

Chinese official thanks India for rescuing crew of ship on fire

New Delhi: China's newly appointed defence attache to India, Rear Admiral You Jian, has thanked the Indian military for rescuing 12 Chinese crew members from a cargo ship that caught fire off Kerala coast last year, reports **Surendra Singh**.

"We will not forget that, last June, the Indian military had rescued 12 Chinese crew members from a cargo ship that caught fire and exploded off the coast of Kerala," You said while speaking at a reception marking the 99th anniversary of the founding of Chinese People's Liberation Army. Indian Navy and Indian Coast Guard jointly carried out the rescue operation.

A senior Chinese military officer lauding the effort of the Indian military is aimed at improving the relations between the two countries. New Delhi and Beijing have engaged in multiple constructive and forward-looking discussions towards gradual normalisation after the 2020 LAC faceoff.

Chinese defence attache also called for closer communication and ties between the armed forces of the two nations.

India invites B'desh PM to Brics Summit

Hasina's Presence On Indian Soil May Be A Spoiler

Ahsan Tasnim

Dhaka/New Delhi: As part of Delhi's broader approach to enhancing global collaboration and cooperation, India has invited PM Tarique Rahman to attend the 18th Brics Summit, which will focus on global cooperation, trade, and sustainable development. India will host the summit in New Delhi on Sept 12-13.

Bangladesh state minister for foreign affairs Shama Obaed Islam said Thursday that the ministry had received the invitation from the Indian side and forwarded it to the Prime Minister's Office, without elaborating further.

PM Narendra Modi had invited Tarique in Feb too, after he took office. Tarique has so far not appeared inclined to take the political risk of visiting India while former PM Sheikh Hasina remains on Indian soil, amid concerns about a domestic backlash. However, Bangladesh also aspires to become



Narendra Modi & Tarique Rahman

a Brics member and has already received support from China and Russia.

Both Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin are expected to attend the summit.

Tarique recently visited Malaysia and China, and also plans to travel to Japan and the US for the UN General Assembly later this year. An official confirmation of India's invitation is still awaited. India had also invited Bangladesh in 2016, the last time it hosted the Brics summit in person, as a Bimstec member for a Brics outreach session.

External affairs minister S Jaishankar on Thursday met Bangladesh foreign mini-

ster Khalilur Rahman on the sidelines of the Asean Regional Forum Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Manila. An official in Dhaka said the two ministers exchanged greetings.

Responding to a question on regional instability, Shama Obaed said Bangladesh, as a democratic state with a democratically elected govt, wanted peace and stability in the region. She added that Bangladesh expected India, as a large democratic country, to address its internal issues and move towards a solution.

