



INDIA SPEAKS

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BILATERAL ISSUES

a. EGYPT

1. Ayush Scholarship Scheme: 2015-16, Cairo, 28 Jun 2015

The Government of India is offering scholarships under the International Cooperation Scheme of the Department of AYUSH Scholarship Scheme to the eligible foreign students for the academic year 2015-16. Students wishing to pursue courses in Traditional System of Medicine in India can apply for this scholarship. The Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) will administer this scholarship. The applicant must have completed 12 years of schooling with science subject (Physics, Chemistry and Biology).

The candidate should have sufficient proficiency in English. In case the application is accepted at the Embassy, the candidate will be required to come for an interview at a short notice.

The details of the AYUSH Scholarship Scheme which covers courses in Traditional Systems of Medicine in India along with the names of the colleges, application forms, financial terms and conditions, guidelines and checklist are available on the website <http://iccr.gov.in/content/many-other-schemes>.

The duly filled-in ICCR Scholarship Application Form as per Guidelines, along with the relevant enclosures should be sent by E-mail to the Maulana Azad Centre for Indian Culture at macic@indembcairo.com latest by 2 July 2015. Application form and other details can be seen at <http://iccr.gov.in/content/about-scholarship-schemes>.

The Maulana Azad Centre for Indian Culture (MACIC) was established in 1992 is located at 3, Abu El Fida Building (2nd Floor), Zamalek, Cairo. It holds languages classes in Hindi and Urdu, meditation classes, Yoga classes for Beginners and Intermediate level on a regular basis. The Indian Cultural Centre also conducts lectures, symposia, exhibitions on India, and dance classes.

MACIC also does outreach activities with educational institutions and cultural centres both within and outside Cairo.

For regular updates and information follow us on Facebook at 'India in Egypt' or write to us at macic@indembcairo.com.

Source: Embassy of India, Cairo, http://www.indembcairo.com/en-us/presscentre/pressreleases.aspx?udt_656_param_detail=45314

b. IRAQ

2. Travel Advisory for Indian Nationals in Iraq, Bagdad, 28 June 2014

As indicated in the travel advisory of 24 June 2014, the Indian Embassy in Baghdad has opened camp offices in Najaf, Karbala and Basra for assisting Indians nationals in Iraq.

Following are the contact details of the officials stationed in these cities:

Najaf

Abu Mathen George +964 771 6511190
Srinivas Rao +964 771 6511181
Rakesh Singh +964 771 6511179
Email: controlroomnajaf@gmail.com

Karbala

P K Sharma +964 771 6511183
Anil Sapra +964 771 6511180
Jeewan Singh +964 771 6511176
E-mail: controlroomkarbala@gmail.com

Basra

Pramod K Aggarwal +964 771 6511185
Narasimha Murthy Kuppa +964 771 6511182
Asif Shah Ahmed +964 771 6511178
E-mail: controlroombasrah@gmail.com

The 24-hour helpline, as per details below, set up by the Indian Embassy in Baghdad on 15 June 2014 also remains operational.

Tel. No. +964 770 444 4899 (Mobile)

Tel. No. +964 770 484 3247 (Mobile)

Email: amb.baghdad@mea.gov.in

hoc.baghdad@mea.gov.in

cons.baghdad@mea.gov.in

edubaghdad@yahoo.com

Website: www.indianembassybaghdad.in

All Indian nationals requiring assistance in returning to India may contact the Indian Embassy officials at the station nearest to their location as indicated above. All necessary assistance,

including provision of travel documents, air tickets and facilitation in any other form for travel out of Iraq, will be provided to those Indian nationals desirous of returning back to India.

Source: Embassy of India, Baghdad, http://indianembassybaghdad.in/eoi.php?id=Travel_Advisory

c. JORDAN

3. Embassy of India will be celebrating the “1st International Day of Yoga-2015”, Amman, 19 June 2015

Embassy of India, Amman, Jordan will be celebrating the “1st International Day of Yoga-2015” on 21 June 2015 between 4:30 and 7:30 PM at Inter Continental Hotel, Amman. Yoga demonstration, meditation, a short seminar/presentation and photo exhibition has been planned, in collaboration with local partners [Yoga institutes in Amman], to commemorate the event. In this context, Anil Trigunayat, Ambassador of India to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan had a preliminary discussion with the local partners who have shown great interest. Follow-up discussions are being slated later in the month in order to firming up the concrete programmes befitting the event. The Ambassador has requested Jordanian leadership to grace the occasion on the day. Mission is also in the process of inviting other dignitaries. The Mission has devised a Registration Form which is being circulated inviting free participation through various sources and also posted on the Mission’s website. The Embassy has roped in one of the Indian textile industry [M/s Classic Fashion Apparel Ltd] for issuing “White Polo T-Shirt” with the IDY logo for free distribution to participants on the International Day of Yoga.

