

INDIA SPEAKS

(Monthly Digest of Official Indian Statements on Middle East)

No. 70

May 2015

BILATERAL ISSUES

a. EGYPT

1. Sanjay Bhattacharyya appointed as the next Ambassador of India to Arab Republic of Egypt, New Delhi, 17 April 2015

Sanjay Bhattacharyya, (IFS: 1987), presently Joint Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs, has been appointed as the next Ambassador of India to Arab Republic of Egypt.

He is expected to take up his assignment shortly.

Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, [http://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/25074/Sanjay Bhattacharyya appointed as the next Ambassador of India to Arab Republic of Egypt](http://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/25074/Sanjay_Bhattacharyya_appointed_as_the_next_Ambassador_of_India_to_Arab_Republic_of_Egypt)

b. KUWAIT

2. Emergency Number and the list of Officials who know the regional languages of India, 6 April 2015

The Embassy would like to inform that there is an Emergency number 22530600 during office hours and even beyond normal office hours/weekends. During the office hours, one needs to know the extension number of the concerned Wing which may be dialled immediately after hearing the automatic recorded voice. The extension number of the concerned section/wing is available on the link of 24/7 Emergency contact (Embassy Website). Even if anyone does not know the extension, then caller is attended by the Receptionist who can then connect him/her to the concerned desk. Besides, the Embassy has many officials and local staff who speak the various regional languages whose names are already there on the Embassy Website along with their contact details and mail-IDs.

The Embassy has drawn up a list of officials who can be approached for assistance in different Indian languages apart from Hindi and English. The main objective is to help the members of our

community who are not able to convey their problems due to language problem. The list of such officials with their contact details are placed below. Members of Indian community are requested to make use of this initiative of the Embassy

Indian Language Skills in Embassy of India Kuwait (other than Hindi/English)

i) Malayalam

S. No.	Name	Designation	Telephone No.
1	Balram Kumar Upadhyay	Counsellor	22533125 Mob:97224029
2	Sunila Krishnan	Attaché (Labour I)	22530409 Mob: 97264247
3	M. Sudheendran	Local Clerk	Mob: 99183576
4	Mujib Kollorath	Local Clerk	Mob: 97610246
5	Justin James	Local Clerk	Mob: 94476852

ii) Telugu

S. No.	Name	Designation	Telephone No.
1	Thriveni Reddy	Local Clerk	Mob: 97108538
2	Deena Ratnam	Local Clerk	Mob: 66560773
3	K.S.S. Naidu	Local Clerk	Mob: 66442433

iii) Tamil

S. No.	Name	Designation	Telephone No.
1	Sunila Krishnan	Attaché (Labour)	22530409 Mob: 97264247
2	Sajan Varghese	Local Clerk	22550725 Mob: 99896053

iv) Bengali / Assamese / Oriya

S. No.	Name	Designation	Telephone No.
1	Shubashis Goldar	Deputy Chief of Mission	22510891 Mob: 97229942

v) Kannada

S. No.	Name	Designation	Telephone No.
1.	Sarita Shetty	Local clerk	Mob. 97983059

All Indian nationals are advised to use the above facilities.

Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait, <http://www.indembkwt.org/DispNews.aspx?ID=764>

3. Indian Embassy participates in “Living Kuwait” festival at GUST, Kuwait, 12 April 2015

The Embassy participated in “Living Kuwait” festival organized by Humanities and Social Sciences Department of Gulf University for Science and Technology (GUST), West Mishref on 8 April 2015. The Festival had a rich display of art, fashion, embroidery, handicraft, cultural banners and publicity materials from many countries. The Indian stall was decorated with rich dresses, embroidery, manuscripts, handicrafts, cultural banners, dance posters and publicity materials of Incredible India. The Festival was well attended by the students and the faculty members of GUST & visiting public. Many of them, especially students of GUST, took the opportunity to take photographs posing with the exhibits and enjoyed the show.

Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait, <http://www.indembkwt.org/DispNews.aspx?ID=770>

4. Temporary relocation of the embassy of India in Yemen to Djibouti, 20 April 2015

The Embassy of India in Sana'a, Yemen has been closed temporarily and relocated to Djibouti with effect from 15 April 2015. The Embassy is functioning from Hotel Djibouti Palace Kempinski. Their contact number is Tel: 00253-325555 Ext-2755. The officers and staff members of the Embassy can be contacted on the following:-

- (1) Amrit Lugun, Ambassador-00967 736 333 786 (or) 00253-77199669.
- (2) T. Rajagopal, SS (PPS) to Ambassador 00967-764 000 658 (or) 00 253 77199369
- (3) S.L. Vaiphei, GA 00 253 77196685
- (4) Mohd Tariq, Accountant 00 253 77196875

E-mails amb.sanaa@mea.gov.in (or) ambassador@eosisanaa.org

hoc.sanaa@mea.gov.in (or) hoc@eosisanaa.org

admin@eosisanaa.org

Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait, <http://www.indembkwt.org/DispNews.aspx?ID=771>

5. E-Tourist Visa Facility, Kuwait, 23 April 2015

In pursuance of the announcement made on 14 March 2015 by Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, the Embassy of India is pleased to inform that the e-Tourist Visa (eTV) scheme is extended to nationals of 45 countries with effect from Tuesday, 15 April 2015. e-Tourist Visa Facility is available for holders of passport of following countries: Australia, Brazil, Cambodia, Cook Islands, Djibouti, Fiji, Finland, Germany, Guyana, Indonesia, Israel, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kiribati, Laos, Luxembourg, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia, Myanmar, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue Island, Norway, Oman, Palau, Palestine, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Russia, Samoa, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Tonga, Tuvalu, UAE, Ukraine, USA, Vanuatu & Vietnam. Kuwaiti nationals are not included in eTV facility.

