; India is a partner for capacity-building rather than an extractive force
C. Raja Mohan	India's growing presence allows it to demonstrate global leadership, particularly within South–South cooperation
Shyam Saran	Avoid the extractive model associated with China; build on strengths in human resource development, entrepreneurship and digital connectivity

Shashi Tharoor · Shoumitro Chatterjee	While Africa admires China, many African nations aspire to India's democratic model and value its inclusive and sustainable approach. Africa has moved from a modest priority — less important commercially or politically than the Middle East or Southeast Asia — to a significant area of focus and a continent for India's own "rebranding": a forward-thinking benefactor, a source of investment, a partner in development, a donor in humanitarian need, a guide on the new information highway
Rajiv Bhatia	The untapped potential of the Indian diaspora, and the persistent problem of timely project implementation
Siddharth Varadarajan	Engage the African diaspora at all levels, enhance diplomatic presence, set red lines for the private sector, promote CSR among Indian companies to address land grabbing
Mahesh Sachdev · Mark Linscott	Address the **delivery deficit** and walk the talk; there is a perception that India promises but China delivers. Reliability and follow-through are essential
Harsh V. Pant	Build on strengths in IT, pharmaceuticals, capacity building and technology transfer rather than competing directly with China; use geographical proximity and modernize age-old ties
Shiv Shankar Mukherjee	Recognise the unique requirements of each African country; a one-size-fits-all policy is inadequate
Sanjay Baru · Shairee Malhotra	Break free from the dark-continent stereotype, expand people-to-people contact, reverse India's sub-continental drift

Theoretical linkages

- **South–South cooperation** → the relationship reflects the **Bandung spirit** of solidarity and mutual development, countering traditional North–South dynamics, with emphasis on equitable development in climate resilience, food security and development funding.
- **Complex interdependence** (**Robert Keohane** and **Joseph Nye**) → ties span trade, security, technology and culture, which minimises the risk of single-issue confrontation.
- **Soft power and constructivism** → cultural exchange, scholarships and people-centric diplomacy.

> *"Soft power is the ability to shape the preferences of others through appeal and attraction."* — **Joseph Nye**

C India, Latin America & the Caribbean

20 The last frontier — why the region matters

- Latin America has traditionally been viewed as the **last frontier in India's foreign policy**, relatively neglected and overlooked.
- Some analysts suggest that this neglect is **more psychological than geographical**. The region holds significant untapped potential.

Head	Content
Reforming global governance	Shared interest in expanding the United Nations and the UN Security Council
Support for India's aspirations	Latin American nations have supported India's bid for a UNSC seat and played a key role in securing the **Nuclear Suppliers Group waiver**
Market access	Approximately **630 million people** with a combined GDP of about **$4.9 trillion**; three Latin American countries are members of the **G20**
Rising trade	Trade grew at an annual rate of around **30 per cent** from 2000 to 2014
Resource wealth	Iron and lithium, central to India's manufacturing and technological industries
Energy and food security	Venezuela's substantial oil reserves and the region's clean energy matrices; vast fertile lands with a relatively small population, Brazil as an agricultural powerhouse
Economic complementarity	Energy, natural resources, services and pharmaceuticals

21 Evolution of relations — and the Modi phase

- **Cold War era** → engagement limited by India's inward-looking, protectionist approach and its focus on the immediate neighbourhood; significant US influence in the region, India's closed economy and geographical distance constrained interaction.
- **Post-Cold War re-engagement** → India's private sector re-engaged, particularly in information technology and pharmaceuticals. Participation in **BASIC, IBSA and BRICS** widened cooperation.
- **Institutionalized dialogue** → in **2012** the first Pan-LAC summit was held in New Delhi, formalizing dialogue between India and **CELAC**.
- **Trade** → India signed a Free Trade Agreement with **MERCOSUR**; Latin American countries view India as a promising market in IT, agro-business, pharmaceuticals and entertainment.
- **Technological cooperation** → tele-medicine, tele-education, e-governance and space capabilities.
- **Diversification** → both sides seek to diversify trade partners amid rising protectionism in the West; Latin America seeks alternative markets after the US shale gas boom.
- **Alternative to China** → India's rise is appreciated by countries concerned about China's extractive policies, high interest rates and lack of local employment in Chinese projects.

Consolidating relations under Narendra Modi

- Intervention has been intermittent. As Prime Minister, Narendra Modi visited Latin America only **thrice**; two visits were on the sidelines of the **6th BRICS summit in Brazil** and the **13th G20 summit in Argentina**.
- As protests against Venezuelan President **Nicolás Maduro** intensified in 2019, the crisis posed a challenge; ONGC found itself in difficulty owing to delayed payment of dues by Venezuela's PDVSA. US economic sanctions on Venezuela threatened India's energy relations to some degree, even as India intended to develop energy relations with other states such as Mexico.
- Traditionally, engagement has been guided by India's role in NAM and by the idea of the '**Global South**', which still has resonance in Latin America. President **Ram Nath Kovind** delivered a speech on "India and the Global South" at the University of Havana; Vice President **Venkaiah Naidu** · **Vivek Mishra** attended the NAM summit in Venezuela in 2016.

