



UPSC & STATE PCS CURRENT AFFAIRS · UJIYARI.COM

EDITORIAL ANALYSIS

Global South Is Becoming Another India-China Arena

 **INDIAN EXPRESS**26 June 2026 · **IR** · **GS2**

CURATED & WRITTEN BY

**Bharat Choudhary**

UPSC Educator & Content Creator

 [linkedin.com/in/epicbharat](https://www.linkedin.com/in/epicbharat)**ALSO FROM THE CREATOR****BharatNotes**Free UPSC notes, MCQs, PYQ analysis. **100% Free.**bharatnotes.com → **ADVERTISE****Advertise with Ujiyari**

Reach thousands of UPSC aspirants daily.

 epicbharat@gmail.com



Global South Is Becoming Another India-China Arena

 **The Indian Express** 26 June 2026 **GS2**

Source: ujyari.com — researched, fact-checked & UPSC-mapped



INTERVIEW ANGLE

"How can India lead the Global South on the strength of solidarity and delivery rather than by mirroring China's chequebook diplomacy?"

Source: [Original editorial](#)  [The Indian Express](#)

 **Every fact web-verified against primary sources** (<https://ujyari.com/how-we-verify/>)

WHY THIS MATTERS NOW

The developing world, long courted for votes and markets, has become a contested field of India-China strategic competition. China deploys vast development finance and infrastructure to build influence; India responds with capacity-building, digital public infrastructure, vaccine and disaster diplomacy, and a self-appointed role as the voice of the Global South. With **multilateral** (<https://ujyari.com/vocab/multilateral/>) forums under strain and a wave of developing nations seeking alternatives to old power blocs, the contest for influence has sharpened. For India, which has invested heavily in Global South leadership through its G20 presidency and the Voice of Global South Summits, how this rivalry is managed will shape its standing for a generation.

THE CRUX IN 60 WORDS

India-China rivalry is spilling into Global South diplomacy. China leads with Belt and Road finance and scale; India counters with capacity-building, digital public infrastructure and solidarity. Multilateral forums have become arenas of agenda-setting. The danger is reducing partner nations to pawns. India must **recalibrate** (<https://ujyari.com/vocab/recalibrate/>) to lead through transparent, demand-driven, sustainable partnership rather than mirror chequebook diplomacy.

THE ISSUE, DECODED

Ujjiyari Current Affairs - ujjiyari.com - Free Daily Current Affairs for UPSC & State PCS

CONCEPT	WHAT IT MEANS	WHY IT MATTERS
Global South	Developing nations of Africa, Asia, Latin America seeking voice and development	The new theatre where influence is contested
Belt and Road Initiative	China's flagship infrastructure and finance network	China's primary instrument of Global South influence
Digital public infrastructure	Open identity, payment and data systems India exports	India's distinctive, low-cost development offering
Voice of Global South Summit	India-led platform aggregating developing-world priorities	Positions India as spokesperson, not just a player
Debt sustainability (https://ujjiyari.com/terms/debt-sustainability/)	Risk of unsustainable lending burdening recipients	A key differentiator between transparent and opaque finance

THE ANALYSIS

- 1 Two different theories of influence are competing.** China's model rests on scale, infrastructure and concessional (<https://ujjiyari.com/terms/concessional/>) finance through the Belt and Road Initiative. India's rests on capacity-building, training, credit lines and the export of digital public infrastructure. The contest is as much about method as about money.
- 2 Multilateral forums are now arenas.** The G20, BRICS and the multilateral development banks have become spaces where India and China contest agenda-setting for the developing world, on debt relief, climate finance, technology and reform of global governance.
- 3 India's distinctive assets are credibility and delivery.** Vaccine diplomacy during the pandemic, disaster relief in the neighbourhood and beyond, and the offer of open-source digital public goods give India a trust-based appeal that pure finance cannot replicate.
- 4 The G20 presidency was a strategic high point.** Securing permanent African Union membership of the G20 and centring developing-country concerns positioned India as a bridge between North and South, a role China finds harder to claim given its great-power posture.
- 5 The instrumentalisation risk is real.** If every engagement is framed as a counter to Beijing, partner nations are reduced to pawns, and India's solidarity narrative loses authenticity. Genuine, needs-based cooperation must remain the anchor.

