

Reimagining India's South Asia Playbook While Batting for the Global South

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Summary

As India projects an era of aspirational diplomacy aimed at global leadership, managing its immediate neighbourhood still beckons acute attention. The question arises as to whether India is overstretching itself and not aligning capabilities and aspirations by emphasising its Global South strategy, while its vicinity calls for greater focus. This paper attempts to assess India's playbook for South Asia while it bats for the broader Global South. It also attempts to inquire whether India could align the concerns closer to home with the call for a more exalted leadership of the Global South and how India could leverage bilateral and multilateral partnerships in this enviable yet challenging endeavour.

Introduction

The year 2023 for India's foreign policy, more than anything else, belongs to its G20 presidency and its championship of the Global South, and efforts to bridge the gulf with the Global North in addressing the concerns of the former. In such pursuit of benign leadership, New Delhi seems to have placed the realisation of its value-based aspirations of 'vishwaguru' (world guru), 'vishwamitra' (global friend) and 'vasudhaiva kutumbakam' (the world is one family). A host of issues that are central to sustainable development and growth of the Global South, including global health, digital public infrastructure, food security, resilient supply chains, climate change mitigation, transition to a greener economy and many others, have been at the front and centre of India's G20 presidency. However, as India projects an era of aspirational diplomacy aimed at global leadership, managing its immediate neighbourhood still beckons acute attention. Moreover, the challenge of implementing many initiatives cutting across South Asia's politics, economics and security remains a task cut out for India's foreign policy.

New Delhi must maintain the positive trend in India-Bangladesh relations, with Sheikh Hasina's government winning another term, and it must deal with the current challenges posed by the new government in the Maldives. While building a stable relationship with Sri Lanka coming out of a difficult economic crisis, New Delhi will need to find a new meaning of engagement with Taliban-ruled Afghanistan, along with navigating terms with a volatile Pakistan. From the new curves in Bhutan's ties with China to the more familiar risks and opportunities of dealing with Nepal, New Delhi has its hands full in South Asia. Although Myanmar is technically not a South Asian country, the impact of its ongoing crisis on India's north-eastern region cannot be ignored.

This paper will attempt to assess what is India's playbook for South Asia while it champions for the broader Global South. In addition, the paper will inquire into whether India could align the concerns and priorities closer to home with the call for a more exalted leadership

of the Global South. It also attempts to argue how India, besides the South-South cooperation, can use its growing engagement with the Global North to address concerns of the Global South.

India's Responsible Rise and the Global South

Recently, the overriding language of India's foreign policy has been one of building inclusiveness in an emerging multipolar world undergoing a crisis of multilateralism. During its G20 presidency last year, that language solidified the call to shift the spotlight on the concerns and priorities of the Global South. Indeed, to propagate and vouch for inclusiveness in a world replete with power asymmetries and differing national interests is not a walk in the park. However, it will continue to be inevitable and worth pursuing. In this pursuit, India's civilisational connections with the Global South, newfound curve of constructive engagements with countries of the Global North and multilateral platforms representing the emerging economies present an opportunity for itself and the greater good. India's championship of the Global South is being built on a shared historical experience of colonisation, but more importantly, on India's intention to frame its global identity on positive convergences and not a vindictive anti-Western framework. If India's vision of the Global South solidarity, through the Bandung Conference and the Non-Aligned Movement, was besieged by the bipolar Cold War between the United States (US) and the Soviet Union, India's growing economic prowess and its multi-alignment strategy today lends a much more engaged, and not a revisionist outlook.¹

Even amid Indo-Pacific rivalries and geopolitical extremities, India's outlook, as Prime Minister Narendra Modi professed at the Shangri La Dialogue in 2018, was one of inclusivity and development for all. Prime Minister Modi contended that "inclusiveness, openness and ASEAN centrality and unity" were central to the Indo-Pacific. "India does not see the Indo-Pacific Region as a strategy or as a club of limited members. Nor as a grouping that seeks to dominate. And by no means do we consider it as directed against any country", he emphasised.² India aspires to be a development partner for the Global South countries. While creating economic incentives and building trade connections are fundamental to India's growth, development partnerships shape its aspirations and not predatory financial footprints at the cost of partners in the Global South. In his book, *Why Bharat Matters* India's External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar argued, "... conscious policy of responding to the priorities and needs of the partner country involved" made India's endeavours distinct. "Unlike cases where such initiatives have been driven by extractive objectives, India's efforts are aimed more at ensuring self-reliance; and the partners appreciate it. India matters to the Global South because few others have taken such an approach."³ India has since hosted the virtually held Voice of Global South Summit (VOGSS) twice, calling to move towards a

