



Sanskriti IAS



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SUMMARY OF IMPORTANT EDITORIALS

14th May 2026

TOPICS:-

- 1. China's economic strengths now rival that of the U.S.**
(GS Paper III Economy)
- 2. At India-Nordic Summit, turn historical sambandh into future partnership**
(GS Paper II International Relations, GS Paper III Economy)
- 3. India's Africa policy needs continuity**
(GS Paper II International Relations)

DELHI CENTRE:
636, Mukherjee Nagar
New Delhi-110009

PRAYAGRAJ CENTRE:
1/1/8A, Stanley Rd,
Maharana Pratap Chauraha,
Civil Lines, Prayagraj, UP - 211002

 **9555-124-124**
 **sanskritiias.com**

1. CHINA'S ECONOMIC STRENGTHS NOW RIVAL THAT OF THE U.S.

(GS Paper III Economy)

This editorial 'China's economic strengths now rival that of the U.S.' was published in **The Hindu** on 14th May 2026, highlights **China's economic rise** and its growing ability to convert economic strength into diplomatic influence.

Economic Catch-up with the U.S.

- China's **GDP gap** with the U.S. narrowed from 15 times smaller in 1990 to only 1.5 times smaller by 2025.
- Despite entering the **\$10 trillion economy** club in 2014, China sustained at least 5% growth, except in 2020 and 2022.
- The U.S. last crossed **3% growth** in 2005, except in 2021 when recovery followed the previous year's COVID-19 contraction.
- China's **labour productivity** growth has remained far above the U.S. level for nearly 25 years, deepening the catch-up.

Export and Technology Shift

- China's **global export share** rose from below 1% in 1995 to over 13% in 2024, replacing the U.S. in many sectors.
- China expanded across **electronics**, minerals, vehicles, metals, chemicals, agriculture, services and textiles, while the U.S. share declined gradually.
- China overtook the U.S. in **R&D expenditure** in 2024, spending \$785.9 billion against America's \$781 billion.
- Between 2000 and 2024, China's **R&D share** rose by 23 percentage points, while the U.S. share fell by 9.71 points.

Trade Conflict and Diplomatic Leverage

- Trump's China visit and later **tariff war** reflected U.S. concern over "unfair trade practices" and the widening bilateral imbalance.
- China retaliated with tariffs and later **rare earth** restrictions, showing its ability to convert economic strength into counter-pressure.
- China became the world's largest **official creditor** in 2023, lending about \$40 billion to public and private borrowers.
- Lowy Institute's **Asia Power Index** ranked China's diplomatic influence and economic relations above the U.S. for 2025.

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India's Strategic Response to China's Economic Ascent

- **Manufacturing resilience:** India must expand domestic manufacturing and export depth, as seen in **PLI** schemes for mobiles and high-efficiency solar modules.
- **Technology self-reliance:** China's R&D rise makes indigenous innovation critical, as seen in **India Semiconductor Mission** and indigenous 5G stack efforts.
- **Supply-chain security:** Dependence on China for **APIs**, electronics and solar components can weaken autonomy, as COVID-era disruptions and import concentration showed.
- **Critical minerals:** India must secure lithium and rare earths through **KABIL** overseas projects, as seen in Argentina's five lithium brine blocks.
- **Strategic partnerships:** India should use **Quad**, India-EU Trade and Technology Council and I2U2 platforms to balance Chinese economic and technological influence.
- **Export competitiveness:** India must move beyond assembly towards design and high-value manufacturing, as seen in Apple's expanding **iPhone exports** from India.
- **Calibrated engagement:** India's China policy should combine economic resilience with selective trade, as seen in continued imports despite post-Galwan investment scrutiny.

2. AT INDIA-NORDIC SUMMIT, TURN HISTORICAL SAMBANDH INTO FUTURE PARTNERSHIP

(GS Paper II International Relations, GS Paper III Economy)

This editorial 'At India-Nordic Summit, turn historical sambandh into future partnership' was published in **The Indian Express** on 14th May 2026, highlights the need to **convert India-Nordic historical ties** into a green, technological and strategic partnership.

Historical Base and Strategic Reset

- India-Nordic ties have deep **historical roots**, from linguistic echoes of **sambandh** to long-standing development and fisheries cooperation.

- Norway recognised independent India in **1947**, while its 1950s **Kerala fisheries** programme became an early model of practical partnership.
- The **Oslo Summit** marks a shift from routine diplomacy to a **Green Strategic Partnership** based on blue economy, renewable energy and deep-tech innovation.

Investment, Technology and Green Growth

- The India-EFTA **TEPA** strengthens the economic logic of cooperation by committing **EFTA countries**, including Norway, to \$100 billion investment over 15 years.
- Norway's **Government Pension Fund Global** can provide India the **patient capital** needed for infrastructure, manufacturing and long-term green transition.
- India can replicate Norway-linked **fisheries expertise** in coastal states such as Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Gujarat through **state-level cooperation**.
- Norway's strengths in **offshore wind**, green shipping and carbon capture can complement India's scale in decarbonising heavy industries.
- Nordic experience in **renewable energy** and green manufacturing can support India's **industrial transformation** without reducing cooperation to trade alone.