6 **The recalibration is about quality, not volume.** India cannot and should not try to match Chinese lending dollar for dollar. Its advantage lies in transparent, demand-driven, debt-sustainable partnerships and in championing a fairer global order. India's official posture remains principled engagement and respect for partners' sovereignty (<https://ujiyari.com/vocab/sovereignty/>).

DATA AND INSTITUTIONS VAULT

CARRY THESE INTO THE EXAM HALL.

Voice of Global South Summit: India-led platform, first convened in 2023, aggregating developing-world priorities.

G20 New Delhi (2023): secured permanent membership of the African Union; advanced developing-country agenda.

Belt and Road Initiative (BRI): China's infrastructure-finance network, launched 2013.

Digital public infrastructure: India's identity, payments and data-exchange stack offered as global public goods.

India-Africa Forum Summit: framework for India's deepening Africa partnership.

Multilateral bodies: BRICS, G20, multilateral development banks, the UN reform agenda.

Concept anchors: South-South cooperation, debt sustainability, strategic autonomy (<https://ujiyari.com/terms/strategic-autonomy/>), soft power.

THE DEBATE

For active competition: China's expanding footprint cannot be ignored; India must contest influence to protect its interests, secure supply chains and retain a leadership claim it has carefully built.

Against framing it as rivalry: Treating the Global South as a chessboard instrumentalises partner nations, fuels a wasteful aid race and undercuts the solidarity that gives India its edge.

Balanced verdict: Competition is real and must be acknowledged, but India should win it on its own terms. Leadership through transparent, demand-driven, capacity-building partnership, anchored in reform of an unequal global order, is more sustainable than mirroring chequebook diplomacy. Solidarity is India's comparative advantage.

HOW TO THINK ABOUT THIS (TRANSFERABLE SKILL)

Ujjiyari Current Affairs - ujjiyari.com - Free Daily Current Affairs for UPSC & State PCS

When two actors contest the same space, the weaker on one metric should shift the contest to a metric where it leads. India cannot outspend China, so it competes on trust, transparency and digital public goods. Spotting where to change the terms of competition, rather than matching a rival blow for blow, is a hallmark of sophisticated IR analysis.

DIAGRAM-IN-WORDS

Developing world seeks voice and development -> China offers BRI finance and scale -> India offers capacity-building + digital public goods + solidarity -> contest spreads into G20, BRICS, banks -> risk: partners become pawns -> India recalibrates: transparent, demand-driven, sustainable partnership -> Global South leadership earned, not bought

THE WAY FORWARD

- 1 **Differentiate on quality.** Offer transparent, demand-driven, debt-sustainable cooperation that contrasts with opaque lending.
- 2 **Scale digital public infrastructure.** Export identity, payment and data systems as affordable global public goods.
- 3 **Deepen Africa and neighbourhood ties.** Convert the India-Africa partnership and neighbourhood-first policy into concrete, locally owned outcomes.
- 4 **Lead on global governance reform.** Champion debt relief, climate finance and a stronger developing-country voice in multilateral institutions.
- 5 **Avoid instrumentalisation.** Keep cooperation needs-based so that solidarity, India's true comparative advantage, remains credible.

THE TAKEAWAY BOX

Ujjyari Current Affairs - ujjyari.com - Free Daily Current Affairs for UPSC & State PCS

Assess the Global South as a theatre of India-China competition and evaluate how India can sustain leadership through distinctive instruments rather than imitation.

“India will not lead the Global South by outspending China, but by out-delivering it on trust, transparency and dignity.”

Voice of Global South Summit; G20 New Delhi and African Union membership; Belt and Road Initiative; digital public infrastructure; BRICS; India-Africa Forum Summit; South-South cooperation.

The tension between strategic competition and treating partner nations with respect rather than as pawns; integrity in development partnership.

GS2 questions on India and its neighbourhood, bilateral (<https://ujjyari.com/vocab/bilateral/>) and global groupings, and the effect of policies of developed and developing countries on India's interests.

strategic autonomy, reform of global governance, the neighbourhood-first policy, and India's soft power.