22 Country-wise engagement

Partner	Content
Mexico	Second largest economy in the region after Brazil; has shown interest in a 'strategic partnership'. Indian enterprises see Mexico as a '**springboard**' for access to the larger US market. India's **second largest trading partner** in Latin America; bilateral trade in 2017-18 approximately **US$8.30 billion**. In 2016 India exported more to Mexico than to Thailand, Myanmar and Iran. Since Mexico opened its oil sector to foreign participation in 2014, New Delhi has viewed it as a source of crude and associated investment; **Dharmendra Pradhan** expressed interest in purchasing more crude and investing, and ONGC decided to bid for Mexican oil blocks
Brazil	Both are widely regarded as '**rising powers**'; association in BRICS and IBSA supports wider cooperation. Brazil was instrumental in guiding India through negotiations for the **India-MERCOSUR Preferential Trade Agreement**. India's total trade with MERCOSUR in 2017-18 was over **US$10.5 billion**. A **Social Security Agreement** was signed after the 8th BRICS summit in 2016, exempting expatriates from paying contributions twice. Energy cooperation, where potential is high, remained insignificant: after investing more than US$400 million in 2006, ONGC floated a tender in 2018 to sell its BC-10 block investment. Trade grew over 20 per cent to a little over **US$11 billion in 2014-15**, then slumped to just over **US$8.50 billion in 2017-18**
Argentina	The 2019 visit of President **Mauricio Macri** may prove significant at a time when Argentina-China relations have grown rapidly. Both sides are exploring cooperation in **defence, nuclear energy and space**; the MoU on defence cooperation matters in view of Argentina's evolving military cooperation with China
Chile, Peru & others	Chile is India's **sixth largest trading partner** in the region. India and Peru are deliberating a comprehensive free trade agreement, with three rounds so far. India is looking at Guatemala to join the **International Solar Alliance**, of which Brazil, Costa Rica, Suriname and Venezuela are members and Peru a founding member. Panama seeks to gain from ISRO, interested in a Telemetry, Tracking and Tele Command Earth station there. With Chile aboard the ISA and Bolivia interested, a new approach is forming though far from crystallised — the solar revolution in Chile and Bolivia's lithium-based potential offer models. MoUs with Chile and Bolivia, and those signed during Venkaiah Naidu's visits, concentrate on higher education and innovation, services-sector solutions, conventional healthcare and wellness, and knowledge sharing in civic engagement and financial inclusion; these need matching lines of credit and identified partner entities
CARICOM	The Caribbean community helps India reinforce relations across the region and supports outreach to the larger Latin America. For CARICOM, relations with India and other emerging economies support regional integration and sustainable development, as complementary alternatives to shrinking traditional development cooperation. **Narendra Modi** emphasised partnership in capacity building, development assistance, and disaster management and resilience, announcing a **USD 14 million grant** for community development projects and a **USD 150 million Line of Credit** for solar, renewable energy and climate-change projects. He extended an invitation to a CARICOM parliamentary delegation; building contact beyond government officials — with the opposition, other political actors and state officials — widens engagement. The **blue economy** is a shared area under the UN Sustainable Development Goals; CARICOM also seeks cooperation in health, including complementary and alternative medicine, and is keen on India's wellness and medical tourism sectors

23 Recent developments

- **High-level visits** → the Presidents of Chile and Paraguay and the Prime Minister of Jamaica in 2024-25; India reciprocated with visits to Guyana, Trinidad & Tobago, Argentina and Brazil.
- **Diplomatic missions** → embassies opened in Bolivia and Paraguay; Honduras and St Kitts & Nevis established missions in Delhi.
- **Trade growth** → bilateral trade reached **$35.7 billion in 2023-24**, with both sides aiming at **$100 billion by 2025**. India exports pharmaceuticals, IT services and automobiles, and imports crude oil and raw materials.
- **Energy** → Latin America supplies nearly **20 per cent** of India's crude oil imports, with Brazil, Colombia, Mexico and Venezuela the key contributors.
- **Indian companies** → Indian IT firms employ over **40,000 locals** in the region.
- **Renewable energy** → India and Brazil have strengthened partnership in biofuels and solar energy; the International Solar Alliance drives shared goals.
- **Digital public infrastructure** → India's **UPI** payment system and vaccination databases have found resonance where governments seek to modernise governance and public service delivery.
- **Agriculture** → millet cultivation in Guyana, edible-oil linkages, agro-chemical manufacturing in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia and Mexico, and agro-research tie-ups, with a focus on food security and climate-smart practices.
- **Cultural affinities** → literary links running through **Rabindranath Tagore**, **Victoria Ocampo**, **Cecilia Meireles** and **Octavio Paz** have kept people-to-people connections alive.

24 Challenges

Challenge	Content
Limited high-level engagement	Successive governments have shown limited interest; the absence of high-level visits is perceived as neglect, and recent prime

	ministerial visits have been tied to multilateral events. Joint Commission and other bilateral dialogues are conducted at the Latin American end by the **Minister of State** rather than the Foreign Minister, unlike Chinese and other major-power practice
Trade imbalance and tariffs	India's trade volume stands at **$42 billion** against China's **$264 billion**; tariff rates in India of **65 per cent** against China's **12.5 per cent** create significant barriers
Insufficient investment	India has invested **$12 billion** in the region, which needs improvement
Absence of a comprehensive policy	The lack of a well-defined policy document hampers clarity and direction
Infrastructural deficiencies	Limited consulate presence, absence of direct flights, lack of shipping services
Competition with China	China's trade volume is roughly tenfold higher; its scale in commodities, infrastructure finance, critical minerals and logistics crowds Indian firms out of large projects
Thin trade architecture	The preferential agreements with MERCOSUR and Chile are modest; India has begun an upgrade with Chile towards a **CEPA** and signalled interest in expanding MERCOSUR coverage, but outcomes are pending
Concentration and logistics	Trade is concentrated in a few partners and commodities (crude, ores, select manufactures), making it cyclical. Long distances, limited direct shipping and air links, and complex intra-regional connectivity add costs. Latin America does not function as a single market, pushing India towards a country-by-country approach and raising transaction costs
Small diaspora, language gaps	Indian communities in continental Latin America are small, offering fewer ready commercial networks; limited Spanish and Portuguese capacity among Indian MSMEs slows market entry and after-sales support
Perception deficits	A persistent perceptual distance endures. Indian businesses often overstate risks about costs, corruption and macro-instability, while many in the region still reduce India to narrow images. Limited India-focused research centres and market intelligence slow the discovery of opportunity
Under-representation of smaller nations	While Brazil and Mexico have benefited, smaller nations lag behind, facing high tariff barriers and insufficient facilitation
Regional divides	Not taking account of Latin America's internal divides can cost opportunities. The balance within MERCOSUR is delicate, and existing proximity with Chile and Mexico offers safer, though smaller, footholds

