

India's Africa Engagement

What is the issue?

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- Ahead of BRICS leaders' summit in South Africa, Indian PM made visits to Rwanda and Uganda.

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- This is a reflection of the intensity and significance of India's engagement with Africa.

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What is the significance?

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- **Rwanda** - It is one of the Africa's fastest growing economies.

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- After the end of its civil war, it is moving steadily on the path of recovery and national reconciliation.

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- Rwanda President Paul Kagame is chair of the African Union (an intergovernmental organization of African states).

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- About 3,000 Indian nationals and PIOs live in Rwanda.

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- Rwanda's only sugar refinery, only modern textile mill, and a soap and cosmetic factory are all PIO-owned.

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- India-Rwanda bilateral relations have been cordial and have grown steadily over the years.

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- In 1999, Rwanda officially opened its mission in New Delhi and posted a charge d'affaires.

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- In 2001, it appointed its first resident ambassador in New Delhi.

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- India has taken a decision to open a diplomatic mission in Kigali, the capital

of Rwanda.

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- **Uganda** - In Uganda, India established its diplomatic presence in 1965.
- But the ties dates back to the era when trade began across the Indian Ocean.
- Eventually a number of Indians settled in East Africa, and many made Uganda their home.
- There are over 30,000 Indians/PIOs in the country.
- Uganda is currently chair of the East African Community.
- **India - Africa** - The visit of more than 40 leaders for the 3rd India-Africa Forum Summit in 2015 was a significant event in this regard.
- The present visit to African countries takes forward India's engagement with Africa.

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What are the outcomes of the visit?

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- India signed two loan agreements with Rwanda worth \$ 100 million each.
- It contributes for investments in agriculture and development of special economic zones.
- With both Rwanda and Uganda, India signed defence cooperation agreements.

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What is China's role?

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- Chinese President Xi Jinping is also making visits to some of the African States, including Rwanda.
- China gave a loan of \$126 million to build two roads.

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- China began its outreach to Africa earlier than India.

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- The first ministerial meeting of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) was held early in 2000.

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- Africa, in many ways, has been a learning ground for China's international role.

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- Some of it includes the following:

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- i. China first took a proactive position on an internationally significant Sudan conflict

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- ii. It was in Mali that China sent its first combatant unit under the UN peacekeeping framework in 2013

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- iii. Djibouti will be the first location of the People's Liberation Army's overseas base

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- China's role in the African continent is thus noteworthy as it showcases the future of Chinese power.

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Source: Indian Express

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