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India-Africa Forum Summit IV: Delhi Reboots a Decade-Old Partnership

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IR**ECONOMY**

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India-Africa Forum Summit IV: Delhi Reboots a Decade-Old Partnership

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WHY IN NEWS

India and the African Union Commission have jointly announced the **Fourth India-Africa Forum Summit (IAFS-IV)** to be held in **New Delhi from May 28 to 31, 2026**. The theme is **“IA SPIRIT – India Africa Strategic Partnership for Innovation, Resilience and Inclusive Transformation.”** It is the first IAFS since 2015 – an 11-year gap.

THE IAFS FRAMEWORK – HISTORY AT A GLANCE

The India-Africa Forum Summit is the **apex multilateral platform** for India’s structured engagement with the African continent.

SUMMIT	YEAR	VENUE	OUTCOME
IAFS-I	2008	New Delhi	“Delhi Declaration”; 14 African Heads attended; concessional credit lines launched
IAFS-II	2011	Addis Ababa, Ethiopia	“Addis Ababa Declaration”; institutional cooperation framework
IAFS-III	2015	New Delhi	41 African Heads attended; framework for strategic cooperation; concessional credit doubled
IAFS-IV	2026	New Delhi (May 28-31)	Theme: IA SPIRIT

The 11-year gap (2015 to 2026) reflects pandemic disruption, scheduling differences, and the African Union’s restructuring of its summit calendar.

IAFS-IV: FORMAT AND THEME

Theme Breakdown – “IA SPIRIT”

- Innovation – digital public infrastructure, fintech, healthtech

- Africa Part of broader **Strategic Partnership**
- Inclusive economic growth
- Resilience – supply chains, food, climate
- Integration – continental and trilateral
- Transformation – structural shift in trade and investment

Parallel Events

- ❶ **India-Africa Business Dialogue** – corporate and investment summit
- ❷ **Track-2 Strategic Dialogue** – think tanks, academia
- ❸ **India-Africa Music & Dance Festival** – cultural diplomacy
- ❹ **Africa Day commemoration** (May 25) – coincides with the run-up

Co-host: African Union Commission

- AUC is the **executive arm** of the African Union (HQ Addis Ababa, Ethiopia)
- AU has been a **G20 permanent member since 2023**, having joined during India's G20 Presidency on **September 9, 2023** – a landmark Indian diplomatic initiative

WHY IAFS-IV MATTERS

1. The Numbers

INDICATOR	VALUE
India-Africa bilateral trade	~USD 100 billion (2023-24)
India's investment stock in Africa	~USD 75 billion
Indian Lines of Credit extended to Africa	~USD 12 billion+
Africa's share in India's crude oil imports	~15-18%
ITEC slots for African nationals	Largest regional bloc
Africa training programmes	Pan-Africa e-Network revived as e-VBAB

2. Strategic Drivers

- **Critical minerals:** Africa holds ~30% of global mineral reserves – cobalt (DRC), platinum (South Africa), copper (Zambia), rare earths (multiple)

- **Energy security:** Diversifying crude oil sources (Nigeria, Angola, Egypt)
- **Diaspora:** ~3 million Indian-origin population across Africa (largest concentration in South Africa, Mauritius, Kenya, Tanzania)
- **UN Security Council reform** alignment – the Ezulwini Consensus (African Union, 2005) seeks 2 permanent UNSC seats for Africa; India is part of the G4 seeking permanent seats

3. Geopolitical Competition

PLAYER	ENGAGEMENT VEHICLE
China	FOCAC (Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, since 2000); \$50bn+ pledges; BRI
EU	EU-AU Summit (every 3 years)
US	US-Africa Leaders Summit
Japan	TICAD (Tokyo International Conference on African Development)
Russia	Russia-Africa Summit (2019, 2023)
India	IAFS – competitive but qualitatively distinct (capacity-building over hard infrastructure)

India’s model emphasises **demand-driven** development, **training and human resource development**, and **concessional finance** – contrasting with China’s debt-financed infrastructure push.

INDIA’S AFRICA ENGAGEMENT – TOOLBOX

Financial Instruments

- **Lines of Credit** through Exim Bank of India
- **Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC)** scholarships
- **e-Vidya Bharati and e-Aarogya Bharati (e-VBAB)** project (telemedicine and tele-education)
- **Development Partnership Administration (DPA)** under MEA

Multilateral Levers

- **AU at G20** (since September 2023, India’s Presidency)
- **International Solar Alliance (ISA)** – many African members
- **Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI)**
- **BRICS** – South Africa is a founding member; Ethiopia, Egypt joined 2024

Defence and Security

- IAFS commitments on **anti-piracy** in Gulf of Aden
- **Africa-India Field Training Exercises (AFINDEX)**
- Indian Navy mission-based deployments in Western Indian Ocean

KEY OUTCOMES EXPECTED AT IAFS-IV

- Renewed Delhi-AU framework on **digital public infrastructure** (UPI-style stack)
- New **concessional credit envelope** likely to be announced
- **Critical minerals partnership** framework with AU and lead countries (DRC, South Africa, Zambia)
- **Climate cooperation** including ISA expansion, green hydrogen, **Mission LiFE**
- **Health partnership** – vaccine manufacturing, pharma access
- Possible joint **UNSC reform** statement

UPSC RELEVANCE

GS Paper 2 – International Relations

- India-Africa relations; IAFS framework
- Indian diaspora; soft power; Africa-India cultural ties
- UNSC reform; AU at G20

GS Paper 3 – Economy

- Critical minerals; supply chain diversification
- Lines of Credit; concessional finance
- Energy security; oil import diversification

Mains Angles

- 1 Examine the evolution of the India-Africa Forum Summit framework and its relevance in the multipolar global order.
- 2 Compare India's and China's Africa engagement models. Which is more sustainable?
- 3 How can IAFS-IV advance India's quest for UNSC reform?

FACTS CORNER – KNOWLEDGEPEDIA
IAFS-IV (2026):

Venue: New Delhi; Date: May 28-31, 2026

Theme: “IA SPIRIT – India Africa Strategic Partnership for Innovation, Resilience and Inclusive Transformation”

Co-host: African Union Commission (AUC)

First IAFS since IAFS-III (2015)

Parallel events: Business Dialogue, Track-2, Music & Dance Festival

IAFS HISTORY:

IAFS-I: 2008, Delhi (Delhi Declaration)

IAFS-II: 2011, Addis Ababa (Addis Ababa Declaration)

IAFS-III: 2015, Delhi (41 Heads of State/Government)

AU AT G20: PERMANENT MEMBER SINCE 2023 (JOINED SEPTEMBER 9, 2023, DURING INDIA'S G20 PRESIDENCY).

INDIA-AFRICA TRADE: ~USD 100 BILLION (2023-24); INDIA'S INVESTMENT STOCK ~USD 75 BILLION.

OTHER MAJOR AFRICA FRAMEWORKS:

FOCAC (China, 2000); TICAD (Japan); US-Africa Leaders Summit; EU-AU Summit; Russia-Africa Summit

AU HQ: ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA. AU ESTABLISHED 2002 (SUCCESSOR TO ORGANISATION OF AFRICAN UNITY, OAU, 1963). CURRENT 55 MEMBER STATES. AGENDA 2063 = AU'S LONG-TERM DEVELOPMENT BLUEPRINT.

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