25 Views of scholars · theory · way forward

Scholar	Position
Manish Chand	India must take decisive action to strengthen the relationship through deeper engagement, collaboration and mutual growth
Deepak Bhojwani	Expand ties beyond economics into political and strategic dimensions. Political ties have improved since the Cold War; democratization in Latin America and India's liberalization built connection through the communication revolution and globalization. Strategy should begin with a hard look at the current relationship, disaggregated to sub-regional and where necessary country-specific level; the lack of institutional memory on both sides calls for verification of vital facts and updated statistics. Goals, a programme and a structure for regional dialogue should follow, incorporating the **India-CELAC joint statement of 2012**, whose commitments largely remain on paper — even the minimal pledge of annual Foreign Ministerial meetings has not been fulfilled. The prime mover is **political will**: India's trade with 54 countries in Africa, around $70 billion, is comparable with its trade with 34 countries of Latin America and the Caribbean in volume and composition, yet the attention given to Africa is far greater
V. Shivkumar	Explore opportunities beyond Brazil
Shyam Saran	Organise an India-Latin America summit, modelled on the India-Africa summit
R. Viswanathan	The economic potential remains underexploited; India needs a **standalone Latin America policy**, similar to China's focused approach. The lack of a specific policy and the irregularity of high-level visits limit the relationship
Harsh V. Pant	Growing engagement provides a buffer against global volatility, in line with complex interdependence and the mutual benefit of reduced geopolitical friction
C. Raja Mohan	India must engage more comprehensively, not only for resources but to shape the global order through BRICS and the G20, where Brazil and Argentina are essential partners
S. Jaishankar	On his 2023 visit, emphasised India's role as a **democratic alternative**, offering the region a diversified partnership beyond traditional powers
Cairo Henrique Dias Duarte · Chietigj Bajpaee	India already holds a soft power presence and can benefit from its position as a **third path** and its untainted reputation compared with the US and China. Latin American politicians are wary of the political costs of proximity to Washington, and China's debt diplomacy has not gone unnoticed. A **tailor-made bilateral diplomacy** should build on existing successful ties — Mexico in the oil sector, and the Andean countries of Chile and Peru, using Pacific entry points such as the Pacific Alliance — and extend to smaller countries from Uruguay, Bolivia and Paraguay to most of Central America, which still lack Indian diplomatic missions

Theoretical linkages

- **South–South cooperation** → both regions draw on colonial legacies to act as partners, not patrons, across food security, climate finance and development funding.
- **Active non-alignment** → India and many Latin American countries assert a pragmatic middle path, seen in their shared stance on the Ukraine war. This aligns with **Stephen Walt's** theory of **balance of threat**, where both sides avoid being drawn into great power rivalries.

- **Complex interdependence** → the dense web of trade, technology, energy and cultural ties reduces the potential for geopolitical conflict.

Way forward

- Promote Latin American studies in Indian universities and facilitate student exchange; use **Bollywood** as soft power, given its following in the region.
- Support private-sector engagement through incentives; maintain institutionalized dialogue and sustain its momentum; increase high-level diplomatic visits.
- Pursue trade agreements → PTAs and FTAs with countries such as Mexico and Colombia; conclude the **Chile CEPA** and an expanded MERCOSUR arrangement; promote trade fairs, exhibitions and economic missions.
- Ease logistics and standards, build Spanish and Portuguese capability, and deploy targeted finance for energy, critical minerals and agri-value chains.
- **Sectoral openings** → agriculture and food value chains (agri-tech, water-efficient farming, oilseeds, pulses, processed foods); the energy transition (solar, wind, green hydrogen, grid equipment under ISA frameworks); critical minerals and industry 4.0 (lithium and copper in the Southern Cone, services-led manufacturing in Mexico and Brazil).

D Platforms, Trade & the New Order

26 The IBSA Dialogue Forum

> **Origin**
>
> The India-Brazil-South Africa Dialogue Forum was established in **2003**, formalised by the **Brasilia Declaration of 6 June 2003**, with the inaugural summit in Brazil. Formation was motivated by dissatisfaction with the stagnation of the **Doha Development Agenda** in 2001. India's objective → reassert leadership among developing countries while avoiding the anti-Western stance characteristic of NAM.

Areas of cooperation

- Advancing a democratic global order and pressing for reform of global governance institutions to increase the representation and influence of developing nations.
- The **IBSA Fund** — each member contributing **$1 million annually** for small-scale projects in developing countries across infrastructure, healthcare, education and poverty alleviation. Managed with **UNOSSC and UNDP**, it has crossed **US$50 million** in cumulative contributions and allocations and operates across Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean.
- Active working groups → Defence, Blue Economy, Energy, Trade/Investment/Infrastructure, Agriculture, Tourism, Customs/Tax.

Significance and challenges

- Valuable for developing nations through a **bottom-up approach** emphasising consultation, expertise sharing and community involvement; the Fund's projects earned the **MDG Award in 2010**.
- IBSA has encountered difficulty and is currently in a period of **inactivity**. The summit scheduled for Delhi in **2012** was postponed indefinitely.
- Shifting national priorities, increased bilateral engagement and changing geopolitical dynamics have reduced momentum. Member priorities sometimes diverge — on the pace of trade liberalisation, and on obligations to regional blocs such as MERCOSUR and SACU. The rise of an expanded **BRICS** can overshadow IBSA's bandwidth.
- **Renewal** requires political will from all three members, building on past achievements in sustainable development, climate change, technology transfer and trade.