2. The new scheme will be in addition to the existing visa services. Foreign nationals of above 45 countries holding Diplomatic / Official passports cannot avail of the eTV scheme. International Travellers having Pakistani passports or of Pakistani origin are not eligible for this facility.

3. The eTV can be utilized by all foreign Nationals holding ordinary passports whose sole objective of visiting India is recreation, sightseeing, casual visit to meet friends or relatives, short duration medical treatment or casual business visit. The applicant should not have a residence or occupation in India. The applicant should hold a passport with at least six months validity from the date of arrival in India.

4. It may be noted that visa will not be issued on arrival without ETA. Applicants have to apply and obtain ETA online prior to undertaking travel to India. This process will take a minimum of 4 working days.

5. The eTV will be for single-entry, and valid for only 30 days stay from the date of arrival in India. The eTV will be non-extendable, non-convertible and not valid for visiting Protected /Restricted and Cantonment Areas. Entry into India must be through any of the following 9 designated airports only - Bengaluru, Chennai, Delhi, Goa, Hyderabad, Kochi, Kolkata, Mumbai and Thiruvananthapuram. However, exit can be through any authorized Immigration Check Post (ICP) in India. Entry into India must be undertaken within 30 days from the date of approval of ETA. The eTV facility cannot be availed of more than twice in a calendar year.

6. The applicant should carry a printed copy of ETA along with him / her at the time of travel. He / she should have a return / onward journey ticket, with sufficient money to spend during his/her stay in India.

7. Biometric details of the applicant will be captured at Immigration on arrival in India.

8. There is a special fee of US\$ 60 per person (plus an interchange charge of US\$ 2 for credit / debit cards) for the new scheme. This fee must be paid before the application can be processed, and once paid, the fee is non-refundable.

How to apply for ETA

9. Applicants should apply online at:

<https://indianvisaonline.gov.in/visa/tvoa.html>

Each applicant must have a separate passport (international travel documents shall not be accepted). Applications by individuals endorsed on parent's/ spouse's passport shall not be accepted.

10. The application process requires uploading the scanned page of the passport containing the photo and personal details like name, date of birth, nationality, expiry date, etc., in PDF format (10 KB to 300 KB).

11. The application process also requires the uploading of a recent front-facing digital photograph with plain white background, in JPEG format (10 KB to 1 MB). The head should be centred within the frame and present the full head, from top of hair to bottom of chin. The photograph should not have any shadow on the face or on the background, and should not have any border. The height and width of the photograph must be equal.

12. The application is liable to be rejected if the uploaded document and photograph are not clear and as per specification.

13. The fee can be paid through Credit or Debit card. If there are more than three unsuccessful payment attempts, the application ID would be blocked & the application has to be made afresh, with a new application ID.

14. A decision on the application will be conveyed by email. Applicants are advised to ensure that correct e-mail address is provided. Applicants can track the status of their application online by clicking visa status.

15. For any assistance call 24 x 7 visa support centre at +91-11-24300666 or send email to indiatvoa@gov.in

16. The process of ETA issuance is completely online, and the Embassy of India will be unable to assist in expediting the issuance of ETAs. However, in case the eTV application is rejected, the applicant may apply afresh for issue of a regular visa.

Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait, <http://www.indembkwt.org/DispNews.aspx?ID=773>

6. Statistics of Indian nationals in Kuwait, Kuwait, 23 April 2015

As per the latest statistics (18 February 2015) received by us from the Kuwaiti authorities, the number of Indian nationals legally residing in Kuwait has crossed the 8 lakh mark. In addition, there are estimated 25,000 Indian nationals who have overstayed their visas and, therefore, are staying illegally in the country. Some highlights from the latest figures are:-

- The Indian community in Kuwait continues to grow at 5-6 per cent per annum. Our community remains the most preferred community in Kuwait, the second biggest expatriate community being the Egyptians.
- The gender ratio of Indians in Kuwait is highly skewed as they are about 6 lakh Indian males as against only 2 lakh Indian females in the country.
- Out of 8 lakh Indians, 2.8 lakh are domestic workers (i.e. drivers, gardeners, cleaners, ayahs, cooks and housemaids). There are about 1.9 lakh male domestic workers plus about 0.9 lakh female domestic workers. They are not allowed to bring their spouses/children into the country. With the implementation of US\$ 2,500 bank guarantee since September 2014 for the housemaids, there may be little or no growth in the number of Indian housemaids to Kuwait.