More information on the Mission’s intended plan may be accessed at [www. http://indembassy-amman.org](http://indembassy-amman.org) and visit the Facebook page

Source: Embassy of India, Amman, http://indembassy-amman.org/IDY_2015.html

d. KUWAIT

4. India-Kuwait Bilateral Trade, Kuwait, 4 June 2015

India-Kuwait relations are traditionally warm, close and friendly and our community of over 8.2 lakh is the largest expatriate community in Kuwait. During 2013-14, Kuwait was the third largest crude oil supplier to India, meeting 9-10 percent of our energy needs. India has consistently been among the top ten trading partners of Kuwait. However, India’s exports to Kuwait have remained stagnant, i.e., a little over US\$1 billion. Furthermore, investments from Kuwait into India are miniscule. The table given below shows the bilateral trade. The trade balance is heavily in favour of Kuwait.

Table: India-Kuwait Bilateral Trade FY 20011-12 to 2014-15(April-Feb) in US\$ million

	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15 (April-Feb)
Indian exports to Kuwait	1,181.41	1,061.08	1,065.14	1,082.88

Indian imports from Kuwait	16,439.64	16,588.13	17,153.52	12,620.15
Total	17,621.05	17,649.21	18,218.66	13,703.03
Trade Balance	(-)1515,258.23	(-)15,527.05	(-)16,088.38	(-)11,537.27

Source: Department of Commerce, M/o Commerce & Industry, New Delhi

2. While our various Export Promotion Councils and Chambers of Commerce and Industry in India (FICCI, CII, FIEO etc.) are working to increase India's exports, the Embassy provides 5-year and 1-year multiple entry Business visas to all Kuwaiti nationals and other expatriates residing in Kuwait the same day.

3. Ambassador Sunil Jain has met Kuwaiti authorities and discussed ways to improve trade and investment between the two countries and has written a letter to the members of Indian Business Council, Kuwait urging them to work towards increasing greater exports from India to Kuwait as well as greater investments from Kuwait to India.

4. The Embassy welcomes suggestions and comments from the Indian business community in Kuwait in this endeavour.

Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait, <http://www.indembkwt.org/DispNews.aspx?ID=792>

5. General Amnesty by the Kuwait Government, Kuwait, 4 June 2015

Embassy has been receiving numerous queries/distress calls from Indian community seeking confirmation regarding announcement of General Amnesty by the Kuwait Government for illegal residents in the country allowing them to regularize their stay or leave the country without payment of fines.

2. It is hereby informed that there is no such grant of General Amnesty by the Kuwaiti Government for these residents staying illegally in the country.

3. However, there is a grace period of 60 days effective 1 June 2015 for workers who are working with the companies whose licenses has been suspended so that these workers can regularize their stay. All affected expatriate workers of these suspended companies will be given a chance to transfer to other sponsors or return to back to their own countries within the grace period from 1 June – 1 August 2015.

Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait, <http://www.indembkwt.org/DispNews.aspx?ID=793>

6. Nalanda University at Rajgir (Bihar), Kuwait, 10 June 2015

The Nalanda University has been established at Rajgir (Bihar) as an international institution of academic excellence. The University was formally inaugurated by the Minister of External Affairs on 19 September 2014. The University's School of Historical Studies, School of Ecology

and Environment Studies, set up in a temporary campus, are soon going to complete their first year of teaching. The process of admission for the second year has already commenced.

All students in Kuwait who are interested, may please see the following link for all the relevant details like admission procedure about Nalanda University. <http://admissions.nalandauniv.edu.in>, for taking admission.

Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait, <http://www.indembkwt.org/DispNews.aspx?ID=795>

7. Ramadan Working hours of passport and visa service centres, Kuwait, 11 June 2015

During the Holy month of Ramadan, the office timings of the Indian Passport and Visa Service Centres of COX & KINGS Global Services, Kuwait, situated at (i) Behbahani Tower, 17th Floor, Sharq, Kuwait, (ii) Complex Kais Alghanim, 4th Floor, Mecca Street in front of Al Anood Complex, Fahaheel, Kuwait & iii) 2nd Floor, Jleeb Al Shuyoukh Block 1, Street 1, Xcite building, Kuwait, will be from 8.00 AM - 3.00 PM from Saturday to Thursday (i.e. six days a week). Tokens for submission of applications will not be issued after 2.00 PM. Delivery of passports and visas services will be from 11.00 AM onwards. Regular working hours (Sunday to Thursday 08:00 am to 5:00 pm & Friday and Saturdays 04:00 pm to 08:00 pm.) will be restored the day after Eid al-Fitr (end of Ramadan)".

The Consular wing of Embassy of India, Kuwait will however, maintain its usual working hours, i.e., 0730 hrs to 1630 hrs.

Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait, <http://www.indembkwt.org/DispNews.aspx?ID=796>

8. Celebrations of first International Day of Yoga (IDY) at the Embassy premises on 21 June 2015, Kuwait, 22 June 2015

The Embassy organized the celebrations of the First International Day of Yoga (IDY) at its premises with participation of over 600 Kuwaiti and Indian nationals. Sheikh Nasser Sabha Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Minister of Amiri Diwan attended the function as Chief Guest and expressed his deep appreciation over the large participation of people to mark the IDY.

The event commenced with Indian Prime Minister's Narendra Modi's message on the occasion, followed by the video presentation on Common Yogic Protocol. The participating organizations viz, Art of Living, Harmony House and Isha Foundation and the Indian Doctors Forum presented talks on the occasion. The Art of Living yoga experts gave live demonstrations on breathing exercises and Yoga asanas on the stage while members of Harmony House presented the essence of Raja Yoga and meditation. Simultaneously, some participants joined in Yoga asanas in the nearby Consular hall specially arranged for this purpose. The three Yoga foundations and the Indian Doctors Forum set up stalls in the Embassy for distribution of books and pamphlets relating to Yoga and its health benefits.

To create greater awareness and generate interest in Yoga, Al-Rai, a prominent local Arabic newspaper, published a one full-page supplement on 21 June 2015. Other prominent Arabic newspapers in Kuwait, Al-Qabas, Al-Nahar, Al-Anba also published articles to increase publicity

of International Day of Yoga 2015. Prominent English dailies in Kuwait viz, Kuwait Times, Arab Times and the weekly newspaper, The Times Kuwait also published articles on International Day of Yoga for creating wide awareness in the country.

Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait, <http://www.indembkwt.org/DispNews.aspx?ID=800>

9. Bomb blast at Imam Sadiq Mosque, Kuwait, 27 June 2015

The Embassy regrets to inform about the death of two Indian nationals in the bomb blast at Imam Sadiq Mosque, Kuwait on 26 June 2015. Both were taking part in the prayers when they died. Their details are given below:

- 1) Rizwan Husain, DOB 29/6/1984, Passport No. H-0338720, date of issue 14/8/2008 from Lucknow, Resident of Village Walipur, PS Baldipur, District Sultanpur, UP, who was working as a watchman in the Mosque.
- 2) Ibne Abbas, DOB 20/07/1989, passport No. M-1629683, date of issue 28/08/2014 from Lucknow, Resident of 151 Jafarabad, The. Jalalpur, Ambedkar Nagar, UP, who was working as driver.

2. In view of the bomb blast on 26 June 2015, all members of Indian community in Kuwait are advised to take precautions for their safety and security in the country.

Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait, <http://www.indembkwt.org/DispNews.aspx?ID=804>

10. Digital India week, Kuwait, 29 June 2015

The Embassy would like to inform that a Digital Week has been planned to highlight “Digital India” which is a flagship programme of the Government of India, aiming to transform India into a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy. Prime Minister is launching the programme on 1 July 2015 at 1330 hours (1600 hours IST) and is likely to be of two hours duration. The aim of Digital India Week is to showcase the initiatives of the Government in three key vision areas (1) Infrastructure as a Utility of every citizen, (2) Government and Services on demand, & (3) Digital empowerment of citizens. The Department of Electronic & Information Technology (DeitY) under the Government of India has provided the following URL for Webcast of PM Launching event of Digital India Week on 1 July 2015 at 1.30 PM (4 PM IST):-

<https://webcast.gov.in/digitalindia/>

<http://pmindiawebcast.nic.in/>

The URL for broadcast of PM event on YouTube:-

<https://youtube.com/PMOfficeIndia>

Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait, <http://www.indembkwt.org/DispNews.aspx?ID=805>

11. Medical test of Indian nationals coming to Kuwait, Kuwait, 30 June 2015

The Embassy of Kuwait in New Delhi has announced that the Kuwaiti authorities will henceforth accept medical reports only from GAMCA (GCC Approved Medical Centres Association) Medical centres in India replacing the services of M/s Khadamat Integrated Solutions Pvt Ltd. A copy of the Embassy of Kuwait, New Delhi's Notice dated 29 June 2015 is attached for reference.

Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait, <http://www.indembkwt.org/DispNews.aspx?ID=806>

e. LEBANON

12. India Night at Le Royal, Beirut, 6 June 2015

India Night returned successfully to the Titanic Piano Bar at Le Royal Hotel in Beirut on 5 June 2015. An Indian ambiance was created with Indian handicrafts & textiles, Indian music & dance, sari-clad hostesses greeting guests with the traditional 'Tilak', and waiters wearing turbans & kurta/pyjamas. The Le Royal's award-winning team, led by Chefs Suhail and Jamil, created a flavourful and beautifully presented gastronomic Indian menu.

See more at: <http://indianembassybeirut.org/notice/display/41#sthash.6UHEfluc.dpuf>

Source: Embassy of India, Beirut, <http://indianembassybeirut.org/notice/display/41>

f. PALESTINE

13. Statement by India at the High Level Conference - UNRWA@65: Sustaining Human Development and Protecting Rights of Palestine Refugees at the UN Trusteeship Council Chamber, Ramallah, 2 June 2015

We express appreciation for the convening of this High Level meeting - UNRWA@65 to mark the 65th Anniversary of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). We thank the Secretary-General under whose auspices this important conference is convened. We also thank the President of the General Assembly for his very pertinent keynote address.

Chairperson,

At the outset, I would like to join earlier speakers in expressing tribute and deep appreciation for the commendable work done by the UNWRA in last 65 years, particularly the dedication, diligence and perseverance with which UNRWA continues to conduct itself to fulfil its mandate in the best possible manner. I wish UNRWA success in its endeavours. On this occasion, I would like to reiterate India's unwavering support for the just cause of Palestine and solidarity with the Palestinian people for their struggle and our support to UNRWA in meeting its mandate.

Chairperson,

It's unfortunate that since the General Assembly passed its resolution 302(IV) on 8 December 1949 which establishing UNRWA, sixty five years have passed without finding an amicable solution to the Palestine Question. In fact, the problem has compounded over the years and UNRWA is at a difficult juncture in its 65-year history, facing unprecedented operational challenges.

Chairperson,

Given the current fragile and unpredictable situation and the ongoing conflicts in the Middle East region, the role of UNRWA in providing critical assistance to the Palestinian refugees has assumed even greater significance. UNRWA's continued and dedicated pursuit of its mandate,

has truly become an epitome of the international community's commitment to the well-being of the Palestinian refugees until a just and durable settlement of the issue is achieved. India commends UNRWA for successfully and diligently carrying out its mandate of serving over 5 million Palestinian refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and the West Bank and the Gaza Strip under extremely difficult conditions. This also includes UNRWA's emergency assistance to more than 1.3 million Palestine refugees in acute distress within areas of operations as a result of armed conflict in the occupied Palestinian territory and in neighbouring countries. India also acknowledges and commends the invaluable cooperation extended to UNRWA's work by host countries.

Chairperson,

India supports a negotiated solution, resulting in a sovereign, independent, viable and united State of Palestine with East Jerusalem as its capital, living within secure and recognized borders, side by side and at peace with Israel, as endorsed in the Arab Peace Initiative, the Quartet road map and relevant United Nations Security Council Resolutions.

Chairperson,

Apart from political support for the Palestinian cause, India continues to support development and nation-building efforts of Palestine by consistently extending technical and financial assistance. We contribute US\$1 million annually to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). India has also pledged US\$4 million in response to the National Early Recovery and Reconstruction Plan for Gaza. We are 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.

Chairperson,

We firmly believe that dialogue is the only viable option in the search for a just, durable and comprehensive peaceful solution of the Palestinian issue. Diplomacy and statesmanship have to prevail over hatred and violence; there is no other road to a lasting peace. We call for all to show restraint, to avoid provocation and unilateral actions and to return to the peace process. We remain hopeful and urge both sides to resume the peace process, for a comprehensive resolution of the Palestinian issue.

I thank you, Chairperson.