Scholar	Position
Sachin Chaturvedi	IBSA's success stems from "**trilateral solidarity**", which builds democratic global institutions and amplifies the voice of developing countries
Renu Modi · Sankalp Gurjar	The **triangular cooperation** model offers a more inclusive approach to development, using the diverse expertise and resources of each member
Harsh V. Pant	IBSA holds significant potential as an alternative to the diminishing relevance of NAM. Unlike NAM, which was a **reactive** stance during the Cold War, IBSA represents **proactive** cooperation among emerging economies, positioned to shape global agendas
Ian Taylor	IBSA-style alliances "created a new dynamic in international relations" and raise important questions for global governance; such coalitions "may allow African economies to bypass the conditionalities imposed" by western-led international financial institutions

27 India and the WTO — the record

- After 1947 India adopted a protectionist model built on **import substitution**; this shifted in the early 1990s after the balance of payments crisis, towards liberalization and integration.
- India joined **GATT in 1948** as one of the original **23** countries, which laid the foundation for its later engagement with the WTO.
- The WTO, established in **1995** as successor to GATT, promotes predictable, non-discriminatory trade through tariff-cutting and rules on non-tariff barriers, with principles such as **Most-Favoured-Nation** and **national treatment**, **special and differential treatment** for developing members, and a dispute settlement system.
- The WTO comprises **166 member states**, accounting for over **98 per cent** of global trade.
- India's participation offers advocacy for developing countries, influence on trade rules in agriculture and services, support for regional trade negotiation, and space to press for trade policies aligned with sustainable development.

28 The Doha Round and the North–South divide

The **Doha Development Agenda**, launched in **2001**, set out to place development at the core of multilateral trade reform — agriculture, industrial tariffs (NAMA) and services, alongside rules on subsidies, trade remedies and special and differential treatment. Progress has stalled because developed and developing countries prioritise different outcomes and interpret development obligations differently.

Fault line	Content
Agriculture	Developing countries want steep cuts to trade-distorting farm subsidies in advanced economies and more policy space for food security; developed members seek new market access and disciplines on support programmes. A permanent solution on **public stockholding** remains unresolved beyond an interim **peace clause**. Disagreement persists over the **1986-88 external reference price** used to calculate support, which developing members argue overstates their subsidy levels
Special & differential treatment	Developing members press for broad, automatic flexibilities; many developed members want targeted differentiation based on objective indicators rather than across-the-board self-designation
Safeguards	The **Special Safeguard Mechanism** and **Special Products** carve-outs remain unfinished, keeping agricultural market access stuck
Industrial goods (NAMA)	Advanced economies want deeper tariff cuts and fewer exemptions; developing members resist steep linear cuts that could harm nascent industry
Services and Mode 4	Developing countries seek easier temporary movement of professionals and recognition of qualifications; many developed members are cautious on labour-market and regulatory grounds
Rules and new issues	Some members favour plurilateral or **joint-statement initiatives** on e-commerce, investment facilitation and domestic regulation in services. India warns these dilute multilateral consensus and the development focus
IP and public health	Differences endure over the balance between TRIPS protections and access to medicines and technology

Systemic challenges

- **Asymmetric reciprocity expectations** → developed members seek market access commensurate with emerging economies' growth; developing members insist on historical responsibility and policy space.
- **Erosion of trust** → limited delivery on agriculture in earlier rounds has hardened positions.
- **Dispute settlement strain** → the **Appellate Body's paralysis since 2019** has weakened enforcement credibility and reduced incentives to undertake new bindings.

Where the Round stands

- Some elements have been picked off, such as the elimination of agricultural export subsidies in the **2015 Nairobi Package**.
- Core pillars remain unresolved → agriculture domestic support, SSM and Special Products, meaningful operationalisation of SDT, and balanced NAMA and services outcomes.
- Fisheries-subsidies talks have seen partial progress outside the strict Doha template; plurilateral pushes and uneven ministerial outcomes have shifted attention away from a single comprehensive conclusion.

UPSC 2017 · 15m Analyse the stalled progress of Doha Round of WTO negotiations over the differences between the developed and the developing countries.

29 India's coalitional diplomacy

- India's involvement in the WTO is marked by a blend of **intellectual activism**, **coalition-building** and a commitment to **developmental multilateralism**.
- Through the **G20, G33 and IBSA**, India has advocated for Least Developed Countries and developing nations, particularly on **food security** and **public stockholding rights**.
- **Amrita Narlikar** · **Alberto Rizzi** and **Rajesh Rajagopalan** hold that India has perfected the art of coalitional diplomacy, using alliances to punch above its weight. By aligning with other developing countries, India has advocated trade equity and reshaped the discourse around global trade norms; this diplomacy is a model for how smaller nations can exert influence in multilateral negotiations.

> *"Developing countries can punch above their weight in multilateral institutions."* — **Amrita Narlikar**

India's leadership role at the WTO for the Global South

Head	Content
Development-focused agenda	Trade policies and agreements that support economic growth and sustainable development in developing nations
Special & differential treatment	The **Trade Facilitation Agreement**, where India and other developing countries secured provisions for **gradual implementation** matched to capacity limitations
Agricultural subsidies	Raising concerns about developed-country subsidies that distort trade and hurt farmers in the Global South, including challenges at the **Dispute Settlement Body**
Market access	Calls for reductions in tariffs and non-tariff measures to improve export opportunities
Intellectual property	Balancing protection with access to essential medicines, technology transfer and agricultural innovation; India has issued **compulsory licences** for essential medicines to allow domestic production of affordable generics

Trade facilitation	Technical and financial support so that developing countries can engage effectively in global trade

Public diplomacy and agenda-setting → India's ability to set the global agenda is visible in its consistent use of public diplomacy, through articles in prominent publications and statements by trade negotiators such as **Piyush Goyal** and **Rajiv Bhatia**. The TRIPS waiver, the debate on food security and the push for a digital economy agenda reflect India's proactive role as a **global norm entrepreneur**.

UPSC 2018 · 20m India's coalitional diplomacy within the WTO has earned it wide appreciation. What accounts for the success of India's coalitional diplomacy?

UPSC 2024 · 10m "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.

30 The TRIPS waiver debate

- In **October 2020**, India and **South Africa** submitted a proposal to the WTO to suspend intellectual property on all COVID-19 **vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics** until widespread vaccination could help achieve immunity in low- and middle-income countries. The proposal responded to the **hoarding** of essential medical equipment by countries of the global North at the beginning of the pandemic.
- After over **18 months**, in **March 2022**, a "compromise text" emerged — the result of high-level consultations between the EU, India, South Africa and the US, coordinated by WTO Director-General **Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala**, and known as the **WTO DG text**. Other than the EU, none of the sponsoring quartet publicly expressed official support.
- Civil society, public health advocates and academics criticized the text as reflecting the negotiating positions of the EU and US, and as too narrow for the inequities of COVID-19.

