



Global South Matters

# DAKSHIN

## Global South Centre of Excellence



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### In-Focus Article

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### The Rising Debt Burden in the Global South: Time for Global Action

The Global South is facing a worsening debt crisis, with public debt rising from USD 8.6 trillion in 2010 to USD 32.2 trillion in 2024. Growing debt burdens and rising interest payments are constraining investments in health, education, and infrastructure, while widening the SDG financing gap. This article highlights the causes and implications of the debt crisis and suggests enhanced debt relief, increased development assistance, and stronger debt management measures to support sustainable development in the Global South.

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### Key Developments in the Global South

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**India, Nepal Discuss Ways to Take Forward Bilateral Ties, Development Cooperation**



India and Nepal discussed ways to take forward bilateral ties and development cooperation following the change in government in Kathmandu, with visiting Hon'ble Nepalese Foreign Minister H.E. Shisir Khanal calling for a “genuinely transformative relationship” driven by economic transformation and result-driven diplomacy. Hon'ble Indian External Affairs Minister Dr. S Jaishankar met Hon'ble Nepalese Foreign Minister H.E. Shisir Khanal to review bilateral ties, including development cooperation, connectivity, trade and transit, energy and people-to-people ties, and discuss regional and multilateral issues. He said on social media the two sides had a detailed discussion on “our unique partnership” and he reiterated India’s commitment to work with Nepal for mutual progress and prosperity.

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## **India-Indonesia Ties Deepen as Hon'ble External Affairs Minister Dr. S Jaishankar Outlines Blueprint for Defence, Trade Cooperation**

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Highlighting the deep-seated historical and strategic ties between the two nations, India’s Hon'ble External Affairs Minister Dr. S Jaishankar stated that the visit of Indonesian Hon'ble President H.E. Prabowo Subianto as the Republic Day Chief Guest in 2025 has imparted fresh momentum to the bilateral Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. Welcoming the Indonesian delegation for the 8th India-Indonesia Joint Commission Meeting (JCM), which is being held after a gap of four years, Hon'ble External Affairs Minister Dr. S Jaishankar outlined the vast potential for multi-sectoral cooperation. He further emphasised that the high-level dialogue would comprehensively review and

expand cooperation across diverse strategic fields, ranging from defence and trade to health and education.

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## India and Philippines Push for Closer Economic Ties, Review Trade Pact Options

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India and the Philippines said they would work to deepen trade and investment ties after bilateral commerce climbed to USD 3.9 billion in 2025-26, as officials from the two countries met in Manila to review cooperation and map out new areas of collaboration. The 14th meeting of the India-Philippines Joint Working Group on Trade and Investment (JWGTI), co-chaired by senior officials from India and Philippines, reviewed trends in trade and investment and identified priority products, services and promotional activities, according to an official statement. Officials discussed expanding cooperation in sectors including film, energy, construction and infrastructure, information and communications technology, IT-enabled services, artificial intelligence and pharmaceuticals, areas both sides said could support long-term growth and development goals.

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## India's Hon'ble External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar Hands Over 72 Health Facilities and 12 Heritage Projects to Nepal

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Hon'ble External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar virtually handed over 72 health facilities and 12 cultural heritage projects to Nepal under the Reconstruction programme post 2015 earthquake, after meeting with Hon'ble Nepalese Foreign Minister H.E. Shisir Khanal in New Delhi. The two leaders jointly launched the linkage between UPI (Unified Payments Interface) in India and the National Payments Interface of Nepal for facilitating cross-border personal remittances. Both leaders also witnessed the exchange of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) between Digital India Bhashini and Kathmandu University for co-creating the National Digital Infrastructure for a 'Voice First' Language Translation platform for Nepal. Hon'ble External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar also reiterated India's commitment to work with Nepal for the mutual progress, prosperity and well-being of the people of both nations.

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## India Advocates for Rules-Based Order at ASEAN Regional Forum

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India has underscored the critical value of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) framework alongside its commitment to dialogue and diplomatic engagement to navigate modern geopolitical hurdles during a high-level security meeting in the Philippines, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) announced. The diplomatic position was outlined by MEA spokesperson Shri Randhir Jaiswal in an official social media update, noting that "Secretary (East) Shri Rudrendra Tandon led the Indian delegation at the Asean Regional Forum (ARF) Senior Officials' Meeting in Manila. Elaborating on New Delhi's intervention during the summit, Shri Randhir Jaiswal stated that the Indian delegation "highlighted the critical relevance of the ARF mechanism and support for dialogue and diplomacy in addressing contemporary geopolitical challenges."

