

INDIA SPEAKS

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BILATERAL ISSUES

a. IRAN

1) Saurabh Kumar, Ambassador of India to Iran presented a copy of his Letter of Credence to Dr. Mohammad Javad Zarif, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Iran, Tehran, 20 October 2015

Ambassador of India Saurabh Kumar called on His Excellency Dr. Mohammad Javad Zarif, Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran on 19 October 2015 and presented to him a copy of his Letter of Credence. Foreign Minister acknowledged the excellent relations between India and Iran. He said that Iran presents new opportunities after the signing of the JCPOA. Dr. Zarif called for comprehensive India – Iran ties especially in the economic field with early implementation of joint projects. In this regard, he referred to the Chabahar port project and rail-road and petro-chemical sectors.

Ambassador conveyed the warm greetings of his Government to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran. He said that New Delhi attaches great importance to its historic and friendly ties with Iran. He reiterated India's interest in participation in various joint projects in Iran and the need for their early implementation. The forthcoming Joint Commission between the two countries in December 2015 would provide an opportunity to take stock of the progress of these projects. Ambassador also briefed the Foreign Minister about the recent bilateral interactions.

Foreign Minister welcomed the Ambassador to Iran and assured him all support of his government.

Source: Embassy of India, Tehran, <http://www.indianembassy-tehran.ir/press.php?id=33>

2) Ambassador Saurabh Kumar presented his credentials to H.E. President of the Islamic Republic of Iran Dr. Hassan Rouhani at a formal ceremony in Tehran, Tehran, 27 October 2015

Ambassador conveyed greetings of the Government and the people of India to Dr. Hassan Rouhani. President Rouhani welcomed India's Ambassador to Iran and noted that India and Iran have historical and friendly ties, which are both extensive and deep. President Rouhani recalled his meeting with the Prime Minister in Ufa in July 2015, and emphasized the immense possibilities for bilateral cooperation between the two countries. He said that efforts should be made to realize the potential. Ambassador responded that this was also the desire of the Government of India. He added that he would work towards this objective. President Rouhani reiterated his invitation to the Prime Minister to visit Iran. He wished Ambassador all success during his tenure in Iran and assured him full support from his government in this regard.

Source: Embassy of India, Tehran, <http://www.indianembassy-tehran.ir/press.php?id=34>

b. ISRAEL

3) Visit of the President of India to Israel (13-15 October 2015), New Delhi, 6 October 2015

The President of India Pranab Mukherjee will pay a State visit to Israel from 13-15 October 2015 at the invitation of His Excellency Reuven Rivlin, President of State of Israel. The Honourable President will be accompanied by a high level delegation including Thawar Chand Gehlot, Union Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment, Members of parliament, senior officials, senior representatives of our educational and academic institution and media representatives.

During the visit, the Honourable President will have meetings and interactions with President Rivlin and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu as well as the speaker of the Israeli Knesset Yuli-Yoel Edelstein. The Honourable President will also address the Knesset during the visit. The two sides will sign a number of MoUs in the fields of culture, education, science and technology.

India established diplomatic relations with Israel in 1992 and since then the relationship has evolved into a multi-dimensional partnership. The two countries are engaged in a range of issues of bilateral interest including cooperation in agriculture, science and technology, education, etc. The visit will further cement bonds of cooperation between the two sides and enhance mutual understanding. The Honourable President will also grace a function organized by our Embassy in Tel Aviv for the Indian community in Israel.

Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, http://mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/25889/Visit_of_President_to_Israel_October_1315_2015

4) President's Address to the Knesset, Jerusalem, 14 October 2015

Shalom and Namaste.

Honourable Yuli Edelstein, Speaker of the Knesset,

Members of the Knesset,

Excellencies,

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

I feel deeply honoured to be the first Indian President to make a State Visit to Israel. Since I arrived here yesterday, I have been touched by the warmth of the reception and the gracious hospitality that has been accorded to me and to my delegation. It is indeed an honour to be invited to the Knesset to address the distinguished representatives of the people of Israel. I bring to you the warm greetings and goodwill of the people of India.

Distinguished Members of the Knesset,

Having participated intensely in the deliberations of the Indian Parliament since I was first elected to the Upper House in 1969, I feel very much at home when I visit other great Parliaments of the world. And this is one such occasion. The Knesset, with its unicameral structure and responsibilities of making the Basic Laws that substitute a written Constitution has proved the power of parliamentary discussion and debate. Having been a Parliamentarian and public servant for over fifty years, I am , today, more convinced than ever , that a thorough deliberation - with due consideration of all shades of opinion - is the key to good policy making.

I am accompanied today by the Honourable Union Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment, Thawar Chand Gehlot and a delegation of Members of the Lower House of the Indian Parliament including Honourable Prof. K.V. Thomas of the Indian National Congress, Meenakshi Lekhi, Prof. Dr. Subhash Bhae, Prathap Simha and Vinod Chavda of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party and Prof. Dr. Anupam Hazra of the Trinamool Congress. They represent different political parties and constituencies across the length and breadth of India. In fact, the Indian Parliament is a microcosm of the Indian sub-continent and it symbolizes, in every sense, the unity, strength and diversity of the Indian people. As you are doubtless aware, the general elections which took place in India last year was the largest democratic exercise of the right to vote in living history. The turnout was unprecedented – and the outcome historic: for the first time in 30 years, the Indian electorate had voted for a majority Government. I am happy to say that as President of India voted to office at the time of the previous Government, I had the satisfaction of presiding over a very smooth transition - from one democratically elected Government to another. Like the Knesset, the Indian Parliament has all the important functions of a legislative branch that checks the Executive branch of the Indian Government, questions its actions and thoroughly examines its policies. It makes laws and has wide financial powers. No tax can be levied without its approval and no expenditure can be incurred without its authorization and sanction.

Excellency, Honourable Members of the Knesset,

My State Visit to Israel is taking place at a time when relations between our two Governments and our people are on a very positive trajectory. India and Israel, as fellow democracies share many commonalities. The linkages between our peoples date back to ancient times. The first group of persecuted Jews who came to India landed on her western coast more than two thousand years ago. Throughout their long history, the Jewish communities in India have maintained, developed and enriched their traditions with many Indian additions to their unique

heritage. The Jewish people have been - and will always be - an integral part of India's composite society.

Honourable Speaker,

Both India and Israel made parallel struggles against British rule. Our leaders adopted different methods but were inspired by the same human values and ideals. I was pleasantly surprised to learn that Mahatma Gandhi is the only world leader whose photograph had been kept by former Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion in his desert home.