The critique in specifics

- New "burdensome, unnecessary, TRIPS-plus requirements for countries seeking to issue a compulsory license", particularly in notification procedures.
- Patents were covered, but the draft did not address barriers arising from **confidential information and trade secrets** held by corporations or contained in regulatory submissions.
- **Eligibility requirements** still excluded too many low- and middle-income countries from producing, supplying, exporting and importing even vaccines.
- The measures created **more legal uncertainty** than existing TRIPS flexibilities, because of textual ambiguity and a confusing structure.
- Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Oxfam and the People's Vaccine Alliance described it as a reiteration of existing TRIPS flexibilities with a narrow export waiver and additional cumbersome requirements, and noted that many affected WTO members were not part of the negotiations.
- The final compromise at the **12th Ministerial Conference in 2022** relaxed IP rules only for **COVID-19 vaccines**, not for diagnostics and therapeutics.
- **C. Raja Mohan** and India's own critique hold that the compromise was insufficient because it failed to address systemic issues in **technology transfer and pandemic preparedness**. **Shyam Saran** argues existing IP rules still hinder the ability of developing countries to respond swiftly to health emergencies. **Harsh V. Pant** and **S. Jaishankar** emphasise that the initiative was about **saving lives**, not simply negotiating trade terms.

UPSC 2021 · 10m Explain India's position on the waiver of intellectual property rights on COVID-19 vaccines in WTO.

UPSC 2023 · 10m Why is the compromise reached at WTO regarding the Covid-19 vaccine manufacturing not a Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) waiver?

31 The WTO and the Global South

- **Jagdish Bhagwati** · **Konark Bhandari** highlights the benefits the Global South can derive from the system: participation in global trade gives access to larger markets, attracts foreign investment, and enables technology transfer. He acknowledges the challenges but holds that the WTO provides a framework for advancing developing-country interests.
- **Special and differential treatment** → longer transition periods and preferential market access. The **Agreement on Agriculture** gave flexibility in subsidies to support farmers and food security; the **Agreement on Textiles and Clothing** helped integrate textile industries into the global trading system.
- **Technical assistance** → help in implementing agreements and building intellectual property regimes compatible with development goals, balancing innovation protection against access to essential medicines.
- **Capacity building** → analysing trade policies, identifying areas for improved competitiveness, strengthening customs administration.
- **Dispute settlement** → developing nations have used it effectively to challenge unfair trade practices of developed countries, with favourable outcomes.

Scholarly perspectives

- India's approach is rooted in **constructivist** principles, reshaping global discourse on public goods and equity.
- **Robert Keohane** and **Joseph Nye's** theory of **complex interdependence** describes the multidimensional character of India's WTO engagement across trade, security, technology and health.
- India's leadership in the Doha Round and its role in South–South cooperation reflect developmental priorities and a commitment to inclusive growth, as discussed by **Suhasini Haidar** and **Rajiv Bhatia**. **Baylis and Smith's** work on Global Politics situates India's position as leader of the Global South within the wider structures of global political order.

> *"For India, fairness in global trade is not just policy, it is a principle."* — **S. Jaishankar**

32 The tariff shock and the multilateral trading system, 2025–26

Step	Content
2 April 2025	**Executive Order 14257** set a baseline **10 per cent reciprocal tariff**; steel and aluminium duties rose to **50 per cent**

August 2025	A **25 per cent reciprocal tariff** on Indian goods took effect
6 August 2025	**EO 14329** added a **25 per cent penalty** over Russian oil (effective 27 August), reaching a **50 per cent cumulative rate**. It was the first US **secondary tariff** — penalising one country for its trade with another
Legal basis	The penalty invoked **IEEPA** and a "national emergency" first declared in EO 14066 (2022); EO 14329 found India "directly or indirectly importing Russian Federation oil"
India's response	The MEA (6 August 2025) called the measures unfair, unjustified and unreasonable, and framed oil imports as **energy security for 1.4 billion people**. India **did not retaliate** and issued no further statement after the second round
2 February 2026	Framework for an **Interim Agreement**: the reciprocal rate cut to **18 per cent** from the 50 per cent peak; India signalled intent to buy **$500 billion** of US goods over five years. An order of 6 February removed the Russian-oil penalty, effective 7 February. The Joint Statement carried **no explicit Indian commitment on Russian oil**
20 February 2026	The **US Supreme Court struck down** the IEEPA "reciprocal" tariff authority
24 February 2026	A temporary **10 per cent blanket tariff** on all partners for 150 days, expiring 24 July 2026; the interim pact remained **unsigned** through mid-2026

> *"We reiterate that these actions are unfair, unjustified and unreasonable. India will take all actions necessary to protect its national interests."* — **Ministry of External Affairs, 6 August 2025**

How the pool reads it

- **Shoumitro Chatterjee** (Carnegie) → the episode shows that India's post-2017 inward turn had raised the cost of relying on the home market.
- **Konark Bhandari** → India's conduct was **tactical altruism**: concessions offered without demanding an immediate return.
- **Elizabeth Threlkeld**, **Daniel Markey** and **Akriti Vasudeva Kalyankar** (Stimson) → the long standoff let China, Russia, Pakistan and Europe each gain ground.
- **Harsh V. Pant** and **Vivek Mishra** (ORF) → India absorbed the pressure, kept growing, and reached **greater parity** with Washington.
- **Chietigj Bajpaee** (Chatham House) → equidistance can read as disengagement; India needs a more **proactive** rather than passive strategic autonomy.
- **Milan Vaishnav** and co-authors (Carnegie) → tactical adjustment, not strategic rupture; the volatility confirmed the value of spreading India's bets.