Source: Representative Office of India, Ramallah,

<http://www.roiramallah.org/press.php?id=40>

g. QATAR

14. President of India's message on the eve of accession Anniversary of Emir of Qatar, New Delhi, 24 June 2015

The President of India Pranab Mukherjee has extended his greetings and felicitations to the Emir and people of the State of Qatar on the eve of the Anniversary of Accession of His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, The Emir of the State of Qatar (25 June 2015).

In his message sent to Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, the President has said, “On behalf of the Government, the people of India and on my own behalf, it gives me great pleasure to extend warm greetings and felicitations to Your Highness and the people of the State of Qatar on the occasion of the Anniversary of Your Highness’s Accession.

India deeply values its close and time-tested relations with Qatar which are firmly rooted in history and characterized by vibrant people-to-people contacts. Your successful State Visit to India in March this year has added fresh momentum to our multifaceted engagement. I am confident that our ongoing bilateral cooperation across the full spectrum of political, economic and cultural spheres will continue to diversify and further strengthen for the mutual benefit of our two peoples.

I take this opportunity to convey to Your Highness my best wishes for your personal good health and well-being and for the progress and prosperity of the friendly people of the State of Qatar”.

Source: Press Information Bureau, New Delhi,
<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=122737>

15. Embassy Open House, Doha, 29 June 2015

The monthly Open House to address urgent consular and labour issues/cases of Indian nationals in the State of Qatar was held at the Embassy on 29 June 2015. Charge d’Affaires R.K. Singh and other officials met all the complainants, discussed their problems and assured them that the Embassy would actively follow up their cases with the authorities concerned in Government of Qatar. Baby Kurien, Vice President of Indian Community Benevolent Forum (ICBF), a community association working under the aegis of the Embassy for the welfare of Indian workers, also attended the Open House.

An Embassy team visited the Central Prison and Deportation Centre this week to enquire about the welfare of detainees from India. The total number of Indian nationals in the Central Prison and the Deportation Centre currently is 99 and 153 respectively.

During the current year, the Labour and Community Welfare Section of the Embassy has received a total of 2027 complaints so far. The number of complaints received during 2014 was 3943.

The number of deaths registered in the Embassy in June 2015 so far is 21. The number of deaths registered during 2015 so far is 143. The number of deaths registered during 2014 was 279.

On the basis of requests received from the Qatari authorities for travel documents for inmates in the Deportation Centre, the Embassy has issued 18 Emergency Certificates (ECs) in June, 2015.

The Embassy also issued 15 air tickets to Indian nationals in distress for their return to India in June 2015.

Indian Community Benevolent Forum [ICBF] continues to help Indian workers through various welfare measures, including provision of air tickets, financial assistance and medical help. The assistance given by the ICBF to Indian nationals during June 2015 includes 12 air tickets for destitute workers.

Source: Embassy of India, Doha,
http://indianembassyqatar.gov.in/pages/press_release_detail.php?id=115&page=1

h. SAUDI ARABIA

16. The Prime Minister of India will inaugurate the “Digital India week” on July 1 2015, Riyadh, 28 June 2015

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the “Digital India week” on 1 July 2015 at 1600 hours in New Delhi following which several events will be held across 36 States and Union Territories covering 600 districts in the country. The PM is expected to launch Wi-Fi services in a number of tourist destinations during the event and investments worth billions of dollars could also be announced at the inauguration of the Digital India week.

“Digital India” is a flagship programme of Government of India aimed to transform India into a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy. It refers to Government’s campaign to digitally deliver essential services to all the citizens across the country and includes raising digital awareness among citizens. The ongoing e-Governance initiatives have been revamped to align with Digital India. The impact of Digital India by 2019 would range from broadband connectivity in all Panchayats, WI-Fi in Schools and Universities and Public Wi-Fi hotspots besides generating huge number of direct and indirect jobs in IT, Telecom and Electronics sectors.

The launching ceremony would to be attended by corporate honchos and industrialists like Cyrus Mistry, Mukesh Ambani, Kumarmangalam Birla, Pawan Munjal, Anil Ambani, Azim Premji, Mikio Katayama, Vice-Chairman, NIDEC Corporation, Japan and Airbus India's Head Peter Gutsmeidl among others.

The launching ceremony of Digital India Week by PM would be webcast live at <https://webcast.gov.in/digitalindia>; <http://pmindiawebcast.nic.in> and <https://youtube.com/PMOficeIndia>. A link to the live webcast would also be provided at the website of Embassy of India, Riyadh (www.indianembassy.org.sa).

