

Jaishankar meets Sudanese counterpart

Reiterates India's stance for end to violence in Sudan

NEW DELHI, Jan 30 (IANS)

EXTERNAL Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar held a meeting with his Sudanese counterpart Mohieldin Salim Ahmed Ibrahim here on Friday and reiterated India's position for an end to violence in Sudan and return to dialogue.

In a post on X, EAM Jaishankar wrote: "A cordial meeting this afternoon with Foreign Minister Mohieldin Salim Ahmed Ibrahim of Sudan. Reiterated India's position for an end to violence in Sudan and return to dialogue. Discussed our ongoing humanitarian support and exchanges in education and capacity build-

ing. Committed to further activities in that regard."

Ibrahim arrived in New Delhi on Thursday to attend the second India Arab Foreign Ministers' Meeting scheduled to be held on January 31.

Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal stated that Ibrahim's visit to India will further strengthen people-to-people ties between the two nations.

"Delighted to welcome H E Mohieldin Salim Ahmed Ibrahim, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Republic of Sudan for the second India Arab Foreign Ministers' Meeting. The visit will further strengthen people to people ties between India and Sudan," Jaiswal posted on X.

India is set to host the 2nd India-Arab Foreign Ministers' Meeting (IAFMM) on January 31. The meeting, being hosted by India and the United Arab Emirates, will have the participation of Foreign Ministers of other Arab League Member States and the Arab League Secretary General.



Union External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar during a meeting with his Sudanese counterpart Mohieldin Salim Ahmed Ibrahim, in New Delhi. (@DrSJaishankar/X via PTI)

United Nations very active in mediating conflicts: Guterres

UNITED NATIONS, Jan 30 (IANS)

THE United Nations is very active in mediating conflicts across the world, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said.

At a press conference on Thursday, outlining his priorities for 2026, Guterres said in some cases, some warring parties do not want the United Nations to mediate in their conflicts, and the world body is very active in "several scenarios," such as in Libya, Sudan, South Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). "No," the UN chief replied when asked by Xinhua whether he was concerned about the future role of the United Nations in maintaining world peace and security.

"There are areas where we are not mediators, because at least one of the parties (to a conflict) does not want us to mediate," the UN chief said.



"Israel never accepted the UN to be mediator, probably because we would mediate based on our values, the values of the (UN) Charter ... those that violate the Charter probably are not interested in the mediation by an entity that is, in itself, the entity that represents the Charter," he said.

Guterres said the United Nations has been "extremely active" in trying to avoid the worst scenario in the situation of South Sudan, in the DRC and Myanmar, and "very active" in negotiations related to Western Sahara, Xinhua news agency reported.

"And I could go on and on and on with the number of situations in which we are extremely active with efforts of mediation, efforts of conciliation of positions, peace processes," he said.

"There is only one thing we do not have, (which) is the instruments of power to force parties to come to the negotiation," said the secretary-general.

UN CHIEF GUTERRES SEES 'A LOT OF POSITIVE EXPECTATIONS' FROM INDIA-EU TRADE AGREEMENT : UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said on Thursday that he sees "a lot of positive expectations" from the recent free trade agreement between India and the European Union, and it could contribute to global multi-polarity.

On Tuesday, India and the EU announced the free trade agreement, which EU President Ursula von der Leyen called the "mother of all trade deals".

India-EU free trade pact rattles Bangladesh

NEW DELHI, Jan 30 (IANS)

THE EU-India free trade agreement has emerged as a major cause for concern in Dhaka as it delivers market access gains for India in the textiles, apparel, leather, and footwear sectors that have long underpinned Bangladesh's export success in Europe, a Bangladeshi media report said. "With Bangladesh

set to graduate from LDC status in November 2026, and its preferential access to the EU market expected to erode after a three-year transition period, the timing of this deal could not be more unsettling," the article in the 'Daily Star' newspaper said.

For decades, Indian exports of garments, textiles, leather, and footwear entered the EU facing substantial tariffs. However, the

EU-India FTA would slash duties on footwear from 17 per cent to zero, and apparel and textiles from 9-12 per cent to zero, substantially strengthening India's competitiveness, it pointed out.

By leveraging LDC duty-free access while competitors such as India and Vietnam continued to face tariffs, Bangladesh was able to expand its share of the EU apparel market at a remarkable pace.