- The majority of Indians are deployed in private sectors (i.e. construction workers, technicians, engineers, doctors, chartered accountants, IT experts, etc.). In addition, there are about 1 lakh dependants i.e. spouses/children. Out of these, there are about 42,000 Indian students studying in 20 Indian schools in the country. There is no university-level educational facility for Indian students in Kuwait. There was 8 percent growth last year in Indians engaged in private sector in Kuwait. With Indian companies being awarded civil construction jobs of over US\$ 4 billion in 2014, we may see a surge in Indian nationals working in private sectors in the next 2-3 years.
- There are about 24,000 Indians working for the Kuwaiti Government in various jobs like nurses, engineers in National Oil Companies and a few scientists. The demand for Indian nurses remains strong as ever in Kuwait.
- The Kuwaiti authorities are hinting that Indian community may reach one million mark is not too distant a future.

Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait, <http://www.indembkwt.org/DispNews.aspx?ID=774>

7. Offer of Free Baggage Allowance by Air India Express, Kuwait, 29 April 2015

AIR India Express (AIE) is celebrating 10 years of its successful operations in the Gulf region. A.I.E. is now offering 30 kgs free baggage allowance on this occasion in all its flights from Gulf region to India up to 31st May 2015. All passengers will be eligible for 30 kg Free Baggage Allowance (FBA) irrespective of the ticketing date. Passengers who have already paid for additional 10 kgs of baggage shall now be permitted to carry 10 kgs over 30 kgs FBA i.e. a total of 40 kgs.

All those interested for further information with regard to free baggage allowance, are advised to contact Air India Express office in Kuwait (Tele No. 22456700 and 22438185) or their authorized travel agents in Kuwait.

Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait, <http://www.indembkwt.org/DispNews.aspx?ID=776>

c. LEBANON

8. India's North-East Comes to Lebanon, Beirut, 6 April 2015

April 2015 saw the Narmada Cultural Organization performing classical and folk dances from the state of Manipur in the North-East of India in Beirut, Tripoli and Tyre. The performances were presented by the Embassy of India, in collaboration with ADLIR (Association for the development of Lebanese Indian Relations), and with the Safadi Cultural Foundation in Tripoli and Tiyyatro Istanbouli in Tyre. The performances showcased Ras Leela, depicting the loves of Lord Krishna, and Draupadi's Swayamwara (wedding) performed in the classical Manipuri dance style, both the Pung Cholan and Dhol Cholan drum dances, and an acrobatic "stick-balancing" display of coordination and control. The shows attracted big audiences, and was received enthusiastically by the spectators, who were enchanted by this revelation of a facet of Indian culture which they had never seen before. Manipur is a small state in India's North-East bordering Myanmar, and its cultural traditions as depicted in the Narmada Devi Troupe

performances go back thousands of years. Another interesting fact- the game of Polo was inspired by a Manipuri game called Pulu played with horses, sticks and a ball, which was adopted by British officers posted there and developed into today's Polo. Narmada Devi, who is the leader of the group, was born in 1968 in Imphal (capital of Manipur) and has spent lifetime training in classical Manipur dance. She also had 5 years of theatre training under the guidance of Lokendro Arambam of the Aryan theatre and Ratan Thiyam of the Chorus Repertory Theatre.

She and her group have performed widely in India and internationally. For more photos and videos of the performances, go to: India In Lebanon:

<https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.808020919294030.1073741850.519820998114025&type=1> YouTube : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-mYGdg-b42I&feature=youtu.be>

LBC TV: <http://www.lbcgroup.tv/news/209163/1504050527-lbci-news> Safadi Foundation, Tripoli: <https://www.facebook.com/media/set/set=a.1097347153624319.1073742049.215960708429639&type=3>

Tyre: <https://www.facebook.com/media/set/set=a.1097347153624319.1073742049.215960708429639&type=3>

See more at: <http://indianembassybeirut.org/notice/display/40#sthash.CMqgJsVR.dpuf>

Source: Embassy of India, Beirut, <http://indianembassybeirut.org/notice/display/40>

d. QATAR

9. Indo -Qatar Ties, New Delhi, 22 April 2015

Will the Minister of External Affairs be Pleased to State:-

- (a) Whether the Emir of Qatar recently visited India and held discussions with various leaders?
- (b) If so, the details of discussions held during the said visit and outcome thereof;
- (c) The details of Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) signed during the occasion along with the areas identified for further co-operation between the two countries?
- (d) Whether India has sought Qatar's help in rescuing Indians held hostage by Islamic militant outfit, ISIS; and
- (e) If so, the reaction of the Qatar Government thereto?

Answer

The Minister of State in the Ministry of External Affairs Gen. Dr. V. K. Singh (Retd.)

- (a) Yes, the Emir of Qatar paid a State Visit to India from 24-25 March 2015 and held discussions with our leaders.
- (b) During the visit, discussions were held on bilateral and regional matters of mutual interest.
- (c) The agreements/MoUs signed during the visit included:-

1. Agreement between the Government of the Republic of India and the State of Qatar on the Transfer of Sentenced Persons.
2. MoU between the Foreign Service Institute, Ministry of External Affairs of the Republic of India and the Diplomatic Institute of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the State of Qatar.