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## 'First Responder' India Sends Vaccines, Medical Supplies as Maldives Battles Measles Outbreak

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India sent a consignment of 20,000 doses of measles vaccines and approximately three tonnes of medical supplies to support Maldives government in strengthening its immunisation coverage and safeguard public health. According to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), India's timely assistance will help Maldives in addressing the increasing cases of measles and reinforce the response efforts of the government. "Maldives enjoys a special place in India's 'Neighbourhood First' policy and Vision MAHASAGAR. India, as a trusted First Responder, remains committed to working closely with the Government of Maldives in advancing shared priorities and for the mutual benefit of the people of the two countries," the MEA said in a statement. India's assistance comes after the Maldives' Health Protection Agency (HPA) said that four more people tested positive for measles last week, raising the total number of confirmed cases reported in Maldives in 2026 to 15.

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## BRICS Agriculture Ministers' Conference Begins in Indore, Madhya Pradesh

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The two-day BRICS Agriculture Ministers' Conference began in Indore, Madhya Pradesh. Hon'ble Union Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Minister Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan welcomed all delegates and stressed carrying forward the spirit of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam', the idea that the whole world is one family. He said that under Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's leadership, India's approach is built on peace over war and cooperation over conflict. He spoke about India's achievements in agriculture. He said that over the past decade, the sector has recorded an average annual growth of around 4.5 per cent. The country's total food production has risen to nearly 376 million tonnes. He pointed out that about 87 per cent of India's farmers are small and marginal farmers, and empowering them is the real key to inclusive development.

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## **BIMSTEC Emerging as Model of South-South Cooperation**

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Hon'ble BIMSTEC Secretary General H.E. Indra Mani Pandey said the Bay of Bengal regional grouping is poised to emerge as a dynamic and successful platform for regional cooperation and a shining example of South-South collaboration. In a message marking BIMSTEC Day, he said the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) is expected to play a crucial role in ensuring security and sustainable development of its member states. He said the organisation is undergoing a process of reform and revitalisation through the implementation of recommendations contained in the report of the Eminent Persons' Group (EPG), aimed at strengthening regional cooperation and enhancing the effectiveness of the grouping.

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## **Brazil Enters Central America With Strength, Signs an Agreement with Guatemala After 50 Years of Cooperation**

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Brazil, Guatemala, and Honduras advanced an agenda of agriculture, livestock, and trade focusing on research, innovation, health, animal genetics, bioinputs, food security, and integrated technical and regional cooperation. The Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock and the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food of Guatemala signed, a Memorandum of Understanding to expand bilateral cooperation in strategic areas of agricultural development. An official mission was also concluded in Honduras with advances in bilateral cooperation in agricultural research, technological innovation, rural development, and food security. The advancement of these agendas opens space for new insights on trade, technology, and food security in the region.

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## **Egypt and Saudi Arabia Seek Deeper Agricultural Cooperation to Advance Food Security**

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Hon'ble Minister of Agriculture and Land Reclamation H.E. Alaa Farouk discussed with Hon'ble Saudi Deputy Minister of Environment, Water and Agriculture H.E. Osama Faqeeha ways to enhance bilateral cooperation in the fields of agriculture, food security, and environmental protection. H.E. Alaa Farouk underscored the depth of the historic and fraternal ties between Egypt and Saudi Arabia, stressing the importance of continued coordination and joint efforts to achieve agricultural and environmental integration in support of sustainable development plans in both countries. Both sides emphasised the importance of unifying and coordinating Egyptian and Saudi stances at international forums, particularly regarding the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, in a manner that serves the shared interests of the two countries and the Arab region.

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## **Guyana, Dominican Republic Partner to Expand Mango and Avocado Production**

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Guyana and the Dominican Republic are moving to strengthen agricultural cooperation, with plans to develop large-scale mango and avocado production while boosting technical support and training for local farmers. The initiative emerged from discussions between Guyana's Hon'ble Agriculture Minister H.E. Zulfikar Mustapha and Hon'ble Dominican Agriculture Minister H.E. Francisco Oliverio Espaillat Bencosme during Mustapha's recent visit to the Dominican Republic. The talks focused on expanding agricultural production, improving technical capacity and promoting crop diversification in Guyana. A key outcome of the discussions was an agreement to pursue large-scale cultivation of

mangoes and avocados in Guyana, building on existing production while creating new commercial opportunities.

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## **Hon'ble Egyptian Agriculture Minister and World Bank Official Discuss Strategic Cooperation**

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Egypt's Hon'ble Agriculture Minister H.E. Alaa Farouk and World Bank Regional Director Mr. Meskerem Brhane discussed strengthening cooperation to support Egypt's food and water security, sustainable agricultural development, and rural economic growth. The talks focused on enhancing agricultural resilience, improving infrastructure, supporting smallholder farmers, promoting climate-smart agriculture, and expanding access to finance and digital services. The two sides also reviewed World Bank-funded projects and the Group's "AgriConnect" initiative, which aims to help small farmers transition to market-oriented production through better financing, technology, and market access. Discussions further covered cooperation under Egypt's "Productive Village" initiative, modernisation of agricultural cooperatives and irrigation systems, strengthening research and training programs, and attracting greater private-sector investment in the agriculture and food sectors.

