

# AFRICA DIGEST

*Monthly Compilation of News Items from Africa*

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## Historic State Visit: India and Ghana Forge Comprehensive Partnership

On 02 July 2025, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's State Visit to Ghana marked a historic milestone, as he became the first Indian Prime Minister to address the Parliament of Ghana. Convened by Speaker Hon. Alban Kingsford Sumana Bagbin, the special session was attended by Members of Parliament, senior officials, and dignitaries from both nations. The address reflected the deep historical bonds, shared democratic values, and mutual aspirations uniting India and Ghana.

In his [speech](#), Prime Minister Modi paid tribute to Ghana's founding leader, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, and echoed his words that "the forces that unite us are intrinsic and greater than the superimposed influences that keep us apart." Drawing parallels between the two nations' struggles for independence and democratic journeys, he emphasised India's identity as the "Mother of Democracy," highlighting its vast political diversity and unity in plurality. He praised Ghana's democratic vibrancy and welcomed the establishment of the Ghana-India Parliamentary Friendship Society.

The visit produced a series of concrete [outcomes](#), including the elevation of bilateral ties to a Comprehensive Partnership. Four Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) were signed: a Cultural Exchange Programme; cooperation between the Bureau of Indian Standards and the Ghana Standards Authority; collaboration between the Institute of Traditional & Alternative Medicine, Ghana and India's Institute of

Teaching & Research in Ayurveda; and the institutionalisation of a Joint Commission Meeting for regular high-level dialogue.

Addressing a joint press [conference](#) with President H.E. John Dramani Mahama, Prime Minister Modi lauded Ghana's leadership and democratic credentials. The two leaders committed to doubling bilateral trade—currently over USD 3 billion—within five years, and noted Indian investments of approximately USD 2 billion across 900 projects. India pledged cooperation in fintech, offering its UPI digital payment expertise, and support for Ghana's "Feed Ghana" agricultural programme. Additional commitments included doubling ITEC and ICCR scholarships, establishing a Skill Development Centre, and enhancing healthcare access through Jan Aushadhi Kendras.

In defence and security, both nations agreed to deepen cooperation in armed forces training, maritime security, defence supplies, and cyber security. India will also partner with Ghana in the exploration and mining of critical minerals, and strengthen collaboration in renewable energy, including through the International Solar Alliance and the Global Biofuels Alliance. Regional security concerns, particularly in the Sahel, were discussed, with agreement to bolster counter-terrorism cooperation. The visit also had symbolic significance, as Prime Minister Modi was conferred Ghana's national honour—Officer of the Order of the Star of Ghana—by President Mahama, recognising his distinguished statesmanship and global leadership. Accepting the award on behalf of 1.4 billion

Indians, he dedicated it to the youth, cultural traditions, and the enduring friendship between the two nations.

In his closing remarks to Parliament, Prime Minister Modi affirmed India's commitment to walk "shoulder to shoulder" with Ghana in its development journey, guided by the shared ethos of unity, peace, and justice. Stressing that Africa's priorities are India's priorities, he reaffirmed support for the African Union's role in global governance and Ghana's aspirations for sustainable growth. The visit, rich in symbolism and substance, has charted a path for deeper, more strategic India–Ghana engagement in the years ahead.

### **India–Namibia Partnership Sets Ambitious Agenda for the Future**

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's [State Visit](#) to Namibia from 9 July 2025 marked a historic milestone in bilateral relations, being the first visit by an Indian Prime Minister in 27 years. Hosted by President H.E. Dr. Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, in her first bilateral State Visit since assuming office in March, the trip underscored the depth and warmth of the India–Namibia partnership. From the ceremonial reception at the State House in Windhoek to the substantive discussions that followed, the visit reflected a shared desire to elevate ties rooted in history and driven by a common vision for the future.

