

Africa will be India's top priority, says PM

TIES Modi winds up two-day Uganda trip, arrives in South Africa

Agencies

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KAMPALA(UGANDA): Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday described Uganda as the 'pearl of Africa' and said that India will strengthen its cooperation and mutual capabilities with Africa to combat terrorism and extremism.

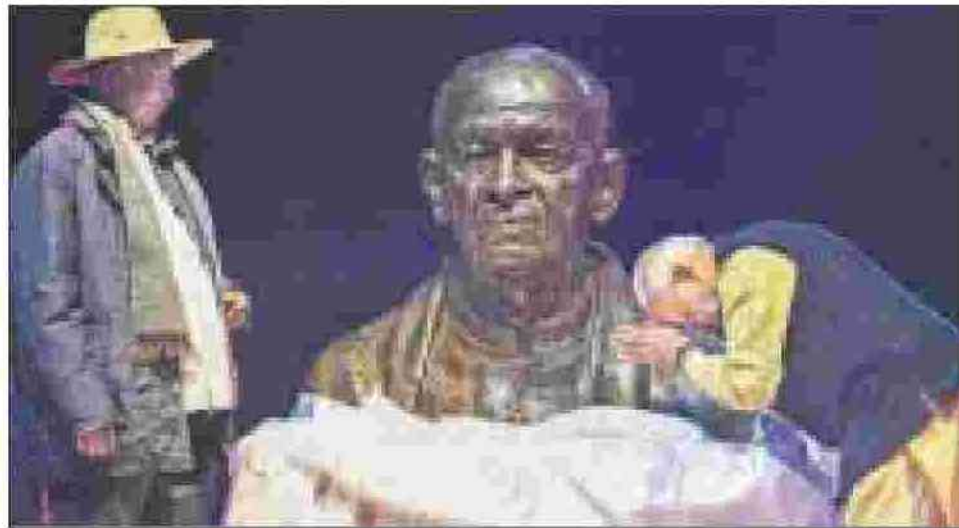
Addressing the Parliament of Uganda, Modi said that India is proud to be Africa's partner and Uganda is central in this on the African continent and spoke of 10 principles that would guide India's engagement in Africa.

In his address, the first by an Indian prime minister to parliament of Uganda, Modi also said Africa would be at the top of India's priorities.

"India's engagement with Africa will continue to be guided by 10 principles. One, Africa will be at the top of our priorities. We will continue to intensify and deepen our engagement with Africa. As we have shown, it will be sustained and regular," Modi said.

Modi announced that India would build a Gandhi Heritage Centre at the sacred site in Uganda's Jinja, where a statue of Mahatma Gandhi now stands.

"As we approach the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, there can be no better homage than a Centre to remind us of Africa's role in shaping his mission that even inspired Africa to freedom and justice; and the universal and timeless values of



■ PM Narendra Modi pays tribute to India's first home minister Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel after unveiling his bust along with Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni in Kampala, Uganda, on Tuesday. PTI

his life and message," Modi said.

"Our people are among many threads that connect Uganda and India together," he said. "Our partnership currently includes implementation of 180 Lines of Credit worth about \$11 billion in over 40 African countries."

Prime Minister Modi also spoke about open markets and easier trade between the two countries. "We will keep our markets open and make it easier and more attractive to trade with India. We will support our industry to invest in Africa," he said.

Modi also said India will strengthen cooperation with Uganda to fight terrorism.

"We will strengthen our cooperation and mutual capabilities in combating terrorism and extremism, keeping our cyberspace safe and secure and supporting the UN in advancing and keeping peace."

Winding up his two-day Uganda tour, the PM tweeted: "My visit to Uganda has been productive. I express gratitude towards President Kaguta Museveni and the people of Uganda for their kindness through the visit. This visit will lead to further cementing of bilateral relations, particularly giving a strong impetus to economic ties."

Uganda has a substantial Indian community, including a group of industrialists who flourished in the years since they returned to claim assets seized during the rule of dictator Idi Amin.

The Prime Minister later arrived in South Africa to participate in the 10th edition of the BRICS Summit in Johannesburg. The grouping's leaders are expected to deliberate on global hot-spot issues, international peace and security, global governance and trade issues among others.