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

17. The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), Riyadh, 24 June 2015

The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), Department of Agricultural Research and Education, Ministry of Agriculture invites applications for Netaji Subhash – ICAR International Fellowship (ICAR-IFs) for the year 2015-16.

The Council offers doctoral degree in agricultural and allied science to overseas candidates for study in the best Indian Agricultural Universities (AUs).

Interested candidates may visit the web portal www.icar.org.in for further guidelines, application form, eligibility criteria and other relevant details.

Applications may be submitted to the Assistant Director General (EQR), Education Division, ICAR, Kirishi Anusandhan Bhawan II, Pusa, New Delhi 110012; email: adgerq@gmail.com latest by 30 June 2015.

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

18. Embassy of India, Riyadh invites applications from the aspirant Saudi citizens under the Ayush Scholarship Scheme for the academic year 2015-16, Riyadh, 23 June 2015

The Department of Ayush, Ministry of Health and Embassy of India, Riyadh invites applications from the aspirant Saudi citizens under the Ayush Scholarship Scheme for the academic year 2015-16. Family Welfare, Government of India under the International Cooperation Scheme of the Department of Ayush offers a total of 20 scholarship seats to international students interested in pursuing under graduate / post graduate / Ph.D. courses in Ayurveda, Yoga, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy including five seats for Yoga courses. The applications will be considered on first-cum first-serve basis only of those students who meet the criteria set for the scholarship.

In this connection, Embassy of India, Riyadh invites applications from the aspirant Saudi citizens under the Ayush Scholarship Scheme for the academic year 2015-16.

The Scholarship Application Form along with the relevant documents may be submitted latest by 9 July 2015 at the address given below.

Second Secretary (PIC)

Embassy of India, Riyadh

B-1 Diplomatic Quarter

PO Box 94387 Riyadh - 11693,

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Phone: +966-11-488 4144 Fax: +966-11-4884713

Email; infowing@indianembassy.org.sa

The *Form*, *guidelines* and the *instruction* can be accessed here.

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

19. Extension of time limit to apply for OCI cards in lieu of PIO card, Riyadh, 22 June 2015

The last date for submission of application for registration as OCI cardholder in lieu of the existing PIO card has been extended till **30.09.2015**. This service is provided free of charge, if availed on or before the last date. OCI card is a smart card which facilitates quicker immigration clearance at the Immigration Check Posts and also facilitates for availing various Consular services from the Indian Missions. The erstwhile valid PIO card holders are therefore requested to avail the facility.

Source: Embassy of India, Riyadh,

<http://www.indianembassy.org.sa/Content.aspx?ID=790&PID=691>

20. Yoga in Office, Riyadh, 22 June 2015

To celebrate the First International Day of Yoga, the Embassy of India organized a Lecture cum Demonstration on Yoga for diplomats, executives of business firms, Indian community members and the officials of the Mission at its auditorium. More than 250 guests attended the event.

Charged' Affaires Hemant Kotalwar in his inaugural speech highlighted the importance of Yoga in the daily life. Students from the Indian community school presented dance performances based on yoga postures. Two yoga practitioners held an interactive session with the audience who also participated in simple and subtle forms of yoga related to releasing muscular tensions, refreshing body and mind and organizing the breathing system, with emphasis that simple forms of yoga can be performed at any place including in the office. The interactive session received an over-whelming response from the audience.

Books and DVDs containing Yoga protocol were also distributed among the participants.

Source: Embassy of India, Riyadh,

<http://www.indianembassy.org.sa/Content.aspx?ID=790&PID=691>

21. The Embassy of India in Riyadh also celebrated the First International Day of Yoga, Riyadh, 21 June 2015

Addressing the 69th session of United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) on 27 September 2014, Prime Minister Narendra Modi urged the world community to adopt an international Day of Yoga.

"Yoga is an invaluable gift of ancient Indian tradition. It embodies unity of mind and body; thought and action; restraint and fulfilment; harmony between man and nature and a holistic approach to health and well-being. Yoga is not about exercise but to discover the sense of oneness with ourselves, the world and Nature. By changing our lifestyle and creating consciousness, it can help us to deal with climate change. Let us work towards adopting an International Yoga Day," Modi said on the recommendation of the Government of India, on 11 December 2014, UNGA adopted a Resolution proclaiming 21 June as the International Day of

Yoga. To celebrate the first International Day of Yoga, more than 37,000 persons performed Yoga at Rajpath on 21 June 2015.