The two leaders [reviewed](#) the proud legacy of solidarity that bound their nations during Namibia's liberation struggle. Prime Minister Modi recalled India's early advocacy for Namibian independence, its hosting of SWAPO's first overseas office,

and the leadership role of Indian peacekeepers in Namibia's transition to freedom. Building on this legacy, the discussions charted an ambitious path for future cooperation, with a focus on defence, maritime security, digital technology, agriculture, health, energy, and critical minerals. Recognising that bilateral trade—currently over USD 800 million—still holds untapped potential, both sides agreed to expedite negotiations on the India–SACU Preferential Trade Agreement.

Economic engagement emerged as a cornerstone of the visit, with Namibia becoming the first country globally to adopt India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI) through a licensing agreement. Prime Minister Modi noted that this digital leap would bring inclusive financial access to Namibians, from rural farmers to urban entrepreneurs. Complementing this, India committed to establishing an Entrepreneurship Development Centre in Namibia to nurture innovation, mentor business ideas, and support start-ups. Quick Impact projects in agriculture, IT, cyber security, healthcare, education, and women's empowerment were also proposed, including the use of drones for agricultural efficiency—an area where India's experience could be transformative.

The partnership extended beyond economics to address pressing global and regional challenges. Prime Minister Modi expressed gratitude for Namibia's contribution to India's cheetah reintroduction project, a symbol of conservation cooperation. In turn, he invited Namibia to join the International [Big Cat Alliance](#), reinforcing the shared

commitment to biodiversity. Climate resilience and sustainable development formed another pillar, with Namibia formally joining the International Solar Alliance, the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI), and the Global Biofuels Alliance—platforms where Indian and Namibian priorities align closely.

A highlight of the visit was Prime Minister Modi's address to the Namibian Parliament, where he paid tribute to Dr. Sam Nujoma and other heroes of Namibia's freedom struggle. He emphasised that both nations, as part of the Global South, must work together to ensure that their people's voices shape the global agenda. Citing over 1,700 Namibians trained in India, he reaffirmed that "capacity is the best currency" and pledged continued support for skill development, healthcare access, and innovation.

In a moment of deep symbolism, President Nandi-Ndaitwah conferred on Prime Minister Modi Namibia's highest civilian honour—the Order of the Most Ancient Welwitschia Mirabilis—making him the first Indian recipient. Accepting the [award](#), the Prime Minister likened the Welwitschia plant's resilience to the enduring friendship between the two nations, expressing confidence that their partnership would shine as brightly as Namibia's diamonds polished in India.

Concluding his visit, Prime Minister Modi called for a shared journey "From Freedom to Future," anchored in peace, progress, and prosperity. By aligning their historical solidarity with a forward-looking agenda that spans trade, technology, conservation,

and global governance, India and Namibia signalled that the next chapter of their partnership will be defined not only by mutual respect and equality but also by a shared determination to shape a just and inclusive global order.

### **Trade Over Aid: Trump Hosts Five African Leaders in Washington**

On 09 July 2025, US President Donald Trump [welcomed](#) the leaders of Gabon, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mauritania, and Senegal to the White House this week for a three-day summit framed as an "incredible" commercial opportunity. The meeting, organised in part by Guinea-Bissau's President Umaro Sissoco Embaló and expanded to include the other four nations, underscored a dramatic recalibration of US policy toward Africa — away from aid and toward trade-focused, resource-driven engagement.

"We're shifting from aid to trade," Trump told his guests, noting the recent closure of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). He emphasised Africa's "great economic potential" and the desire to forge new opportunities in sectors such as mining, energy, and infrastructure. In return, the US is seeking commitments on security cooperation, migration control, and investment access particularly to critical minerals like Gabon's manganese and uranium, Mauritania's iron ore, and Senegal's offshore gas. For Trump, the gathering was as much about strategic positioning as commerce. His administration has sought to counter China and Russia's growing foothold on the continent. Gabon, for instance, has signed over \$4.3 billion in Chinese investment

deals, and Beijing built Guinea-Bissau's only highway.