> *"India's response to Trump 2.0 has been characterized less by strategic rupture than by tactical adjustment."* — **Milan Vaishnav (ed.), Carnegie Endowment, 2026**

For the Southern argument the significance is structural: tariffs set unilaterally and far above bound commitments, justified by national-emergency powers, bypass the consensus machinery that developing members rely on. The demand to revive the **Appellate Body** and restore the two-tiered adjudicative system is therefore a Global South interest before it is a procedural one.

UPSC 2025 · 15m Trump's unilateral imposition of reciprocal tariffs on scores of countries poses impending threat to the future of the rule-based multilateral global trading system under the WTO. What options do the WTO members have to salvage the organization?

33 Trade diversification as hedge — CETA, the EU FTA and CBAM

Agreement	*Content*
India–UK CETA	Concluded **6 May 2025** after 14 rounds; signed **24 July 2025** in London by **Piyush Goyal** and **Jonathan Reynolds**. Companion **Double Contribution Convention** signed 10 February 2026; both due in force **15 July 2026**
CETA — goods	The UK removes duties on about **99 per cent** of India's tariff lines from day one — cuts up to 70 per cent on processed food, 21.5 per cent marine, 18 per cent engineering and auto parts, 16 per cent leather, 12 per cent textiles, 8 per cent chemicals and pharma
CETA — services and procurement	UK commitments across **137 sub-sectors**; the DCC exemption raised from three to five years; over 75,000 professionals and 900 companies expected to benefit. India opens its **central-government procurement** market for the first time; state and local procurement stay excluded
CETA — safeguards	India excludes dairy, cereals, millets, edible oils, oilseeds and apples from tariff cuts; 85 per cent of India's steel exports fall outside the UK's steel measures
India–EU FTA	Negotiations concluded **27 January 2026** at the 16th India–EU Summit, New Delhi; full text published late February 2026. Signing expected by end-2026; European Parliament consent still required; entry into force expected **early 2027**
EU FTA — goods	India gains preferential access on **97 per cent** of EU tariff lines, covering **99.5 per cent** of India's export value; nearly **$33 billion** of labour-intensive exports go to zero duty. India offers 92.1 per cent of its own lines
EU FTA — services	The EU opens **144** services sub-sectors, India **102**; a framework for social-security agreements to follow within five years. India shields dairy, cereals, poultry and soymeal; the EU excludes beef, chicken, rice and sugar
CBAM friction	India won **no exemption** from the EU's **Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism**, only an assurance to match any flexibility given to third countries. Iron and steel make up nearly **90 per cent** of India's CBAM-exposed exports; compliance may cost **$2–4 billion a year**; the EU pledged **€500 million** for a green transition
The wider run	Deals with Oman, New Zealand, the UK and the EU across 2025–26, adding to earlier pacts with the UAE, Australia and EFTA. India

now holds FTAs with **14 of the 16 RCEP economies**; only China stays outside its FTA network

The argument

- **Chietigj Bajpaee** (Chatham House) → the run of agreements reaffirms strategic autonomy: they were settled while Washington raised tariffs and pressed India over Russian oil, and they show a wish to avoid dependence on any single country.
- **Shairee Malhotra** (ORF) → a shift towards more predictable partners, protecting strategic autonomy and economic resilience.
- **Sankalp Gurjar** (ORF Occasional Paper No. 542) → read through **geoeconomics**, economic tools deployed for geopolitical ends.
- **Alberto Rizzi** (ECFR) → the same lens from the European side: a wider partner network, less reliance on an unpredictable United States, and a way of keeping India from drifting into a more anti-Western camp.
- **The sceptical case → Mark Linscott** (Atlantic Council) expects only a modest economic effect, since EU tariffs are already low and gains may be offset by the removal of **GSP preferences** that kept Indian textiles competitive with Bangladesh; he also notes the final push in the EU talks began before the latest US tariffs. The **GTRI** flags the price of concessions: car import duties cut from over 100 per cent to 10 per cent, limits on **compulsory licensing** in the IP chapter, and the opening of government procurement — all of which narrow policy space for Make in India.
- **Gopalika Arora** (ORF) → CBAM is the sharpest unresolved friction, and how it is settled will decide how much the deal finally delivers.
- **De-risking, not decoupling → Amit Kumar** (Takshashila) finds almost all Chinese exports to India substitutable, so Beijing's scope for economic coercion is narrow and de-risking is the sensible course.

> *"India's geoeconomics since 2019 rests on three pillars: rejection of the RCEP, strategy of Atmanirbharta for promoting domestic industrialisation, and signing new FTAs with strategically important countries. All three are in service of a single goal: managing its China challenge."* — **Sankalp Gurjar, ORF Occasional Paper No. 542**

> *"India, faced with US tariffs, is pushing for certainty in its trade relations, while Europe is seeking diversification to reduce reliance on an increasingly erratic American administration."* — **Alberto Rizzi, ECFR**

> **Why this belongs to the Southern account**
>
> **CBAM** sits in the same North–South argument as TRIPS and agricultural subsidies: a measure written in the developed world whose compliance cost falls on developing-country exporters, met by an assurance rather than an exemption. **Iván Gonzalez-Pujol** supplies the theory — hedging as a mixed strategy of cooperation and competition under uncertainty, with free trade agreements as its instrument of economic diversification.

34 The New International Economic Order

- The NIEO emerged in the **1970s** as a developing-country agenda to correct structural inequities embedded in the post-war economy. Its rationale was that the rules were written when most of the Global South lacked voice and independence.
- The UN General Assembly's **1974 Declaration on the Establishment of a NIEO** and its Programme of Action crystallised these priorities. India, along with other NAM countries of Africa, championed the demand.

Content of the demand

Sovereign equality · Participation in decision-making · Policy space · Terms of trade · Regulation of TNCs · Technology transfer · Development finance · Monetary reform

Operating slogans → "trade, not aid", industrialisation, agricultural support for food security, concessional finance, and access to technology.

