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GLOBAL GROUNDLINES



What the G20 Means for India

At the G20 foreign ministers' meeting in Atlanta, India widened its partnerships across energy, technology, defence and critical minerals, while the Quad flagged concerns over economic coercion. Backed by falling poverty and 7 percent growth forecasts, India heads into the Miami leaders' summit with credibility and options

The G20 foreign ministers' meeting in Atlanta, held on October 30-31 and chaired by US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, carried heavy economic and strategic weight for India. The agenda centred on energy security, resilient supply chains and open sea lanes, issues that sit at the heart of a fast-growing economy's ambitions. For India, a voice in these conversations is both a recognition of its rising stature and an opportunity to shape outcomes that matter to its people.

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar leveraged the occasion. On the margins, his packed schedule of bilateral meetings reflected a deliberate strategy of widening India's partnerships: technology and defence with Europe and Korea, resources with Argentina and Brazil, and deeper ties with Canada. Each conversation served a distinct purpose, and together they show a diplomacy that is confident, multi-directional and firmly anchored in national interest. From Atlanta, Jaishankar travels to Antigua and Barbuda for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, extending the same outreach to another important forum.

The Quad foreign ministers also met on the sidelines, their second meeting this year after the New Delhi gathering in May. Their joint statement expressed concern about arbitrary export restrictions and economic coercion. China was not named, but the language was widely interpreted against the backdrop of Beijing's dominance in critical minerals.

The grouping also announced plans for more than $85 million in trusted AI-related assistance across the Indo-Pacific. For India, the Quad offers a practical platform to secure diversified supply chains, access trusted technology and help build a regional order free from coercion, with a possible leaders' summit still to come.

Equally significant is India's growing closeness to Europe, underscored by the recent visit of Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk to New Delhi from October 21 to 23. At Hyderabad House, he and Prime Minister Narendra Modi set a target of doubling bilateral trade by 2030, agreed to deepen cooperation in defence, space and artificial intelligence, and called for early implementation of the India-EU trade agreement. Modi invited Polish companies to pursue co-development and co-production in defence, space and nuclear energy, with business forums planned in New Delhi and Bengaluru. The visit builds on the strategic partnership agreed in Warsaw in 2024 and is strategic because India's engagement with Europe is increasingly moving beyond traditional trade diplomacy towards defence production, technology resilience and supply-chain diversification.

India brings this confidence from a strong domestic base. The World Bank's October Poverty and Equity Brief documents one of the most remarkable economic transformations in living memory: poverty at the lower-middle-income threshold fell from 57.7 percent in 2011 to 16.1 percent in 2023, and is projected to fall further to 12.1 percent by 2028. Tens of millions of families have moved from the arithmetic of survival to the possibility of choice. The economy is moving ahead on the same footing. The IMF raised its growth forecast for FY2026-27 to 7 percent, real GDP expanded 7.8 percent in April-June, household spending rose 7.1 percent and investment climbed 11.9 percent. Record monthly SIP contributions show Indian savers increasingly anchoring their own markets.

A growing, more prosperous and more self-reliant India is a sought-after partner, from Washington, Tokyo and Canberra to Warsaw and Brussels. The Atlanta meetings, the Quad's economic-security agenda and the momentum with Europe point the same way: the world is investing in India's story. That is a very strong signal for India. With the Miami leaders' summit on December 14-15 ahead, India enters the next round of global diplomacy with credibility and options. Diplomacy has opened doors; a confident domestic economy gives India the strength to walk through them.

TOP WATCH



BRAZIL: DOWN AT HALFTIME, UP AT THE WHISTLE

Election night on October 4 belonged to the Bolsonaros. Flávio, a little-known senator just months earlier, edged out Lula 47% to 45%, defying polls that had the president ahead. Lula shrugged it off as extra time. He used it well, winning the October 25 runoff and becoming the first politician in modern Brazilian history to win a runoff after trailing in the first round. Bolsonaro is now seeking to annul the result, so Lula, due to be sworn in January 5, 2027, will govern with a right-leaning Congress watching.



HORMUZ: THE CHOKEPOINT BITES BACK

September was a deep breath, with crude exports through the strait back at prewar levels. October was the exhale. At least nine commercial ships were attacked near Hormuz in a single week, and Brent surged to $110. By the final Friday, Brent had settled at $117.64, a six-month high, up 13.6% for the month. A tanker was struck that same day as Washington again raised the prospect of renewed hostilities. The world's most nervous waterway was nervous again.



UKRAINE: A CEASEFIRE ANNOUNCED BEFORE IT EXISTED

On October 11, Trump declared an energy ceasefire effective immediately, but Zelensky said it came as a surprise and he'd had no details. Moscow answered with missiles, launching massive strikes on Kyiv, Kharkiv and other cities within a day. Lavrov waved the whole idea off as a slogan. Kyiv and European capitals were also stung by Trump's deal letting Russia sell diesel. Trump's verdict was that both sides were breaking the agreement.

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