The Embassy of India in Riyadh also celebrated the First International Day of Yoga in its premises as well as at the International Indian Schools in Dammam and Riyadh and International Indian Public School in Riyadh. The Embassy organized a demonstration cum lecture to experience 'Subtle yoga, power breathing and relaxation' which was attended by diplomats as well as distinguished guests. Students of the International Indian School, Riyadh also gave a demonstration of the Asanas during the event.

Around 1,500 students of International Indian Schools in Dammam and Riyadh and International Indian Public School in Riyadh also participated in the International Yoga Day activities organized by the Embassy of India at their schools.

Source: Embassy of India, Riyadh,

<http://www.indianembassy.org.sa/Content.aspx?ID=790&PID=691>

i. Tunisia

22. Celebration of 1st International Day of Yoga in Tunis, Tunis, 21 June 2015

A large group session of Yoga was held for the first time ever in Tunis on 21 June 2015, the first International Day of Yoga. More than 300 Tunisians, after registering online, performed the asanas of the Common Yoga Protocol with enthusiasm and interest, even though it was in the first week of the fasting month of Ramadan. The session was held at night in the largest covered sports arena of Tunisia. Organized jointly by the Embassy of India in Tunis and the Ministry of Youth and Sports of the Republic of Tunisia, the event was attended by Sghayer Zvita, Director General of Sports and Baccouche, spouse of the Foreign Minister of Tunisia.

Ambassador Nagma M. Mallick began the session by giving a brief introduction to the essence of Yoga and to the idea behind the establishment of the International Day of Yoga. Sghayer Zvita expressed his happiness at the organization of the group session of Yoga, describing it as being an exemplar of the kind of peace-building activities that Tunisia stood in great need of. He expressed his personal happiness at being given the opportunity to practice Yoga asanas for the first time. Tunisian Film star Hichem Roustom, who graced the occasion, described himself as a long-term devotee of India who had practiced Yoga since years. He expressed the hope that the International Day of Yoga would continue to be celebrated every year around the world since Yoga was needed now more than ever before.

The practice was led by Ravishankar Mani Pandey, Yoga expert from India. Nihel B'chini, member of the Art of Living Foundation chapter of Tunisia, demonstrated the Yogic exercises alongside the Indian teacher. The group session of meditation which brought the event to an end was its highlight, with many participants expressing their wonder at their first experience of

meditation. The event was covered by Tunisia1, the state broadcaster and M Television channel, as well as print media dailies and agencies.

Yoga week in Tunis comes to an end today, 22 June, with a special group session of Yoga particularly for the residents of the Medina, or the old city of Tunis, to be held in Maison Saheb Ettabaa, a traditional 19th -century Tunisian house located in the Medina. This session has been organized in collaboration with Art and Democracy Association, a Tunisian NGO concerned with preservation of Tunisian culture among the youth.

Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi,

http://mea.gov.in/Portal/CountryNews/4613_Press_Release_IDY_21_June_2015.pdf

23. Building up to International Day of Yoga in Tunisia, Tunis, 21 June 2015

Members of the Art of Living Foundation, along with Ambassador of India to Tunisia, performed yoga asanas in well-known famous tourist sites of Tunisia on Saturday, 20 June, 2015. The iconic Sidi Bou Said with its famous marina and its well-known blue and white houses were the venue for some of the yoga asanas.

Some asanas were performed in India House in the neighbouring Carthage area as well. Ms. Nihel B'Chini of the Art of Living Foundation led the practice.

Source: Embassy of India, Tunis,

<http://www.embassyofindiatunis.com/pdf/Press%20Release%20Building%20upto%20IDY%20in%20Tunisia.pdf>

24. The special week-long course of Yoga, Tunis, 17 June 2015

The first class of the special week-long course of Yoga was held on 16 June 2015 at the Centre Culturel et Sportif des Jeunes, Menzah, Tunis. Ravishankar Mani Pandey, Yoga teacher from India, conducted the session with a large group of young Tunisians. Sihem Belkhouja, the foremost contemporary dancer and dance choreographer of Tunisia was also present at the session with some of her students. Nagma M. Mallick, Ambassador of India to Tunisia gave a brief introduction to Yoga and the message of the International Day of Yoga to the class before it began.