As China's share of EU apparel imports declined from 45 per cent in 2010 to 28 per cent in 2025, Bangladesh's share rose sharply from about 7 per cent to 21 per cent. This shift is particularly striking given that, in 2005, Bangladesh and India held almost identical market shares in the EU, but over the next two decades, Bangladesh was able to increase its share by threefold

while India's share declined to 5%. Desh's rise was driven not only by tariff advantages but also by favourable EU rules of origin for LDCs, notably the single transformation rule, the article pointed out. "Therefore, in a twist of irony, the very advantages of preferential margins that once propelled Bangladesh's rapid ascent in the EU market are now eroding, just as key competitors secure

permanent duty-free access through free trade agreements," it lamented. Moreover, given the safeguard provisions embedded in the EU's Generalised System of Preferences, there is a genuine risk that even if Bangladesh qualifies for GSP+ after graduation, its garment exports could still face full MFN tariffs, fundamentally altering the competitive balance in EU market, the article observes.

World Bank commits USD 8-10 bn annual financing in India over next 5 years

NEW DELHI, Jan 30 (PTI)

THE World Bank Group and India on Friday announced a new Country Partnership Framework (CPF), envisaging USD 8-10 billion in annual financing over the next five years to help accelerate India's next phase of growth and support its vision of becoming a developed economy.

The Union Finance Minister welcomed the new Country Partnership Framework (CPF) with the World Bank Group, which is fully aligned with India's Viksit Bharat vision.

The CPF focuses on leveraging public funds with private capital, creating more jobs across rural and urban India, and enriching projects with the World Bank Group's global knowledge, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said after the World Bank team led by President Ajay Banga



called on her. Both leaders also discussed ways to deepen India-World Bank cooperation in support of India's long-term development vision of Viksit Bharat, the Finance Ministry said in a post on X.

"Leveraging public funds with private capital, creating more jobs across rural and urban India, and enriching projects with the Bank Group's global knowledge will be key to achieving sustainable impact at both speed and scale," she said.

The Finance Minister underlined the importance of a development partnership that goes beyond financing, and includes knowledge sharing, technical assistance, and exchange of global best practices.

The new India-World Bank Group strategic partnership applies this global jobs strategy in India and supports it with USD 8-10 billion in annual financing over the next five years, to create jobs and mobilize private sector capital at scale, Washington-based multilateral funding agency said in a statement.

At the heart of the new partnership is private sector-led job creation, it said, adding that with around 12 million young people entering India's labor market each year, unlocking private investment in job-rich sectors is a central priority for the country's next phase of growth.

Israel to reopen Gaza's-Egypt border strip tomorrow

JERUSALEM, Jan 30 (AP)

ISRAEL said Friday that it will reopen the pedestrian border crossing between the Gaza Strip and Egypt in both directions over the weekend, marking an important step forward for US President Donald Trump's Gaza ceasefire plan.

COGAT, the Israeli military body in charge of coordinating aid to Gaza, said in a statement that starting on Sunday a "limited movement of people only" would be allowed through the Rafah crossing, Gaza's main gateway to the outside world.

The announcement followed statements from Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Ali Shaath, newly appointed to head the Palestinian administrative committee governing Gaza's daily affairs, that it would likely open



They said 50 medical evacuees would be permitted to exit, and 50 returnees permitted to enter

soon.

COGAT said both Israel and Egypt will vet individuals for exit and entry through the crossing, which will be supervised by European Union border patrol agents. In addition to screenings at the crossing, Palestinians leaving and returning will be screened by Israel in the adjacent corridor, which remains under Israeli military control.

The crossing has been under a near complete closure since Israel seized it in May 2024, saying the step was part of a strategy to halt cross-border arms smuggling by Hamas.

It was briefly opened for the evacuation of medical patients during a short-lived ceasefire in early 2025.

Israel had resisted reopening the crossing, but the recovery of the remains of the last hostage in Gaza on Monday cleared the way to move forward.

South Africa asks Israel's envoy to leave country

CAPE TOWN, Jan 30 (AP)

SOUTH Africa ordered Israel's deputy ambassador to leave the country within 72 hours on Friday, accusing him of undermining relations between the countries with social media posts that insulted South African President Cyril Ramaphosa and violating diplomatic protocols.