¹ C Raja Mohan, "India's Return to the Global South", *ISAS Brief 991f*, Institute of South Asian Studies, National University of Singapore, 16 January 2023, <https://www.isas.nus.edu.sg/papers/indias-return-to-the-global-south/>.

² "Prime Minister's Keynote Address at Shangri La Dialogue, 1 June 2018", Ministry of External Affairs (India), 1 June 2018, <https://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/29943/Prime+Ministers+Keynote+Address+at+Shangri+La+Dialogue+June+01+2018>.

³ S Jaishankar, *Why Bharat Matters* (New Delhi: Rupa, 2024), p. 213.

human-centric globalisation shaped by a more consultative, equitable and transparent approach to development.

As India projects its benign leadership of the Global South and builds new webs of cooperation with the Global North, the governance of new technologies will become a primary task for consensus building. India has been at the forefront of digital public infrastructure (DPI). Given its own experience of initiating ground-breaking digital movements affecting the day-to-day lives of people of all strata, there is much that it can contribute towards capacity building in this aspect. Moreover, DPI is now being seen as instrumental for countries in the Global South to have greater access to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).⁴ The SDGs cut across the most urgent and consequential needs for inclusive growth and development, which, among many others, include building global habits of cooperation in the drive for transition towards a greener economy as the blueprint of future development while keeping the needs and requirements of the Global South for access to uninterrupted supply of energy.⁵ As the statement from the inaugural VOGSS contented, “Often, the concerns of the developing world do not receive due attention and space on the global stage. Often also, the relevant existing platforms have proven to be inadequate in addressing these challenges and concerns of the developing countries.”⁶

The second VOGSS reiterated many of the issues, concerns and pathways put forward, including one on the growing importance of DPI and data “for development in boosting growth, improving the delivery of public services and accelerating development” and the need for an equitable distribution of the benefits of new technologies.⁷ India has initiated the Global Digital Public Infrastructure Repository (GDPIR) and a Social Impact Fund (SIF) aimed at promoting the development and advancement of the digital public infrastructure (DPI) in the Global South. The GDPIR is a “comprehensive resource hub, pooling essential lessons and expertise from G20 members and guest nations”. It aims “to bridge the knowledge gap in the choices and methodologies required for the design, construction, deployment, and governance of DPIs.” India has also pledged an initial commitment of US\$25 million (\$33.5 million) to the SIF, which “is envisioned as a government-led, multi-stakeholder initiative to fast-track DPI implementation in the Global South.”⁸

⁴ “Global South Must Adopt Digital Public Infra to Achieve SDGs: Kant”, *Business Standard*, 5 December 2023, https://www.business-standard.com/world-news/global-south-must-adopt-digital-public-infra-to-achieve-sdgs-kant-123120500589_1.html; and Anirban Sarma, “Imagining 2024: Digital Public Infrastructure’s Global Footprint”, *Observer Research Foundation*, 19 December 2023, <https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/imagining-2024-digital-public-infra-structure-s-global-footprint>.

⁵ “Sustainable Development Goals”, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations, <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>; and Dima Al-Khatib, “South-South Cooperation is Essential to Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals”, United Nations, 11 September 2023, <https://www.un.org/en/un-chronicle/south-south-cooperation-is-essential-achieving-sustainable-development-goals>.

⁶ “1st Voice of Global South Summit 2023”, Ministry of External Affairs (India), 12-13 January 2023, <https://www.mea.gov.in/voice-of-global-summit.htm>.

⁷ “Chair’s summary: 2nd Voice of the Global South Summit, 17 November 2023”, Ministry of External Affairs (India), 21 November 2023, https://www.mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/37278/Chairs_summary_2nd_Voice_of_the_Global_South_Summit_November_17_2023.