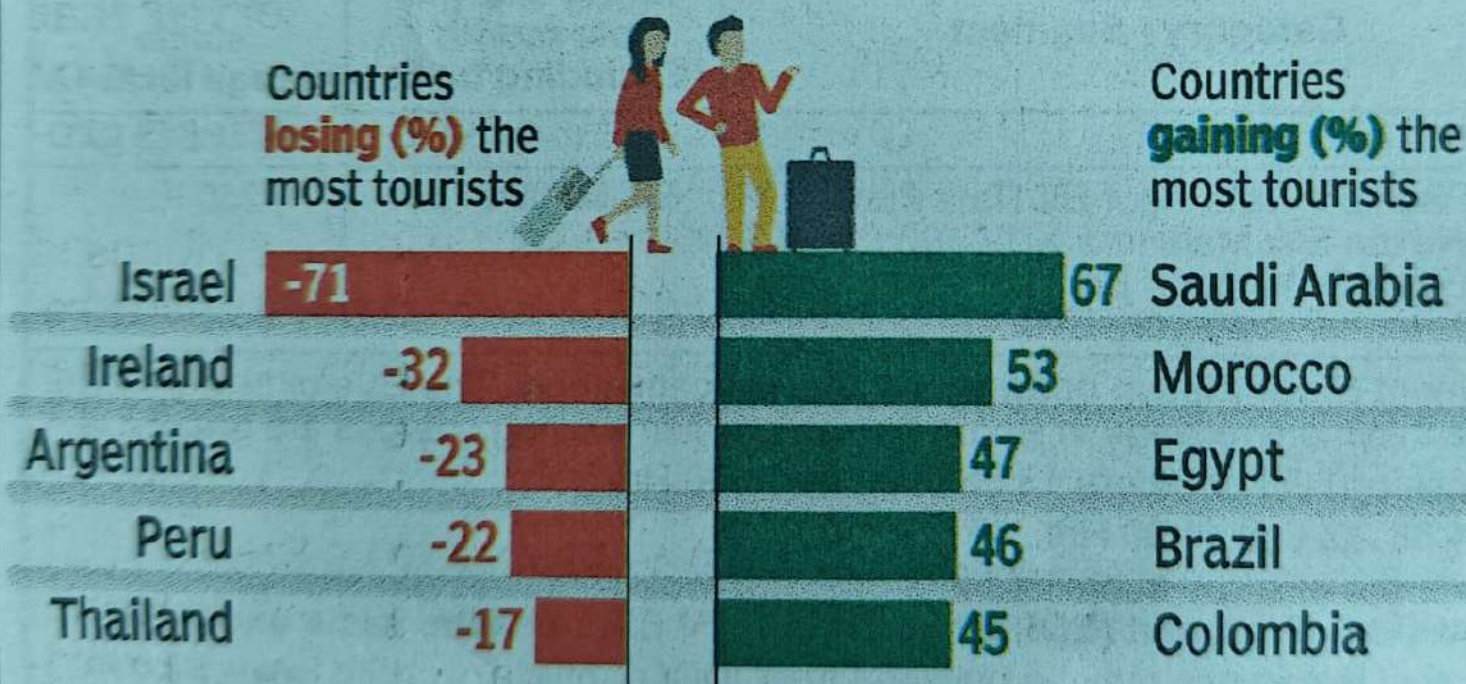
India's Brics chairship is guided by the theme "Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability", reflecting a people-centric approach articulated by Modi at the 2025 Rio Summit. Brics comprises Brazil, China, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Iran, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa and the UAE as members.

The 17th Brics Summit was held on July 6-7, 2025, in Rio de Janeiro in Brazil.

Israel, Saudi are at opposite ends on tourist arrivals

Saudi Arabia recorded the biggest gain in international tourist arrivals in 2025 over 2019, helped by easier visas under its Vision 2030 plan. In the period that also saw the Covid pandemic, Israel — which was involved in the Gaza conflict — clocked the steepest decline

Change in international tourist arrivals (2025 vs 2019)



Source: Visual Capitalist

Trump pegs N-deal to Saudi Arabia joining Abraham Accords

Saudi Has Always Sought Palestinian Statehood Before Recognising Israel

Chidanand Rajghatta | THN

Washington: US President Donald Trump has abruptly raised the diplomatic stakes on his administration's landmark civilian nuclear deal with Saudi Arabia, declaring the pact will proceed only if Riyadh joins the Abraham Accords and normalises relations with Israel — a condition that was not publicly articulated when the agreement was unveiled a day earlier.

In a Truth Social post on Thursday, Trump sought to reassure critics that the agreement would not enable Saudi Arabia to develop nuclear weapons while simultaneously using the deal to revive his

signature West Asia diplomatic initiative. "The Civil Nuclear Deal (There will be no enrichment of material) being made between the Department of Energy and Saudi Arabia... will be approved, but is totally subject to Saudi Arabia joining the very respected and successful Abraham Accords," Trump wrote, adding, "The United States is not opposed to Civil (Non-Enriched) Nuclear Facilities."

The Abraham Accords are a series of US-brokered normalisation agreements signed during Trump's first term, under which Israel established formal diplomatic relations with the UAE, Bahrain, Morocco and Sudan.