In the period after independence, our countries travelled different paths. The Indian people have, nonetheless, always appreciated Israeli innovations in the field of agriculture, the kibbutz system and the remarkable achievements of your scientists and engineers. We admire the will and resolve with which the Jewish people have risen from the depths of unspeakable suffering and deprivation with a strong spirit and built their nation to make it what it is today - a thriving, progressive and prosperous society that leads the world in so many fields. Whenever the Nobel Prizes are announced, we often see names of scientists who have studied in the Hebrew University or Technion. As friends of Israel, we rejoice in your success.

Our two countries established full diplomatic relations in 1992. Since then, our co-operation in different fields has grown steadily. India remembers, with gratitude, the help that the Israeli Government provided in rushing critical defence supplies to India when we required them most urgently in 1999. We also appreciate the support that we have received from Israel for India's rightful claim to a permanent seat in the UN Security Council. India has been a strong voice of developing countries in the UN and other multilateral organizations. India believes that there is no better option than to resolve issues through negotiations and peaceful dialogue. We see that the administrative architecture of international bodies is not effective enough in enforcing their decisions. The United Nations was established at the end of the Second World War. Today its organizations need to be more responsive to the challenges that the world faces - and its structure as well as administrative and financial architecture need reform to make them more reflective of the changed world.

India's consistent policy has been to build a strong, substantive and mutually beneficial relationship with Israel. We will continue to do so through high-level visits and exchanges so that India-Israel relations are accorded the utmost priority. As we approach the 25th anniversary of the establishment of full diplomatic relations, we both seek to expand the vision of our future partnership.

The Government of India has taken some new initiatives in economic policies and has been emphasizing innovation, research and technological development to accelerate India's social and economic transformation. These policies are aimed at raising India's agricultural productivity,

promoting manufacturing for employment generation and boosting the services industry. India and Israel can work together in each of these areas.

Excellencies, Agriculture is the mainstay of the Indian economy. In this vital sector, our Government's policy has been to grow more crop-per-drop. Our farmers face the challenges of uneven distribution of water - we often have floods in one part of the country while there is drought in another. Our scientists should collaborate to deal with these challenges. We also seek assistance to clean our rivers, particularly the holy Ganga.

To stimulate our domestic manufacturing sector, Government of India has launched an ambitious "Make in India" campaign. Israeli innovation and technology can combine with Indian engineering and scale to manufacture in India. Such a partnership, particularly in the defence sector, has the potential of creating new markets and generating more jobs - both in India and Israel.

In both our countries, the service sector is growing fast. This is another area where we have complementary strengths. India is one of the largest exporters of software in the world. Every year more than 400,000 English-speaking engineers graduate from Indian universities. The number of start-ups in India is expected to cross 10,000 in the next two years. I am happy that the Israeli Government has opened a Consulate in Bangalore, India's 'Silicon Plateau'.

As Visitor of 114 institutions of higher learning in India, I have personally placed a great deal of emphasis on developing educational linkages between Indian institutions and universities abroad. India produces first rate managers and engineers who are highly regarded by global companies. The current CEOs of both Microsoft and Google are graduates of Indian engineering colleges. In the coming decade, the emphasis in our educational institutions will be to strengthen innovation and research. A delegation of Vice Chancellors of Indian universities and scientific institutions is accompanying me on this visit. I am confident that their contacts with Israeli counterparts will result in a variety of partnerships in a range of areas - from space and cyber security to the building of 'smart' cities.

Ladies and gentlemen,

India is delighted that Israeli citizens, particularly the younger generation, enjoy travelling to India. They rightly see India as a safe and welcoming destination where they always feel at home. I am told that Hebrew is spoken in some villages in northern India, whose populations also enjoy hummus.

The Jewish community in India has always been an integral part of India's social, economic and cultural mosaic. Recently local authorities have renovated the synagogues of Peravoor and Chennamangalam near Cochin in Kerala. These institutions are a proud testimony to the Indian Jewish tradition. I was told by one of the Indian Jews in Israel that his village in Cochin is , perhaps, the only place in the world where a synagogue, a mosque, a temple and a church co-

exist peacefully on the same street. The Jews of Mumbai have left their mark on the architectural heritage of the city, its banking world, its literary scene and even Bollywood.

Honourable Members of the Knesset,

India and Israel are separated by two seas but joined by their common belief in the power of diversity and democracy. The Knesset has, this year, entered the 50th year of its existence in this magnificent, "green" building. As I extend my felicitations to the Honourable Members of the Knesset, I once again thank you for the honour of addressing you. I invite you all to visit India to further engage with your parliamentary counterparts and contribute to the enrichment of our bilateral discourse.

Jai Hind

Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, <http://mea.gov.in/outgoing-visit-detail.htm?25931/Presidents+Address+to+the+Knesset+Israel+October+14+2015>

5) President's opening Remarks to the Media and the Delegation immediately after the Ceremonial Reception, Jerusalem, 14 October 2015

I am very happy to be here today. This is a historic first State Visit to Israel by an Indian President. I thank President Reuven Rivlin and the Government and people of Israel for the warm reception and gracious hospitality extended to me and to my delegation.

Soon after my arrival I visited Yad Vashem and offered prayers in memory of all the men, women and children commemorated here.

I am accompanied by Honourable Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment, Thawar Chand Gehlot, and a delegation of Members of Parliament representing many different political parties and regions of India. A group of eminent educationists is also accompanying me.

I greatly look forward to my discussions with His Excellency, the President of Israel, Honourable Prime Minister and other political leaders. We will engage on a wide range of issues of shared interest. My officials and the senior educationists in my delegation will meet their counterparts to take forward our bilateral agenda and explore new avenues of co-operation and partnership. I will meet His Excellency Honourable Leader of the Opposition Issac Herzog and greatly look forward to visiting the Knesset.

India attaches high importance to its relationship with Israel. Relations between India and Israel have taken great strides in the last few years. We are cooperating and collaborating in a range of areas from defence and agriculture to science, research and cyber security. We are also discovering and identifying new areas of complementarities where there is significant potential to be realized. We agree that there are tremendous opportunities for mutually beneficial collaboration. As two leading knowledge economies of Asia and the world, India and Israel have many strengths and much to learn from each other's experiences.

President Rivlin, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and I will also take this opportunity to discuss the many global challenges that our two countries face today - including the growing menace of terrorism and extremism, our common concerns about climate change and the urgent need for reform of global governance institutions. We are distressed at the recent violence. India condemns all forms of terrorism. We have always advocated a peaceful resolution of all disputes. I will seek the assessment of the Israeli leadership about the recent developments in this region which have caused concern all over the world and have direct implications for India.

