

# Ebola outbreak: India sends 2nd tranche of medical aid to Africa

NEW DELHI, June 2 (IANS)

INDIA on Tuesday dispatched the second tranche of medical assistance to the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC), comprising protective gear, diagnostic and monitoring equipment, medicines, and nutritional supplements aimed at strengthening the continent's response to the ongoing Ebola outbreak.

India is also confident that this 43-tonne consignment will further strengthen public health preparedness and bolster Ebola response capacities across Africa.

External Affairs Minister (EAM), S Jaishankar, took to social media 'X' and said, "India has dispatched the second tranche of medical assistance to Africa CDC, comprising protective gear, diag-



nostic & monitoring equipment, medicines, and supplements. Confident that this 43 tons consignment will further strengthen public health preparedness and bolster Ebola response capacities across Africa." Earlier, on May 24, India dispatched the first tranche of urgent medical supplies and protective kits to Africa CDC.

"India dispatched the first tranche of urgent medical supplies and protective kits to Africa CDC today. Committed to support Africa in responding to the

emerging Ebola public health emergency," EAM Jaishankar had posted on X. On May 29, India had expressed readiness to continue assisting affected countries and the Africa CDC in dealing with the health emergency.

**GOVT ISSUES EBOLA ADVISORY, SAYS NO CASES DETECTED YET:** THE Ministry of Health and Family Welfare on Tuesday issued a public health advisory on Ebola virus disease, stating that no cases have been reported in India so far while urging heightened vigilance among individuals who have recently travelled through Ebola-affected countries.

The Government stressed the importance of early reporting of symptoms. "Health advisory on Ebola disease. As on June 2, 2026, there are no cases of Ebola disease reported in the country," the Ministry said in a post on X.

# 5 new judges take oath, SC strength now 37

NEW DELHI, June 2 (PTI)

CHIEF Justice of India Surya Kant on Tuesday administered the oath of office to five new judges of the Supreme Court, taking the strength of judges at the top court to 37, the highest ever.

The CJI administered the oath of office to justices Sheel Nagu, Shree Chandrashekhar, Sanjeev Sachdeva, Arun Palli, and V Mohana.

The swearing-in ceremony was held in the apex court premises.

The strength of judges at the apex court will now be 37, one short of the upgraded sanctioned strength of 38.

The Centre on Monday cleared the appointment of Justice Nagu, the Chief Justice of the Punjab and Haryana High Court, Justice Chandrashekhar, the Chief Justice of the Bombay High Court, Justice Sachdeva, the Chief Justice of the Madhya Pradesh High Court, Justice Palli, the Chief Justice of the Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh High Court, and senior advocate Mohana as top court judges.

The Government last month promulgated an ordinance



Chief Justice of India Surya Kant administers the oath of office to Justice Shree Chandrashekhar, and (R) Justice Sanjeev Sachdeva as judges of the Supreme Court during a swearing-in ceremony in New Delhi on Tuesday. (PTI)

amending a law to increase the sanctioned strength of the apex court from 34 to 38, including the CJI. Two sitting Supreme Court judges -- Justice Pankaj Mithal and Justice J K Maheshwari -- are set to retire on June 16 and June 28.

The five new names were recommended by the apex court Collegium on May 27 and the appointments came through in four days.

Justice Mohana became only the second woman in the country to be directly elevated to the apex court from the Bar after

Justice Indu Malhotra in 2018.

She will be one of the two serving women judges in the Supreme Court, the other one being Justice B V Nagarathna, who has been a judge at the top court since August 31, 2021.

Justice Nagarathna will become the Chief Justice of India in September 2027. She will be the CJI for more than a month.

Born on January 1, 1965, Justice Nagu was enrolled as an advocate in October 1987.

He was appointed an additional judge of the Madhya Pradesh High Court on May 27,

2011, and a permanent judge there on May 23, 2013.