The [leaders](#) came prepared to align with Trump's priorities. Mauritania's President Mohamed Ould Ghazouani highlighted "many resources" and opportunities for US investors. Gabon's President Brice Clotaire Oligui Nguema welcomed American investment but cautioned, "Otherwise, other countries might come instead of you." Senegal's President Bassirou Diomaye Faye pitched a "tech city" project on Dakar's coast and sought help addressing his country's 111.4% public debt and stalled \$1.8 billion IMF loan. Liberia's President Joseph Boakai stressed his wish for trade partnerships over aid dependency, despite cuts that have crippled his health sector, once reliant on US funding for nearly half its budget.

[Migration](#) was another central theme. Trump pressed for "safe third-country agreements" to accept deported migrants, visa overstay reductions, and cooperation on illegal migration routes. Between 2023 and 2025, over 20,000 Mauritians and hundreds of Senegalese traveled to the US via Nicaragua; in 2024 alone, 20,000 Senegalese were intercepted at the US-Mexico border. Liberia and Gabon are under consideration for such migration accords, alongside possible inclusion in an expanded US travel ban affecting four of the five visiting states.

Security cooperation also featured prominently. The Gulf of Guinea's piracy risks threatening vital oil and gas shipping lanes make it a strategic priority for Washington. Gabon's coastline could even host a future US military base. Guinea-

Bissau, long linked to narcotics trafficking, has stepped up cooperation, handing over convicted smugglers to US authorities in April.

Despite the optimistic tone, the backdrop is complex. Trump's dismantling of USAID has left gaps in humanitarian and development assistance, while conflicts persist in places like eastern DR Congo, even after US-brokered peace deals. Still, the African leaders praised Washington's mediation efforts, particularly between Rwanda and the DRC, and expressed hope for deeper commercial and strategic ties.

The summit reflects a transactional US–Africa reset minerals and migration control in exchange for market access and investment. Whether this approach yields lasting partnerships or fuels new dependencies will depend on how both sides navigate the balance between opportunity and leverage in the months ahead.

### **Peace Deal between Democratic Republic of Congo and M23 Rebel Group**

DRC and M23 [signed](#) a Declaration of Principles mediated by Qatar on 19<sup>th</sup> July, to stabilise the region. This declaration is [aimed](#) at prioritising peaceful means, establish ceasefire, and set up a joint mechanism to define its practical implementation. The declaration acts as a roadmap towards a permanent settlement. The two sides have agreed to implement the deal's terms by 29<sup>th</sup> July and final peace deal is due by 18<sup>th</sup> August. The final deal has to be aligned with the [peace agreement](#) between DRC and Rwanda signed in June.



Since February 2025, the situation in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has remained largely static. However, [clashes](#) between the March 23 Movement (M23) and the pro- Kinshasa militias engaged in guerrilla warfare had escalated. This volatile region, bordering Rwanda is rich in minerals and has endured over three decades of persistent conflict.

The dialogue is aimed at bringing lasting peace in the region. Jacquemain Shabani, Congolese Deputy Prime Minister in charge of the Interior, Security, Decentralisation and Customary Affairs, followed the discussions in Doha on behalf of the government. He emphasized the need for a political dialogue between M23 and Kinshasa for effective implementation of the deal. The real progress of this deal will depend on the trust between leaders, fighters, and the people they represent

[United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo](#) (MONUSCO) has welcomed the move as an important step towards sustainable peace in the region. Furthermore, the commitments to enable the safe return of displaced people, encouraged inclusive dialogue, and emphasized civilian protection and ceasefire support have garnered MONUSCO's endorsement. It also praised Qatar's mediation role, reaffirmed readiness to verify hostilities' cessation, and urged all parties to prioritize human rights, security, and peace in cooperation with national, regional, and international partners.

