

Editor's Note

This issue of *Africa Trends* brings together diverse perspectives on Africa's evolving strategic choices amid intensifying geopolitical competition, security challenges, energy transitions and changing external partnerships. The cover story by Ms. Khyati Singh examines Africa's position in the US-China competition over critical minerals and artificial intelligence, arguing that African states are increasingly using transactional hedging, beneficiation and supply management to convert resource endowments into strategic leverage, even as technological dependence continues to constrain sovereignty. Mr. Bame Romeo Gaonyadiwe analyses the conflict in Mozambique's Cabo Delgado province, arguing that while military intervention has contained insurgent violence, sustainable peace requires addressing governance deficits, socioeconomic grievances and weak community participation. Dr. Abhishek Verma examines Africa's emerging nuclear energy landscape, highlighting its potential contribution to energy security and industrialisation alongside challenges relating to financing, institutional capacity, safety and technological dependence. In the View Point, Ms. Sneha M traces Pakistan's evolving defence outreach in Africa from military training towards more institutionalised defence-industrial partnerships, while assessing the financial and technological constraints on this expansion. Concluding the issue, Ms. Abyssinia Abay Mengistu reviews Tom Gardner's *The Abiy Project*, highlighting its emphasis on religion and political theology in understanding Abiy Ahmed's leadership and Ethiopia's political transition. Collectively, the contributions highlight Africa's search for greater strategic agency while underscoring the importance of strong institutions, indigenous capacity and partnerships that support sustainable African priorities.

We welcome your feedback.