The South African Foreign Ministry said that it was expelling Ariel Seidman, the charge d'affaires at the Israeli Embassy, and declared him persona non grata - a diplomatic term indicating the person is no longer welcome in a country.

Venezuela's acting President signs oil industry overhaul

■ Reform will lure the foreign investment needed to revamp a long-crippled oil industry in Venezuela

■ By Regina Garcia Cano
CARACAS (Venezuela), Jan 30 (AP)

VENEZUELA'S acting President Delcy Rodríguez on Thursday signed a law that opens the nation's oil sector to privatisation, reversing a tenet of the self-proclaimed socialist movement that has ruled the country for more than two decades.

The reform will undoubtedly be her Government's signature policy as it positions the oil sector "Venezuela's engine" to lure the foreign investment needed



Venezuela's acting President Delcy Rodríguez takes part in a rally holding up a copy of a new law for opening the nation's oil sector to privatisation at the Miraflores Palace in Caracas, Venezuela on Thursday. (AP/PTI)

to revamp the long-crippled industry. Rodríguez enacted the measure less than a month after the brazen seizure of then-President Nicolás Maduro in a US military attack in Venezuela's capital, Caracas.

Rodríguez, facing oil workers and ruling-party supporters, signed the bill less than two hours after the National Assembly approved it. At the same time, the US Department of Treasury officially began to ease punishing economic sanctions on Venezuelan oil, which were imposed by the first Trump administration, and expanded the ability of US energy companies to operate in the South American nation.

Rodríguez on Thursday also (Contd on page 3)

TRADE WAR: Trump threatens Canada with 50% tariff on aircraft sold in US

WASHINGTON, Jan 30 (AP)

PRESIDENT Donald Trump on Thursday threatened Canada with a 50% tariff on any aircraft sold in the US, the latest salvo in his trade war with America's northern neighbour as his feud with Prime Minister Mark Carney expands.

Trump's threat posted on social media came after he threatened over the weekend to impose a 100% tariff on goods imported from Canada if it went forward with a planned trade deal with China. But Trump's threat did not come with any details about when he would impose the import taxes, as Canada had already struck a deal.

In Trump's latest threat, the Republican President said he was retaliating against Canada for refusing to certify jets from Savannah, Georgia-based Gulfstream Aerospace.



EAM Jaishankar, Arab League chief Gheit hold talks to enhance ties

INDIA-ARAB FOREIGN MINISTERS MEET TODAY



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar with Secretary General of League of Arab States Ahmed About Gheit during a meeting in New Delhi on Friday. (PTI)

NEW DELHI, Jan 30 (IANS)

EXTERNAL Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar met League of Arab States Secretary General Ahmed About Gheit in New Delhi on Friday to discuss strengthening cooperation between the two sides across various sectors.

Following their talks, EAM Jaishankar in a post on X, wrote, "A warm meeting with Secretary General, League of Arab States Ahmed About Gheit this morning. Had a wide ranging conversation about our cooperation and strengthening it across various domains. Also exchanged views on the recent developments in the region."

Ahmed About Gheit arrived in New Delhi on Thursday to attend the second India-Arab Foreign Ministers' and related meetings. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) extended a warm welcome to Gheit, an Egyptian politician and diplomat.

India is set to host the 2nd India-Arab Foreign Ministers' Meeting (IAFMM) on January 31.

The meeting, being hosted by India and the United Arab Emirates, will have the participation of Foreign Ministers of other Arab League Member States and the Arab League Secretary General. The second India-Arab Foreign Ministers Meeting is expected to build on existing cooperation and expand the partnership. The IAFMM will be preceded by the 4th India-Arab Senior Officials' Meeting.

The Foreign Ministers' meeting is taking place after 10 years, as the first meeting was held in Bahrain in 2016. During the first Foreign Ministers Meeting, the leaders identified five priority verticals of cooperation - economy, energy, education, media and culture and proposed a set of activities across these verticals.

EAM JAISHANKAR MEETS PALESTINIAN COUNTERPART: Jaishankar met Palestine's Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates Varsen Aghabekian here and discussed development cooperation, the Gaza Peace

(Contd on page 3)