3. MoU between Ministry of Communication and Information Technology, Government of India and the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology of the State of Qatar for Cooperation in the field of Information and Communication Technology.

4. MoU for Scientific and Technical cooperation between Qatar Civil Aviation Authority, Ministry of Transport, State of Qatar and Earth System Science Organization, Ministry of Earth sciences, Government of India.

5. MoU for Cooperation in the field of Radio and Television between the Government of the State of Qatar and the Government of the Republic of India.

6. Agreement for Mutual Cooperation and Exchange of News between Qatar News Agency and United News of India.

The two sides discussed ways and means to enhance bilateral cooperation in the areas of energy, power, petrochemicals, investments, infrastructure, development, project exports, education, culture, health, human resource, media and information technology.

(d) and (e) Yes, India has sought assistance of countries in the region, including Qatar for rescuing Indian nationals held hostage by the ISIS. The Qatari side has assured all possible assistance in this regard.

Source: Lok Sabha (Council of People), starred Question No. 410, asked by G. Hari, Rahul Ramesh Shewale, Dr. Shashikant Eknath Shindhe, Vinayak Bhaurao Raut, Nagendra Kumar Pradhan, J.M Scindia, K.N. Deo Singh,

<http://164.100.47.132/LssNew/psearch/QRresult16.aspx?qref=14944>

e. SAUDI ARABIA

10. Air India Express announces free tickets to the needy Indians, Riyadh, 28 April 2015

Air India Express is completing 10 years of successful operation of its services on 29 April 2015. As part of its celebrations on the occasion, the Air India Express has conferred 10 free tickets to be used by the needy Indian expatriates for returning back to India. Similar gesture is also being conferred to Indian expatriates in UAE, Kuwait, Muscat, Qatar and Bahrain. This is also recognition of the expat Indian community's unstinted loyalty, support and patronage of the airline's services. This offer is a onetime goodwill gesture and will remain valid till December 2015, excluding super peak period from 18 June - 17 July 2015.

Handing over a letter from the Chairperson, Air India Charters Limited (AICL) to His Excellency Hamid Ali Rao, Ambassador of India to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia authorizing the Embassy to identify the beneficiaries for the complimentary tickets, Air India Manager-Riyadh (in-charge) M.A. Noor Mohamed said that the airline will also be conducting a Lucky Draw Bonanza on board during the period 29 April – 8 May 2015 on Air India Express network. The flights IX381 on 29Apr from Calicut to Dammam and IX382 on the same day from Dammam to Calicut have been selected for the Lucky Draw. The winners will be given one free sub-load return ticket on Air India Express sector to be used before 31 December 2015.

Air India, the national carrier of India, introduced Air India Express through AICL, its subsidiary company, to cater the needs of Indian expatriates in Middle East and South East Asia. Air India Express during the 10 years of its operation, has been offering point to point service focusing primarily on providing affordable air travel services to the expat Indian communities in the region. Air India Express presently operates from Dammam (Saudi Arabia) to Calicut, Cochin and Mangalore destinations.

The full service carrier Air India operates to Dammam, Riyadh and Jeddah from various points in India with 36 services per week catering the needs of Indian community. Air India is also known for helping Indians whenever in trouble at alien places. The recent evacuation a large number of Indians including hundreds from different foreign nationalities, from Yemen, has won wide accolades and appreciations from across the World. Air India also has the credit of successful evacuation of Indian nationals during crisis in Kuwait, Libya, Lebanon and Gulf war.

Source: Embassy of India, Saudi Arabia,
<http://www.indianembassy.org.sa/Content.aspx?ID=790&PID=691>

11. eTourist Visa Scheme, Riyadh, April 21, 2015

The name of Tourist Visa on Arrival – enabled with Electronic Travel Authorization (TVOA – ETA) scheme, which was launched on 27 November 2014 for 43 countries, has been changed to eTourist Visa scheme (eTV) with effect from 15 April 2015. A dedicated website has been launched for this purpose. (Click the following link) <https://indianvisaonline.gov.in/visa/tvoa.html>. The list of 43 countries is given below, as Annexure – A. The citizens of these 43 countries can apply online for ETA i.e. Electronic Travel Authority (twice a year, each visit not exceeding 30 days, visa duration non-extendable except in the event of medical emergencies) which shall be granted within 72 hours through e-mail. The applicant is expected to take a print of the ETA received through email and can travel to India through 9 designated international airports (Bangalore, Chennai, Kochin, Delhi, Goa, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Mumbai and Thiruvananthapuram). The eTV scheme entails capture of biometric data of the visitor on arrival at the airport. Applicants can approach for addressing their difficulties, if any, in connection with applying for ETA on the 24 x 7 helpline telephone number 0091-11-24300666 or email to indiatvoa@gov.in.

Source: Embassy of India, Saudi Arabia,
<http://www.indianembassy.org.sa/Content.aspx?ID=790&PID=691>

12. Indian Embassy, Riyadh requires Two/Three Clerks in pay scale of SR. 3000-90-4350-130-5650-170-7350, Riyadh, 16 April 2015

Applicant should have:-

- A Bachelor or equivalent degree.
- Be able to operate computer effectively and computer typing skill in Arabic as well as English.
- Good command of spoken and written English.