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## **West Africa Urged to Build Financing Ecosystem for Agricultural Transformation**

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West African governments, financial institutions and development partners have been urged to build a robust regional financing ecosystem to unlock investment in agriculture,

reduce risks and accelerate food systems transformation across the sub region. The move, stakeholders said, would help bridge the gap between policy ambitions and investment execution by attracting commercial capital into agriculture, strengthening regional trade and creating sustainable opportunities for farmers and agribusinesses. The call was made at a high level strategic fireside chat on Unlocking West Africa's Agricultural Investment Future, held on the margins of the ECOWAS Rice Investment Roundtable in Accra. The event brought together regional institutions, development partners, financial actors and private sector leaders.

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## South Africa Commits \$72 Million to Address HIV epidemic

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South Africa's Hon'ble President H.E. Cyril Ramaphosa recently announced that a massive R1.3 billion initiative has been launched to roll out Lenacapavir, a groundbreaking long-acting injectable drug for HIV prevention. Describing the funding as a "catalytic investment," he emphasised that the partnership reflects a core principle South Africa has consistently championed: that lifesaving medicines must never be a privilege reserved for a select few, but must be accessible to all who need them. The announcement marks a critical turning point for public health in South Africa, which carries the world's largest HIV burden. The R1.3 billion rollout is being fueled by a combination of South African government funding and international backing from organizations like The Global Fund and the Children's Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF).

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## Kenya, Africa CDC Deepen Collaboration on Health Security and Epidemic Preparedness

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Kenya's Hon'ble Cabinet Secretary for Health H.E. Dr. Aden Duale held high-level consultations with the Africa Centre for Diseases Control and Prevention's Deputy Director General Dr. Raji Tajudeen to strengthen collaboration on regional health security, epidemic preparedness, and Africa's capacity to respond to public health emergencies. The meeting focused on advancing cooperation in disease surveillance, emergency preparedness, workforce development, and local manufacturing of health products and technologies. The Cabinet Secretary acknowledged the critical role played by Africa CDC under the leadership of Dr. Jean Kaseya in supporting African countries to build resilient public health systems and coordinate responses to health emergencies, including ongoing Ebola response efforts in the region.

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## States Call For Compulsory Health Insurance Law In Nigeria

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The maiden National Summit of State Social Health Insurance Agencies (SSHIA) in Akure, Ondo State, with stakeholders adopting a far-reaching communique calling for compulsory health insurance laws across all states of the federation is a key step toward achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC). The communique, issued at the end of the two-day summit held at the International Culture and Event Centre, in Akure, the state capital, was signed by the Chairman of the Forum of CEOs of SSHIA, Dr. Mohammed Safana, and the Secretary, Dr. Vetty Agala. The summit brought together policymakers, regulators, development partners, and state health insurance executives under the Forum of CEOs of SSHIA in Nigeria to deliberate on strengthening health financing systems and expanding access to affordable healthcare.

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## Kazakhstan Classifies Antibiotic Resistance as National Security Concern

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The Ministry of Health said it plans to strengthen regulation of antibiotic dispensing and introduce additional measures to curb the growing spread of drug-resistant infections, which it attributed in part to widespread self-medication and illegal over-the-counter sales, including via online platforms. Officials warned that misuse of antibiotics is accelerating antimicrobial resistance, which already causes an estimated 700,000 deaths globally each

year. The World Health Organisation (WHO) has projected that deaths linked to resistant infections could rise to 40 million annually by 2050 if current trends continue. Dr. Erik Baizhunusov, chair of Kazakhstan's National Centre for Public Health, said antimicrobial resistance had moved beyond a purely medical issue. According to the National Centre for Public Health, Kazakhstan is not meeting WHO-recommended standards for antibiotic consumption patterns.

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## **ASEAN Urged to Build Integrated Fintech Ecosystem for Digital Future: Hon'ble Deputy Prime Minister H.E. Nguyễn Văn Thắng**

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At a discussion on regional fintech development during the ASEAN Future Forum 2026, Hon'ble Deputy Prime Minister H.E. Nguyễn Văn Thắng said that ASEAN must move beyond connecting markets and start building an integrated financial technology ecosystem if it wants to emerge as a major digital finance hub in the Asia-Pacific region. He called for stronger cooperation among governments, regulators, businesses and investors to create a more connected, secure and inclusive digital financial landscape across Southeast Asia. He said fintech had evolved far beyond digital payments and banking services, becoming strategic infrastructure that supports economic growth, cross-border connectivity and trust in the region's digital economy.