My visit is intended to further strengthen the excellent relations between our two countries and increase our friendship, mutual trust and understanding. India looks forward to enhancing our close co-operation with Israel for the progress of our respective peoples and peace in this part of the world.

Thank you.

Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, <http://mea.gov.in/outgoing-visit-detail.htm?25932/Presidents+opening+Remarks+to+the+Media+and+the+Delegation+immediately+after+the+Ceremonial+Reception+in+Jerusalem+Israel+October+14+2015>

6) Speech by President at the Indian Community Reception, Jerusalem, 14 October 2015

Good evening, Shalom, Namaskar, distinguished Members of the Indian Community, Ambassador, Jaideep Sarkar, Union Cabinet Minister Thawar Chand Gehlot, distinguished members of Indian parliament and distinguish members of Indian community ladies and gentlemen.

I am happy to be here amidst this evening in the holy city of Jerusalem. It is a great privilege for me to be the first Indian President to make a State Visit to Israel. As I mentioned I am accompanied by Minister Gehlot and six Members belonging to different political parties of Indian Parliament. Since we arrived in Israel, we have been deeply touched by the friendship, goodwill and hospitality of the people of Israel.

I bring to you the warm greetings of the people of India. Needless to say, we have been looking forward to this occasion. Your community represents a cross section of the Indian people. You are here as students, caregivers, professionals and businessmen; some of you are serving in the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF). I wish to particularly recognize the Indian Jewish community in Israel – who continue to cherish India.

I would like to make a special mention of Jerusalem's 800 years old Indian hospice. Friends, India is very proud of its large diaspora. Indians all over the world are successful not only as dedicated professionals and hard working businessmen, but also as model citizens. They are proud of their contribution to the society in which they adopted themselves; yet they nurture in themselves and their younger generations an enduring "Indian-ness" and an undying love for their motherland. I commend you all.

Distinguish Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, India considers Israel as a valued partner. In fact, West Asia as a whole and the Gulf have always been a priority for India. Not only do we have ancient and civilizational link with these lands and peoples, but today, some 7 million Indians live and work here. The countries of this region are India's vital partners in the energy, hydrocarbon and mineral sectors. We continue to pay special attention to them and seek closer cooperation and stronger partnership with them for our mutual benefit.

Distinguish Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, this is a time of great opportunities in India. A unique transformation is taking place. The country is at the threshold of a new era of rapid economic development. Several recent initiatives of Government have already shown results and a positive impact has been created in certain key sectors. The 'Make in India' campaign to make India an investment and manufacturing destination, the 'Digital India programme' to transform India into a digitally empowered society, 'Smart Cities', 'Model Villages', 'Clean India' and the 'Clean Ganga mission' are some of the flagship schemes. In the last year alone, Government of India has succeeded in encouraging our people to open almost 140 million bank accounts under 'Jan Dhan Yojna'.

Ladies and Gentlemen, in the realm of external relations, I am happy to say that Government has intensified India's engagement with her neighbours and all friendly countries across the globe. In August, the Forum for India-Pacific Island Co-operation was hosted in Jaipur; later this month, New Delhi we shall host the largest ever gathering, in India, of Heads of State and Government of the African Continent in the 3rd Summit of the India Africa Forum. India is working with like-minded countries in multilateral organizations including the United Nations to play an enhanced role in diverse fora – from the Arctic Council and the Pacific Alliance to the UN Security Council where India has made a legitimate claim to form permanent membership. The potential of India now has a stronger resonance. Our circle of friends has expanded. India's efforts for inclusive economic growth and social advancement have shown the way to many developing countries.

I would like to take this opportunity to emphasize the potential of India-Israel collaboration in Science and Technology. Our future partnership must prioritize co-operation in innovation and research and development. Eminent Vice Chancellors of premier Indian Universities have accompanied me on this visit. Their Universities look forward to close exchanges with their counterpart Israeli Universities. I am confident that our hard working students will do India proud in Israel.

Distinguish Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, I see among you many members of the Indian Jewish community. You have distinguished yourselves through your achievements – both in India and in Israel. In Mumbai you have contributed leaders in business, education and the literary field. In Kolkata, the Magen David Synagogue and the Jewish Girl's School are historic landmarks. I recall that in 1968, former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi had attended the 400th anniversary of

the synagogue and released a commemorative stamp. I understand that all the four Jewish communities in Israel have come together to host a National Convention of Indian Jews with Israel. I compliment you on this initiative and wish you success.

Before concluding, I would like to thank the friendly people of Israel for making the Indian community here feel welcome and valued. We are two countries with ancient civilizations, much like the two branches of a bountiful tree. India looks forward to strengthening the friendship and co-operation between our peoples in the years to come.

With these words, I thank the Ambassador of India for hosting this reception and thank you all for being here present. To each one of you, I extend my best wishes for your well being, progress and many proud achievements. God Bless you all. Thank you.

Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, <http://mea.gov.in/outgoing-visit-detail.htm?25929/Speech+by+President+at+the+Indian+Community+Reception+in+Jerusalem+October+13+2015>

7) President's speech at the Banquet hosted by the President of Israel, Jerusalem, 14 October 2015

Your Excellency Reuven Rivlin, President of the State of Israel,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is indeed a privilege for me to make the first ever State Visit by an Indian President to Israel. The Nobel Laureate, Shai Agnon once said "if we breathe the scent of goodly grass, the fragrances of spices, the aroma of good fruits, we pronounce a blessing over the pleasure". I wish to begin by thanking you, President for the warmth of the welcome that I have received, the graciousness of your hospitality and the friendship of your people.

We, in India, know you as a man of courage and conviction. You lead a country that has faced many trials and tribulations throughout its history but whose people have always risen to the challenges that have confronted them. Israel's leaders have guided their countrymen on a path of hard work, innovation and rapid progress. Their efforts have made them what they are today – a proud, confident and self reliant people.

Excellency,

My visit is taking place at a time when our bilateral relations can be described as excellent. In fact, the linkages between India and Israel date back many centuries. According to records, the people of India first welcomed members of the lost tribes of Israel around 175 BC – more than 2000 years ago. They were followed by different groups who were similarly integrated into the Indian society. It was not long before their religious traditions also became a part of India's composite culture. Hebrew has been taught as a subject in our educational system much before the State of Israel was established. Our society was enriched by the contributions of the Indian Jews, who became famous poets, actors, teachers, industrialists and even generals in the Indian army.

In the 20th century, our two nations came into being through the trauma of conflict, division and human suffering. We weathered many challenges but our leaders kept their faith in democracy. They believed in the transformative power of education and science in building a strong nation. Today, our strong and vibrant democracies are committed to the vision of our Founding Fathers. Both our countries have invested in building knowledge economies. India's economy is presently on a fast trajectory of growth. In Israel, the innovation and enterprising spirit of your people have transformed Israel into a hi-tech powerhouse that has many remarkable achievements to its credit.