The new caveat surprised diplomats because energy secretary Chris Wright had signed the agreement with the Saudi energy minister, Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman only a day earlier without publicly announcing that normalisa-



(L-R) US President Donald Trump, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu. Trump has sought to build on the 2020 accords, which expanded the number of West Asian countries with diplomatic ties with Israel. The UAE and Bahrain signed the Abraham Accords in 2020, followed by Morocco.

tion with Israel was a prerequisite. The move appears aimed at placating critics in Congress and Israel who had questioned why Washington was extending sensitive nuclear cooperation without extracting a major geopolitical concession. It also allows Trump to frame the agreement as an extension of the Abraham Accords, one of the signature foreign-policy achievements of his first term.

Whether Riyadh accepts the condition is another matter. Saudi Arabia has maintained that recognition of Israel remains contingent on mea-

ningful progress toward the creation of a Palestinian state. The devastation in Gaza since the Oct 2023 Hamas attacks has hardened public opinion across the Arab world, making normalisation politically more difficult for the Saudis despite quiet security cooperation with Israel against shared regional threats. Most analysts regard Saudi entry into the Abraham Accords in the near term as unlikely unless accompanied by Israeli concessions on the Palestinian issue.

The agreement is already facing intense scrutiny on Ca-

pitol Hill, where congressional approval will be required. Trump acolytes and supporters of the deal argue that keeping Saudi Arabia's nuclear ambitions tied to American technology and oversight is preferable to allowing Riyadh to turn toward China or Russia for nuclear cooperation. They also contend that limiting the programme to civilian purposes strengthens US influence in the Gulf.

Critics, however, warn that the deal risks undermining decades of US non-proliferation policy. Trita Parsi, executive

vice-president of the Quincy Institute, called it evidence of "a weaker American bargaining position, not a stronger one", arguing that Washington is offering more while receiving less as Gulf states diversify their strategic partnerships. He also warned that the agreement could complicate future negotiations with Iran.

Retired US Army officer and political commentator Fred Weisman was even more scathing, writing on social media: "I'm old enough to remember when Republicans were losing their minds that a Muslim was being elected to head NYC just 25 years after 9/11... Now they are literally handing nuclear secrets and technology to the country that raised the attackers because Trump's family is bought and paid for by the Saudi royal family."

Trump's latest intervention may have been intended to quiet critics by linking the nuclear pact to a broader diplo-

matic prize. Instead, it has complicated both objectives. Riyadh has shown no sign of abandoning its long-standing position on Palestinian statehood, while Congress is now poised to debate not just the wisdom of sharing nuclear technology with Saudi Arabia but also whether a signed international agreement can be fundamentally rewritten after the fact — a typically Trump approach that involves constantly re-litigating deals.

Saudi recognition would be 'historic' for peace: Israel

Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu's office said Thursday that Saudi Arabia's joining of the Abraham Accords would be a historic leap forward for peace in West Asia. "The American and Israeli military action against Tehran and Israel's crushing of Iran's terror axis have created the possibility to expand the circle of peace," the statement said. **AP**

1. C... in Red Russia behind Iran's

Houthi attack Saudi tankers in Red Sea, threatening to widen Iran war

Trump Threatens 'Major Military Punishment' If Houthi Attacks On Ships Continue

Cairo: Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi rebels said they attacked two Saudi oil tankers in the Red Sea Thursday, potentially widening the Iran war. The Houthis have threatened to shut down another key trade route, with the world economy already reeling from Iran's closure of the Strait of Hormuz.

Iran and the US have meanwhile stepped up their attacks as they vie for control of the strait, through which a fifth of the world's oil and gas transited in peacetime, setting off a scramble for alternative routes. As the US carried out a 12th night of strikes across Iran, President Trump threatened "major military punishment" against the Houthis if their attacks on ships continue.

"If they do this again, the US will hold Iran responsible, in that the Houthis are a surrogate and/or proxy of Iran, and major military punishment will be inflicted upon Iran and, of course, the Houthis, themselves," Trump wrote on social media.