⁸ “Prime Minister Announces Completion of Global Digital Public Infrastructure Repository and Creation of a Social Impact Fund to Advance Digital Public Infrastructure in Global South”, Press Information Bureau, 23 November 2023, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=1979113>

One of the focal points of concern raised amongst the Global South countries, reminiscent of earlier debates such as the New International Economic Order, is the development financing issue. A reformed financial order and more inclusive decision-making about the priorities of the Global South has been a mainstay of South-South cooperation. In this aspect, how India aligns its purpose in multilateral platforms like the expanded BRICS (originally Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) and G20 test for India's diplomacy. The BRICS remains a pre-eminent platform for South-South cooperation, and its founding members are some of the most prominent actors of the G20 as well. With growing geopolitical rifts between the East and the West posing new structural challenges, it becomes even more imperative to emphasise the true purpose and founding principle of the BRICS, which is not anti-western. Rather, the BRICS represent the intention and willingness for more representative multilateral decision-making and sustainable development in the Global South through greater South-South cooperation.⁹ Debt vulnerabilities faced by countries of the Global South and the need for flexible debt restructuring frameworks, as well as the call for effectively integrating the Global South into global supply chains are also moot points. There has been overwhelming support for "consultative, demand-driven and people-centric efforts for continuing to enhance cooperation for sharing experiences and learnings."¹⁰

In this pursuit, New Delhi needs to build a new consensus by reshaping multilateral aspirations, helping build bridges between the Global South and North, and reimagining how the rise of the non-West need not be antithetical to the West. One of the most significant consequences of India's G20 presidency is the inclusion of the African Union as a permanent member. Just a cursory examination of the joint declaration will reveal the human-centric issues that a primary multilateral forum like G20 has to tackle in the times to come, and it would have been naïve to leave a major stakeholder like the African continent out of such deliberations.¹¹ One of the defining aspects of India's diplomatic outreach and engagement in recent times has been this overt intent to resume its championship of a vast group of countries that had perhaps fallen out of its primary strategic calculus as New Delhi managed its great power relations, to navigate its rise in the international system.¹²

Although the development of the Global South cannot be seen as a zero-sum game, and it should ideally be taken as a win-win scenario, it has not and will not play out in a geopolitical vacuum. The inherent challenges and constraints of inter-state power rivalries will be felt in several issue areas. India has to be mindful of the inroads that China has made in the Global South, most significantly through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), even

⁹ Dima Al-Khatib, "South-South Cooperation Is Essential to Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals", United Nations, op. cit.

¹⁰ "Chair's summary: 2nd Voice of the Global South Summit, 17 November 2023", Ministry of External Affairs (India), op. cit.

¹¹ Hung Tran, "Breaking Down China and India's Race to Represent the Global South", *Atlantic Council*, 20 October 2023, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/econographics/breaking-down-china-and-indias-race-to-represent-the-global-south/>; and Damien Cave, Mujib Mashal and David Pierson, "Can India Challenge China for Leadership of the 'Global South'?", *The New York Times*, 12 September 2023, <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/12/world/asia/india-china-global-south.html>.

¹² C Raja Mohan, "India's Return to the Global South", op. cit.

though the BRI continues to face backlash and controversies regarding its impact.¹³ The material rise of China mixed with anxiety in the current Chinese leadership to maintain an iron grip on its domestic populace has produced an aggressive external manifestation that New Delhi needs to manage with an equal show of force and diplomatic traction. At a time when China is locked in a great power rivalry with the US, and many of its development initiatives in the Global South are usually pitched with an anti-western edge, India's non-confrontational and non-reciprocal outlook stands out.¹⁴

