

LOOK FOR BOOSTING TIES IN DEFENCE, FOOD SECURITY, VACCINES

India, Ghana elevate ties to comprehensive partnership

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INDIA AND GHANA have elevated their ties to the level of comprehensive partnership, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Ghanaian President John Dramani Mahama resolving to expand the bilateral ties in a range of areas, including defence, food security and pharmaceuticals.

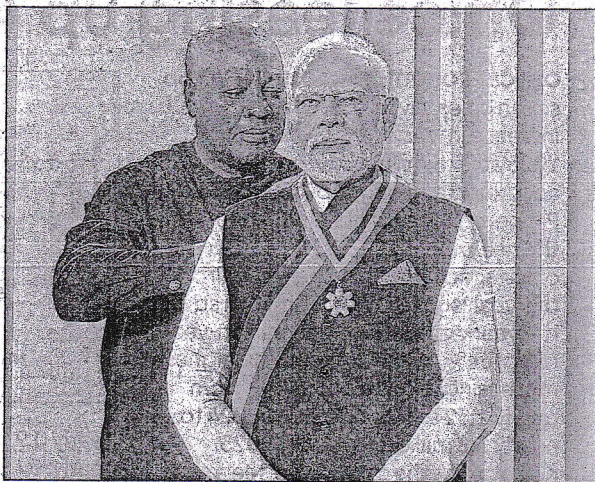
After the talks with Mahama, the prime minister said both sides have set a target of doubling the two-way trade in the next five years and that India is not just a partner but a co-traveller in Ghana's development journey.

The delegation-level meeting between the two leaders took place hours after Modi arrived in this capital city of the West African country on the first leg of his five-nation tour.

In a special gesture, the prime minister was received at the airport by President Mahama and was accorded a ceremonial welcome. It is the first prime ministerial visit from India to Ghana in three decades.

In their talks, the two leaders resolved to accelerate cooperation in key areas such as defence cooperation, food security and pharmaceuticals, especially vaccines. Following the Modi-Mahama talks, the two sides inked four pacts that will provide for cooperation in several areas, including culture and traditional medicine.

"Today, the president and I have decided to elevate our bilateral partnership to a com-



Prime Minister Narendra Modi being conferred with The Officer of the Order of the Star of Ghana, the country's national honour, by the Ghanaian President John Dramani Mahama, in Accra

prehensive partnership," Modi said, adding, "India is not just a partner but a co-traveller in Ghana's journey of nation-building." "In agriculture, it will be our pleasure to lend support towards President Mahama's 'Feed Ghana' programme," he stated. "We've discussed cooperation in vaccine production," he said.

Mahama said Ghana is keen to sign formal agreements with India on defence cooperation, vaccine production and supply of agricultural machinery.

"Both countries will work to deepen economic and investment relations at a time that Ghana is undergoing economic restructuring due to the debt treatments we are undergoing in the IMF programme," he said.

Modi said both sides were

unanimous that terrorism is the enemy of humanity and that it was decided to further strengthen mutual cooperation in countering the menace.

"We are unanimous that terrorism is the enemy of humanity. We thank Ghana for its cooperation in our fight against terrorism," he said.

"In this context, we have decided to further strengthen mutual cooperation in counter-terrorism," he said.

In the field of defence and security, we will move forward with the mantra of "security through solidarity," he added.

India-Ghana cooperation will be enhanced in areas such as training of armed forces, maritime security, defence supply and cyber security, he added.

The prime minister also

highlighted the upswing in trade relations between the two countries. "Indian companies have invested nearly two billion dollars in about 900 projects. Today, we have set a target to double our mutual trade in the next five years," he said.

"In the field of FinTech, India is ready to share its experience of UPI digital payments with Ghana," he noted.

The prime minister also said that Indian companies will cooperate in the exploration and mining of critical minerals.

At a media briefing, Secretary (Economic Relations) in the External Affairs Ministry Dammu Ravi said President Mahama pitched for cooperation in the areas of agriculture, food security, pharmaceuticals, vaccines and defence.

"President Mahama is very clearly interested in creating Ghana a hub for vaccines, and some development has already taken place in collaboration with the Global Vaccine Alliance and in that context," Ravi said.

The senior diplomat said Ghana is also interested in boosting defence cooperation with India. "Here again there are concerns for Ghana in terms of security, terrorism from the northern region, the Sahel region and the piracy in the seas are of concern," he said.

In his remarks, the Prime Minister said both sides expressed serious concerns over the conflicts in West Asia and Europe and called for finding solutions to the problems through dialogue and diplomacy.