- Preference would be given to Arabic knowing candidate.

Interested candidate with requisite qualifications may send their CVs to:

- E-mail: adm.riyadh@mea.gov.in; trade.riyadh@mea.gov.in
- P. O. Box No. 94387, Riyadh-11693.

Note: - The applicant who is in a position to join this Embassy within one month after selection may apply within 7 days of the publication of this advertisement.

Source: Embassy of India, Saudi Arabia,
<http://www.indianembassy.org.sa/Content.aspx?ID=790&PID=691>

f. SYRIA

13. Indian technical Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme – Courses 2015-2016, Damascus, 20 April 2015

The Government of India has announced a list of courses conducted under the Indian Technical Economic Cooperation for 2015-16. These courses have already been uploaded on the public portal <http://itec.mea.gov.in> as “Training Brochure 2015-16” under “Courses” head. A link is also provided in the Embassy webpage [<http://eoi.gov.in/Damascus>]. The information is also being forwarded to the concerned authorities of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic. All interested scholars are requested to forward their applications through the concerned authority so that the same can be forwarded to the respective institutes at the earliest.

Source: Embassy of India, Damascus, <http://eoi.gov.in/damascus/?4005?000>

g. TUNISIA

14. Sheikh Rashid Ghannouchi's visit to India, 5-8 April 2015, New Delhi, 9 April 2015

Sheikh Rashid Ghannouchi, President of Ennahda Party of Tunisia, visited India from 5-8 April 2015 as a guest of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations. While in New Delhi, Sheikh Rashid Ghannouchi met with M. Hamid Ansari, Vice President of the Republic of India and Sushma Swaraj, External Affairs Minister of India. He also met with Thambi Durai, Deputy Speaker of Lok Sabha, the lower House of Parliament and visited Parliament House. The Indian leaders conveyed their felicitations on the successful transition of Tunisia to a durable democracy. Matters of mutual interest were discussed and both sides expressed the desire to deepen the political and economic relationship between the two countries.

Sheikh Rashid Ghannouchi held interactions with the Indian student community at two universities at the School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University and at the Aligarh Muslim University. He also delivered a lecture on **Tunisia's Transition to Democracy** at the Observer Research Foundation, a respected academic body in New Delhi.

Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi,
http://mea.gov.in/Portal/CountryNews/4084_Press_Release_on_Sheikh_RG_s_visit_to_India.pdf

h. YEMEN

15. Evacuation of Indian Nationals from Djibouti by the Indian Air Force (IAF), New Delhi, 1 April 2015

Consequent upon the Government of India issuing an advisory for Indian nationals to leave Yemen, the Indian Air Force (IAF) deployed two heavy transport aircraft with alacrity, in support of evacuation operations. In a well coordinated operation involving multi agencies, IAF deployed two C-17 Globemaster III aircraft, today. These aircraft took off from Delhi early this morning and reached Djibouti. These two aircraft will bring back people evacuated from Yemen to India. One aircraft will be landing at Kochi and the other at Mumbai.

It would be pertinent to note that transport aircraft are being utilized extensively for Human Assistance Disaster Relief (HADR) operations. The Indian Air Force, after proving its mettle in bringing succour to scores of people after Jammu and Kashmir in September last year has once again risen to the occasion and added a pioneering chapter in Disaster Relief by bringing home the Indians evacuated from Yemen. The Indian Air Force reaffirms its commitment towards Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Operations in support of the nation.

Source: Press Information Bureau of India, New Delhi,
<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx?relid=117925>

16. PM salutes the services of civilian and defence officials and organizations in helping evacuate Indian citizens from Yemen, New Delhi, 6 April 2015

The Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, has saluted the services of civilian and defence officials and organizations in helping evacuate Indian citizens from Yemen. "I salute the services of our civilian and defence officials and organizations in helping evacuate our citizens from Yemen. Continue your efforts! Seamless co-operation between organizations - Ministry of External Affairs, Navy, Air Force, Air India, Shipping, Railways and State Governments greatly helped in rescue work. Colleagues Sushma Swaraj and General VK Singh (who has been on the ground for days), have coordinated evacuation efforts in an exemplary manner. I am also glad that India has rescued several non-Indian citizens from Yemen. Our evacuation efforts in Yemen reflect willingness to serve our people and readiness to help others in distress, which is India's ethos," the Prime Minister said.

Source: Press Information Bureau of India, New Delhi,
<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=117970>

17. In An Unique Gesture, Indian Railways Makes All Out Efforts in Helping 940 Yemen Evacuees to Reach Their Respective Destinations, New Delhi, 9 April 2015

As directed by the Minister of Railways Suresh Prabhakar Prabhu, the Indian Railways is making all possible efforts to facilitate the Yemen Evacuees to reach their respective destinations in India. In all 940 persons were accommodated in the trains from 2 April 2015 to 8 April 2015. On 8 April 2015, a total of 435 persons were facilitated to go for their destination. Sunil Kumar

Sood, General Manager, Central and Western Railway personally received the Yemen Evacuees at the Mumbai International Airport.