Rebooting South Asia through the Global South

India, by dint of geography and history, is the most consequential power in South Asia and in this reality lies the dilemma of New Delhi's South Asia policy. The power asymmetry between India and the rest of South Asia presents a fear of perceived hegemony among the neighbours and combined with China's growing footprints of investments in infrastructure and other forms of engagements, India's neighbours find it prudent to hedge their bets between India and China.¹⁵ While the case of Pakistan being an adversary and in a strategic alliance with China is an extreme example, other smaller states both in continental and maritime South Asia exercise more complex balancing behaviours. While a broader element of structural continuity may persist, changes in political leadership and shifting geopolitical currents may lead to either "India First" or "India Out" campaigns in many of India's neighbours. For instance, while the result of the national election in Bangladesh lends a sense of stable progress, the one in the Maldives has made all the wrong noises.¹⁶ India's relations with Sri Lanka remain relatively stable, with New Delhi rising to the occasion and becoming the most significant responder to helping Sri Lanka during its worst-ever economic crisis.¹⁷ While the cordial relationship with Bhutan has followed an overall positive arc, New Delhi cannot take Thimphu for granted and must closely consult the emerging

¹³ Dewey Sim, "China, India Court Global South in Competing Bids to Lead Developing Countries", *South China Morning Post*, 29 November 2023, <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3243204/china-india-court-global-south-competing-bids-lead-developing-countries>; and C Raja Mohan, "India Rethinks the Non-Aligned Movement", *ISAS Brief 781*, Institute of South Asian Studies, National University of Singapore, 11 May 2020, <https://www.isas.nus.edu.sg/papers/india-rethinks-the-non-aligned-movement/>

¹⁴ S Jaishankar, *Why Bharat Matters*, op. cit., 211-12; and Akhil Ramesh and Cleo Paskal, "India Can Unite Global South with Developed World", *Asia Times*, 6 January 2024, <https://www.fdd.org/analysis/2024/01/06/india-can-unite-global-south-with-developed-world/>.

¹⁵ T V Paul, "When Balance of Power Meets Globalization: China, India and the Small States of South Asia", *Politics* 39, no. 1 (2019), 50-63; and Darren J Lim and Rohan Mukherjee, "Hedging in South Asia: Balancing Economic and Security Interests amid Sino-Indian Competition", *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* 19, no. 3 (2019), pp. 493-522.

¹⁶ "India-Bangladesh Relations are Reaching New Heights", *Livemint*, 1 November 2023, <https://www.livemint.com/news/india/indiabangladesh-relations-are-reaching-new-heights-says-pm-modi-11698818417453.html>; and Mimrah Abdul Ghafoor, "Damaging and Disingenuous: Evaluating the 'India Out' Campaign in Maldives", *The Diplomat*, 20 May 2023, <https://thedi diplomat.com/2023/05/damaging-and-disingenuous-evaluating-the-india-out-campaign-in-maldives/>.

¹⁷ "Explained: India's Big Role in Helping Sri Lanka Tide Over its Worst-ever Economic Crisis", *Firstpost*, 16 January 2023, <https://www.firstpost.com/explainers/india-role-in-helping-sri-lanka-tide-over-its-worst-ever-economic-crisis-china-imf-debt-11994432.html>; and Shishir Gupta, "India First in Supporting IMF Assistance for Sri Lanka", *Hindustan Times*, 22 January 2023, <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/india-first-nation-to-assure-imf-of-efforts-to-aid-lanka-recovery-101674323767651.html>.

dynamics of the former's border talks with China.¹⁸ Despite close political and cultural ties with India, the shadow of China has loomed large in Nepal, and New Delhi has had to constantly recalibrate its terms of engagement.¹⁹ With the return of the Taliban to power in Kabul, the trajectory of India's engagement with Afghanistan has undergone a dramatic change, with New Delhi currently tiptoeing its way into a severely restrained relationship, focusing highly on a people-centric approach.²⁰ While Myanmar is technically not a South Asian country, India shares extremely porous borders with this conflict-ridden country and it remains a consequential partner for the development and growth of India's northeast region. The spillover effects of unrest and uncertainties in Myanmar are starkly being witnessed in India's eastern frontier.²¹

Thus, having a "Neighbourhood First" policy is as basic as pursuing a national interest in a country's foreign policy orientation. Yet, it remains a challenge to translate this otherwise benign sentiment and almost primordial foreign policy imperative into effective policymaking.²² A country's first international point of contact lies at its frontier with its neighbours. Hence, continental and maritime South Asia lies at the heart of India's development partnerships amidst challenges that are both structural and pertaining to bilateral dynamics.²³ India faces a twin asymmetry problem in its neighbourhood. On the one hand, India's smaller neighbours encounter an asymmetry vis-à-vis India's geographical size and its political, cultural and economic influence. On the other hand, New Delhi also faces the challenge of dealing with the asymmetry that exists between itself and China's ability to provide material benefits to South Asian countries that desire both developmental aid as well as security assistance.²⁴

