



# DAILY EDITORIAL ANALYSIS

TOPIC

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**A DECADE OF INDIA-AFRICA RELATION:  
CONNECT, BUILD AND REVIVE**

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## A DECADE OF INDIA-AFRICA RELATION: CONNECT, BUILD AND REVIVE

### Context

- **India's engagement with Africa** needs to deepen through strategic partnerships that emphasize connectivity, capacity-building, and revitalization of diplomatic ties.

### About India-Africa Relations

- **Historical Foundations and Diplomatic Legacy:** India's engagement with Africa is rooted in **shared anti-colonial struggles and solidarity** through platforms like the **Non-Aligned Movement**.
  - ♦ Over the decades, India has supported African nations in global forums, opposed apartheid, and extended development assistance through capacity-building and education.
  - ♦ The **India-Africa Forum Summits (IAFS-III), 2015** institutionalized bilateral engagement, with **participation from all 54 African nations**.

### Strategic Shifts: A Decade of Expansion

- **Diplomatic Outreach:** India has opened 17 new missions across Africa since 2015.
  - ♦ India's support played a central role in securing **full African Union membership in the G20**, and continues **to advocate for Africa's representation** in global governance, including at the UN.
- **Trade and Investment:** India-Africa trade has crossed **\$100 billion**. Key sectors include critical minerals, agriculture, technology, and manufacturing.
  - ♦ Cumulative Indian investments stand at approximately **\$75 billion**, placing **India among Africa's top five investors**.
  - ♦ It has shifted from transactional to collaborative — with a focus on co-building infrastructure, digital tools, and health systems.
  - ♦ **Development Finance:** India's Exim Bank's \$40 million credit line to EBID signals support for African-led development.
- **Security Cooperation:** The **Africa-India Key Maritime Engagement (AIKEYME)**, 2025, involving **nine African navies**, marked a new phase of oceanic security cooperation rooted in shared Indian Ocean geography.
  - ♦ Defense cooperation is growing, with India **deploying defense attachés** and **inaugurating strategic installations** like the Mauritius naval base.
- **Education & Innovation:** The new IIT Madras campus in **Zanzibar** showcases India's commitment to long-term academic collaboration.
  - ♦ Programs like **ITEC**, the **ICCR**, and the **Pan-African e-Network** continue to train thousands of African professionals.
- **People-to-People Exchanges:** India's strongest export remains talent exchange:
  - ♦ Over 40,000 Africans studied in India over the past decade.
  - ♦ Many now serve in leadership roles across Africa.
  - ♦ African students, athletes, and entrepreneurs are increasingly visible in India.
  - ♦ These cross-cultural bonds form a living partnership grounded in trust.

### Key Concerns & Challenges

- **Strategic Challenges:** China's presence is seen as 'empire-building', with massive investments, military bases, and trade deals, shifting Africa's geopolitical orientation and reducing India's relative leverage.
  - ♦ India's model of cooperation—focused on capacity-building and mutual respect—faces difficulty competing with China's infrastructure-heavy, high-visibility projects.

- **Diplomatic and Institutional Gaps:** India has not held a follow-up summit in the past decade, despite hosting the **India-Africa Forum Summit (IAFS-III) in 2015** leading to a loss of momentum in diplomatic engagement.
  - ♦ There is a **lack of institutional mechanisms** to track and evaluate the promises made during past summits, which hampers accountability and strategic planning.
- **Operational and Economic Constraints:** India's trade with Africa, while growing, still lags behind China's, and investment flows are uneven across sectors and regions.
  - ♦ Limited visibility and branding of Indian initiatives in Africa reduce their impact, especially when compared to China's high-profile projects like railways, ports, and industrial parks.

### Opportunities Ahead of India-Africa Relations

- **A Rising Growth Corridor:** Africa's demographic surge and India's economic ascent form a natural corridor for cooperation in technology, manufacturing, and services.
- **Evolving Partnership Models:** Indian firms remain competitive but often constrained by small balance sheets and bureaucratic delays.
  - ♦ China continues to dominate African markets, pushing India to innovate and move up the value chain.
- **Future Sectors:** India needs to invest in **Green hydrogen, Electric mobility, and Digital infrastructure**.
  - ♦ The **African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)** requires India to align with a rapidly integrating market.

### Way Forward: Roadmap 2030 and Shared Prosperity

- The proposed '**Roadmap 2030**' outlines **nearly 60 policy recommendations** to deepen India-Africa ties.
  - ♦ India aims to support **Africa's African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)** implementation, enhancing intra-African trade and connectivity.
- **Link Finance to Outcomes:** Lines of credit must lead to visible, high-impact projects. Public funds should de-risk private investment, not replace it.
- **Build an India-Africa Digital Corridor:** Co-develop platforms for health, education, fintech, and public services by combining India's digital public infrastructure with Africa's fast-growing innovation ecosystems.
- **Revive Institutional Architecture:** The **India-Africa Forum Summit** needs a timely revival.
  - ♦ The 2015 summit unlocked major diplomatic momentum, and restoring it is essential for sustained high-level engagement.

Source: TH

### Daily Mains Practice Question

[Q] Analyze the evolution of India-Africa relations. How has India's approach shaped its strategic, economic, and diplomatic engagement with Africa?

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