The Yemen evacuees who arrived at Mumbai International Airport were guided to the felicitation and ticketing counter opened specially for them at the Airport and their tickets were borne and confirmed by Central Railway as per their destination like Gorakhpur, Lucknow, Kanpur, Patna, Brahmapur, Varanasi, Bengaluru, Mangalore, Ernakulam, Nagpur, Sainagar Shirdi, Thiruvananthapuram, Muzaffarpur, Chhapra, Madurai, Chennai, Hyderabad, Kanyakumari, etc. Sunil Kumar Sood, General Manager, Central & Western Railway received the Yemen Evacuees at the Mumbai International Airport in the wee hours of 2-4 April 2015. Later they were shifted to Lokmanya Tilak Terminus and Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus Mumbai in buses. At the railway stations they were settled in waiting rooms and provided with breakfast and water.

Later they were shifted to Lokmanya Tilak Terminus (76 persons) and Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus Mumbai (35 persons) in buses for boarding the trains in the morning of 4 April 2015. As a kind gesture, Central Railway presented “Trains at a glance” to them as a souvenir.

Source: Press Information Bureau of India, New Delhi, <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=118113>

18. Evacuation from Yemen, New Delhi, 9 April 2015

1. With the airlifting of over 630 persons from Sana'a today by three special Air India flights, India has concluded its evacuation by air. The total number of Indians evacuated from Sana'a by air has crossed 2,900 by eighteen special flights since the beginning of the air operations.
2. In addition, Indian naval vessels have also evacuated over 1,670 Indians from Aden, Al Hudaydah and Al Mukalla ports in Yemen since 31 March.
3. Indian Naval Ship INS Sumitra evacuated 349 persons, including 46 Indians and 303 foreign nationals from Al Hudaydah port on 9 April.
4. The entire evacuation effort has resulted in the evacuation of over 5,600 persons. These include over 4640 Indian nationals and about 960 foreign nationals from 41 countries.

Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, [http://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/25049/Evacuation from Yemen](http://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/25049/Evacuation+from+Yemen)

19. Security situation in Yemen, New Delhi, 9 April 2015

Security situation in Yemen deteriorates further with bomb blast at Aden port today. India completes its air evacuations from Sana'a.

Following evacuation by Naval Ships from Al Hudaydah Port for remaining nationals over next two days, Embassy in Sana'a will need to shut operations and relocate its personnel.

Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, http://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/25048/Security_situation_in_Yemen

20. Evacuation Operations from Yemen - 'OPERATION RAAHAT', New Delhi, 12 April 2015

In yet another difficult and challenging operation, Indian Naval Ship Tarkash evacuated 464 personnel of different nationalities from the war torn city of Aden, Yemen on 10 April 2015. Body of Late Manjeet Singh, who succumbed to injuries sustained during bombing in Aden city was embarked onboard INS Tarkash for passage to Djibouti. He was a resident of Hamirpur, Himachal Pradesh. 46 Indians nationals and 422 persons hailing from 14 countries were evacuated in this trip from the port city of Aden and disembarked at Djibouti on 11 April 15. The personnel evacuated were observed to be in a state of shock and were greatly relieved to be onboard an Indian Naval Ship safely.

Amongst the evacuees there were four pregnant women, one patient each suffering from cancer and renal failure and two malnourished children were provided succour and medical aid by INS Tarkash. It was learnt from the evacuees that the city Aden continues to remain under siege by the Houthis and the situation there was grim with continuous shelling and firing taking place. Despite the difficult conditions, embarkation continued to be undertaken by INS Tarkash. Gun/shots, shelling and firing in port area and on the jetty were reported by crew of INS Tarkash.

Earlier on 9 April 2015, INS Sumitra had safely evacuated 349 personnel including some foreign nationals from the Port Al Hodeida. Sumitra was received in Djibouti harbour by Indian Ambassador to Ethiopia and Bangladeshi Ambassador to Kuwait. All evacuees were safely disembarked at Djibouti for further passage to India by Indian Air Force Aircraft and civil flights on 10 April 15.

Till now Indian Naval Ships Mumbai, Tarkash and Sumitra deployed in Gulf of Aden have evacuated 2,671 persons including 964 foreign nationals from 30 countries. Evacuation operations as part of Operation Rahat continues to be progressed by the Indian Navy Ship deployed off the coast of Yemen.

Source: Press Information Bureau of India, New Delhi, <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=118176>

21. Indians in Yemen, New Delhi, 22 April 2015

Will the Minister of External Affairs be pleased to state:-

- (a) Whether several Indians have been trapped in the strife torn country of Yemen and if so, the details thereof along with the assistance provided to these Indians?
- (b) Whether the Government has mooted a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to evacuate the stranded Indians and if so, the number of Indians who have been safely evacuated from Yemen along with the number still trapped in the conflict zone, State-wise?

- (c) The steps taken in consultation with the Yemeni Government to ensure the safety and security of Indians in that country and their safe evacuation;
- (d) Whether any advisory has been issued to Indians to leave that country under the prevailing situation and if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) The number and details of help desks opened at the Indian embassy in Yemen and India for providing adequate assistance in this regard?