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## **West Africa Risks Digital Dependence Without Strong Cyber Defences: Ghana's Hon'ble Minister for Communication, Digital Technology and Innovations, H.E. Samuel Nartey George**

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Ghana's Hon'ble Minister for Communication, Digital Technology and Innovations, H.E. Samuel Nartey George has called on West African developers and cybersecurity

professionals to treat digital security as a matter of national sovereignty. According to him, countries that fail to protect their digital infrastructure risk becoming dependent on foreign vendors and external decision-making. He made the remarks at the opening of the ECOWAS Regional Hackathon held at the Mensvic Grand Hotel in Accra. The 48-hour event brought together developers and cybersecurity experts from across West Africa. “The future of West Africa’s digital security is being shaped here, by the innovators in this room,” he said. The Minister warned that despite significant digital progress across the region, growing cyber threats pose serious risks.

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## Kenya and South Africa Pledge Closer Cooperation on AI, Fintech and Cross-Border Investment

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Kenya and South Africa have pledged to deepen cooperation in digital innovation, financial services and investment, with artificial intelligence featuring prominently among the priority areas for joint development. Addressing the Joint South Africa-Kenya Business Forum, Hon’ble Kenyan President H.E. William Ruto and Hon’ble South African President H.E. Cyril Ramaphosa highlighted the growing importance of technology, capital markets and cross-border investment in advancing continental integration under the African Continental Free Trade Area. Both leaders stressed that Africa’s future growth would depend on moving beyond traditional trade patterns toward integrated value chains, digital connectivity and innovation-driven industries.

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## Namibia and Angola Join Forces to Accelerate Digital Transformation

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Namibia and Angola have strengthened their bilateral ties in the digital sector with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) aimed at enhancing cooperation in information and communication technology (ICT) and media development. The agreement was signed during the official opening of ANGOTIC 2026 in Luanda, Angola, by Namibia's Hon'ble Minister of Information and Communication Technology, H.E. Emma Theofelus, and Angola's Hon'ble Minister of Telecommunications, Information Technologies and Social Communication, H.E. Mário Oliveira. The MoU establishes a framework for collaboration in several areas of mutual interest, including the promotion of ICT and media cooperation, the organisation of joint events and initiatives, and the exchange of knowledge and expertise between professionals in both countries.

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## **Ghana and Zambia Reinforce Partnership to Support Digital Transformation Across Africa**

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The National Communications Authority (NCA) welcomed a senior delegation from Zambia, headed by the Special Envoy of Hon'ble President H.E. Hakainde Hichilema and accompanied by officials from the country's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. The delegation was received by Hon'ble Director General, NCA, Mr. Rizig Dominic Samuel as part of a courtesy engagement aimed at enhancing cooperation between the two nations. Discussions centered on expanding bilateral collaboration, particularly in the telecommunications sector, and exploring opportunities to support Africa's broader digital development agenda. The meeting also addressed matters related to the forthcoming African Telecommunications Union (ATU) elections, as well as Zambia's vision for advancing connectivity and digital inclusion across the continent.

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## **Brazil and the ILO Reinforce Their Strategic Partnership and Commitment to South-South**

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Brazilian Representatives of the Government, employers' and workers' organizations, and senior officials of the International Labour Organization (ILO) reaffirmed their shared commitment to promoting decent work through South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) during their annual partnership SSTC review meeting at the ILO headquarters in Geneva. Brazil has been a leader and co-convenor of the Global Coalition for Social Justice and has actively supported the implementation of the “Social Justice for the Global South” programme. The programme, whose pillars include gender equality, fundamental principles and rights at work and social protection, aims to share good practices on the promotion of decent work, with other global south countries , with a focus on Latin America and the Caribbean and Asia and the Pacific.

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## **AIIB to Lend Acelen Renewables USD58 Million to Support Sustainable Aviation Fuel Project in Brazil**

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The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) will lend USD58 million to Acelen Renewables to support the development of a large-scale biorefinery project in Bahia, Brazil. The project will expand the production of sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) and renewable diesel (HVO), contributing to the decarbonisation of the aviation and heavy transport sectors. A new hydro-processed esters and fatty acids (HEFA) plant, with a processing capacity of about 20,000 barrels a day, will convert feedstocks such as soybean oil, used cooking oil and other waste-based inputs into SAF and HVO, with output expected to serve domestic and international markets. As one of the first large-scale private-sector SAF production facilities in Brazil utilizing HEFA technology, the project represents an important step toward establishing a commercially viable SAF market in the country and abroad.

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