Excellency,

I see a very promising future for our bilateral relations. In the twenty years since we normalized our relations, we have learned to do business with each other and have developed a substantial bilateral agenda. The time is opportune for us to further strengthen our economic cooperation and intensify our collaborations in science and technology. We believe that robust academic exchanges will help us build a rewarding partnership in areas of advanced technology.

The challenges of the 21st century have been rapidly unfolding before us. Our future generations will have to deal with a variety of these including the globalization of extremism, the severe impact of climate change and the scarcity of water. Governments will be hard pressed to meet the rising aspirations of their people. Democracies will have to respond to the needs of increasing diversities and pluralities in their social fabric. The international community must work together now, with wisdom, to create tolerance and understanding for addressing the complex issues confronting mankind. In this scenario, President, the Sanskrit shloka, "Vasudhaiva kutumbakam" comes to mind. It is found in the Maha Upanishad and is meant to convey that the whole world is one family, interconnected and interdependent. I would add that although this is an ancient Vedic philosophy, it is more relevant in today's globalised world than ever before.

With these words, Excellency, I take this opportunity to most cordially reiterate my invitation to you to visit India. I thank you, once again, and look forward to the pleasure of receiving you in New Delhi.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I invite you to join me in raising a toast :

To the health and well-being of President Rivlin and Nechama Rivlin.

To the enduring friendship between India and Israel.

To peace in this region and the continued progress and prosperity of the people of Israel.

Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, <http://mea.gov.in/outgoing-visit-detail.htm?25933/Presidents+speech+at+the+Banquet+hosted+by+the+President+of+Israel+in+Jerusalem+October+14+2015>

8) Transcript of Media Briefing by Secretary (East) in Jerusalem on President's Ongoing Visit to Israel, Jerusalem, 15 October 2015

Press Secretary to President (Venu Rajamony): Good Afternoon friends. I would like to introduce to you Ambassador Jaideep Sarkar, in case any of you have not met him. He was with us here yesterday evening. Secretary (East) of course needs no introduction. I would request Secretary (East) to brief you on the discussions of the morning.

Secretary (East) (Anil Wadhwa): Dear friends, I think you were there for most part of the morning and afternoon's functions. Because you were there in the Senate, you have the speeches, who said what etc. So, I am going to brief you essentially on the meeting with President Rivlin. This meeting covered a range of issues, bilateral issues and issues which relate to the international relations etc.

First of all, both Presidents recalled the fact that this is a historic visit, first by a President from India to Israel. Our President recalled his visit to the Holocaust Museum yesterday and he repeated what he said on that occasion yesterday that it was a moving experience to be there; it was quite incredible that human beings can be so outrageous to fellow human beings; decades have passed but nobody can wash away the memory from human civilization of what had happened.

He also said in that context that we cannot allow violence to speak; that the violent may have a louder voice, but it is always the voice of peace and reconciliation which is important. Thereafter, the discussions turned to bilateral cooperation. Here we covered a lot of ground starting from 1992 when Israel and India established fully fledged diplomatic relations.

Thereafter, we came on to specifics like collaboration in defence equipment and platform systems, cooperation relating to agriculture, to irrigation, and the importance of India turning into a manufacturing hub in the future. In order to ensure that 1.2 billion people of India, who actually are one-sixth of the world population but have only one-sixteenth of the land mass in the world, to feed this population it is important to have the technology which is required for this purpose. And Israel has mastered technology in the fields of drip irrigation, also higher yields, seeds etc., in all of which India and Israel are collaborating and that this collaboration needs to intensify in the future.

India also intends to develop its infrastructure by encouraging foreign direct investment from abroad. President said that the Prime Minister of India has already given the call for Make in India and that also takes care of the issue of job creation because 10 million young people join the job market every year, and there is a requirement of skilling about 500,000 people in a decade or so which would make them important for the manufacturing sector. Therefore, all the programmes in India like Clean India, Digital India and Skill India which have been started are all steps in that direction.

He also said that Israel and India are major collaborators in the fields of power, ports and railways. He referred to the fact that FDI liberalization has taken place in many sectors including in defence where 49 per cent is now the equity through the direct route and 100 per cent in many cases. He also invited investments in financial instruments in India; and also the fact that Israel had strengths in IT, in pharmaceuticals and in cyber security where we could collaborate in the future inviting Israeli entrepreneurs to invest in India in these fields.

He also referred to the recent court order of the Vodafone judgment by a High Court pointing out to the fact that India was operating under a rule of law and that even the court which is a government court had given a ruling for a private company against the government in this case.

Finally he referred to collaboration required in the field of telecom and said that the capacity which is required in this sector is growing enormously; we have a growing middle class and the technology from Israel would be important in this respect to set up joint ventures together in many of these fields.

The Israeli side responded by saying that all these remarks have been taken into account and they will all be taken into consideration. The fact that Israel itself had gone down the path of manufacturing way back in 1951 made them a self-reliant nation and he could understand the reasons why India is following a similar policies.

There was also a discussion related to the neighbourhood, the terror groups in the region, Iran, the Russian intervention in Syria, and also the fact that Israel did not want the current upsurge in violence to turn into a religious war, something which we also heard in Palestine, which is a good sign.

Also there was a question about NATO and Russian jets operating at the same time in Syria and how important it was to have some coordination in that respect.

Finally, there was reference to the fact that within Israel as well there are a number of different nationalities which have to live together and therefore it is important that that aspect should be strengthened in Israel itself. There was a brief discussion on that taking the cue from the pluralistic society that we have in India.

Then we had a meeting also with the Leader of Opposition. There the main issues that were discussed were the management of different religions in India where President stressed on the fact that debate, dissension and decision are three essentials of democracy which was how it was important that India had preserved these principles.

There was a discussion on bringing down of poverty in India. Here again discussion turned back to the fact that we have about 10 million persons in the job market every year and still there

remains a gap, however, the fact that birth rates in India had also come down and helped a little bit in this regard even as life expectancy has gone up.

There was also an issue which was raised about solving conflicts in our pluralistic and multi-religious society, the Indian experience in this regard, and the fact that religion could not be the basis of any state, and finally a discussion on the path chosen by Pakistan and the current situation which we never actually got down to discussing in detail because that was overtaken by a discussion on a separate law for religions in both India and Israel and the current situation which is similar in both countries. I think that was in brief were the discussions.

Then there were two agreements which were signed which you know about – a cultural exchange programme for 2015-2018 and the amendment to the protocol on Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement. These were the two documents that were signed.