Answer

The Minister of State in the Ministry of External Affairs Gen. Dr v. k. Singh (Retd)

(a) to (e) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement referred to in reply to parts (A) to (E) of the Lok Sabha starred question No. 410 regarding “Indians in Yemen” to be answered on 22 April 2015

(a) Yes, several Indians got trapped in the strife-torn country of Yemen recently. As per estimates from our Embassy in Sana’a, over 4,000 Indians were working in different cities in Yemen before the onset of airstrikes by a coalition of Arab countries beginning 26 March.

The GOI took all necessary and immediate steps to ensure safe and early evacuation of our nationals stranded in Yemen. Necessary logistical arrangements for their evacuation were put in place in coordination with the Ministries of Home, Defence and Civil Aviation. Adequate capacity for evacuation was ensured through deployment of 5 Indian naval ships- 3 warships- INS Sumitra, INS Mumbai and INS Tarkash and 2 Indian vessels Kavaratti and Coral. 7 aircraft- 3 Indian Air Force C-17 Globemasters and 4 Air India commercial aircraft were used to ferry the evacuees from Sana’a to Djibouti and onward to destinations in India.

(b) Yes, there is an inter-ministerial “Standing Group for Repatriation of Indian nationals from Abroad” in place. The Group includes relevant GOI Ministries and departments to plan, coordinate and implement evacuation plans in contingency situations.

As of 18 April, 4,741 Indians have been assisted in their return to India. All Indian nationals willing to return to India are being assisted in evacuation. A list indicating state-wise details of the returnees as on 18 April is enclosed at Annexure A.

(c) The evacuation efforts were carried out with active cooperation from the local Yemeni authorities and other governments in the region.

(d) Yes, in anticipation of a possible deterioration of the security environment in Yemen, the Ministry of External Affairs and Indian embassy in Sana’a issued three advisories on 21 January, 19 March and 25 March 2015 urging Indians there to leave Yemen voluntarily by available commercial means as it was safe to do so at that time.

(e) A control room with 24-hour help-lines was established in the Ministry of External Affairs from 26 March to assist Indian nationals in Yemen and their concerned family members in India. Similar 24-hour help-lines were established in the Indian embassy in Sana'a and in the Indian control room in Djibouti.

Source: Lok Sabha (Council of People), starred Question No. 410, asked by Prof. Saugata Roy and M. B. Rajesh, <http://164.100.47.132/LssNew/psearch/QResult16.aspx?qref=14940>

MULTILATERAL ISSUES

22. Vice president releases Delhi Policy Group-IDSa report on West Asia, New Delhi, 24 April 2015

The Vice President of India M. Hamid Ansari released the “Delhi Policy Group – IDSa Report on West Asia” at a function here today. Addressing on the occasion, the Vice President said that this Report on West Asia is an excellent beginning but we have to go a way beyond this. We have very old social, economic, geographical, cultural and political relations with West Asian countries. One more thing should have been included in this Report as to why the West Asia is in its present situation. We have our interest in the stability in West Asia as we have our large workforce working in these countries. He hoped that this Report will be found useful by the strategic community. He congratulated Delhi Policy Group and the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSa) for their valuable effort.

The Delhi Policy Group and the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSa) had set up a Joint Task Force on Indian Policy towards the ongoing transitions in West Asia last year. The Task Force Report has been edited by Ambassador Arundhati Ghose and has brought together eminent analysts such as Ambassador Ishrat Aziz, Pramit Pal Chaudhary and Meena Singh Roy. It has argued that India needs to craft a “Look West Asia” policy to protect its many engagements in the region, from Energy to Indian Diaspora.

Source: Press Information Bureau of India, New Delhi, <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=118700>

23. Statement by Ambassador Asoke K. Mukerji, Permanent Representative at the Open Debate on the Situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian Question in the United Nations Security Council, New York, 21 April 2015

Thank you President,

I would like to appreciate your convening of this quarterly open-debate on the situation in the Middle East including the Palestinian Question. I also thank the Secretary General for today's briefing. We take this opportunity to extend our support to the newly appointed Special Coordinator for Middle East Peace Process Nickoloy Mladenov in his efforts and appreciate the work of outgoing Special Coordinator Robert Serry.

President,

2. Last month when the outgoing Special Coordinator Robert Serry briefed this council he said and I quote “It remains the primary responsibility of this Council to play its role in developing new peace architecture for resolving the conflict at long last”. Pointing out that the Security Council resolution 242 embodying the key principle of “land for peace” is nearly half century old, he had rightly questioned whether the time hasn’t come for the Council to lead?.

President,

3. The Palestine Question is the one of the long standing issue before this Council and the international community. While we reiterate our support to the amicable resolution of this issue, we are concerned that the Security Council has not been able to achieve the objective of such a peaceful solution. The Council has at best been a standby witness to phases of escalation and relative calm which has become characteristic of this unsettled issue. The effectiveness of the Council has consequently been brought into question. We therefore join others in urging the Council to step up its efforts and take the lead in resolving this problem.

