

EDITORIAL

DATE : 16th July

Reclaiming the Global South: PM Modi's 5-Nation Tour as a Strategic Reset in India's Foreign Policy

Syllabus Mapping

Paper	Area
GS2	Bilateral & Multilateral Relations, India & Diaspora, Role in International Institutions
GS3	Economic Development, Critical Minerals, Tech Diplomacy, Energy Security
Essay	India in the Emerging Global Order, Role of Soft Power, India and the Global South
Ethics (GS4)	Ethics in International Relations, Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, Developmental Diplomacy

Contextual Introduction

From July 1 to July 9, 2025, Prime Minister Narendra Modi undertook a 9-day, 5-nation diplomatic tour, covering Ghana, Trinidad & Tobago, Argentina, Brazil, and Namibia. This visit was one of the most ambitious outreach initiatives by India toward the Global South in recent times. It focused on four broad pillars:

- Diplomatic Realignment
- Energy and Mineral Security
- Digital and Developmental Partnership
- Multilateral Leadership & Ethical Soft Power

The timing of this visit is significant. It came:

- After criticisms of India's **pro-Israel stance** post-October 2023 Hamas conflict.
- Following India's **loss in the UNESCO Executive Board vice-chair election** (defeated by Pakistan with Global South support).
- Amid emerging geopolitical shifts, economic fragmentation, and demands for **reform in global governance structures**.

Understanding the Global South: From Concept to Coalition

The **Global South** is a collective identity encompassing nations from **Africa, Latin America, Asia, and Oceania** that share:

- Post-colonial histories
- Developmental struggles
- Aspirations for global equity

India has long aligned itself with the Global South through the **Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)**. In the 21st century, India is transitioning from **passive solidarity to active norm-shaping**, particularly in areas like **climate justice**,

technology access, debt reform, and inclusive multilateralism.



Country-Wise Breakdown of the Tour

🇬🇭 Ghana: Mineral Diplomacy and Democratic Solidarity

- First PM-level visit in 30+ years.
- Key areas: **Bauxite & manganese mining**, healthcare cooperation, energy partnerships.
- Engagement with 15,000-strong diaspora; emphasized **South-South cooperation**.
- Ghana, as a **West African leader** in ECOWAS, becomes vital for India's Africa outreach.

🇹🇹 Trinidad & Tobago: Diaspora Diplomacy and Digital Public Infrastructure

- Commemorated **180 years of Indian migration**.
- First Indian PM visit since 1999.
- Key agreements: **Telemedicine**, **DigiLocker-based ID**, disaster resilience.
- Couva diaspora event highlighted India's **soft power and civilizational outreach**.

🇦🇷 Argentina: Lithium and Strategic Balancing

- First Indian PM visit in **57 years**.
- Focused on **lithium (EV batteries)**, agriculture, digital systems, shale gas.
- Argentina's Lithium Triangle crucial for India's **energy security**.
- Collaboration on **AI governance** and **space research** showed shared global vision despite ideological differences.

🇧🇷 Brazil: BRICS Summit and Strategic Reset

- Participated in the **17th BRICS Summit in Rio de Janeiro**.
- Topics: **UNSC reform**, **AI ethics**, **climate finance**, **inclusive multilateralism**.
- Brazil visit also included bilateral meetings on **biofuels**, **space technology**, and **sustainable agriculture**.
- India used BRICS+ to promote a **democratic and multipolar world order**.

🇳🇦 Namibia: Ecological and Energy Diplomacy

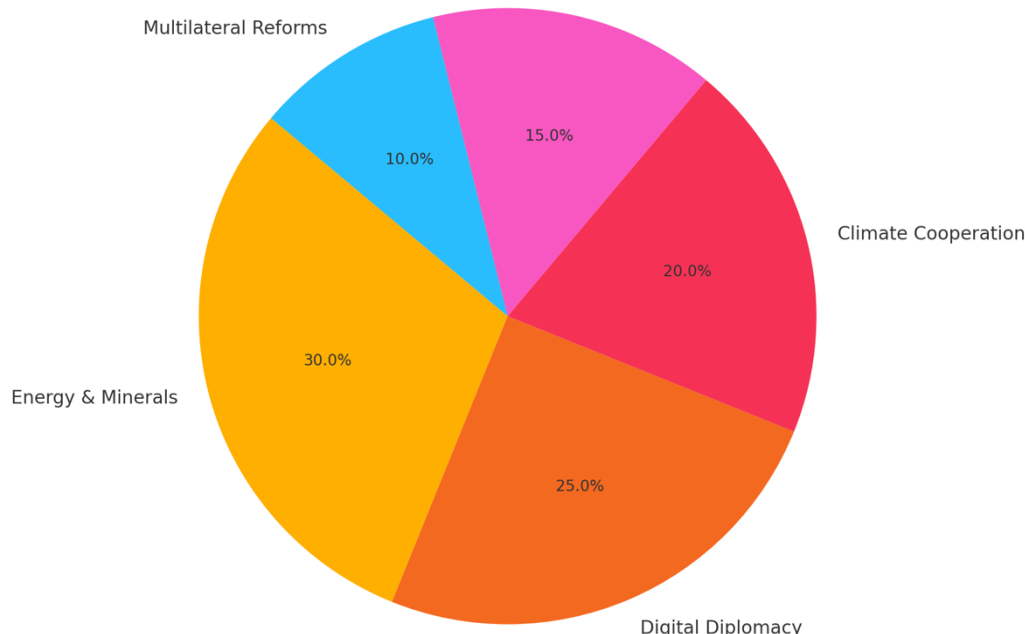
- First PM Modi visit; emphasized **historical anti-colonial ties**.
- Focus on **solar energy**, **green hydrogen**, and **wildlife diplomacy** (Project Cheetah extension).
- Agreements on **vocational training**, **digital governance**, and **capacity building**.
- A symbol of India's **ethical, long-term engagement** with Africa.

