

INDIA SPEAKS

(Monthly Digest of Official Indian Statements on Middle East)

No. 71

June 2015

BILATERAL ISSUES

a. IRAN

1. Inter-Governmental MoU between India and Iran, New Delhi, 06 May 2015

Nitin Gadkari, Minister for Shipping and Road Transport & Highways of the Republic of India and Dr. Abbas Ahmad Akhoundi, Minister for Transport and Urban Development of the Islamic Republic of Iran signed an inter-Governmental MoU regarding India's participation in the development of the Chabahar Port in Iran.

With the signing of this MoU, Indian and Iranian commercial entities would now be in a position to commence negotiations towards finalization of a commercial contract under which Indian firms will lease two existing berths at the Port and operationalize them as container and multi-purpose cargo terminals.

The availability of a functional container and multipurpose cargo terminal at Chabahar Port would provide Afghanistan's garland road network system alternate access to a sea port, significantly enhancing Afghanistan's overall connectivity to regional and global markets, and providing a fillip to the ongoing reconstruction and humanitarian efforts in the country.

Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, [http://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/25185/InterGovernmental MoU between India and Iran](http://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/25185/InterGovernmental%20MoU%20between%20India%20and%20Iran)

2. Saurabh Kumar appointed as the next Ambassador of India to the Islamic Republic of Iran, New Delhi, 25 May 2015

Saurabh Kumar (IFS: 1989) presently Joint Secretary, has been appointed as the next Ambassador of India to the Islamic Republic of Iran. 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/25284/Saurabh Kumar appointed as the next Ambassador of India to the Islamic Republic of Iran](http://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/25284/Saurabh_Kumar_appointed_as_the_next_Ambassador_of_India_to_the_Islamic_Republic_of_Iran)

b. IRAQ

3. External Affairs Minister meets families of Indian Workers held captive in Iraq, New Delhi, 14 May 2015

At the request of the families of the Indian workers held captive in Iraq, Hon'ble External Affairs Minister, Sushma Swaraj met them on 14 May 2015 in the Conference Hall of the Ministry of External Affairs, Jawaharlal Nehru Bhawan, New Delhi. Hon'ble Minister of Food Processing, Harsimrat Kaur Badal was also present during the meeting.

Hon'ble External Affairs Minister assured the families that the Government was making all sincere efforts for the safe and early release of the Indian workers. She had earlier personally spoken to her counterpart Foreign Ministers in the GCC as well as other friendly countries in the region for their assistance in the safe release of Indians in captivity. She reassured the families about the well-being of the Indian nationals held captive in Iraq on the basis of information received from various sources. She also assured them that as soon as some concrete proof on the well-being of the workers is received by the Government, it would be shared with the families.

This was the seventh meeting Hon'ble External Affairs Minister had with the families of the Indian workers.

Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, [http://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/25237/External Affairs Minister meets families of Indian Workers held captive in Iraq](http://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/25237/External_Affairs_Minister_meets_families_of_Indian_Workers_held_captive_in_Iraq)

c. JORDAN

4. Ambassador's welcome remarks on the International Day of Yoga, Amman, 21 June 2015

Your Royal Highness Princess Rym Ali, Your Excellency Lord Mayor of Amman Aqel Biltaji, dear Yogis and Yoga enthusiasts. Ramadan Kareem and a very warm welcome on this very important Day, when we celebrate the first International Day of Yoga. At the outset I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Her Royal Highness for very kindly agreeing to be the Patron of today's celebrations.

I am grateful to you and I am confident that your presence and patronage today will motivate further consciousness about health among young Jordanians. I would also like to express my gratitude to Lord Mayor and my dear friend for taking the time out to be with us. My thanks also go to the various Yoga centres in Jordan for being worthy partners and initiators of Yoga in this beautiful country. Lastly I must thank the Indian industrialist Mr. Sanal Kumar who has several textile factories in QIZ and who readily provided T-shirts with the Yoga logo for today's event. Thank you all wonderful people for joining us today.

You may be aware that Yoga has been practiced in India for over 40 centuries and there are some legends that it was realized some 15,000 years ago. What is Yoga and to define that frankly there is a vast literature and galaxy of books are available and so are thousands of Yoga teachers around the world. Many of them have tried to define it in the simplest terms. Anyone who is not exposed to Yoga may often get perplexed by the complex poses and asana. What I am going to say has been said a million times before but it always has an omniscience and pervasiveness and novelty about it because it is Yoga. Yoga is a philosophy in action that purifies us for our own wellbeing. Of course as is well known the word Yoga denotes and embraces union, joining and imbibing within your own self. Yoga is a conduit -It has spiritual connotation but seeks to achieve peace and harmony by initiating intense human interaction with oneself and with nature so that the feel good factor is continually extended. What I am saying has been said for thousands of years and practiced to that end. Often we do not even realize that we are doing yoga. For example if any of your friend or relative is angry, frustrated, dejected, or stressed you promptly advise them to take a deep breath and relax – that's Yoga in action.