As the rhetoric escalated, so did the economic fallout. The price of Brent crude oil, the international standard, spiked more than 6% Thursday to about \$100 a barrel. That is the highest level since May, before the two sides reached a prelimi-



Bab el-Mandeb, at the southern tip of the Arabian Peninsula, is a vital shipping chokepoint connecting the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden. Around 12% of the world's trade, including a fourth of global container traffic, passes through there, moving between Europe and Asia via Egypt's Suez Canal

nary peace agreement last month that has since collapsed.

Prime Minister Ali al-Zaidi of Iraq, which has close ties to both the US and Iran, was in Tehran on Thursday to call for peace and dialogue, and he promised not to allow Iraqi territory to be used for attacks on Iran, his office said. Al-Zaidi met with Trump earlier this month in Washington.

An Arab diplomat said Gulf states are increasingly pessimistic about finding an off-ramp. The diplomat, speaking on condition of anonymity, said regional countries like Pakistan and Türkiye continue to push for de-escalation.

The Houthis' SABA news agency said the rebels had

struck two tankers, the *Encelia* and the *Layla*, in the Red Sea, leading to fires on both. There were no reports of casualties. It was their first reported attack on a vessel since they announced a blockade of Saudi-linked shipping through the Bab el-Mandeb Strait earlier this week in retaliation for the kingdom's blockade on Yemen and a recent attack on the international airport in Yemen's rebel-held capital, Sanaa.

Bab el-Mandeb, at the southern tip of the Arabian Peninsula, is a vital shipping chokepoint connecting the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden. Around 12% of the world's trade, including a fourth of global container traffic, passes through the-

re, moving between Europe and Asia via Egypt's Suez Canal. The state-run Saudi Press Agency reported an attack set the *Encelia* ablaze overnight in the Red Sea. It did not mention the *Layla*. The United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations Center, UKMTO, said it received a report of a tanker being struck by "an unknown projectile" 130km southwest of Al Shuqaiq, Saudi Arabia, in the Red Sea.

The Houthi attacks put at risk oil shipments from Saudi Arabia's Yanbu port on the Red Sea and present a "double whammy" on top of the disruption in the Strait of Hormuz, said maritime data and analysis firm Lloyd's List Intelligence. Saudi Arabia has diverted millions of barrels a day of oil exports to Yanbu via an overland pipeline as the war has bottled up the Persian Gulf. The Houthi threats "raises questions on the viability of this route," Lloyd's said in slides accompanying an online webinar Thursday.

The rebels say they are blockading Saudi Arabia, but during their announced blockade of Israel, at the height of the war in Gaza, they targeted many vessels with little or no connection to that conflict, disrupting global trade. AP

Gujarat town records India's third-highest 24-hour rainfall: IMD

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: With 1,064mm, Umbergaon in Gujarat's Valsad district witnessed the third-highest rainfall ever recorded in the country in 24 hours, said India Meteorological Department Thursday. On June 16, 1995, Sohra (Cherrapunji) in Meghalaya got 1,563.3mm of rain, while Aminidivi in Lakshadweep received 1,168.5 mm on May 6, 2004.

To put the figure into perspective, 944mm was recorded in Mumbai on July 26, 2005, after the cloudburst that triggered the city's worst floods in living memory.

A day earlier, Kaprada in the same district had recorded 417mm in 24 hours.

Meteorologists attributed the deluge to a rare combi-

nation of favourable monsoon conditions. A large-scale upper-air cyclonic circulation over central India shifted westwards towards Rajasthan, while the monsoon trough remained south of its normal position and extended into the middle troposphere. The system was strengthened by the interaction of a western disturbance over Jammu and the monsoon circulation, resulting in persistent, high-intensity rainfall over south Gujarat.

IMD said this combination of weather systems, along with strong moisture-laden winds from Arabian Sea, created conditions for prolonged torrential rain over Valsad, making it one of the most extreme rainfall events recorded in the country in recent decades.