Press Secretary to President: I will just add one small point to what Secretary said. In the meeting with the Leader of Opposition, the President also in response to how India has become a success, how we make India work, he also emphasized the need, the sense of live and let live and the importance of coexistence within the country. In a different part of the discussion he also mentioned that India basically accepts the fact that you can choose your friends but not your neighbours. There are no easy solutions but we need to keep striving for that. Violence cannot achieve anything but violence. And he quoted Gandhiji to say that an eye for an eye will only lead to a world full of blind people.

We will have to take quick questions since we have to rush back for a meeting. Ten minutes maximum for questions, if there are any.

Question: Just a clarification. Who said this that the religion cannot be the basis of a state? Our President?

Secretary (East): Our President.

Question: And what was the response?

Secretary (East): There was no particular discussion on that.

Question: Who did he say this to?

Press Secretary to President: This was in the context of India's partition and Pakistan, Bangladesh, etc. The question was, how does India work? So the President went into history and spoke about how India was born and the divisions at that period of time.

Question: Does this not contradict Israel's consistent stand that it is a homeland for Jewish people, that it is a Jewish state based on Jewish religion? So, did President not contradict the very premise of Israel's existence?

Secretary (East): I will clarify that because I knew that you would ask this question. There is confusion. Yes, the terminology is a Jewish state but we were talking to people who believe in a two-state solution, the Labour Party. And if you take the ruling party, that is not the path they are pursuing right now. So, there is a difference and they were talking about it in that context that when you have coexistence of a number of religions either within the same country or side by side, within the same country is a solution which has been favoured by the ruling coalition, but the Labour parties always had this stand that two-state solution was something that they negotiated on in the past as well. So, the former Foreign Minister was there during the discussions. It was in that context that these discussions took place. Yes, definitely there is that terminology which exists and will continue to exist. But within that, how you take into account the fact that currently in Israel for instance there are 75 per cent of Jews but the rest 20 per cent will be Muslims and five per cent will be others.

Question: Did you get any sense of how the peace process can go forward? Prime Minister has almost clarified and clearly articulated the Israel's policy on this issue. In the discussions, did you get any sense how the peace process can move forward?

Secretary (East): In the discussions that we had, because these were with the Leader of Opposition and Labour in particular, the way forward as they put it was to have the two-state solution and they also outlined the two most important areas which we know about which is the issue of refugees and the issue of security. How does Israel ensure its own security in the two-state solution, which you all know about that process as we have gone through that process in the past.

Question: Can you ... (Inaudible)...

Secretary (East): No, there was no specific discussion on settlements.

Question: In the case of Vodafone court judgment, was concern raised by Israeli side on?

Secretary (East): No concern was raised. It was a suo motu reference by our President to show that India has a rule of law and that we know the legal system which exists in India takes care of investors, and that climate for investment is improving.

Question: They had no concerns of ... (Inaudible)...

Secretary (East): No, they do not.

Question: National Instruments Investment policy, what is the proposal? President asked for investment for national instrument.

Secretary (East): Those are the financial instruments which we have in India. As you know, we have set up a National Investment Fund as well, plus there are a number of government securities that have been floated by Indian Government.

Question: Were there any talks with the Prime Minister?

Secretary (East): No, there were no talks with the Prime Minister. Prime Minister's speech was there in the Parliament which you know about.

Question: Did he not call on the President?

Press Secretary to President: I think in his speech he briefly mentioned that they exchanged a few words perhaps before the President was ushered in to speak.

Secretary (East): Probably all of them met briefly in the room before they came into the Senate. So, at that time they had a brief discussion.

Press Secretary to President: The meeting with the Leader of Opposition was wide ranging and covered a lot of issues. They were very relaxed and had a lot of time. In fact, what the Leader of Opposition said on the floor of the House, he repeated that. His father used to have an Indian Jew, a lady who used to work with him. He had brought her there to meet the President. And the former Foreign Minister in the Government was there who said that she had gone to India and spent a lot of time in Himachal Pradesh. So, it is not just young Jews but she had decided to quit politics for a period and she chose to come and spend time in India. So, it was a very wide ranging discussion.

The discussion started off with this question of how do you make a country as complex as India work and the President went into history and spoke about the history of the Partition, how Pakistan believed that the religion could unite and make a state but India believed differently. All our neighbouring countries fell to military dictatorships but we continued to be a strong democracy and this is because of our sense of live and let live, coexistence and our commitment to democracy in which the three principles of debate, dissent and decision are very important.

Question: ... (Inaudible)... convergence of approach of the Israeli Prime Minister and the Indian Prime Minister that he kept referring to on a number of things. How do we see that?

Secretary (East): He talked about a number of areas in his speech which he clearly spelt out. He spelt out four clear areas which are: cooperation in agriculture, in dairy, in solar energy, solar energy being the number one and also in water. These are the four specific areas of cooperation.

Question: Apart from that I am talking about both within the Israeli society and our society and the neighbourhood. ... (Inaudible)...

Secretary (East): It is the experience of dealing with pluralistic societies, multi-religious societies. That is where the convergence lies. And also the fact that you face terrorism in your neighbourhood and we live in similar kind of neighbourhood we face similar kind of challenges. How does one keep territory secure and how does one keep the country secure? Those are exchange of experiences that can happen.

Question: There were some media comments that President had not referred to the terror on Palestinians when he spoke on two occasions in Palestine and similarly today also there was no reference. Is that correct? ... (Inaudible)...

Secretary (East): He has made a clear reference today in his opening statement.

Press Secretary to President: It has been circulated immediately after the Ceremonial ... (Inaudible)...

Secretary (East): If you take a look it is there. He also did make a reference in his Senate speech as well.

Question: In his meetings with Israeli President and other leaders, did President Mukherjee specifically refer to by any chance Israel-Palestine conflict, especially the recent upsurge and how to deal with it in his view?

Secretary (East): I think the issue came up for more the Israeli side rather than him raising it because they talked about the fact that they did not want this conflict to escalate or turn into a religious conflict and that they were very conscious of that. That is the response that we got in Palestine as well as you know. As I said, this is a good sign that both sides are thinking along the same lines.

Question: Two quick small questions. One, about the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu speaking about the Islamists terror across the region, he said that the fight is against Islamist terror and he continuously at least two times he referred to Palestine. I would like to ask you, I interviewed Mahmoud Abbas President of Palestine, he referred again and again that he was not looking towards an Islamic state, he was looking towards a democratic state and a multilateral approach. He said that India has a larger role to play in this entire process of building peace. Would you like to appreciate that statement, any kind of reaction from your end, Sir.

