



CUTS International *Global Affairs*

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India's G20 Legacy: A New Era for Africa

India's presidency of the G20 marked a transformative period in global economic diplomacy, notably enhancing the representation of the Global South and fostering stronger ties with nations like South Africa. A significant milestone during India's tenure was the inclusion of the African Union (AU) as a permanent member of the G20, a move that added 1.3 billion people and a GDP of US\$3tn to the forum. This development underscored the importance of Africa in global economic discussions and addressed longstanding disparities in international decision-making bodies.

South Africa lauded India's leadership in this endeavour. Vincent Magwenya, spokesperson for South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, highlighted India's efforts to amplify the voices of the Global South and integrate smaller countries into global forums. He remarked, "India has done extremely well... in including the voice of the Global South, and including smaller countries that were often excluded from such forums."

The AU's inclusion is anticipated to bolster global economic governance, allowing African nations to influence decisions on key issues. This aligns with South Africa's vision of advancing the interests of the Global South, especially as it prepares for its G20 presidency in 2025. Joel Sibusiso Ndebele, South Africa's High Commissioner to India, emphasised that this inclusion reflects a recognition that the world cannot be one family if such a significant population is excluded.

India's G20 presidency also focused on addressing challenges pertinent to the Global South, such as debt crises exacerbated by external shocks like the COVID-19 pandemic. The G20's efforts to restructure debt and provide financial relief are crucial for African nations, many of which spend more on debt interest than on healthcare, hindering sustainable development.

In conclusion, India's strategic initiatives during its G20 presidency have not only elevated the role of the Global South in global economic governance but have also strengthened its bilateral relations with South Africa. The inclusion of the AU in the G20 signifies a pivotal step towards a more inclusive and representative global economic order, benefiting nations across Africa and beyond.

Pradeep S. Mehta
Editor

P.S.: The happenings at the White House on 28th February will be a blot in the global history when Zelenskyy was pilloried by Trump and Vance, for no fault of his. The whole world was aghast. Fortunately, Europe and the UK have risen up in Ukraine's support.

Message for our Readers

This is the eighty-third edition of the Monthly Brief from the Centre, which carries select published news or comments on a relevant issue. There are equally important issues which may have been missed out to keep the Monthly Brief short and swiftly readable.

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Is it time for 'China plus two' or 'China plus many?'

The 'China Plus One' strategy is accelerating as businesses diversify supply chains to mitigate geopolitical risks. While both Western and Chinese firms adopt this approach, 'China Plus Two' or 'China Plus Many' strategies are emerging. China remains vital, with logistics providers key to navigating market access, regulations, and global expansion.



- [Indian markets have detected a chill in India's American ties](#) | LiveMint
- [The New Plan for Western Companies Is ABC: 'Anything But China'](#) | The Wall Street Journal
- [Sudipto Mundle: On balance, India could gain from Trump's policy blitzkrieg](#) | LiveMint
- [Trump threatens to double tariffs on China and says punishing Mexico and Canada tariffs will go into effect March 4](#) | CNN
- [One Response to Trump's Tariffs: Trade That Excludes the U.S.](#) | The New York Times

Strategic Issues

ITAR review gives India a chance to align with US allies

The Donald Trump Administration's willingness to review its International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR) to facilitate easier military trade with India, as conveyed in the Indo-US joint statement during PM Narendra Modi's just concluded visit, is an opportunity to revisit an old effort to bring India on a par with key US allies for defence sales.



- [India, France unveil AI roadmap, partnership for small nuclear reactors](#) | Hindustan Times
- [Mind the gaps: Europe's to-do list for defense without the US](#) | Defence News
- [A COMPACT deal starring Modi and Trump](#) | The Economic Times
- [China builds huge wartime military command centre in Beijing](#) | Financial Times

Energy and Climate

Under Trump, Billionaire Climate Champions Have Gone Quiet

Since Trump's inauguration, billionaire climate advocates, mainly from tech, have remained silent on his policies. Previously, figures like Jeff Bezos, Bill Gates, and Michael Bloomberg pledged billions to climate initiatives. Major tech firms also committed to emissions cuts, but their climate activism has notably declined under the new administration.



- [Outrage as Trump cites 'emergency' to fast-track fossil fuel projects](#) | The Guardian
 - [US fossil fuel push may undo climate progress](#) | LiveMint
 - [Energy to be a strong component of India-US ties says oil minister](#) | LiveMint
 - [US exit from Paris Agreement raises questions about Indonesia's clean energy goals](#) | The Straits Times
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EU's vision for the Indo-Pacific must translate into concrete policy actions

A CUTS International webinar urged a decisive EU approach towards India and the Indo-Pacific. Experts stressed deeper cooperation beyond rhetoric, citing trade, security, and connectivity. Ambassador Mohan Kumar highlighted India as the EU's strategic hedge, while speakers called for concrete policy actions to enhance Europe's geopolitical role in the region.



- [As its rift with US widens, EU seeks no-limit ties with India](#) | Times of India
 - [Why the India-US 123 Agreement of 2007 could finally achieve its full potential](#) | Indian Express
 - [Is China the new USSR? Tepid growth, trade barriers may derail China's plans to rule the 21st century](#) | Economic Times
 - [Iran's president calls for unity against Donald Trump](#) | Financial Times
 - [EU chief makes India trip as bloc woos Modi](#) | Nikkei Asia
 - [Cook Islands' 'strategic' deal with China angers New Zealand](#) | Financial Times
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Donald Trump's foreign aid freeze sparks global funding crisis

The abrupt 90-day freeze on US foreign aid under Trump's executive order has disrupted global programmes, affecting healthcare, narcotics control, and humanitarian relief. While exemptions for life-saving aid were announced, uncertainty remains. Critics warn of worsening crises, while some argue it highlights over-reliance on US funding.



- [US, Ukraine agree to terms of critical minerals deal](#) | Reuters
 - [Taiwan pledges chip talks with US, more investment to mollify Donald Trump](#) | Economic Times
 - [EU watchdog warns of resistance to Brussels' bid to slash red tape](#) | Financial Times
 - [Michelin looks at accelerating US investments to counter tariff threat](#) | Financial Times
 - [Indonesia's \\$19bn austerity drive targets travel and air conditioning](#) | APN News
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Russia's Plans for New World Order Leaked

A leaked Kremlin report reveals Russia's plan to form a trade-focused Eurasian bloc to counter Western influence, but sanctions and Ukraine's invasion have weakened its grip. Former allies, including Central Asian nations and Armenia, are distancing themselves, exploiting sanctions, and favouring Western ties, challenging Moscow's long-term regional dominance.



- [Diplomacy dies on live TV as Trump and Vance gang up to bully Ukraine leader](#) | The Guardian
- [The Rise of India's Generic Boom: Can the Dark Horse Take the Lead?](#) | Economic Times
- [Going dark: 296 internet shutdowns witnessed across 54 countries in 2024](#) | Business Standard
- [Javier Milei to follow Donald Trump's lead and pull Argentina out of WHO](#) | Financial Times

CUTS Event

From Connectivity to Security: EU's Vision for the Indo-Pacific