Yoga in my view is also like a doctor but with a difference and it does not discriminate since you are the object and subject in its domain. It aims to help achieve a healthy body for a sound mind and bring about a unique unison within humans and their surroundings and hence eventually strive for inner peace and external harmony. Man is said to be the thinking animal but thinking it does the least else how would you describe the prevailing conflicts often for no rhyme or reason or only for petty reasons .In today's age and time being at peace with your self is probably the beginning of a new journey for the good of the humanity . Stress and conflict is all pervasive and its management is essential and you have Yoga as the most effective tool. Besides, Health is a global good and also a global responsibility and hence we ought to strive for it individually and collectively.

For me personally it was a mere coincidence. During my very first posting to Abidjan in West Africa I by chance got to meet a distant cousin who being a Yoga master had started his own Yoga centre there which was running very successfully and it was a novelty in that francophone country. Out of curiosity I went to visit the centre not far from the embassy and was surprised to see the who's who in the country coming to do Yoga and that too with so much dedication and enthusiasm. Most of them were Muslims or Christians. For me it was a great networking opportunity. But in a short time I got hooked onto it. I can't say I am very regular but the day I don't do it I feel a bit strange and less energetic.

Sometimes we hear of criticism from some people looking at Yoga with a myopic prism and attribute and associate it to a religion which is neither fair to Yoga nor to fundamental human intelligence. It is a civilizational gift to be taken advantage of for your own good. Yoga is a science of self-realization and transports us from ego to immortal self by gaining knowledge of our true self and nature beyond time, space, death and suffering while reinforcing the physical , psychological and spiritual. In my view it is an art of living a way of life that can help us be one

with nature. We have no option but to go in that direction as human is supreme and nature is his sustenance. Let us imbibe the good values for the sake of humanity and above all for ourselves.

You will be hearing from the experts about various types of Yoga practices and Ayurveda but the objective of all processes is one to bring you closer to yourself.

I am happy and proud that due to an initiative by Indian Prime Minister H.E. Mr. Narendra Modi the United Nations declared 21 June as the International Day of Yoga. Most importantly the resolution was co-sponsored and supported by 177 countries including 47 OIC countries. Besides it is being celebrated in 191 countries and over 200 locations across the world by various yoga enthusiasts.

Jordan is very unique and special not only because it is like India—multi ethnic, multi religious, modern and traditional at the same time but we have Samira Dajani who has propagated and practised Yoga here for last 40 years. I was surprised to see the remarkable affinity for Yoga in Jordan when we embarked on organizing celebrations. I must say that although Yoga emanated from the exceptional heights of the mighty Himalayas its practice at the Dead Sea at the lowest point on earth in Jordan is a statement in itself.

Wish you all a very good holistic health hopefully through Yoga.

Source: Embassy of India, Amman

http://indembassy-amman.org/IDY_2015_Welcome.html

5. President of India's message on the eve of Independence Day of Jordan, New Delhi, 24 May 2015

The President of India, Pranab Mukherjee has extended his greetings and felicitations to the King and people of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan on the eve of their Independence Day (25 May 2015).

In his message to His Majesty King Abdullah II, the King of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the President has said, “On behalf of the Government, the people of India and on my own behalf, I extend my warm greetings and felicitations to you and to the friendly people of Jordan on the occasion of the Independence Day of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

India and Jordan have traditionally enjoyed cordial and friendly relations, which have expanded in all fields. I am confident that the bonds of friendship between our peoples will be further strengthened to our mutual benefit in the years to come.

Please accept, Your Majesty, my personal good wishes for your health and well-being, as well as for the continued progress and prosperity of the friendly people of Jordan”.

Source: Press Information Bureau, New Delhi, <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx>

d. KUWAIT

6. Advisory to stop taking up employment as shepherds, Kuwait, 31 May 2015

The Embassy is deeply shocked and distressed to learn that an Indian national working as a shepherd in Kuwait has been found dead on 28 May 2015 in a remote desert area in Qashaniya. According to press reports, preliminary investigations suggest that the Indian national died of thirst and de-hydration as his body was found in a very arid spot.

