

## Ghana backs India's UN bid, eyes Indian investment

Ahead of the India-Africa Forum summit in April, Ghana Tuesday backed India for a permanent UN Security Council seat and launched a charm offensive to attract Indian investment in the resource-rich West African country.

'We recognise the might of India. We have excellent ties with India. Ghana and Africa support India for a (permanent) place in the UN Security Council,' Ghana Vice-President Alhaji Aliu Mahama, who is leading a 42-member business delegation to India, told reporters here.

'We see India as a true partner with whom we can do business and learn a lot. Ghana is a place to do real business,' said Mahama, while flaunting Ghana as a gateway to the markets of the resource-rich West Africa.

Showcasing Ghana, which has huge reserves of gold, diamond, manganese, bauxite and cocoa, as one of the 10 reforming economies of the world, the Ghanaian vice-president underlined a business-friendly environment in his country and envisaged a win-win partnership with India.

'Africa has a lot to gain from you. There are several business opportunities for Indian businessmen in Africa. It's a win-win situation,' said Mahama, who was a businessman before he became vice-president.

'Business people are running the country. Private sector can play a big role in creating new jobs,' he said while fondly remembering Indian teachers who mentored him in school.

He identified agriculture, oil and mining, financial services, IT, industries, tourism and civil aviation as key areas in which Ghana is looking for Indian foreign investment.

The discovery of the first major oil deposit last year, estimated to be anywhere between 250 to 650 billion barrels, has the potential of turning Ghana into an 'African tiger'.

Ghana, a former chair and active player in the African Union, also struck an upbeat note about the first-ever India-Africa Forum summit in April, which will be attended by 14 African countries.

Mahama will meet his Indian counterpart Hamid Ansari and discuss with him a host of bilateral and global issues.

'The relationship between India and Africa goes back centuries. There is now a wish for a formalised relationship between India and Africa,' he said.

'We need to re-explore the relationship and identify two-three concrete steps that will cement and entrench the relationship.'

'It's like being in a marriage. We need to remind each other we love,' said Robert Ahomka-Lindsay, chief executive officer of Ghana Investment Promotion Centre.

Making a riveting presentation pitching Ghana as 'Africa's Golden Gateway', he beckoned Indian businessmen to take the first flight to Accra and soak in new opportunities in his country.

'Take the first flight. We are waiting to welcome you,' he said while letting in on the one-stop shop Ghana has set for clearing all foreign investment.

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