Secretary (East): What President Abbas told you in your interview is something that was also told to the President when he met the political parties in Palestine and repeatedly they said that India can play a major role. In fact, they said that BRICS can play a major role in conflict as well because they understand the situation very well. In fact, two or three speakers referred to a role for BRICS. It is a fact that Palestine is looking at various ways to take the process forward and make sure that the impasse so to speak no longer exists and that there is some headway which is made in the future. I suppose that is one way out that they are looking for. I would think that any solution that can be found or anything that can be done to take the process forward would be good.

Press Secretary to President: Thank you everyone.

Source: *Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi*, <http://mea.gov.in/outgoing-visit-detail.htm?25934/Transcript+of+Media+Briefing+by+Secretary+East+in+Jerusalem+on+Presidents+Ongoing+Visit+to+Israel+October+14+2015>

9) Acceptance Speech by President on conferment of Honorary Doctorate by Hebrew University, Jerusalem, 16 October 2015

Chairperson of the Board of Governors, Michael Federmann;
President of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Prof. Menahem Ben-Sasson;
Rector of the Hebrew University, Prof. Asher Cohen;
Honourable Members of the Senate of Hebrew University of Jerusalem,
Members of the Faculty and;
Distinguished members of the academic community of this ancient University,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to visit the Hebrew University and be amidst you today. It is indeed a great honour for me to be the first Indian President to make a State Visit to Israel. Since my arrival, I have been touched by the warmth and friendly sentiments of the people of Israel. I would like to express my gratitude to the Hebrew University for honouring me today with the Doctor Philosophiae Honoris Causa.

I greatly value this gesture of friendship. I, therefore, accept this doctorate as the President of India, on behalf of the people of India. It gives me great pleasure to be associated with the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel's second oldest University and one of its largest research and teaching institutions. I am aware of its magnificent libraries and their famed collections of manuscripts and ancient publications on Jewish thought and culture. I hope to someday have the opportunity to see some of these as well as the Albert Einstein Archives preserved here.

Friends,

India attaches great importance to its friendship and partnership with the people of Israel. Our earliest linkages date back more than two thousand years. As you may be aware, India has a significant Jewish population descended from Jewish communities who came to India as far back as 175 BC. Hebrew has been taught as a subject in our educational institutions long before the State of Israel was established.

In modern times, our two peoples seem to have naturally revived these old affinities and embarked on a path of cooperation that has evolved into a close and multi-faceted partnership between our two nations.

As young nations with an ancient history, both India and Israel seek to develop and progress as knowledge economies. In the 20 years since we normalized relations, we have developed a close partnership in key sectors of defence, agriculture, cyber security and advanced technology.

I come at a time when India is at the threshold of a new era of modernization and economic growth. Our Government has taken a number of initiatives to encourage foreign direct investments and stimulate the manufacturing sector of the Indian economy. The 'Make in India',

and the 'Jan Dhan Yojna' for financial inclusion are two of many new initiatives undertaken by our Government.

With Israel, India has a number of complementarities in many key sectors. We are keen to realize the full potential of a partnership between our scientists and researchers. Both our academic communities have much to bring to the table. Eminent Vice Chancellors of premier Indian Universities have accompanied me on this visit to explore and pursue possible collaborations with counterpart universities in areas of shared interest. They hope to foster mutually beneficial academic exchanges, collaborative research and cross pollination of ideas between Indian and Israeli institutions of higher learning. India trains nearly 400,000 engineers every year. Israel, on its part, has proven itself in the field of research and technical innovation. India seeks Israel's participation in our Digital India programme and the building of India's smart cities and model villages. Your ideas and innovations could go a long way in achieving the goals of these flagship programmes of our Government. I invite you all to participate in the transformation of India.

Many of you may have travelled to India and some of you may be contemplating a visit. Travel itself is an educative and enriching experience. Our Government has selected Israel among the few countries to which it has extended the e-tourist visa facility. We do believe that increased exchanges at multiple levels will enhance the mutual understanding between our peoples. At the Knesset yesterday, I stressed the importance of institutionalizing regular exchanges between our elected representatives. I am accompanied by the Honourable Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment, Thawar Chand Gehlot and a multi party delegation of Honourable Members of the Indian Parliament. They join me in inviting you to visit India and contribute to the strengthening of the friendship between our peoples.

With these words, President, I thank you once again.

Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, <http://mea.gov.in/outgoing-visit-detail.htm?25940/Acceptance+Speech+by+President+on+conferment+of+Honorary+Doctorate+by+Hebrew+University+October+15+2015>

10) Address by President at Hebrew University during his visit to Israel, 16 October 2015

Hon. President (Pranab Mukherjee): Good morning, ...(Inaudible)... distinguished members of the Hebrew Faculty in Jerusalem, distinguished members of the academic community, senate, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen:

I am delighted to visit the Hebrew University and...(Inaudible)... Institute this morning. It is indeed a great honour for me to be the first Indian President to make a state visit to this site. Since my arrival, I have been touched by the warmth and friendly sentiments of the people of Israel.

I would like to express my gratitude to the Hebrew University for honouring me today with the Doctor of Philosophy Honoris Causa. I greatly value this gesture of friendship. I, therefore, accept this doctorate as the President of India on behalf of the people of India.

It gives me great pleasure to be associated with this world famous university, one of Israel's largest research and teaching institutions. I am aware of the magnificent library and their famed collection of manuscripts and ancient publications on Jewish thought and culture. I ... (Inaudible) ... have the opportunity to see some of these as well as Albert Einstein's archives preserved here. I had the privilege of just being shown a couple of letters written by great Indian minds Rabindranath Tagore and ... (Inaudible) ... and some symbols of association of these mighty minds Einstein, Rabindranath, Gandhi and Nehru.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, India attaches great importance to its friendship and partnership with the people of Israel. Our linkages date back more than 2,000 years. As you may be aware, India has a significant Jewish population, descendants from Jewish community who came to India as far as back as 175 BC. Hebrew has been taught as a subject in our educational institutions long before the state of Israel was established.

In modern times, our two people seem to have naturally revived these old affinities and embarked on a path of cooperation that has evolved into a close and multifaceted partnership between our two nations. As young nations with ancient history, both India and Israel seek to develop and progress as knowledge economies.

In the 20 years since ... (Inaudible) ... relations, we have developed a close partnership in key sectors of defence, agriculture, cyber security and advanced technology. I come at a time when India is at the threshold of a new era modernization and economic growth progress.

Our Government has taken a number of initiatives to encourage foreign direct investment and stimulate the manufacturing sector of the Indian economy. The Make in India and the Jan Dhan Yojana for financial inclusion are two of many new initiatives undertaken by our Government.

