



India-Ghana Relations in the 21st Century: An Analysis of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent Historic Visit to Ghana

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Ghana in July 2025 marked a watershed moment in the contemporary history of India-Africa relations. As the first Indian Prime Minister to set foot in Ghana in over three decades, Modi's trip was laden with symbolic and strategic importance. The visit came at a time when India is actively recalibrating its foreign policy to strengthen partnerships across the Global South, advance economic interests, and counterbalance growing Chinese influence in Africa. This article examines the motivations, highlights, and wider implications of this historic state visit.

The visit took place from July 2nd to July 3rd, 2025, and was part of a broader five-nation tour encompassing African and Latin American countries. Modi's arrival in Accra was met with a ceremonial reception that included a 21-gun salute and a guard of honour. In a notable gesture of friendship, Ghana conferred upon him the "Officer of the Order of the Star of Ghana," the country's highest civilian award. Modi dedicated this honour to the people of India, as well as to the centuries-old bonds of solidarity and cooperation between India and Ghana. This recognition not only underscored the importance Ghana attaches to its partnership with India but also demonstrated India's rising profile as a trusted development partner in Africa.

One of the primary objectives of the visit was to strengthen bilateral trade and investment ties. At present, trade between India and Ghana stands at approximately three billion dollars. During the discussions with President Nana Akufo-Addo and senior Ghanaian ministers, Modi laid out a clear vision to

double this figure to six billion dollars over the next five years. Both leaders emphasized the need to diversify trade beyond traditional commodities into sectors such as digital infrastructure, renewable energy, pharmaceuticals, agriculture, and education technology. The potential for Indian companies to expand their footprint in Ghana is significant, especially as Ghana continues to emerge as one of West Africa's most dynamic economies.

To provide concrete frameworks for collaboration, the two sides signed four important Memoranda of Understanding. The first was a Cultural Exchange Programme aimed at promoting deeper ties in the fields of literature, music, film, and the performing arts. This initiative is expected to foster greater people-to-people connections and mutual understanding. The second MoU focused on standards cooperation between the Bureau of Indian Standards and the Ghana Standards Authority, intended to harmonize technical regulations and facilitate smoother trade. The third agreement, which has drawn considerable attention, centred on traditional medicine and Ayurveda. India pledged to support Ghana's efforts to integrate Ayurvedic principles into public health initiatives, including capacity-building programs for health professionals. The fourth agreement established a Joint Commission Mechanism to institutionalize dialogue and ensure regular reviews of progress across all areas of engagement.

Beyond trade and cultural cooperation, the visit was notable for its emphasis on digital transformation and financial inclusion. India offered technical assistance to help Ghana

adopt a digital payments ecosystem modelled on India's successful Unified Payments Interface (UPI). By sharing expertise in digital infrastructure, India hopes to contribute to Ghana's ambition of becoming a hub for innovation and fintech in West Africa. This initiative holds promise for enabling micro-entrepreneurs, reducing transaction costs, and expanding access to financial services for Ghana's underserved communities.

Development cooperation featured prominently in the bilateral agenda. Prime Minister Modi announced the establishment of a Skill Development Centre to train Ghanaian youth in fields ranging from information technology to renewable energy. Scholarships under the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) program are to be doubled, allowing more Ghanaian professionals to benefit from training in India. India also expressed its commitment to supporting the "Feed Ghana" initiative, which aims to modernize agriculture and achieve food security. In the health sector, India pledged assistance for establishing Jan Aushadhi Kendras—low-cost pharmacies based on India's public health model—and proposed collaboration on vaccine production, especially in light of recent global health crises.

Security cooperation was another pillar of Modi's discussions in Accra. Ghana, located on the Gulf of Guinea, faces security challenges such as maritime piracy, illegal trafficking, and regional instability. India offered to strengthen Ghana's maritime security capabilities through training and technical support. Both countries agreed to enhance counter-terrorism cooperation, improve information sharing, and develop cybersecurity frameworks. These measures align with India's vision of "Security and Growth for All in the Region" (SAGAR) and reflect a broader commitment to promoting regional stability.

Strategically, the visit underscored India's intention to play a larger role in Africa's development narrative. Since the announcement of the "Ten Guiding Principles of India–Africa Engagement" in 2018, New Delhi has sought to present itself as a partner guided by mutual respect and demand-driven cooperation. Ghana, as a stable democracy with a rapidly growing economy, offers a natural platform for India's expanded engagement in West Africa. The timing of the visit was also important. In an era marked by global conflicts, supply chain disruptions, and debates over the reform of international institutions, India aims to position itself as a leading voice of the Global South. Modi's emphasis on democratic governance, equitable growth, and climate resilience found a receptive audience in Accra, which has long championed similar principles in regional forums.

Economic opportunities arising from the visit are considerable. Sectors such as solar energy, affordable housing, pharmaceuticals, and digital education are poised to benefit from Indian investments and technology transfers. With Indian companies already engaged in nearly 900 projects across Ghana, the foundation for scaling up cooperation is strong. However, realizing the full potential of these commitments will require concerted efforts to overcome bureaucratic delays, mobilize financing, and ensure that projects are implemented transparently and efficiently.

Cultural diplomacy also featured prominently during the visit. The two nations share historical linkages dating back to Ghana's independence movement, which drew inspiration from Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence. The Indian diaspora in Ghana, though relatively small, has contributed to strengthening ties in commerce, education, and cultural life. The new Cultural Exchange Programme, coupled with collaborations in yoga and Ayurveda, will help deepen this soft power engagement.

While the visit yielded several tangible outcomes, challenges remain. India faces strong competition from China, which has invested heavily in infrastructure and mining in Ghana. Turkey and the European Union have also expanded their presence in recent years. To sustain momentum, India must ensure that its projects are locally owned, responsive to Ghanaian development priorities, and implemented in a manner that builds long-term goodwill. Additionally, there is a need for more robust mechanisms to monitor and evaluate the impact of development cooperation initiatives.

In conclusion, Prime Minister Modi's July 2025 visit to Ghana was a landmark event that signalled a new era in India-Ghana relations. By combining trade, digital partnerships, security collaboration, and cultural diplomacy, the visit moved the relationship beyond symbolism to concrete, actionable

commitments. For Ghana, the partnership with India offers an opportunity to diversify its international relationships, harness new technologies, and access affordable development financing. For India, deeper ties with Ghana strengthen its strategic presence in West Africa and reinforce its ambition to be recognized as a credible and committed partner of the Global South.

The real test, however, lies in implementation. Whether this visit becomes a turning point or remains a moment of ceremonial rhetoric will depend on how effectively the two governments translate agreements into outcomes that improve the lives of ordinary citizens. If successful, the India-Ghana partnership forged in Accra in July 2025 could serve as a model for India's broader engagement with Africa in the decades ahead.

**Views are personal*

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