



Global South Matters

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Global South Centre of Excellence

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IN FOCUS

Reducing Infant Mortality in the Global South: Lessons from Kerala, India

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Infant mortality is one of the most telling indicators of a health system's performance. Globally, progress has been uneven: while some nations approach developed-world benchmarks, others continue to struggle with high infant deaths. India's national infant mortality rate (IMR) is 25 per 1,000 live births, but Kerala stands out with an IMR of just 5 per 1,000 live births. It is the lowest in India and even lower than the United States, which reported 5.6 in 2022. Its neonatal mortality rate has also fallen below 4, comparable to that of advanced economies.

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Key Developments in the Global South



India and Singapore Discuss Ways to Enhance Cooperation

At the invitation of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, H.E. Mr. Lawrence Wong, Prime Minister of the Republic of Singapore, paid an Official Visit to India from 02-04 September 2025. This was Prime Minister Wong's first visit to India in his capacity as Singapore's Prime Minister. Singapore is an important partner for India, including in our 'Act East' Policy. During the visit of Prime Minister Modi to Singapore in September 2024, bilateral ties were elevated to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. The visit provided an opportunity for both Prime Ministers to review our robust and multifaceted cooperation and to set the path for future collaboration.

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Education Minister Jayant Chaudhary Calls India's Digital Public Infrastructure a Model for Global South

Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan has said that literacy is a means to dignity, empowerment and self-reliance. Mr Pradhan said this while virtually addressing the International Literacy Day celebrations in New Delhi. Highlighting India's progress and vision for universal literacy, the Minister said that India's literacy rate has risen from 74 percent in 2011 to about 81 percent in 2023-24. Underscoring that literacy goes beyond reading and writing, Mr Pradhan also emphasised that true progress will be achieved only when literacy becomes a lived reality for every citizen. The Minister also urged youth and students to contribute to the literacy mission, suggesting such efforts be integrated with academic credits.

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Cooperation with Global South is Not Conditioned by Current Politics: Russian President Vladimir Putin

Russian President Vladimir Putin on Friday said that Russia's cooperation with the Global South is not related or conditioned by the current political waves. Putin said that the cooperation is a result of common shared interests. "Well, a bear is a bear. Well, you mentioned the double-headed eagle looking to the west and the east. Well, there is also south, you know. We've been discussing it with our colleagues repeatedly, and I've always been saying that expansion of our interaction and our joint work with our friends in the Asia-Pacific region". Putin gave an example, saying that Russia's work with China began 20 years back, and was not influenced by US President Donald Trump's policies.

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CARICOM Secretary-General Carla Barnett Emphasises Shared Challenges, Cooperation Opportunities with Africa

Secretary-General of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), Carla Barnett, has highlighted that the shared challenges faced by the Caribbean and Africa open new opportunities for collaboration and unity. In her remarks, Barnett stressed that common challenges create a platform for solidarity, pointing to health workforce development, sustainable financing, and collaborative research as areas where cooperation can deliver tangible results. She underlined that the meeting represents an opportunity to accelerate collective action and strengthen health as a foundation of sustainable social and economic development. “Our responsibility is not only to exchange ideas, but to agree on concrete actions that can be pursued collectively by all governments and supported by all regional institutions,” Barnett said.

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External Affairs Minister Jaishankar Reiterates India’s Commitment to Amplify Voice of Global South

External Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar interacted with participants of the 3rd Global South Young Diplomats Forum and expressed India’s commitment to articulate, assert and amplify the voice of the Global South. The 3rd edition of the Global South Young Diplomats Forum (GSYDF) was inaugurated by Ambassador Neena Malhotra, Secretary (South) at Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service (SSIFS) on Monday. As many as 42 diplomats from 42 countries representing diverse geographies – Asia, Africa, Latin America, Caribbean Islands, Eurasia, Oceania – are participating in the programme. Earlier in August, Prime Minister Narendra Modi stressed that India’s global initiatives, like Mission LiFE, Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure, International Solar Alliance, and Global Biofuels Alliance, focus on promoting the interests of the Global South.

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India's Infant Mortality Rate Hits Historic Low of 25

Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) — considered a vital measure of healthcare quality — is just 5 per 1,000 live births in Kerala, the lowest among all bigger states and far below the national average. India's overall IMR stands at 25 per 1,000 live births, less than one-fifth of the 1971 level of 129. Over the last decade, IMR has dropped by nearly 37.5 per cent, showing significant progress nationwide. India's population indicators also reflect improvement. The birth rate has dropped sharply from 36.9 in 1971 to 18.4 in 2023, and the death rate has fallen from 14.9 to 6.4 over the same period.

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The 2nd Africa Climate Summit Calls for Climate Investment and African-Led Solutions

The Second Africa Climate Summit (ACS2) in Addis Ababa urged African leaders to move from rhetoric to action—positioning Africa not as a victim of climate change, but as a driving force of solutions and the next global climate economy. Convened by the African Union Commission (AUC) and hosted by the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE), the Summit convened Heads of State and Government, ministers, diplomats, and international partners under the theme: “Accelerating Global Climate Solutions: Financing for Africa’s Resilient and Green Development.” During his keynote address, Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed (PhD) urged the world to rethink Africa’s role in addressing climate change.