With Israel, India has a number of complementarities in many key sectors. We are keen to realize the full potential of a partnership between our scientists and researchers. Both our academic communities have much to bring to the table. Eminent Vice-Chancellors of premier Indian universities have accompanied me on this visit to explore and pursue possible collaborations with counterpart universities in areas of shared intelligence. They hope to foster mutually beneficial academic exchanges, collaborative research, and cross pollination of ideas between Indian and Israeli institutions of higher learning.

India creates nearly 400,000 engineers every year. Israel on its part has proven itself in the field of research and technical innovation. India seeks Israel's participation in our Digital India programme and building of India's Smart Cities and modern villages. Your ideas and

innovations could go a long way in achieving the goals of these flagships programmes of our Government. I invite you all to participate in transforming India.

Many of you have travelled to India and some of you may be contemplating a visit. Travel itself is an educating and enriching experience. Our Government has selected Israel among the few countries to which it has extended the e-tourist visa destination. We do believe that increased exchange at multiple levels will enhance the mutual understanding between our people.

At ...(Inaudible)... yesterday, I stressed the importance of institutionalizing regular exchanges between our elected representatives. I am accompanied by Hon. Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment Thawar Chand Gehlot; and a multiparty delegation of Hon. Members of Indian Parliament join me in inviting you to visit India and contribute to the strengthening of friendship between our people.

Since my arrival in Israel I have frequently been asked how India is managing the largest functional democracy despite its huge diversity. For us, diversity is an integrating factor. We see unity in the diversity. India is a complex country of 1.3 billion people, 122 languages, 1,600 dialects, seven religions, and a substantial presence of all three major ethnic groups - Caucasian, Dravidian and Mongoloid. As I have often said, its strength lies in its unique capacity to ...(Inaudible)... according to contradictions into positive affirmations.

In the words of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, "India is a country held together by strong but invisible threads. About her there is the elusive quality of a legend of long ago; some enchantment seems to have held her mind. She is a myth and an idea, a dream and a vision, and yet very real and present and pervasive."

With these words, President, I thank you once again. Thank you, ladies and gentlemen.

Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, <http://mea.gov.in/outgoing-visit-detail.htm?25942/Address+by+President+at+Hebrew+University+during+his+visit+to+Israel+October+15+2015>

11) List of Agreements/MoUs signed during the visit of President to Israel, New Delhi, 16 October 2015

List of Agreements/MoUs signed during the visit of President to Israel

S. No.	Subject	Signed from Indian side	Signed from Israel side	Remarks
1	Protocol amending the Convention and the Protocol	Anil Wadhwa Secretary (East)	Daniel Carmon Ambassador of Israel in Delhi	The agreement is in connection with the avoidance of double taxation and the prevention of fiscal evasion with respect to taxes on income and on capital

	between the Republic of India and the State of Israel for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and for the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with respect to taxes on income and on capital			
2	Cultural Exchange Programme between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the State of Israel for the years 2015-2018	Anil Wadhwa Secretary (East)	Daniel Carmon Ambassador of Israel in Delhi	The programme has signed is in connection with exchange of culture and art experts, Performing arts festivals, Plastic Arts, photography and design, Architecture Museums and Exhibitions Music, Cultural Heritage and Archaeology etc.
3	MOU between Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India and Ben-Gurion University of the Negev	Professor Sudhir Kumar Sopory (Vice Chancellor) Jawaharlal Nehru University	Professor Zvi Ha'Cohen Rector Ben-Gurion University of the Negev	This agreement is in connection with academic objectives of each institution and to promote better understanding between the faculty and students of JNU and the faculty and students of BGU
4	Agreement of Cooperation between the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur	Prof. Partha Pratim Chakrabarti Director Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur	Prof. Menahem Ben Sasson President	The areas agreement is about the cooperation for program offered at either university which is felt to be desirable and reasonable for the development of cooperation between the two institutions.

5	MOU for Institutional Collaboration between Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur (IITKGP) and Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, (BGU)	Prof. Partha Pratim Chakrabarti Director Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur, Kharagpur, India	Prof. Zvi HaCohen Rector Ben-Gurion University of the Beer Sheva, Israel Negev	The objective of MOU is to promote interaction and collaboration between faculty, staff and students of the two institutions through visits and exchange programs, carry out joint academic and research programs, joint supervision of doctoral and masters students, on a reciprocal basis.
6	MOU between Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India and Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel	Professor Sudhir K. Sopory, Vice Chancellor Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India	Professor Menahem Ben Sasson President Hebrew University of Jerusalem Israel	The MOU is about to promote better understanding between the faculty and students of JNU and the faculty and students of HUJI. Under this Memorandum of Understanding
7	Framework for Academic Collaboration between the Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur, Kharagpur, India and the University of Haifa, Haifa, Israel	Prof. Partha Pratim Chakrabarti Director Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur	Amos Shapira President and Prof. David Faraggi Rector University of Haifa	The Parties have decided to enter into this Framework of Academic Collaboration (the "Agreement") in order to promote, facilitate and consolidate international cooperation in education and research, based on the principles of reciprocity and mutual benefit.
8	MOU between the University of Delhi, Delhi, India and Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, (BGU), Beer Sheva, Israel	Prof. Madan Mohan Chaturvedi Nominee of the Vice Chancellor The University of Delhi	Prof. Zvi HaCohen, Rector Ben-Gurion University of the Negev	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Exchange of information and academic materials that are of mutual interest 2. Exchange between the two institutions relating to : <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Academic faculty and administrative staff 2. research staff 3. visiting scholars 4. students 5. other staff mutually

				<p>agreed upon</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Provision of briefing/orientation services by each institution for visitors from the other institution 4. Other forms of co-operation which the two institutions may jointly arrange.
9	Agreement of Cooperation between the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel and the University of Delhi, India	Professor Madan Mohan Chaturvedi Nominee of the Vice Chancellor University of Delhi, India	Rector The Hebrew University of Jerusalem	<p>The program shall be on</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Exchange of faculty members 2. Exchange of students 3. Joint research projects 4. Joint conferences 5. Exchange of research materials
10	MOU between the University of Delhi, and IDC, India Herzilya, Israel	Prof. Madan Mohan Chaturvedi University of Delhi	Prof. Uriel Reichman President and Founder Interdisciplinary Centre, Herzilya, Israel	<p>The two institutions shall seek to promote:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Exchange of information and academic materials that are of mutual interest 2. Exchange between the two institutions relating to : <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Academic faculty and administrative staff 2. Research staff 3. Visiting scholars 4. Students 5. Other staff mutually agreed upon

Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, <http://mea.gov.in/outgoing-visit-detail.htm?25937/List+of+AgreementsMoUs+signed+during+the+visit+of+President+to+Israel>

12) Israel a valued partner, says president, Jerusalem, 14 October 2015

The President of India, Pranab Mukherjee attended a reception hosted by Jaideep Sarkar, Ambassador of India to Israel for Indian nationals and Israeli nationals of Indian origin in Jerusalem yesterday (October 13, 2015).