From the 1974 demand to the recast agenda

1974
UNGA Declaration + Programme of Action; NAM and G77 carry the demand

→ **Dilution**
Globalisation shifts national priorities; NAM declines; the collective economic agenda thins

→ **Integration**
India moves from demand-side advocate of redistribution to rule-reforming stakeholder that also gains from openness

→ **Recast**
Incremental rule-reform, new institution-building, South–South partnership, technology-enabled inclusion

Continuity and change in India's position

Head	Content
Global financial governance	Support for quota, voice and leadership reform in the IMF and World Bank to reflect contemporary economic weights; backing for complementary institutions such as the **AIIB** and the **New Development Bank** to expand long-term development finance without political conditionalities
Trade multilateralism	Meaningful SDT, a permanent solution on public stockholding for food security, balanced outcomes in agriculture, NAMA and services, and preservation of TRIPS flexibilities
South–South institution-building	IBSA, BRICS, the G77, and engagement with the African Union and small island states; ITEC training, lines of credit, grant projects, and Duty-Free Tariff Preference for LDCs, all on demand-driven and ownership-based principles
Technology, climate, commons	Climate equity through **CBDR-RC** and just transitions, coalitions such as the International Solar Alliance and disaster resilience initiatives, and affordable, interoperable **Digital Public Infrastructure** with open standards as an updated route to

	technology diffusion
Market power with safeguards	Pursuit of FTAs, investment flows and value-chain integration alongside safeguards against volatility, strategic autonomy in critical sectors, and inclusive standard-setting

Assessment

- India's rhetoric is less redistributive than in the 1970s and more focused on practical reform, coalition-building, and delivery through projects and standards.
- Tensions arise → between deeper liberalisation and protection for livelihoods and infant industry, and between stronger IP regimes and access objectives. These are managed through calibrated negotiating positions rather than abandonment of first principles.
- India's rise has not ended its concern with a New International Economic Order; it has recast that concern — from sweeping overhaul to incremental rule-reform, new institution-building, South–South partnership and technology-enabled inclusion.

UPSC 2022 · 20m Discuss the relevance of the demand for New International Economic Order (NIEO) in the present era of globalisation.

UPSC 2024 · 15m 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.

35 India's diplomacy for the Global South

Platforms into outcomes — how the diplomacy works

PLATFORMS
G77 · IBSA · UNCTAD · WTO · BRICS · G20

→

CONVENING & COALITION
Voice of the Global South Summits · G20 Presidency · technical activism

→

OUTCOMES
African Union into the G20 · TRIPS waiver campaign · DAKSHIN · ISA, Mission LiFE, Global Biofuels Alliance

←---- FEEDBACK: delivery and disbursement decide whether summit consensus becomes institutional change ----→

Institutional platforms

- India's commitment to South–South cooperation was institutionalized through the **Group of 77**, the **IBSA Dialogue Forum**, and active participation in **UNCTAD** and **WTO** negotiations. Technical and educational assistance, particularly **ITEC**, provided training and capacity building.
- Within the G77, the coalition "has the purpose of enabling us to deal on terms of greater equality with an existing Center of Power … unity is our instrument".
- Recent UN processes show the bloc pressing systemic questions beyond trade rules: members pressed for "reform of the international financial architecture", seeking "increased participation in the international financial institutions" and more financing.
- Capacity constraints are real → "the group is not always able to reach a position because of internal disagreements", and when it does, decision-making can be "imperfect".

> *"Strategic autonomy has been the defining value … we must renovate that value for the twenty-first century."* — **Sunil Khilnani, Rajiv Kumar, Pratap Bhanu Mehta and others, Nonalignment 2.0**

The Voice of the Global South Summits

- Held in **January and November 2023**, and again in **2024**; over **120 countries**, including **21 Heads of State**, deliberating on climate change, debt distress and food insecurity.
- Rooted in **Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam** and in the vision of *Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas* — inclusive growth and trust-based cooperation.
- **Sushil Kumar** notes that India's presidency "brought Voice of the Global South to the centre stage … including the African Union as a member of the G20". Summit priorities, "supported by 125 countries", fed into an agenda on the SDGs, climate finance, digital public infrastructure and debt.
- India used the Summit to outline sectors — health, education, finance, connectivity, climate — and launched **DAKSHIN**, a Global South Centre of Excellence.
- **Amrita Narlikar** highlights Delhi as "host to the Voice of the Global South Summit", where conversations were "serious, solution-oriented". She argues that moving past a narrow, technocratic WTO lens brings "national security, development, and ethics" into policy.

The G20 presidency and the African Union

- India's **G20 presidency in 2023** was a historic milestone; the manner in which India led it reflected its soft power and its commitment to global cooperation.
- The **African Union** became a permanent member of the G20 under India's Presidency in **September 2023**, embedding Africa's voice in global governance. **Nilimesh Baruah** stresses that the AU's entry marked a decisive shift towards an inclusive agenda that amplifies the Global South's voice, and proposes an Illicit Financial Flows coalition "on equal footing" to drive financing reform.
- India also advocates Africa's representation in the UN Security Council, in line with the **Ezulwini Consensus**.

Development instruments

- **Lines of credit** → concessional finance exceeding **300 lines of credit worth about US$32 billion** worldwide, with over **200 lines of credit worth about US$12 billion across 42 African countries**, backing rail, power, water, ICT and industrial parks such as the **Mahatma Gandhi IT & Biotechnology Park in Côte d'Ivoire**.

- **Preferential market access** → Duty-Free Tariff Preferences for LDCs. **Climate and technology coalitions** → the International Solar Alliance, Mission LiFE and the Global Biofuels Alliance.
- **Development partnerships** in Africa, Latin America and Southeast Asia emphasise capacity-building, technology transfer and inclusive growth, offering an alternative to traditional aid frameworks.
- **Economic engagement** → trade with Africa grew from **$5 billion in 2001 to $90 billion in 2020**, making India Africa's third-largest trading partner; trade with Latin America reached **$50 billion**, driven by oil imports and exports of pharmaceuticals, engineering goods and automobiles.