Sources: *Indian Express* (<https://indianexpress.com>), *Ministry of External Affairs* (<https://www.mea.gov.in>), *PIB* (<https://pib.gov.in>)

Source: Global South Is Becoming Another India-China Arena — Ujjyari.com | Free UPSC & State PCS Editorial Analysis

KEY ARGUMENTS AT A GLANCE

 Ujjiyari Current Affairs · ujjiyari.com · Free Daily Current Affairs for UPSC & State PCS

India-China rivalry is increasingly playing out across the Global South, as both powers compete for influence through development finance, diplomacy and institution-building, and India must recalibrate its approach to retain credible leadership of the developing world.

 **SUPPORTING**

- China leverages the Belt and Road Initiative, large concessional finance and infrastructure to embed influence across Africa, Asia and Latin America.
- India counters with capacity-building, lines of credit, vaccine and disaster diplomacy, digital public infrastructure and the Voice of Global South Summits.
- Forums such as the G20, BRICS and multilateral development banks have become arenas where the two powers contest agenda-setting for the developing world.

 **COUNTER**

Framing every Global South engagement as India-China rivalry risks instrumentalising partner nations and can crowd out genuine, needs-based development cooperation.

 **WAY FORWARD**

Differentiate through demand-driven, transparent, sustainable partnerships; scale digital public infrastructure exports; deepen Africa and neighbourhood ties; and lead on debt and reform of global governance.


MAINS ANSWER FRAMEWORK

 Ujijari Current Affairs - ujijari.com · Free Daily Current Affairs for UPSC & State PCS

QUESTION

The Global South has emerged as a new theatre of India-China strategic competition. Examine the instruments of this contest and suggest how India can sustain its claim to Global South leadership. (250 words)

INTRODUCTION

As India and China both court the developing world, the Global South has turned into a new arena of their strategic competition, testing whether India can lead by solidarity and delivery.

BODY

China's instruments are scale and finance. Through the Belt and Road Initiative, large concessional lending and infrastructure, it has embedded influence across Africa, Asia and Latin America, while using forums like BRICS to shape the developing-world agenda.

India's instruments are different and, in important ways, more durable. It offers capacity-building, lines of credit, the India-Africa partnership, vaccine and disaster relief diplomacy, and increasingly the export of digital public infrastructure such as identity, payments and data systems.

The Voice of Global South Summits and India's G20 presidency, which secured permanent African Union membership, position New Delhi as a spokesperson for developing-country priorities on debt, climate finance and governance reform. The risk in this contest is instrumentalisation: if every road or grant is reduced to a counter to Beijing, partner nations become pawns and India's credibility erodes.

The recalibration India needs is to compete on quality, transparent, demand-driven, debt-sustainable cooperation, rather than on Chinese terms of sheer volume, and to anchor its leadership in reform of an unequal global order.

CONCLUSION

India can retain Global South leadership not by outspending China but by out-delivering it on trusted, transparent and demand-driven partnership.


RELATED DAILY ARTICLES

26 Jun [BRICS Energy Ministers Meet at Gurugram Under India...](#)

25 Jun [Jaishankar at Jeju Forum: India and Korea from Ships to...](#)

24 Jun [Current Affairs Today, June 24, 2026](#)

23 Jun [Current Affairs Today, June 23, 2026](#)

Ujjari Current Affairs · ujjari.com · Free Daily Current Affairs for UPSC & State PCS

Ujiyari Current Affairs · ujiyari.com · ~~Free Daily~~ Current Affairs for UPSC & State PCS

CURATED & WRITTEN BY

Bharat Choudhary

UPSC Educator & Content Creator

[linkedin.com/in/epicbharat](https://www.linkedin.com/in/epicbharat)[Read Full Article on Ujiyari →](#)<https://ujiyari.com/editorials/2026/06/ie-global-south-india-china-arena-2026/>

ALSO FROM THE CREATOR

BharatNotes

Free UPSC study platform — subject-wise notes across all 4 GS papers, Prelims MCQs, Mains answer frameworks, PYQ analysis & progress tracking. **100% Free • No Login Required.**

[Start Preparing → \[bharatnotes.com\]\(https://bharatnotes.com\)](#)

📌 OPPORTUNITY

Advertise with Ujiyari

Reach **thousands of serious UPSC & State PCS aspirants** daily through our PDFs, website, and social channels.

Ideal for: Coaching institutes • EdTech platforms • Book publishers • Exam prep apps

[✉ epicbharat@gmail.com](mailto:epicbharat@gmail.com)

Write to us for rates & media kit

Free UPSC & State PCS Current Affairs · ujiyari.com · bharatnotes.com