Justice Nagu was appointed the acting chief justice of the Madhya Pradesh High Court on May 25, 2024.

He took oath as the Chief Justice of the Punjab and Haryana High Court on July 9, 2024.

He was part of the Supreme Court-appointed in-house committee which conducted an enquiry into the allegations of discovery of burnt wads of cash at the residence of then Delhi High Court judge Yashwant Varma here in March last year.

Justice Shree Chandrashekhar was born on May 25, 1965, and completed his LLB from the Campus Law Centre of the Delhi University in 1993.

He was appointed an additional judge of the Jharkhand High Court on January 17, 2013, and as permanent judge there on June 27, 2014.

He was the acting Chief Justice of the Jharkhand High Court from December 29, 2023, to July 4, 2024, and was transferred to the Rajasthan High Court on July 5, 2024.

# Vipul is India's next envoy to Saudi Arabia

NEW DELHI, June 2 (PTI)

SEASONED diplomat Vipul was appointed on Tuesday as India's next ambassador to Saudi Arabia, widely seen as a crucial posting given the Gulf nation's growing influence and the volatile geopolitical crisis in West Asia.

Vipul, a 1998-batch Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer, is currently serving as Indian ambassador to Qatar.

"He is expected to take up the assignment shortly," the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said.

Vipul has served in Indian Missions in Cairo, Colombo, Geneva and Dubai. In his diplomatic career, he has dealt with diverse areas, including political and commercial relations, development, disarmament, international security and media. Vipul also worked as a Joint Secretary at the Ministry between 2014 and 2017. Subsequently, he was

Consul General of India in Dubai between 2017-20.

**NOROLEFORANYTHIRDPARTIES IN RESOLUTION OF INDIA-NEPAL BORDER ISSUE:** INDIA on Tuesday categorically rejected any role for third parties to resolve its boundary row with Nepal, days after Nepalese Prime Minister Balendra Shah sought involvement of China and the UK to address the long-standing dispute.

External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said both sides have established bilateral mechanisms to deal with all aspects of the border issue and that close to 98 per cent of the India-Nepal boundary has been demarcated.

Shah said in Nepalese Parliament on Sunday that apart from discussions with India on the border dispute, Nepal was in touch with China and Britain as well.

# Bangladesh Foreign Minister elected President of 81st session of UNGA

UNITED NATIONS, June 2 (PTI)

BANGLADESH'S Foreign Minister Khalilur Rahman was on Tuesday elected as the President of the 81st session of the UN General Assembly.

Rahman and Cyprus' Special Envoy for Multilateralism Andreas Kakouris were vying to lead the 193-member General Assembly in its 81st session, which will commence in September.

He takes over the baton from

current General Assembly President and former German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock, only the fifth female president of the organisation in its 80-year history.

Rahman was sworn in as Bangladesh's Foreign Minister in February.

Earlier, he served as National Security Advisor and High Representative for the Rohingya issue in Bangladesh's interim government led by Muhammad Yunus.



# Over 550 Indian peacekeepers in South Sudan awarded UN Medal of Honour

■ By Yoshita Singh

UNITED NATIONS, June 2 (PTI)

OVER 550 Indian peacekeepers, including 53 women, serving with the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) were honoured for their dedication and commitment to protecting civilians and supporting peacebuilding efforts in the conflict-affected country.

A total of 565 Indian Blue Helmets and 464 Rwandan peacekeepers received the UN Medal of Honour at a ceremony in South Sudan's Malakal city, UNMISS said on Monday.

There were 53 women among the 565 Indian Blue Helmets, it said. Blue Helmets refers to military personnel, police officers, and civilian experts serving under the operational command of the United Nations peace-



An Indian soldier receives the UN Medal of Honour

keeping forces.

The peacekeepers were recognised for their efforts in “protecting civilians through patrols, community engagement, veterinary camps, women’s self-defence training, combating gender violence, and improving

humanitarian access”, the UN body said.