PM MODI'S DIPLOMATIC TOUR



Key Strategic Themes Emerging from the Tour

Focus Areas in PM Modi's 5-Nation Global South Tour (2025)



1. Minerals and Energy Security

- **Lithium (Argentina)**, **cobalt (Namibia)**, **bauxite & manganese (Ghana)** vital for India's EV and green energy roadmap.
- India's model: **Technology transfer**, **local value-addition**, **environmental responsibility**—countering China's exploitative model.

2. Digital Public Infrastructure Diplomacy

India is sharing platforms that helped it achieve inclusive governance:

PLATFORM	PURPOSE
UPI	Financial inclusion
COWIN	Health delivery/vaccination
DIGILOCKER	Digital identity & document access

These offer **open-source, scalable** alternatives to surveillance-based systems, making India a **global tech partner**.

3. Renewable Energy and Climate Diplomacy

India is exporting its **Mission LiFE** model to the Global South:

- **Biofuels and climate-smart agriculture** (Brazil)
- **Green hydrogen** (Namibia)
- **Solar tech exports**
- **Cheetah diplomacy** (wildlife conservation)

This promotes a **green developmental model** rooted in **community-based solutions**.

4. Multilateral Leadership and South-South Unity

India championed **equity and reform** in global institutions:

- **UNSC reform** proposal in BRICS
- Expanded role in **BRICS+**
- Advocacy for **AI ethics and digital governance**
- Push for **inclusive multilateralism**, especially after losing the UNESCO vice-chair

5. Geopolitical Balancing: Israel, BRICS & Terrorism

- India **recalibrated** its earlier pro-Israel tilt by condemning Gaza bombings at **BRICS Foreign Ministers Meet (2024)**.
- At BRICS Rio Summit, India secured condemnation of **Pahalgam terror attack**, isolating **Pakistan diplomatically**.
- Balanced approach ensures **strategic autonomy** while retaining **moral authority** in the Global South.

6. India vs China: Development Model Comparison

Dimension	India (Soft Power Model)	China (Hard Infrastructure Model)
Digital Tools	Open-source, partner-led	Proprietary, surveillance-linked
Economic Ties	Grant-based, inclusive	Debt-trap diplomacy
Environment	Green tech, wildlife, solar	Resource extractive
Diplomacy	Diaspora & trust-based	Loan and coercion-based

India offers a **trustworthy, decentralized, and ethical alternative** to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).



Why the Timing Matters

- **Preceded UNGA & COP30**, allowing India to set narratives early.
- Showcased leadership in **climate finance, UN reforms, and digital governance**.
- Served dual goals:
 - **Global assertion** as a responsible power
 - **Domestic optics** ahead of elections (projecting PM as a world leader)



Ethical Dimension of Indian Diplomacy

Value	Manifestation
Transparency	DPI tools, open-source tech
Sustainability	Climate-smart agriculture, green hydrogen
Equity	Bilateralism rooted in local capacity
Respect	Diaspora dignity, cultural diplomacy
Justice	Advocacy for institutional reforms

India's diplomacy rests on **ethical persuasion**, not power projection—a **Kautilyan realism blended with Gandhian ethos**.



Conclusion: Diplomacy That Reflects Bharat's Civilizational Ethos

PM Modi's Global South tour wasn't just diplomatic outreach—it was a **strategic realignment** grounded in:

- **Sustainability**
- **Digital empowerment**
- **Multilateral equity**
- **Trust-based development**

By asserting leadership in forums like **BRICS, G20, and UN**, and reaching out to Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean, India signaled it will **co-author the global rules of the 21st century**—not merely follow them.

This isn't merely a foreign policy moment; it marks India's **evolution into a normative power**, one capable of **bridging divides** between the developed and the developing world.

Mains Practice Questions

1. **GS2 (IR): "India's diplomatic tour of July 2025 marks a shift from symbolic solidarity to strategic leadership in the Global South. Discuss."**
2. **GS3 (Economy/Tech): "Evaluate the role of Digital Public Infrastructure in advancing India's foreign policy objectives."**
3. **GS4 (Ethics): "Compare India's development diplomacy model with coercive foreign aid models. Discuss the ethical implications."**
4. **Essay: "In the age of multipolarity, global leadership lies in partnerships, not patronage."**



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Wisdom leads to success