By the logic of grand strategy, the question arises as to whether India is overstretching itself and not aligning capabilities and aspirations in its Global South strategy, while its vicinity calls for greater focus.²⁵ Do current geopolitics and geo-economics allow India the traction to take up a Global South leadership or should it play more cautious? Although the Modi government might be aware of the dangers of its outreach exceeding its grasp, the foreign policy discourse in New Delhi has been exuberant about India's leadership of the G20 and its

¹⁸ Pradip R Sagar, "Why Bhutan-India Relations are Significant Amidst the Growing Influence of China", *India Today*, 7 November 2023, <https://www.indiatoday.in/india-today-insight/story/why-bhutan-india-relations-are-significant-amidst-the-growing-influence-of-china-2459651-2023-11-07>.

¹⁹ "EAM Jaishankar Envisions Nepal as Partner in India's Development Journey", *Business Standard*, 5 January 2024, https://www.business-standard.com/economy/news/eam-jaishankar-envisions-nepal-as-partner-in-india-s-development-journey-124010500401_1.html.

²⁰ Kallol Bhattacharjee, "India Engaging the Taliban in 'Various Formats', says MEA Spokesperson", *The Hindu*, 1 February 2024, <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/india-engaging-the-taliban-in-various-formats-says-mea-spokesperson/article67801854.ece>.

²¹ Sanjoy Hazarika, "Why India is Fencing its Border with Myanmar – and Why That Could be a Problem", *The Indian Express*, 13 February 2024, <https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/why-india-is-fencing-its-border-with-myanmar-and-why-that-could-be-a-problem-9158141/>.

²² Monish Tourangbam, "Delhi's Dilemma: Rising in a Difficult Neighborhood", *South Asian Voices*, 21 November 2017, <https://southasianvoices.org/delhis-dilemma-rising-in-a-difficult-neighborhood/>.

²³ "India's Development Co-operation", Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), <https://www.oecd.org/dac/dac-global-relations/indias-development-co-operation.htm>.

²⁴ Monish Tourangbam, "Delhi's Dilemma In The Neighbourhood: The Maldives' Imbroglio", *IndiaTimes*, 8 October 2023, <https://www.indiatimes.com/explainers/news/delhis-dilemma-in-the-neighbourhood-the-maldives-imbroglio-617042.html>.

²⁵ John Lewis Gaddis, *On Grand Strategy* (USA: Penguin Books, 2018).

plans to claim the leadership of the Global South. Do India's development challenges at home and, more particularly, challenges emanating from its immediate backyard merit more attention and is ambitious multilateralism a folly at this juncture?²⁶

India's rise to power of global reckoning and as a leading power in the international system has often been predicated on how it handles its immediate neighbourhood. However, India's geographic and historical realities have shown that its rise to prominence at the global level has and will have to be engineered despite a difficult neighbourhood. Even while experiencing a severe capability deficit of its own, India has always exuded internationalism and championed the causes of what is called the Global South, countries that are joined not by geography but by concerns for transparent and equitable development in the 21st century. An India that has grown exponentially in capability and capacity in recent decades, therefore, has even more reason to show its intention to help reshape the global distribution of public goods while protecting and promoting its national interest. As Jaishankar wrote, "As India's profile rises, its policymakers are also discovering that the expectations of other nations are not confined to our immediate vicinity. Ever since its independence triggered global decolonisation, India has carried the responsibility of speaking for a larger constituency. The Global South watches its positions and performance carefully, concluding both."²⁷

India's development partnerships, near and far, are driven by "cooperation programmes without conditionality, making partnerships that are governed by mutual respect, diversity, care for the future, and sustainable development." Over the years, moving from a net aid receiver to a rising development partner, India has shown intention to collaborate both with developed countries of the Global North and emerging economies through greater South-South Cooperation.²⁸