2. As a matter of policy, the Embassy is not allowing Indian nationals in Kuwait to work as shepherds so as to protect their welfare. Unfortunately, there have been some instances reported where Indian nationals have been forced to work as shepherds in desert areas of Kuwait or taken against their will to Saudi Arabia.

3. The Embassy would, therefore, like to advise Indian nationals in Kuwait not to take up employment as shepherds. Those who have been forced to work as shepherds in Kuwait in violation of their work contract, should immediately contact the Embassy for assistance in the matter/redressal of their grievances.

4. Following Telephone / Mobile Numbers may be noted for contacting officers in the Embassy:

(a) S. Goldar, Deputy Chief of Mission (speaks Bengali, Oriya & Assamese), Tel. No. 22510891 & Mobile No.97229942;

(b) Sunila Krishnan, Attaché (Labour) (speaks Malayalam and Tamil), Tel. No.22530409 & Mobile No.97264247;

(c) K.S.S. Naidu, Local Clerk (speaks Kannada & Telugu), Mobile No. 66442433; and

(d) M. Thriveni Reddy, Local Clerk (speaks Telugu), Mobile No. 97108538.

Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait, <http://www.indembkwt.org/DispNews.aspx?ID=790>

7. Emigration clearance for Indian nurses relaxed till May 30, Kuwait, 14 May 2015

You are aware that to streamline the recruitment of Indian nurses for work in Kuwait with effect from 30 April 2015, the Government of India decided to restrict the recruitment of nurses through the following three State-run recruiting agencies:

a) Non-Resident Keralites' Affairs Department (NORKA-ROOTS), Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala;

b) Overseas Development and Employment Promotion Consultants Ltd. (ODEPC), Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala; and

c) Overseas Manpower Corporation Limited (OMCL), Chennai, Tamil Nadu.

2. The Government of India has also decided earlier this month that these recruitment agencies which are authorized to recruit Indian nurses will not charge any fees towards recruitment expenses from Indian nurses. Such cost, if any, shall be met by the concerned agencies in Kuwait on mutually agreed terms. Moreover, foreign employers in Kuwait will not recover any amount towards the cost of recruitment from Indian nurses, initially or subsequently, during their contract.

3. The Government has decided today (14 May 2015) to make one-month relaxation with regard to emigration clearance, that is, Indian nurses coming for work in Kuwait till 30 May 2015 would not require any emigration clearance.

Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait, <http://www.indembkwt.org/DispNews.aspx?ID=783>

8. Three State-Run recruiting agencies for Indian Nurses will not charge any fees towards recruitment expenses, Kuwait, 10 May 2015

To streamline the recruitment of Indian nurses for work in Kuwait, the Government of India decided in March 2015 that the recruitment of nurses will be carried out through the following three State-run recruiting agencies:

- a) Non-Resident Keralites' Affairs Department (NORKA-ROOTS), Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala;
- b) Overseas Development and Employment Promotion Consultants Ltd. (ODEPC), Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala; and
- c) Overseas Manpower Corporation Limited (OMCL), Chennai, Tamil Nadu.

2. The Government of India has further decided on 7 May 2015 that these recruitment agencies which are authorized to recruit Indian nurses will not charge any fees towards recruitment expenses from Indian nurses. Such cost, if any, shall be met by the concerned agencies in Kuwait on mutually agreed terms. Moreover, foreign employers in Kuwait will not recover any amount towards the cost of recruitment from Indian nurses, initially or subsequently, during their contract.

3. The above guidelines relating to recruitment of Indian nurses are applicable for all 18 ECR countries, including Kuwait.

Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait, <http://www.indembkwt.org/DispNews.aspx?ID=781>

e. OMAN

9. Visit of Indian Sail Training Ship to Port of Salalah, Muscat 13 May 2015

The Indian Navy is one of the few navies in the world utilizing Sail Training Ships in its Training Squadron to foster the time honoured virtues of courage, camaraderie, and endurance in junior officers embarking on a naval career. INS Tarangini, which is visiting Salalah from 14-17 May, is the first Sail Training Ship of the Indian Navy, built in Goa in 1997. The name Tarangini is derived from the Hindi word 'Tarang' meaning 'waves', thus Tarangini means 'the one that rides the waves', and she provides an ideal setting for first-hand experience of the natural elements for the young officers, instilling in them their 'sea legs'.

Diamond Jubilee Celebrations of India-Oman Relations

The year 2015 is the Diamond Jubilee of India-Oman diplomatic relations, with the Indian Consulate in Muscat having been set up sixty years ago in 1955 after India gained independence. To mark the Diamond Jubilee, a series of events and commemorations are being organized by the Embassy of India in Muscat. The visit of the Sail Training Ship Tarangini to Salalah is one

such event to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of India-Oman diplomatic ties, and the Ambassador of India, HE JS Mukul, would also visit Salalah during this period to greet the ship and its crew.