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1st Asia–Africa International Forum Upholds the Importance of Regional Cooperation

Nearly 200 international delegates, including scholars, policymakers and experts from across Asia and Africa, alongside representatives of international organisations, gathered at a forum in Hanoi to explore ways of promoting regional cooperation in the face of global challenges. The Asia–Africa International Forum, the first of its kind, was held under the theme “Adapting to global challenges in the new context” by the Institute for South Asian, West Asian and African Studies under the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences (VASS) on September 9. Delegates noted that Vietnam’s ties with Asian and African partners have expanded and deepened in recent years, covering trade, investment, education and cultural exchange.

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Vietnam Approves \$5 Million CO₂ Credit Deal With World Bank

Vietnam has approved the transfer of one million tons of CO₂ emission reductions generated from plantation forests in the north-central region to the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), part of the World Bank Group. The credits are part of the 5.9 million tons of surplus CO₂ reductions achieved during 2018–2019. The ERPA, first signed in 2020 between the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and the IBRD, originally covered 10.3 million tons of reductions. Actual performance exceeded expectations, leaving a surplus that is now partially monetised.

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Brazil and Mexico Sign Framework Agreement for Agricultural Cooperation

As part of the Brazilian official mission to Mexico led by Vice President and Minister of Development, Industry, Trade and Services, Geraldo Alckmin, Brazil's Minister of Agriculture and Livestock, Carlos Fávaro, met with Mexico's Secretary of Agriculture and Rural Development (Sader), Julio Antonio Berdegue Sacristán. During the meeting, the two ministers signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) establishing a legal framework for cooperation between Brazil's Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (Mapa) and Sader. Under the MoU, both countries will exchange information, technologies, and best practices, in addition to conducting technical visits and strategic initiatives to strengthen bilateral trade.

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Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan Agree on Joint Water and Energy Measures

Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan have reached a landmark agreement on coordinated water and energy management, signalling a deepening commitment to cross-border cooperation amid growing seasonal and climate-related challenges. The protocols define mutual obligations for water releases and electricity exchanges, with the goal of balancing the region's energy needs and preserving critical water resources. According to the Kyrgyz Ministry of Energy, the arrangement is designed to optimise the use of water stored in Toktogul and to secure reliable electricity supplies for Kyrgyzstan.

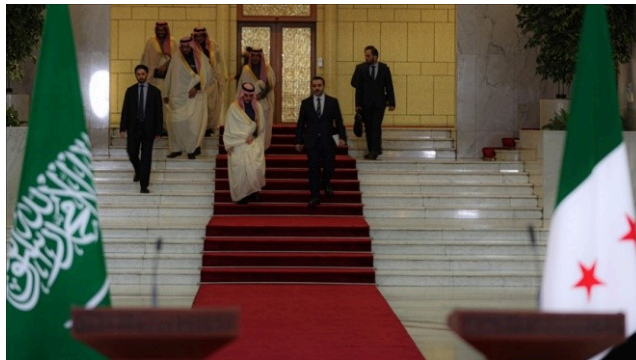
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Philippines and Cambodia Strengthen Agricultural Cooperation

Agriculture Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel Jr. held a bilateral meeting with Cambodian Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Dith Tina to strengthen agricultural cooperation between the two Southeast Asian nations. The meeting took place during the state visit of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. to Cambodia and focused on deepening collaboration in agricultural trade, food security, and market access for farm products. Minister Dith expressed optimism that Cambodia's agricultural exports to the Philippines—particularly its premium aromatic rice—would see an uptick, citing growing demand in Manila and other urban areas.

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Syria and Saudi Arabia Deepen Agricultural Cooperation

Syrian and Saudi officials met in Damascus and Riyadh for separate rounds of talks that underscored the growing partnership between the two countries across humanitarian, development and agricultural fields. In the Syrian capital, Foreign Minister Asaad al-Shaibani welcomed a Saudi delegation led by Royal Court adviser Abdullah bin Abdulaziz al-Rabeeah, who heads the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center. The meeting reviewed dozens of planned relief and development projects covering health, education, housing and food security. The Saudi team joined Syrian officials to inaugurate new initiatives backed by the King Salman Center in different parts of the country.

