

India, South Africa: Strategic partners

January 25, 2019, 10:49 PM IST [ET Edit](#) in [ET Editorials](#) | [Economy](#), [Edit Page](#), [India](#), [politics](#), [World](#) | ET

A partnership between India and South Africa, both advanced developing countries and emerging economies, seeks to fulfil larger goals of political freedom, economic development and social justice, not just of the two countries but of their respective regions. South African President Cyril Ramaphosa's state visit to India and his participation in the Republic Day celebrations as chief guest present an opportunity to renew and reinvigorate the near-quarter century of ties between the two countries of Asia and Africa.

Strengthening the India-South Africa partnership is vital in the context of Africa's development, especially to provide a viable alternative to the China model. The fast-growing and fast prospering population of Africa will present itself as a major opportunity for the rest of the world. India has historic ties with several countries of the continent, such as the nearly 1.5 million people of Indian origin in South Africa, which would help India make good on that opportunity. Their problems and aspirations put India and a variety of African countries on the same side of multinational attempts to tackle global challenges such as climate change, keeping trade open and avoiding big power domination. India and South Africa give these efforts an institutional framework through forums such as the G20, the Indian Ocean Rim Association, Brics and IBSA. Robust maritime security in the Indian Ocean is not of just bilateral significance.



The Asia-Africa Growth Corridor is an ambitious plan by Japan and India to pool their resources — financial, technical, local knowledge and goodwill — to expand opportunities for African nationals while extending the soft power of both India and Japan. New Delhi must win over South Africa as a willing partner in this effort to expand strategic autonomy.

This piece appeared as an editorial opinion in the print edition of The Economic Times.

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