

India-Africa Forum summit postponed

NEW DELHI, May 21 (PTI)

INDIA and the African Union have postponed the India-Africa Forum Summit scheduled for May 28-31 in New Delhi in view of concerns over the spread of Ebola virus.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), without citing reasons for postponement of the mega event, said on Thursday that new dates for the summit will be finalised through consultations with the African nations.

There has been an Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo and it has been declared as a public health emergency of international concern by the World Health Organization (WHO).

India had planned to unveil an ambitious roadmap to further solidify its ties with the African continent at the upcoming summit.

India abstains on UNGA resolution on ICJ climate opinion

■ **By Yoshita Singh**

UNITED NATIONS, May 21 (PTI)

INDIA abstained from voting on a UN General Assembly resolution calling on countries to comply with their obligations on climate change, voicing concern that the draft “undermines” the “sacrosanct architecture” of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

The resolution was adopted in the 193-member General Assembly on Wednesday with 141 votes in favour, eight against and 28 abstentions, including by India.

India said it had engaged constructively during negotiations on the resolution and clarified its concerns and positions at every stage.

“We are therefore disappointed that our concerns were not addressed, despite our best efforts to find common ground,” it said.

In the Explanation of Vote, First Secretary in India’s Permanent Mission to the UN, Petal Gahlot, said adoption of the resolution by the General Assembly does not create binding commitments for India.

India's first underwater museum-submarine tourism project coming up off Sindhudurg coast

MUMBAI, May 21 (PTI)

MAHARASHTRA'S Sindhudurg district, known for its scenic beaches and historic sea forts, is set to emerge as a major marine tourism destination with India's 1st underwater museum and submarine tourism project coming up off its coastline.

The ambitious project is being developed near the Nivati Rock formations in Sindhudurg, some 500 kilometres from Mumbai, and is expected to boost adventure and marine tourism in the Konkan region, officials said on Thursday.

Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation (MTDC), in a press release, said it has successfully scuttled decommissioned Indian Navy warship Ex-INS Guldar off the



Sindhudurg coast as part of India's first underwater museum, artificial reef and submarine tourism project.

The warship was installed on the seabed near Nivati Rock at a depth of around 22 metres on May 19 in coordination with Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL), the release informed.

"The site near the Konkan

coast was selected after scientific studies conducted by Maharashtra Maritime Board and CSIR-National Institute of Oceanography confirmed the absence of natural coral reefs and minimal environmental impact," the release said.

The project, being developed under the Centre's 'Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment (SASCI) -

Development of Iconic Tourist Centres to Global Scale', aims to position Maharashtra as a major marine and experiential tourism destination.

"The Union Government approved financial assistance of Rs 46.91 crore for the project in November 2024, while Maharashtra Government granted revised administrative approval of Rs 112.46 crore in December 2025," an official said.

Ex-INS Guldar, a Magar-class Landing Ship Tank (LST) warship of the Indian Navy, served for 39 years before being decommissioned on January 12, 2024. The vessel, launched at Gdynia Shipyard in Poland on December 30, 1985, was used in amphibious warfare operations, troop transportation, coastal security and naval exercises.

'Trump, Netanyahu had tense phone call on future of Iran war'

■ By Sagar Kulkarni

WASHINGTON, May 21 (PTI)

US PRESIDENT Donald Trump and Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had a tense phone call over the future course of the war on Iran as Washington appeared to be in favour of a deal instead of the resumption of strikes, US media reported.

After the Tuesday phone call with Trump, Netanyahu's "hair was on fire", US media outlet Axios reported on Wednesday, adding that the Israeli Prime Minister was keen on the resumption of strikes to further degrade Iran's military capabilities and weaken the regime by destroying its critical infrastructure.

Trump on Sunday said he had



put-off strikes on Iran, planned for Tuesday, following a request from Arab nations including Qatar and the UAE.

A revised peace memo was drafted by Qatar and Pakistan with input from the other regional mediators to try to bridge the gaps between the US and Iran, Axios reported, quoting sources.



Netanyahu is highly sceptical about the negotiations and wants to resume the war to further degrade Iran's military capabilities and weaken the regime by destroying its critical infrastructure.

Trump continues to say he thinks a deal can be reached, but that he's ready to resume the war if it isn't. "The only question is,

do we want to finish it up, or are they gonna be signing a document. Let's see what happens," he said on Wednesday at the Coast Guard Academy.

Later on Wednesday, he said the US and Iran were "right on the borderline" between getting a deal and resuming the war.

"It's right on the borderline, believe me. If we don't get the right answers, it goes very quickly. We're all ready to go. We have to get the right answers - it would have to be a complete 100 per cent good answers," Trump told reporters.

There is a strong desire in the upper echelons of the Israeli government for renewed military action, CNN reported, quoting an Israeli source.

This hard-line Iranian General is major player in talks with US over war

DUBAI, May 21 (AP)

AS NEGOTIATIONS with the United States hang in the balance, a hard-line Iranian general linked to notorious attacks at home and abroad over the past decades is believed to have seized a place near the centre of power.

