A Bird’s eye View of India-Uganda Relations

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Between April 10 and April 15, 2023, India's Foreign Minister, S. Jaishankar, embarked on a diplomatic trip to Mozambique and Uganda, underscoring India's commitment to strengthening ties with key African allies. During the visit, Jaishankar highlighted Uganda as a significant partner, observing a heightened level of engagement between New Delhi and Kampala. He emphasised India's focus on bolstering economic connections while acknowledging the deep-rooted cultural and economic bonds between the Indian community, comprising around 30,000 individuals and Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs), and Uganda. These ties span multiple sectors, including manufacturing, trade, banking, tourism, and technology, significantly impacting Uganda's economy.Over the past two decades, PIOs and NRIs have invested approximately US$1 billion in Uganda, reflecting a substantial economic relationship. The visit sparked discussions centred on economic development, trade, and cooperation, capitalising on India's robust economic infrastructure, technological advancements, skilled workforce, and vast resources. The historical ties between India and Uganda, dating back to the 19th century with the involvement of Indians in building crucial infrastructure, have laid the foundation for enduring relations. Noteworthy agreements, such as the 1981 Cultural Accord and subsequent accords in 2018, have furthered bilateral cooperation in various domains, including culture, education, public health, and defence. Recent announcements during the visit, including lines of credit for agricultural and infrastructure projects, the establishment of the Mahatma Gandhi Convention and Heritage Centre, and initiatives like the National Forensic Sciences University's overseas campus, signified a pivotal moment in bilateral collaboration.During his visit, the PM announced two lines of credit for $64 million in agricultural and dairy output as well as $141 million in electrical lines and substation buildings. Also, it was stated that India would build a Mahatma Gandhi Convention and Heritage Centre in Jinja and that Uganda's People's Defence Force would receive extra training at several Indian Army training facilities. Also announced was financial help for the East African Community (EAC), which is currently being presided over by Uganda.These endeavours were lauded by Jaishankar as a realisation of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision for an expanded global presence and were hailed as a significant milestone in India-Uganda relations. Jaishankar tweeted that the international footprint was "a personal vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi" and was a source of tremendous satisfaction. The external minister also emphasised that this was a great day for India,Uganda, and the bilateral relationship between the two countries.Furthermore, the Duty-Free Tariff Preference (DFTP) Programme and thriving trade exchanges have enhanced economic ties, with India exporting items like vehicles, medicinal products, and paper products to Uganda while importing goods such as coffee, spices, wood products, and cocoa from the African nation. Speaking in a podcast on his recently finished trip to Uganda, Foreign Affairs Minister Jaishankar stated, "In terms of the world outlook, India and Uganda have highly converging perspectives that are founded on the solidarity of the south-south cooperation between the two states."Jaishankar emphasised the

alignment of India and Uganda's perspectives, rooted in south-south cooperation, underscoring the shared outlook and the potential for future collaboration in various global forums, including India's efforts to address issues pertinent to the Global South during its G20 presidency.

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