

Kampala to New Delhi: Uganda and the new India-Africa Spirit

When India hosts the Fourth India-Africa Forum Summit (IAFS-IV) from 28–31 May 2026 in New Delhi, it will be far more than just another diplomatic gathering.

It will mark an opportunity to reinvigorate a partnership rooted in shared history, strengthened through practical cooperation, and increasingly shaped by a strategic vision for the future.

The summit's theme—IA SPIRIT: India Africa Strategic Partnership for Innovation, Resilience and Inclusive Transformation—captures the present requirements of both India and Africa.

The world is facing supply-chain disruption, climate stress, health insecurity, digital divides and pressure on multilateral institutions.

India and Africa are, therefore, engaging as two major centres of the Global South with complementary development journeys and a shared interest in a more representative global order.

Since 2008, the India-Africa Forum Summit has provided the apex institutional framework for this engagement.

After summits in New Delhi (IAFS-I in 2008), Addis Ababa (IAFS-II in 2011), and again New Delhi (IAFS-III in 2015), IAFS-IV comes after a decade, when the relationship has expanded into a compact covering trade, investment, digital public infrastructure, agriculture, health, education, defence, maritime security, climate action and people-to-people ties.

The scale is significant. India-Africa merchandise trade is above \$80 billion. Around 196 Indian Lines of Credit (LOCs) worth \$12 billion have supported various projects across 42 African countries.

Tens of thousands of scholarships and training slots have been offered to African partners.

India's support for the African Union's per-

India-Uganda relations are rooted in history and have acquired depth across political, economic, defence, education, health, cultural and tourism sectors.



Upender Singh Rawat
Partnerships

manent membership of the G20 and African representation in a reformed United Nations Security Council show that the partnership is political, not merely transactional.

Uganda has a special place in this journey. It was in the Parliament of Uganda in July 2018 that Prime Minister Narendra Modi articulated the 10 guiding principles for India's engagement with Africa, including that Africa will remain at the top of India's priorities and that India's development partnership will be guided by African priorities.

India-Uganda relations are rooted in history and have acquired depth across political, economic, defence, education, health, cultural and tourism sectors.

India established its diplomatic presence in Uganda in 1965.

The Indian community in Uganda remains a strong bridge of commerce and people-to-people contact, with important contributions in manufacturing, agro-processing, banking, sugar, real estate, tourism, IT and healthcare.

The partnership has also become institution-driven. The National Forensic Sciences University campus in Jinja, India's first over-

seas NFSU campus, is a flagship example. Its programmes in forensic sciences, homeland security, cyber security and digital forensics directly reflect IAFS-IV's emphasis on innovation, resilience and inclusive transformation.

Defence cooperation through Indian training support at Uganda's Senior Command and Staff College, Kimaka, and Indian Technical Economic and Cooperation (ITEC) capacity-building scholarships for Ugandan personnel further demonstrates long-term capacity building.

Commercial ties have matured, though they remain below potential. India-Uganda trade crossed \$1 billion in 2022 and Uganda also benefits from India's Duty Free Tariff Preference Scheme for Least Developed Countries.

Recent trade missions, the India Trade Show in Kampala, the Joint Trade Committee meeting, and Ugandan Ministerial participation in India-Africa business platforms point to a practical agenda in pharmaceuticals, healthcare, agriculture, vehicles, digital services and manufacturing.

At IAFS-IV, Uganda's participation will matter across tracks: the Senior Officials' Meeting on May 28, the Foreign Ministers' Meeting on May 29, the Leaders' Summit on May 31, and the India-Africa Business Dialogue and Exhibition, Track 2 Dialogue and cultural events.

For Uganda, the summit is an opportunity to convert political goodwill into trade, technology, skills, health, education and investment outcomes.

For India, Uganda is a trusted East African partner, a NAM chair, a regional gateway and a living example of India-Africa cooperation on the ground.

IAFS-IV should be seen, therefore, not as an isolated summit but as a platform for the next decade of India-Uganda and India-Africa cooperation—one based on shared priorities, mutual respect and practical delivery.

His Excellency Upender Singh Rawat, High Commissioner of India to Uganda

At: Allan Chelwech 29/35 Bth Street, P.O. Box 12141 Kampala, Uganda

Phones 0312301100/101 Fax 041232369

Email editorial@ug.nationmedia.com Registered at the GPO as a newspaper