Time for a new India-Africa digital compact

Why in news: **Africa Day (May 25)** marks the founding of the **Organisation of African Unity in 1963.** Symbolises **unity, independence, and development** across the African continent.

AU's Digital Transformation Strategy

- The **African Union's Digital Transformation Strategy (2020–2030)** places **digital innovation** at the centre of development. Urges **governments to adopt digital solutions** for **socio-economic progress.**
  India's Development Diplomacy Evolution
- India combines **state-led financing** with **socially embedded solutions.**
- Initiatives include **technical training**, **infrastructure projects**, and **concessional credit lines.**
- Increasing role of **social enterprises** offering **low-cost, high-impact innovations.**

India's Digital Approach

- A shift to **integrated, technology-driven partnerships.**
- Builds on **Pan-African e-Network (2009)** for **tele-medicine and tele-education** via satellite and fibre-optics.
- Based on India's **Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI)**: **Aadhaar, UPI, CoWIN, DIKSHA.**
- India now focuses on **sharing/co-creating digital solutions** to address **governance and service delivery.**

Africa's Digital Shift

- **African nations align with**: Policy and Regulatory Initiative for Digital Africa, Smart Africa Alliance.
- **Objective**: **Inclusive and sustainable development** via technology.

Emerging India–Africa Digital Collaborations

- **2021**: Togo's National Agency for Identification signed MoU with **IIIT-Bangalore** for a **Modular Open-Source ID Platform.**
- **2023**: Zambia signed MoU with **Centre for Digital Public Infrastructure (IIIT-B)** for **Smart Zambia Initiative.**
- **2024**: Bank of Namibia partnered with **NPCI** to develop **UPI-like payment system.**
- **Ghana** integrating its system with **India's UPI** for **faster transactions.**
- India's **DPI model** praised for **affordability, scalability, and public-oriented design.**

Global Context of Digital Partnerships

- African nations select digital partners based on **capacity to meet national priorities**, not ideology.
- **China** preferred in infrastructure due to **state-backed financing. India, EU, US** are also **key contenders.**
- **India stands out with**: Open-source, public-oriented DPI, Avoids surveillance-driven or proprietary models, Advocates state-led co-development.

IIT Madras Zanzibar Campus

- First **overseas IIT campus** launched in **Zanzibar.** Offers courses in **Data Science and AI.** Funded with help from **Indian private sector** for scholarships. Aims at **technical capacity-building** aligned with **socio-economic goals.**

Key Challenges in Africa

- **World's largest digital divide** persists.

- **Barriers include**: High costs of data/devices, Rural-urban connectivity disparities, Gender gap in digital access/literacy. **Energy supply** is a bottleneck for digital infrastructure.
- Calls for investment in **sustainable power** and **grid expansion.**

Digital Governance Progress
- **85%** of African nations have **digital ID systems.** Over **70% collect biometric data** for authentication.
- Presents a solid base for **inclusive and interoperable platforms.**

Way Forward
- **Proposed India–Africa digital compact should be anchored in**: Mutual respect, Co-development and Long-term institutional partnerships. Can serve as a **scalable model** for **advancing digital inclusion** across Africa.

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[Current Affairs Course is now Live](). Course will start in October 2025 1st week.

Modules will include class notes, monthly compilation, quarter compilation and annual compilation. This will help in regular revision r/t in the fag-end of preparation.

I will provide my annual compilation, like last year, on Telegram in May 1st week.

Last year I had promised 20 questions in Prelims from my notes & 28+ Questions could be answered from the same.

30 questions is my aim for 2026 prelims. To meet that, I have analyzed why I missed 5-6 C.A. questions in 2025 and I have increased my coverage accordingly.