Blue Economy, Arctic Linkages and Climate Cooperation

- Norway can help India build **green shipping corridors**, port decarbonisation and maritime competence, strengthening the **blue economy** as a growth engine.
- The **Arctic** and Indian Ocean are climatically linked, as polar changes affect the **Indian monsoon**, food security and maritime risks.
- India's Arctic Council role can deepen **polar research**, climate monitoring and **scientific cooperation** with Norway and other Nordic partners.

Shared Values and Diplomatic Opportunity

- India and Nordic countries share interests in **multilateralism**, rule of law and a **democratic world order** amid Trump-era global turbulence.
- Irritants such as Denmark's arms-smuggling case and Norway's **custody dispute** should be treated as **episodic issues**, not structural obstacles.
- Nordic strengths in **social innovation**, green technology and democratic resilience align with India's goals of **inclusive growth** and sustainable development.
- Stronger Nordic ties can diversify India's **diplomatic portfolio** and enhance its voice in a **multipolar order** based on fairness and cooperation.

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Leveraging Nordic Strengths for India's Green and Blue Economy

- **Green transition:** Nordic partnerships can support India's renewable energy goals, as seen in Denmark's **Green Strategic Partnership** on wind and water.
- **Clean technology:** Cooperation in offshore wind, hydrogen, carbon capture and green shipping can help India scale **Lothal**-style maritime and port modernisation.
- **Green finance:** Nordic sovereign funds can provide patient capital, as seen in Norway's **Government Pension Fund Global** investments in Indian equities.
- **Urban sustainability:** Nordic expertise in waste, circular economy and smart systems can support Indian cities, as seen in Sweden-backed **Waste to Wealth** models.
- **Arctic engagement:** Scientific cooperation can strengthen India's polar research, as seen in India's **Himadri** station at Ny-Ålesund, Svalbard.
- **Blue economy:** Nordic maritime strengths can support cleaner ports and fisheries, as seen in Norway's historic **Kerala fisheries** modernisation programme.
- **Issue-based diplomacy:** India-Nordic ties can model focused multilateralism, as seen in cooperation on **green tech**, innovation and sustainable development.

3. INDIA'S AFRICA POLICY NEEDS CONTINUITY

(GS Paper II International Relations)

This editorial '**India's Africa policy needs continuity**' was published in **The Indian Express** on 14th May 2026, highlights the need for **sustained, structured and credible India-Africa engagement** beyond summit-level diplomacy.

Summit Gap and Competitive Context

- The **IAFS IV** scheduled for May 28-31 is timely, as India-Africa engagement has remained paused since **2020**.
- Africa's global partnerships have diversified, with **EU-Japan summits** and South Korea's ministerial consultations increasing competitive diplomatic outreach.
- China's **FOCAC model** offers institutionalised engagement, while India retains goodwill but lacks sustained, visible and structured African outreach.

Need for Institutional Continuity

- The five-year summit cycle remains useful, but weak **inter-summit mechanisms** reduce follow-up across bilateral, regional and pan-African levels.

- India could revive **AU chairperson** annual visits, as rotating AU leadership ensures wider political engagement beyond familiar partner countries.
- With Burundi holding the **AU chair**, such outreach could diversify India's engagement and reduce dependence on major African states.

Strategic Dialogue and Regional Economic Communities

- India should engage Africa's **Regional Economic Communities** and launch a 1.5 **Strategic Dialogue** with policymakers, AU officials, representatives and experts.
- Such dialogue can align India-Africa positions on **climate change**, energy transition, digital governance and artificial intelligence.
- Engaging **RECs** would let India share experience in public infrastructure, public health, financial inclusion and capacity building.

Delivery Deficit and Monitoring

- A persistent weakness of **India-Africa summits** has been the gap between commitment and delivery.
- Official consultations with African diplomats in Delhi can create an **annual review** mechanism to monitor commitments and complement regular engagement.
- A formal mid-cycle review in **Addis Ababa**, involving India's AU ambassador and PRC hosts, can allow recalibration during the summit cycle.

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Africa as a Pillar of India's Global South Leadership

- **Global South voice:** Africa is central to India's Global South leadership, as both share climate justice concerns, seen in India's **Voice of Global South Summit**.
- **UN reform:** Strong India-Africa alignment can strengthen UNSC reform demands, as seen in India backing the **Ezulwini Consensus** for African representation.
- **China contrast:** India can differentiate itself through capacity building and demand-driven cooperation, unlike China's debt-heavy model seen in **Djibouti** and Zambia.
- **Development partnership:** India's ITEC training, lines of credit and **Pan-African e-Network** show knowledge-sharing beyond infrastructure-heavy partnerships.

- **Market diversification:** Africa's young markets offer India opportunities in pharmaceuticals and healthcare, as seen in Indian generic medicines across **East Africa**.
- **Digital cooperation:** India can share Digital Public Infrastructure experience, as seen in UPI-style payments and **Aadhaar-like** identity systems for financial inclusion.
- **Multipolar diplomacy:** A credible Africa policy expands India's reach beyond the Indo-Pacific, as seen in the **AU's G20 entry** under India's presidency.