In the final analysis, the solution to India's South Asia dilemma does not lie in South Asia but outside, and perhaps in the broader Global South. One way India sees its rise and aspiration in the 21st century is to escape the straitjacket of South Asian regionalism and connect its neighbourhood policy to its extended neighbourhood, the Indo-Pacific and the Global South. India's answer lies in constructing feasible regional and trans-regional alternatives, which include partnerships and projects that connect its immediate neighbourhood to the broader push for development and growth in the Global South. Creating deep interdependencies in the region and beyond by building webs of development partnerships is the way ahead because attempting to set political terms of engagement without a solid economic base will be a Sisyphean effort. Moreover, the fundamental logic of strategy means that the Global South, as a frame of reference, should be delimited to finding consensual solutions to issues of development and sustainable growth without overextending its purpose. Building a narrative of aspirational vision and effective implementation in the Global South should be

²⁶ C Raja Mohan, "India's Return to the Global South", op. cit.

²⁷ S Jaishankar, *Why Bharat Matters*, op. cit., 212

²⁸ "75 Years of Development Partnership: Saga of Commitment to Plurality, Diversity and Collective Progress", Research and Information System for Developing Countries, 11 April 2022, https://www.ris.org.in/sites/default/files/Publication/Indian_Development_Cooperation-75%20yrs-NEW-PRINT-11-APRIL-2022-Web-1.pdf.

propagated as an enabler and amplifier for the lure and incentivisation of cooperative behaviours in South Asia.

Conclusion

Divisions within the Global South are not new because the Global South is not monolithic in terms of political outlook, focus areas of socio-economic development and the nature of geopolitical compulsions faced. How India manoeuvres and stitches together a working and practical cooperation is a moot point. Fighting for the Global South in a multipolar world, where multilateralism is in crisis mode, and the two most powerful poles are locked in a new great power rivalry, creating rifts and wedges among the Global South countries, will take a lot of walking the talk. On the cinders of the old order constructed at the end of World War II, a new world order is emerging, albeit uncertainties natural to shifting power configurations and hitherto unseen developments pregnant with both risks and opportunities. While New Delhi is not short of ideas and optimism to build a new consensus around the call for a more inclusive world order and multilateralism catering to the needs of the maximum, it might run short of resources to translate them into reality. In this respect, India's growing closeness to the Global North should be propagated and pursued as an opportunity to build new bridges and leverage resources to craft a stronger multipolar world with stronger multilateralism. A stronger and reformed multilateralism lies at the heart of India's championship of the Global South. Multilateralism of the bipolar and the unipolar era will not work for the multipolar one. New Delhi's engagement with the Global South must be predicated on the quest for effective multilateralism for a multipolar world.

India's championship of the Global South is also a way to express an aspiration which is both ideational and material and reflects India's confidence in being a bridge between the Global North and Global South. A sober analysis of India's aspirations and capabilities may show a contradiction of meeting India's challenges in its immediate neighbourhood while going for its Global South outreach. Is it prudent for New Delhi to augment its role as a development partner for the broader Global South while much needs to be accomplished in its South Asian neighbourhood? However, India's South Asia policy and its Global South thrust are not antithetical. In terms of history and geography, South Asia is a part of the Global South, and the priorities are not dissimilar, even if some regional or country-wise variations are considered. The challenges India faces as a development partner in South Asia are not too dissimilar from those posed by the Global South, in terms of both vision and implementation.

Therefore, the challenge is not one of choosing either South Asia or the Global South but rather one of finding alignments and convergences in what India needs to accomplish, closer to home and farther. The task for India's foreign ministry and multiple other agencies involved will be to create incentives of cooperation across the spectrum that will influence behavioural changes and create habits of cooperation in the immediate neighbourhood and the broader Global South. The lure of development partnerships and jointly working towards sustainable development goals should tie India's South Asia playbook to its new vigour for the Global South. Ultimately, India's path remains one of finding relative consensus on solutions to global problems through diversity and not a binary approach.

The idea of a 'vishwaguru' is not an unwarranted expression of self-pride but one grounded on the premium that a civilisational power like India puts on the value of inclusive growth and progress for all in its region and beyond. A 'vishwaguru' or a 'vishwamitra' is aspirational without being ambitious at the cost of others in the comity of nations.

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