Brigadier General Ahmad Vahidi, who heads Iran's Paramilitary Revolutionary Guard, has become a major player in formulating Iran's

tough stance in negotiating a possible end to the war with the United States, experts say.

He is believed to be part of a small clique in direct contact with Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Mojtaba Khomeini, who remains in hiding after being reportedly wounded in the Feb 28 Israeli strikes that killed his father, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Like everything in Iran since the war began, who ultimately controls decision-making remains uncertain.

Myanmar military recaptures 2 strategic border towns

BANGKOK, May 21 (AP)

MYANMAR'S military-backed Government says it has regained control of two towns near the country's borders with India and Thailand, marking a sig-



nificant advance in the civil war as it seeks to reassert control of regions long held by resistance forces.

A report in the state-run Myanmar Alinn newspaper on Thursday said Tonzang, near the border with India, was captured by the Army on Wednesday after 10 days

of operations to retake it.

The paper published photos of soldiers who recaptured the town in front of the township's administrative office and other departments. That report came a day after 'Myanma Alinn' reported that the Army on Tuesday retook control of Mawtaung, a strategically important border town for trade with Thailand, after a two-week operation.

The Army's recapture of Tonzang in northwestern Chin State and Mawtaung in the southern Tanintharyi region come as the army has regained the upper hand in the nationwide conflict since mid-2025, after China-brokered ceasefires and a conscription-driven increase in troop numbers. Mawtaung, about 630 km southeast of Yangon, the country's largest city, has been under the control of the Karen National Union and other local resistance groups.

Tonzang, about 25 km east of the Indian border, had since May 2024 been under the control of the allied Chin ethnic militias and local resistance forces.

WB Govt transfers 120 acres of Siliguri Corridor land to Centre

KOLKATA, May 21 (Agencies)

THE Suvendu Adhikari-led West Bengal Government has initiated the transfer of 120 acres of land in the strategically-vital Siliguri Corridor to the Central Government as per media reports.

Handing over of land to the Centre in Siliguri Corridor also

Read Editorial
MOST CRUCIAL MOVE !
on page 8

known as "Chicken's Neck" area, - and India's only land link to the Northeast - would help in boosting national security for



the north-east region.

West Bengal Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari personally handed over the land docu-

ments for the Siliguri Corridor to the Border Security Force (BSF) on Wednesday.

(Contd on page 5)

Bullet train to connect Siliguri with Varanasi

SILIGURI, May 21 (Agencies)

INDIA is planning a high-speed bullet train linking Varanasi directly to Siliguri. This strategic project focuses on the vital Siliguri Corridor, enhancing trade, security, and access to Northeast India's 'Ashta Lakshmi' States and positioning the region as an international trade hub.

The project aims to significantly improve infrastructure and connectivity in eastern India by linking Varanasi directly to Siliguri.

(Contd on page 5)

PM returns from 5-nation visit with

\$40 bn investment commitments

NEW DELHI, May 21 (IANS)

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi's recent five-nation visit has helped India to secure an investment pipeline worth nearly \$40 billion, with several global companies committing fresh investments and outlining expansion plans across key sectors, officials said.

During the visit, PM Modi held meetings with chief executives and senior representatives of more than 50 multinational companies spanning sectors such as semiconductors, logistics, infrastructure and technology. The combined market valuation of these firms is estimated at around \$2.7 trillion to \$3 trillion, reflecting the scale of global corporate

participation during the visit.

Many of these companies already have a significant presence in India, with their cumulative investments and business exposure in the country estimated at nearly \$180 billion.

Among the major announcements, UAE committed fresh investments worth about \$5 billion in India

According to officials, several firms are now looking to expand their India operations to tap into the country's strong economic growth trajectory and rising domestic consumption demand.

Among the major announcements during the tour, the United Arab Emirates committed fresh investments worth about \$5 billion in India.

The total estimated value of fresh investment commitments and proposed business expansion plans discussed during the visit stands at nearly \$40 billion, officials said, describing the outcome as a strong endorsement

of India's long-term economic prospects and investment potential. PM Modi's five-nation visit covered the UAE, the Netherlands, Sweden, Norway and Italy, during which India signed multiple agreements and elevated ties with several countries. During the tour, India and the Netherlands unveiled a strategic partnership roadmap

focusing on trade, defence, semiconductors, artificial intelligence and green hydrogen.

India and Sweden also agreed to elevate bilateral ties to a strategic partnership, while PM Modi attended the third India-Nordic Summit in Norway and held bilateral meetings with Nordic leaders. Moreover, Italy and India have established a Special Strategic Partnership following talks between PM Modi and Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni. "Concluding a very productive visit to Italy. My discussions with Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni covered a wide range of sectors," PM said in a post on X. He added that the decision to elevate ties would add new momentum to bilateral cooperation.

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