President,

4. India’s deep association with, and continuing commitment to, Palestine is rooted in our modern history that goes back to our own struggle for independence. India’s position on the issue of Palestine is very clear. India re-affirms its support for the cause of Palestine and solidarity with the Palestinian people for their struggle for a sovereign, independent, viable and a united State of Palestine within secure and recognized borders side-by-side at peace with Israel and with East Jerusalem as its capital.

5. Apart from political support to the Palestinian cause, India continues to support the development and nation-building efforts of Palestine by consistently extending technical and financial assistance to Palestine. It also contributes US\$ 1 million annually to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). India pledged US\$ 4 million in response to the National Early Recovery and Reconstruction Plan for Gaza. We are also implementing development projects in Palestine, jointly with Brazil and South Africa within the framework of IBSA, and have pledged US\$ 1 million for a new project to reconstruct the Atta Habib medical centre in Gaza.

President,

6. India remains firmly convinced that dialogue remains the only viable option that can effectively address the issue. We are particularly worried that last year saw a downward trend in the Peace Process. Efforts for serious negotiations between the parties were inconclusive. In addition, we were faced with an unfortunate situation of resumption of the tragic and escalated conflict in Gaza. Subsequent developments included unilateral actions by the parties, unfortunately moving them further apart. The imperative need is for restraint, to avoid provocation and unilateral actions and to return to the peace process. Diplomacy and statesmanship have to prevail over hatred and violence; there is no other road to a lasting peace.

We remain hopeful and urge both sides to resume the peace process soon, for a comprehensive resolution of the Palestinian issue.

President,

7. We express our deep concern with the activities of proscribed outfits, radicalized and extremist groups in the Middle East region especially in northern parts of Iraq and Syria which are critically impacting on peace and stability in the region. The violence perpetrated against the civilians especially against women and children, on the basis of religion, ethnicity as well as sectarianism strikes at our common humanity. Efforts must be taken by all parties and stakeholders in the region to curb these dangerous trends. We believe the consolidation of political processes and solutions while building durable state institutions will be the effective way of addressing such extremism and radicalism in the region.

8. We note that a proscribed terrorist group has targeted UN peacekeepers twice in UNDOF. We also regret the death of a UN peacekeeper in UNIFIL. Security Council resolutions that proscribe terrorist groups operating in this region need to be implemented. The early and effective prosecution of such groups is essential. Only such action endorsed by the Council will deter such groups in other parts of the world from committing acts of terror.

President,

9. As a nation which took proactive and effective steps in evacuating and safeguarding the lives of thousands of our citizens as well as many other nationals from 48 countries, including from 4 of the 5 Permanent Members of this Council, we urge all parties in Yemen to return to the negotiating table forthwith. As I have stated earlier in my statement dialogue remains the effective solution to resolve all problems.

10. We not only managed to safely evacuate 4,741 Indians but also 1,947 foreign nationals from 48 countries till 18 April under most difficult circumstances. Our approach in the evacuation process has been guided by the spirit of "Vasudhaiva Kukumbakkam" or the "world is one family".

11. We assisted nationals of Australia, Bangladesh, Bahrain, Canada, Cuba, Djibouti, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, France, Greece, Germany, Hungary, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jordan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Maldives, Morocco, Myanmar, Mexico, Moldova, Nepal, New Zealand, Philippines, Pakistan, Romania, Russia, Somalia, Sweden, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Spain, Switzerland, Syria, Tanzania, the UK, Uzbekistan, the US, the UAE, Uganda, Ukraine and Yemen. This received worldwide appreciation.

12. On Syria, we reiterate our support to a Syrian-led, comprehensive political solution to the ongoing crisis, in alignment with the Geneva Communiqué of 2012. The humanitarian crisis arising out of the situation has to be addressed effectively. It is with this conviction we pledged

and contributed US\$ 2 million to the UN Syrian Humanitarian Response Plan in 2014 and pledged another US\$ 2 million during the recently held 3rd International Humanitarian Pledging Conference for Syria in Kuwait. We would like to urge all parties to demonstrate the requisite political will, exercise restraint, and commit to seeking common ground in accommodating their differences.

I thank you.

Source: Permanent Mission of India to the UN, New York,
[https://www.pminewyork.org/adminpart/uploadpdf/72285pr_21apr%20\(1\).pdf](https://www.pminewyork.org/adminpart/uploadpdf/72285pr_21apr%20(1).pdf)

Note: The Exact web links for the questions in the Indian Parliament are non-functional due to technical reasons. They can be searched through the question number or the name of the Member of Parliament concerned at the Websites <http://rajyasabha.nic.in/> of Rajya Sabha and <http://loksabha.nic.in/> of Lok Sabha.

Crore =10 million. Lakh=100,000

Compiled by Jatin Kumar

Jatin Kumar is a Doctoral candidate at the School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. Email: jatintango@gmail.com

As part of the policy, the MEI@ND standardizes spellings and date format to make the text uniformly accessible and stylistically consistent. The views expressed here are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views/positions of the MEI@ND. Editor, **MEI@ND** P R Kumaraswamy