The [talks](#) hosted by the United States, between Rwanda and DRC have also

exerted pressure to finalise a longstanding peace deal in Congo. With hopes of peace, President Donald Trump aims to usher Western investment into a country rich in tantalum, gold, cobalt, copper, lithium, and other minerals. Presently, the [production](#) of these minerals is either owned or controlled by companies based in China. The Western investment in the region hopes to reduce the Chinese influence over mineral production. As international mediators push for resolution, the stakes are high in DRC and could possibly give it a future where its resources fuel prosperity.

Like any other peace deal, this too has not been without [disagreements](#). For instance, there is limited progress on confidence-building measures such as prisoner releases and reopening banks in rebel-held areas. The declaration of principles also commits to creating conditions for future action but leaves key issues unresolved, including potential Rwandan and M23 withdrawals and the restoration of state authority in eastern DRC. Through continuous dialogue the deal could promise a safe return for communities uprooted by decades of conflict and a chance to rebuild lives.

### **French Military withdraws from Senegal**

On July 17<sup>th</sup>, France formally handed back its last two military bases in Senegal in an official ceremony, leaving Paris without permanent camps in either West or Central Africa. This marked an end to France's 65 years long military presence in the West African country. The departure comes after similar [withdrawals](#) across the continent with former colonies increasingly turning their backs on their former ruler.

On Thursday France [handed over](#) Camp Geille, its largest base in Senegal, and the adjoining airfield at Dakar airport in a ceremony attended by senior French and Senegalese officials. These included Senegal's Chief of the General Staff, Mbaye Cisse, and General Pascal Ianni, commander of French forces in Africa.

The [restitution](#) marked the completion of France's military withdrawal with approximately 350 French soldiers departing from Senegal, following the return of the Marechal and Saint-Exupery sites on March 7, the Contre-Amiral Protet base at Dakar port on May 15, and the Rufisque military base on July 1. The handover took place under a May 16 decision by a joint commission, in line with the 2012 military cooperation treaty between Paris and Dakar.

France's withdrawal comes amid an [escalating](#) jihadist insurgency in the Sahel, spanning Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger, and increasingly threatening the Gulf of Guinea nations to the south. In Mali, a recent wave of attacks this month included an assault on a town near the Senegalese border. It also comes at a time when anti-French [sentiment](#) is at its zenith in francophone Africa.

In line with the growing sentiment, after his victory in 2024 elections, Senegalese President Bassirou Diomaye Faye [demanded](#) France to withdraw its soldiers by 2025. However, unlike the military-led governments of other former French colonies such as Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger, Faye has affirmed that Senegal will continue to maintain ties with Paris. Since gaining independence in 1960, Senegal

has been one of France's closest African partners, maintaining a consistent presence of French troops throughout its history. Nevertheless, Faye has [urged](#) France to apologise for colonial-era atrocities, including the 1944 massacre of African troops fighting for France in World War II.

Across Africa, French military presence is under growing scrutiny, prompting Paris to close or scale down bases in its former colonies. In recent months, France has [handed back](#) its last base in Ivory Coast and the Kossei base in Chad, its final foothold in the Sahel. [Ivory Coast](#) still hosts around 80 French servicemen for advising and training the country's military, however it does not have a military base.

Between 2020 and 2023, the coups in Burkina Faso, Niger, and Mali brought military rulers to power, [expelling](#) 4,300 French troops and turned to Russia for security support. The Central African Republic has also demanded a French withdrawal, while France's base in Gabon has been converted into a shared facility. Presently, Djibouti remains France's only permanent African base, hosting around 1,500 personnel and serving as Paris's new military headquarters for the continent.

France's withdrawal from Senegal ends 65 years of military presence, symbolising both a reclaiming of sovereignty for Senegal and a shift in Africa's ties with its former colonial powers. While Dakar maintains cooperation with Paris, the move reflects a broader continental trend toward redefining partnerships and asserting greater control over national security and political futures.