UN Mission in South Sudan Force Commander Major-General Junhui Wu said every medal awarded celebrates the “courage and resilience of our brave peacekeepers, who

demonstrate the highest standards of discipline, operational effectiveness, and teamwork in a challenging environment”.

Reacting to the honour, the Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations congratulated the Indian contingent.

“Indian Blue Helmets have consistently upheld the highest standards of professionalism in all their spheres of operation,” the mission said in a social media post. India is the second largest contributor of uniformed personnel to UN peacekeeping operations, after Nepal.

It currently contributes more than 4,200 military and police personnel, including 155 women, across missions in Abyei, the Central African Republic, Cyprus, Congo, Lebanon, the Middle East, Somalia, South Sudan and Western Sahara.

# BSF to relocate zero-line villages in WB

KOLKATA, June 2 (IANS)

**THE** Border Security Force (BSF) is set to push for the relocation of all zero-line villages in West Bengal to facilitate more effective management of the Indo-Bangladesh Border (IBB).

The BSF has been pursuing the issue for several years. However, according to senior officials, the process is expected to gather momentum following the change of Government in the State.

"The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has been pursuing the matter for several years now. Adequate compensation has been offered.

There are nearly 360 zero-line villages in WB with a population of around 70,000. They are totally isolated, with little access to emergency services at night when the fence gates are locked. Officials said, the villagers themselves have said that they are at the mercy of Bangladeshi criminals and so they are ready for relocation



Zero-line villages are those located within 150 yards of the International Border.

All that the State Government needs to do is find suitable land at a distance from the

border and acquire it. Any farmland close to the border can remain, and people can

tend to their crops during the day," a senior BSF official said. Zero-line villages are those located within 150 yards of the International Border. The presence of such villages makes border fencing difficult. A few Indian villages are even located beyond the border fence.

"They are totally isolated, with little access to emergency services at night when the fence gates are locked. The villagers themselves have said that they are at the mercy of Bangladeshi criminals. They are ready to move, but there was no initiative on the part of the civil administration," the official said.

## India-B'desh border guards conference from June 8

DHAKA, June 2 (ANI)

**BORDER** guard officials from Bangladesh and India will meet in the national capital on June 8 to discuss border security issues as part of the biannual Director General-level border talks, for the first time since the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) government under Prime Minister Tarique Rahman came to power.

# India successfully test-fires RudraM-II air-to-surface missiles

NEW DELHI, June 2 (PTI)

THE DRDO and the Indian Air Force have conducted the successful flight-tests of RudraM-II air-to-surface missiles from an airborne platform, the defence ministry said on Tuesday.

The missiles, after release, were guided to a predefined target with pin-point accuracy, it said, adding all the test objectives were

“fully” met. The ministry said the tests were conducted “under extreme release conditions” with critical trajectory establishing the capability of all subsystems.

The range of the missile is around 350 kms.

“The missiles after release were guided to a predefined target with pin-point accuracy. All the test objectives were fully met as confirmed by the flight data cap-

tured by various range instruments deployed by Integrated Test Range (ITR), Chandipur,” the ministry said in a statement.

RudraM-II has been indigenously developed by Research Centre Imarat, Hyderabad as the nodal DRDO laboratory in collaboration with other sister labs such as Defence Research and Development Laboratory, High Energy Materials Research

Laboratory, Armament Research and Development Establishment and ITR. Along with the Development cum Production Partners (DcPPs), agencies like Hindustan Aeronautics Limited, Regional Centre for Military Airworthiness, Missile System Quality Assurance Agency and several industries have contributed significantly towards achieving this goal, Ministry said.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh lauded the effort of DRDO, Indian Air Force, concerned defence public sector undertakings and the industries for the successful flight-tests of the missile. He said that the tests have demonstrated the growing maturity of indigenous defence technologies, contributing significantly to Aatmanirbharta in advance weapon systems.