Although diplomatic ties are 60 years old, bilateral friendship between India and Oman dates back 5000 years. One of the key facets of this age-old India-Oman relationship are the historic maritime routes between India and its Gulf neighbours. Oman and India share trading linkages across the sea dating back to the time of the Indus Valley Civilization. Dhows traditionally set sail for India from Oman utilizing the prevailing south-west winds in the summer (Apr-Oct), only to return to the Gulf laden with goods on the back of the north-east winds in the winter (Oct-Mar). Visit of Tarangini to Salalah is thus also a reminder of the historic maritime routes between India and its Indian Ocean neighbours, which are being celebrated under the 'Project Mausam' initiative recently announced by India.

Deployment Programme of INS Tarangini

INS Tarangini is the first commissioned ship of the Indian Navy that circumnavigated the globe, in the year 2003 – 04. Over the years, the ship has been deployed over long periods away from base port and has also participated in Tall Ship races on three occasions. During these races the ship has brought laurels to the Indian Navy by winning the class races and being bestowed a special award for travelling the farthest to participate. For this, the ship was awarded the Unit Citation by the Chief of Naval Staff in 2004 – 05. The ship is commanded by Commander Gaurav Gautam.

Tarangini is scheduled to berth at Port of Salalah from 14-17 May 2015. . The Sail Training Ship has 30 under-training officer cadets of the Indian Navy embarked, and it will be their first exposure to the sights and sounds of the beautiful port city of Salalah . The ship would be open to visit by schoolchildren from the Indian School on 15 May. Highlight of the visit would be the opportunity for some important Omani and Indian dignitaries, accompanied by the Ambassador, to sail out onboard INS Tarangini for a few hours off Salalah, to get a feel of life under sail. The Indian community in Salalah would also host a reception in honour of the ship and its crew.

INS Tarangini port call at Salalah is the first stop on an eight-month long voyage through the Gulf, Mediterranean, and Europe to participate in prestigious tall ship races and other events organized under the aegis of Sail Training International. During this eight-month-long 'Lokayan 15', the ship will travel approximately 17,000 miles under sails and visit 17 ports in 14 countries as a goodwill ambassador of India.

This year's tall ship races will be conducted primarily off the coast of United Kingdom, Norway, Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands. About 300 Sail ships of various sizes from all over the world are expected to participate in this year's events. INS Tarangini will form a part of Class A sail ships, the largest of the sailing fleet. During this long voyage, the Indian trainees would also get an opportunity to sail on foreign vessels as part of exchange of trainees.

About the Ship

The vessel is steel hulled and has an aluminium deckhouse and teak wood interiors. She is built for worldwide operation and carries 18 sails with a total sail area of almost 1,000 square feet. The ship has excellent endurance and can remain at sea continuously for a period of over 20 days. She has a complement of five officers and thirty sailors as permanent crew and can accommodate and impart sail training to 30 sea trainees.

The primary role of the ship is to foster time honoured virtues of courage, camaraderie and endurance in under-trainee officers embarking on a naval career. It provides an ideal setting for firsthand experience of the natural elements by imparting training which includes sailing, setting and furling of sails, watch keeping and sail manoeuvres. The “Tall Ship” community believes that training onboard these ships is the best method of instilling among the trainees the indefinable ‘sea- sense’ and respect for elements of nature, which are inseparable from safe and successful seafaring.

Source: Embassy of India, Muscat,

<http://www.indemb-oman.org/inner.aspx?type=AllPressRelease&id=0>

f. PALESTINE

10. First Round of India-Palestine Foreign Office Consultations, New Delhi, 4 May 2015

The first round of Foreign Office Consultations between India and Palestine were held in Ramallah, Palestine on 4 May 2015. The Palestinian delegation was led by Ambassador Mazen Shamiya, Assistant to Minister for Asia, Africa and Australia in Palestinian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Ambassador Sandeep Kumar, Joint Secretary (West Asia and North Africa), Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, led the Indian delegation.

The whole gamut of bilateral relationship was reviewed, challenges identified, and mechanisms strategized to take the relationship forward. They also discussed important regional and multilateral issues including India’s continued support to the Palestinian cause, the latest developments in the Middle East Peace Process, regional developments, fight against terrorism and United Nations Security Council reforms. In this regard, the Palestinian side underlined its support to the efforts and aspirations of India to obtain a permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council.

Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, [http://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/25172/First Round of IndiaPalestine Foreign Office Consultations](http://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/25172/First%20Round%20of%20IndiaPalestine%20Foreign%20Office%20Consultations)

g. TUNISIA

11. Third India-Tunisia Foreign Office Consultations, New Delhi, 02 May 2015

Anil Wadhwa, Secretary (East) in the Ministry of External Affairs, visited Tunisia to hold the third round of Foreign Office Consultations on 30th April 2015, held after a gap of over 12 years. During his visit, he held comprehensive discussions with Mohamed Ezzine Shelaifa, Secretary of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Tunisia. Bilateral and multilateral issues

were discussed, as also regional and international issues of mutual interest. The two sides signed an Agreement on Exemption of Visas for Diplomatic and Official Passports.

Secretary (East) also called on Taieb Baccoush, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Tunisia. He informed the Tunisian Minister of the India-Africa Summit to be held in India in October 2015 and that the Prime Minister of India would shortly be sending the invitation to it to His Excellency the President of Tunisia. Issues of bilateral engagement, including the meetings of Joint Working Groups in diverse sectors and scheduling the next meeting of the Joint Commission, were discussed.

Wadhwa held discussions with Ridha Lahwel, Minister for Commerce & Handicrafts, HE Ridha Ben Mosbah, Economic Advisor to the Prime Minister, Nooman Fehri, Minister for Information and Communication Technology and Amel Azouz, Secretary of State for Investment and International Cooperation. Issues pertaining to TIFERT, the bilateral joint venture in phosphates, were discussed. Further avenues of economic cooperation were explored and some specific items with potential for two-way trade were identified. He also met with Ines Fradi, the Executive Chief of DPM, the regulatory authority for pharmaceutical products in Tunisia, and discussed ways of streamlining the procedure of registration of new pharmaceutical products.

Secretary (East) met with academics and political experts in a discussion organized at the Centre for the Study of Islam and Democracy, and with Tunisian entrepreneurs at a Tunisian Chamber of Commerce, CONECT.

Officials of the Indian Embassy in Tripoli, which has been temporarily relocated to Djerba in Tunisia, met and briefed the Secretary (East).

Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, [http://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/25168/Third IndiaTunisia Foreign Office Consultations](http://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/25168/Third%20IndiaTunisia%20Foreign%20Office%20Consultations)

MULTILATERAL ISSUES

12. Online system for sending mortal remains of Indians from abroad, New Delhi, 7 May 2015

Will the Minister of Overseas Indian Affairs be pleased to State:

- (a) The number of Indians who died in various foreign countries during the last three years, country and year-wise?
- (b) Whether Government has launched an online system for facilitating transportation of mortal remains from Emigration Check Required (ECR) countries recently and if so, the details thereof along with the names of ECR countries?
- (c) Whether the online system has also been linked with the Overseas Workers Resource Centre (OWRC) and if so, the details in this regard?

Answer:

Minister of State for Overseas Indian Affairs Gen. V. K. Singh (Retd.)

(a) As reported by Indian Missions/Posts abroad, the number of Indians who died in various foreign countries during the last three years, country and year-wise are enclosed as Annexure-A.

(b) & (c) Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs has launched an online portal for Transportation of Mortal Remains (TMR) of Indians on 12 August 2014 which can be accessed from the website of the Ministry, www.moia.gov.in and emigrate.gov.in. An applicant (relative or friend of the deceased) can register or report death case of an Indian worker in 18 Emigration Check Required (ECR) countries, namely: Malaysia, Jordan, UAE, Yemen, Lebanon, Qatar, Oman, Kuwait, Iraq, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan, Indonesia, Libya, Sudan, South Sudan, Syria, and Thailand. Such requests are submitted automatically through the TMR system to the concerned Mission, where the deceased has died. Officials in Indian Missions can also register or report death cases of Indian workers in the TMR portal on behalf of the deceased. The TMR system facilitates the return of the mortal remains of deceased Indian nationals to India, with the assistance of the concerned Indian Missions.

The TMR portal has been linked with the Overseas Workers Resource Centre (OWRC). Those who cannot fill the information directly on it can take the assistance of OWRC on their toll free no. 1800-11-3090 to register the request for transportation of mortal remains. OWRC is equipped to attend calls in eleven languages viz., English, Hindi, Bengali, Kannada, Malayalam, Punjabi, Tamil, Telugu, Marathi, Oriya & Gujarati. The caller can also ascertain from OWRC, the status of any grievance submitted on the TMR portal.

Source: Rajya Sabha (Council of People), Unstarred Question No.1309, asked by Shrimati Viplove Thakur , <http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/OREsult.aspx>

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.

Creore =10 million. Lakh=100,000

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