Limits of coalition-building

- **Amrita Narlikar**: the Global South's "collective agenda… remains a reform (and often more than that: a reboot) of global governance institutions… and a more equitable distribution of global resources."
- **Emma Mawdsley** observes the rise of South–South Cooperation platforms: "New institutions and summits — IBSA, the BRICS, FOCAC, the IAFS — were stages for high profile pageantry and promises." She points to cooperation narratives becoming increasingly "muscular", nationalistic and pragmatic, with difficulties sustaining non-interference and a further erosion of ideational and operational distinctiveness.
- **Ian Taylor** cautions that as India rises, "its interest in South–South solidarity declines", and old strategies cannot be carelessly abandoned. Analysis of Latin America likewise finds the political interface largely dominated by BRICS and IBSA, which risks thin outreach beyond Brazil.
- Outcomes therefore depend on addressing G77 internal disagreements and converting summit consensus into institutional change in the international financial institutions and UN processes.

UPSC 2023 · 10m What diplomatic steps has India taken to articulate the interests of the Global South in International Politics?

36 Conclusion

- India cannot match China's financial depth. Its comparative advantage is **democratic, institutional and human** — the sharing of electoral, federal, judicial and administrative experience, along with strengths in IT, pharmaceuticals and training that no competitor can replicate quickly.
- The **multilateral track** remains the highest-value arena. The African Union's entry into the G20, the TRIPS waiver campaign, and the demand for reform of the international financial architecture show what coalition diplomacy can achieve.

> *As India rises, "its interest in South–South solidarity declines", and "old strategies… cannot be carelessly abandoned."* — **Ian Taylor**

37 Power quotes

> *"The commerce between India and Africa will be of ideas and services, not of manufactured goods against raw materials after the fashion of Western exploiters."* — **Mahatma Gandhi**

> *"The world system is a world of unequal relations."* — **Immanuel Wallerstein**

> *"For India, the rise of Africa is key to global rebalancing."* — **S. Jaishankar**

> *"For India, fairness in global trade is not just policy, it is a principle."* — **S. Jaishankar**

> *"Developing countries can punch above their weight in multilateral institutions."* — **Amrita Narlikar**

> *"Soft power is the ability to shape the preferences of others through appeal and attraction."* — **Joseph Nye**

> *'Afro Asian countries became the principal arena for India's policy and diplomacy during the 1950s.'* — **Muni (1991:862)**

38 Scholar index

A. Ghosh · Amrita Narlikar · Baylis & Smith · Amit Kumar · C. Raja Mohan · Cairo Henrique Dias Duarte · Constantino Xavier · Deepak Bhojwani · Dharmendra Pradhan · Edward Said · Emma Mawdsley · Franklin D. Roosevelt · Frantz Fanon · Gamal Abdel Nasser · Hamid Ansari · Happymon Jacob · Harry Broadman · Harsh V. Pant · Ian Taylor · Immanuel Wallerstein · Iván Gonzalez-Pujol · Indira Gandhi · Jagdish Bhagwati · Jawaharlal Nehru · Joseph Nye · Kwame Nkrumah · M. Ayoob · Mahatma Gandhi · Mahesh Sachdev · Manish Chand · Manmohan Singh · Mao Zedong · Mauricio Macri · Muni · Narendra Modi · Nelson Mandela · Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala · Nicolás Maduro · Nilimesh Baruah · P. Stobdan · Piyush Goyal · Pratap Bhanu Mehta · R. Viswanathan · Rajesh Rajagopalan · Rajiv Bhatia · Rajiv Gandhi · Rajiv Kumar · Ram Nath Kovind · Rani D. Mullen · Renu Modi · Robert Keohane · S.B. Bhattacharya · S. Jaishankar · Sachin Chaturvedi · Sanjay Baru · Sanusha Naidu · Shashi Tharoor · Shiv Shankar Mukherjee · Shyam Saran · Siddharth Varadarajan · Stephen Walt · Suhasini Haidar · Sunil Khilnani · Sushil Kumar · Tony Blair · V. Shivkumar · Venkaiah Naidu · Woodrow Wilson · Xi Jinping

39 How UPSC has asked this unit

Theme	Question	Year / marks
Africa — South–South partnership	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.	2017 / 20m
Africa — ITEC and capacity building	"India's capacity building programmes under the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) has earned much goodwill for it in Africa." Discuss.	2018 / 15m
Africa — drivers of interest	Discuss the major drivers of India's interests in Africa.	2023 / 15m
Africa — comparative advantage over China	Discuss some of the key drivers of India's new interests in Africa which might help in developing long-term comparative advantage over China.	2025 / 15m
WTO — TRIPS waiver	Explain India's position on the waiver of intellectual property rights on COVID-19 vaccines in WTO.	2021 / 10m
WTO — India's clout	"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.	2024 / 10m
WTO — unilateral tariffs	Trump's unilateral imposition of reciprocal tariffs on scores of countries poses impending threat to the future of the rule-based multilateral global trading system under the WTO. What options do the WTO members have to salvage the organization?	2025 / 15m
NIEO — relevance	Discuss the relevance of the demand for New International Economic Order (NIEO) in the present era of globalisation.	2022 / 20m
Global South — diplomatic steps	What diplomatic steps has India taken to articulate the interests of the Global South in International Politics?	2023 / 10m
Global South — India's leadership	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.	2024 / 15m

40 Today's practice

1. Discuss some of the key drivers of India's new interests in Africa which might help in developing long-term comparative advantage over China. *(UPSC 2025, 15m)*
2. 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. *(UPSC 2024, 15m)*
3. Trump's unilateral imposition of reciprocal tariffs on scores of countries poses impending threat to the future of the rule-based multilateral global trading system under the WTO. What options do the WTO members have to salvage the organization? *(UPSC 2025, 15m)*

Model answers go up tonight on the Telegram channel — **@psirbyamitpratap**. Write to the demand, not to the topic. The full treatment of every scholar, figure and debate above is developed at length in the **PSIR Foundation & OGP Advanced** course.

See you tomorrow with Day 45 — India & the Global Centres of Power, Part I.