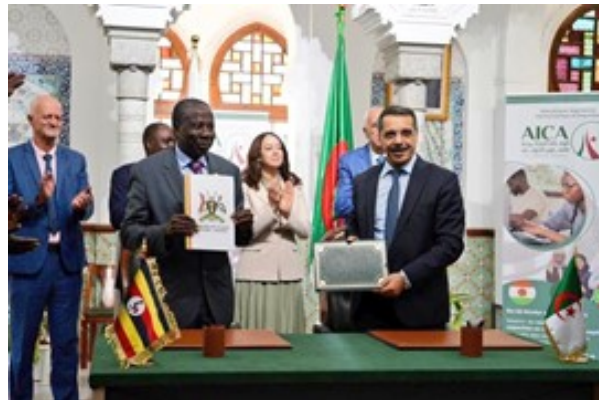
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West African Leaders Commit to Advance Lassa Fever Vaccine for the Region

In a historic moment for regional solidarity and leadership, West African Ministers of Health today pledged their joint commitment to advance the development of, and readiness for, much-needed vaccines against Lassa fever in recognition of the significant threat to regional health security posed by the disease. The Ministers of Health from across the region gathered for high-level talks convened by the West African Health Organisation (WAHO) and Dr. Muhammad Ali Pate, the Coordinating Minister of Health and Social Welfare of Nigeria, as co-leads of the Lassa fever Vaccine Coalition, and Mr. Pierre N’Gou Dimba, Minister of Health, Public Hygiene and Universal Health Coverage of the Republic of Côte d’Ivoire, as host of the Lassa fever International Conference in Abidjan.

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Uganda and Algeria Strengthen Health Ties

Uganda’s healthcare sector is set for a major boost following the signing of a Shs50 billion cooperation agreement with Algeria, targeting the expansion and rehabilitation of Katakwi General Hospital. The deal, signed in Algiers by Finance Minister Matia Kasaija and his Algerian counterpart, Abdelkarim Bouzred, goes beyond just infrastructure support. It forms part of a broader framework overseen by the Algerian International Cooperation for Solidarity and Development Agency, positioning Algeria as a long-term partner in strengthening Uganda’s health system. Under the first phase, the grant will fund upgrades at Katakwi General Hospital, a facility that serves more than 500,000 people across Katakwi and neighbouring districts.

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Philippines Launches its First Digital Health ID

mWell, the digital healthcare arm of Metro Pacific Investments Corporation (MPIC), officially launched the mWell Health ID, the country's first fully digital health identity designed to enable Filipinos to carry their complete personal health records in their pocket. Accessible via the mWell app, the Health ID serves as a secure digital passport containing personal health records, lab results, prescriptions, vaccination records, emergency contacts, and other vital health information. It offers built-in consent and privacy controls, allowing patients to easily share their records with doctors, hospitals, and partner clinics without the hassle of paperwork.

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Guinea-Bissau Launches First National Maternal Health Guidelines

In an important step to reduce maternal mortality, Guinea-Bissau has launched its first-ever national guidelines for maternal health, focused on improving care before, during and after childbirth. The Ministry of Health, with support from the World Health Organization (WHO) and partners, led the development of this new national framework to guide maternal health services. The goal is to curb maternal deaths, estimated to be about 500 per 100,000 live births. Under the Sustainable Development Goals maternal mortality reduction targets, countries should aim to lower maternal deaths to under 70 per 100,000 live births. Guinea-Bissau has not had standard clinical protocols for maternal care. This made it difficult to provide consistent, high-quality services and contributed to avoidable deaths among mothers and newborns.

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Indonesia Launches Digital Wallet to Drive Financial Inclusion

Indonesian fintech firm, Amarta, has obtained a license and launched a digital wallet, allowing it to offer digital payment services. The firm announced recently that with the license issued by Bank Indonesia, it now officially becomes PT Amarta Financial Group, and will continue to pursue its financial inclusion efforts, especially in rural parts of the country. Amarta mentions that its digital technology has substantially contributed to financial inclusion and the rural economy of Indonesia, supporting over 3.3 million medium and small-sized enterprises (MSMEs) across the country. In total, it has reached about 50,000 people in rural Indonesia with different financial services.

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Vietnam Accelerates Digital Transformation to Drive National Growth

Making digital transformation the foundation of national development in the new era is not only an urgent requirement but also a strategic choice for Vietnam to make breakthroughs, narrow the development gap, deepen integration, and enhance competitiveness. The Party and the State have identified digital transformation as one of the three strategic breakthroughs for the new era, as set out in the Politburo's Resolution No. 57-NQ/TW on breakthroughs in science and technology development, innovation, and national digital transformation. Hanoi has established numerous community digital technology groups, drawing on feedback from officials and residents to continuously improve content and processes.

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Uganda Boosts Cybersecurity and Data Protection

A nationwide public awareness campaign dubbed “Beera Ku Guard” has been launched by the National Information Technology Authority – Uganda (NITA-U) in partnership with the Personal Data Protection Office (PDPO). The campaign is aimed at increasing national consciousness around cybersecurity, data protection, and privacy, both online and offline. The campaign, whose name translates to “stay guarded, and on the lookout,” has been officially unveiled at a media event hosted at Serena Hotel, Kampala, and officiated by Dr. Hatwib Mugasa, Executive Director of NITA-U. The campaign reiterates the Government of Uganda’s commitment to building a secure, inclusive, and accountable digital ecosystem for all Ugandans.

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