The Centre Culturel et Sportif des Jeunes is the foremost cultural centre of the Ministry of Youth and Sports, Government of Tunisia, which is associated with the Embassy of India in Tunisia in celebrating the International Day of Yoga here.

Source: Embassy of India, Tunis,

<http://www.embassyofindiatunis.com/pdf/Press%20Release%20on%20Yoga%20practice%20begins%20in%20Tunis%20towards%20IDY.pdf>

MULTILATERAL ISSUES

25. Meeting of the Petroleum Minister with his counterparts from Russia, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Qatar, Kuwait, Iraq, UAE, Angola and Venezuela on the margins of the 6th OPEC International Seminar, Vienna, 4 June 2015

The Minister of State (I/C) for Petroleum and Natural Gas, Dharmendra Pradhan met his counterparts from Russia, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Qatar, Kuwait, Iraq, UAE, Angola and Venezuela on the margins of the 6th OPEC International Seminar.

During his meeting with Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak, the two Ministers agreed to expand bilateral energy cooperation. It was agreed to conduct a Joint Study at an early date for exploring feasibility of crude and gas pipelines from Russia to India. India showed interest to import LNG and crude from Russia. The two sides also reviewed existing Indian investment projects in Russia and discussed possibility of working together in exploration and production sector.

Pradhan met Prince Abdul Aziz Bin-Salman, Deputy Crown Prince and Minister of State for Petroleum of Saudi Arabia. During the meeting, Pradhan reiterated the need to intensify bilateral energy engagements between India and Saudi Arabia from a “buyer-seller” relationship to that of an “Energy Partnership”. The two Ministers agreed to explore and identify concrete avenues of energy cooperation between the two countries.

During his meeting with Minister of Petroleum of Iran Bijan Namdar Zangeneh the two Ministers discussed about Indian involvement in exploration and production projects in Iran and possibility of building gas pipeline from Iran to India through various alternate routes.

Pradhan met Minister of Energy & Industry of Qatar Mohammed Bin Saleh Al-Sada. They discussed the existing bilateral issues including supply of long-term LNG supply to India. They also discussed the global scenario of LNG market and recent changes in it.

During his meeting with Minister of Oil of Kuwait Dr. Ali Saleh Al-Omair, Pradhan invited investment from Kuwait in Indian refining and petro-chemical sector. The Kuwait side showed interest in these projects.

Pradhan discussed broad range of issues with Minister of Oil of Iraq Adil Abd Al-Mahdi. Iraq is second biggest source of crude oil for India. Possibility of Indian public and private sector involvement in Iraqi hydrocarbon sector was also discussed.

During his meeting with Minister of Energy of UAE Suhail Mohamed Al Mazrouei, Pradhan highlighted the possibility of collaboration in all streams of hydrocarbon sector between India and UAE including in skill development and service sector. It was agreed to have regular interaction between the two sides to take the energy cooperation forward.

Pradhan met Minister of Petroleum of Angola, Jose Maria Botelho Vasconcelos. He proposed that Indian public and private sector companies would like to invest in upstream and LNG sector of Angola. The two sides agreed to identify concrete projects of cooperation at an early date.

During his meeting with Minister of Popular Power of petroleum and Mining, Asdrubal Chavez J. Pradhan proposed to set up a joint mechanism to settle all outstanding commercial issues. The Venezuela side agreed to consider this. It may be mentioned that Venezuela is the 3rd biggest source of crude import for India and ONGC Videsh Ltd has investment in oil blocks in Venezuela.

Pradhan also met the Executive Director of International Energy Agency (IEA) during which they agreed to advance cooperation in various sectors of oil and gas.

Source: Press Information Bureau, New Delhi,
<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=122291>

27. Meeting of the Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan with the Secretary General, OPEC for setting up a regular Institutional Dialogue between India and OPEC, Vienna, 4 June 2015

The Minister of State (I/C) for Petroleum and Natural Gas, Dharmendra Pradhan, met Abdalla Salem El-Badri, Secretary General, OPEC today on the sidelines of the 6th OPEC International Seminar held at Hofburg Palace, Vienna.

The two sides agreed to:

- a.) Set up a regular Institutional Dialogue between India and OPEC at the level of Minister/Secretary General;
- b.) The Dialogue will take place every year, alternatively in India and at Vienna, and will look at various avenues of cooperation in the oil and gas sector;
- c.) The first meeting will take place in New Delhi in the last quarter of 2015 on a date mutually convenient to both sides.

Source: Press Information Bureau, New Delhi,
<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=122290>

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. 1 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

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