Speaking on the occasion, the President thanked the people of Israel for making the Indian community there feel welcome and valued. He said India and Israel are two countries with

ancient civilizations, much like the two branches of a bountiful tree. India looks forward to strengthening the friendship and co-operation between our peoples in the years to come.

The President said India has always regarded Israel as a valued partner. In fact, West Asia as a whole and the Gulf have always been a priority for India. The countries of this region are India's vital partners in the energy, hydrocarbon and mineral sectors. We shall continue to pay special attention to them and seek closer cooperation and stronger partnership with them for our mutual benefit.

The President said members of the Indian Jewish community have distinguished themselves through their achievements – both in India and in Israel. In Mumbai they have contributed leaders in business, education and the literary field. In Kolkata, the Magen David Synagogue and the Jewish Girl's School are historic landmarks.

Source: President of India, New Delhi, <http://presidentofindia.nic.in/press-release-detail.htm?1823>

c. JORDAN

13) Visit of President to Jordan (10-12 October 2015), New Delhi, 6 October 2015

At the invitation of His Majesty King Abdullah-II Ibn Al Hussein of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the Honourable President of India, Pranab Mukherjee, will pay a State visit to Jordan from 10-12 October 2015. The Honourable President will be accompanied by Thawar Chand Gehlot, Union Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment, Members of Parliament and the learned members of the academic community, apart from official delegation and media representatives.

The visit of Honourable President will be the first by the President of India to Jordan in the last 65 years since the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi visited Jordan in 1988. From the Jordanian side, His Majesty King Abdullah and Queen Rania visited India in 2006. The visit of Honourable President to Jordan underscores the desire of the two countries to strengthen their bilateral relations.

During the visit, the Honourable President will meet his Majesty King Abdullah and will have extensive discussions on entire gamut of bilateral relations, regional and international issues of mutual concern. The Honourable President will have a meeting with the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Jordan would call on the Honourable President. In the presence of the Honourable President of India, a number of agreements are expected to be signed during the visit. The Honourable President will also visit the University of Jordan and make a public speech. He will also grace a function organized by our Ambassador in Amman for Indian community and Friends of India.

Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, http://mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/25890/Visit_of_President_to_Jordan_October_1012_2015

14) List 6 MoUs/Agreements signed between India and Jordan during the State visit of H.E. Pranab Mukherjee, President of India to Jordan (10-12 October 2015), 12 October 2015

1. Cooperation Agreement between Press Trust of India and Jordan News Agency (PETRA) on exchange of News signed by Anil Trigunayat, Ambassador of India and . Faisal Al Shboul, Director General Chief Editor of PETRA

2. Cultural Exchange Programme between India and Jordan for the years 2015-17 signed by Anil Trigunayat, Ambassador of India and Mohammad Taisir Bani Yassen, Secretary General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates

3. Agreement on Maritime Transport between India and Jordan signed by Anil Wadhwa, Secretary (East), Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India and Saleh Ali Abu-Afifeh, Director General, Jordan Maritime Commission.

4. MoU between Bureau of Indian Standards and Jordan Standards and Metrology Organization for Cooperation in the fields of Standardization and Conformity Assessment signed by Anil Wadhwa, Secretary (East), Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India and Mohammad Taisir Bani Yassen, Secretary General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates, Jordan.

5. MoU between Foreign Service Institute, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India and Jordan Institute of Diplomacy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Expatriates signed by Anil Trigunayat, Ambassador of India and Mohammad Taisir Bani Yassen, Secretary General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates, Jordan.

6. MoU between Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, India and Ministry of Information and Communication Technology of Jordan on Cooperation in the field of Information Technology and Electronics signed by Anil Wadhwa, Secretary (East), Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India and Mohammad Taisir Bani Yassen, Secretary General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates, Jordan.

Source: Embassy of India, Amman, <http://indembassy-amman.org/pdf/List-of-6-Agreements.pdf>

15) Speech by the president of India, Pranab Mukherjee at the conferment of honorary doctorate by the University of Jordan, Amman, 11 October 2015

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. I feel honoured to address this distinguished gathering at the prestigious University of Jordan, one of the oldest and most acclaimed centres of learning in the world. I would like to begin by expressing my gratitude to H.E. Professor Dr. Tarawneh for his generous words and to the University of Jordan for conferring an Honorary Doctorate on me. I am deeply moved by this gesture. I value it as a manifestation of the warmth of the people of Jordan towards me and my country. I have long been aware of the grand reputation of the University of Jordan. I have heard

of its contribution in the building of a knowledge society in this country. Its role in promoting fundamental human values, academic freedom, learning and innovation has been second to none. Today, as I address you, and through you, the people of Jordan, I feel that I could not have chosen a better venue than this esteemed institution.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

2. India attaches high importance to its friendship with Jordan. I have come here, inspired by our common history and encouraged by our mutual goodwill, seeking to open a new chapter in our age-old relationship. Since our two independent nations established our diplomatic relations in 1950, our co-operation has expanded in a variety of areas of shared interest. India was among the first countries to welcome the Wadi Araba Treaty of The Kingdom of Jordan with Israel in October 1994. Our nations have, over the years, consolidated our partnership by establishing institutional mechanisms and undertaking regular high-level exchanges. India values the personal contribution of His Majesty, Late King Hussein bin Talal (May his soul rest in peace) and Their Majesties King Abdullah II and Queen Rania in reinforcing the warmth and understanding between India and Jordan. This mutual sentiment has been strengthened by some unusual events that have become landmarks in the history of our bilateral relations: India recalls, with gratitude, Jordan's invaluable assistance in the emergency evacuation of over 150,000 Indians from Kuwait and Iraq during the Gulf Crisis in 1991 and again in 2004 when our people fled the civil war in Iraq. Over the years, our relationship has been further enhanced by the excellent understanding between our Governments on regional and global issues and our support for each other in multilateral fora including the United Nations. Our convergence of views on Palestine, the Middle East Peace Process, Syria, Iraq and the challenges confronting us in this region today - and our agreement on the need to expedite UNSC reforms reflect our common approach to these important issues.

Excellencies,

3. India has an unflinching commitment to sustaining and expanding relations with the Arab world. Our ties are ancient and civilization. West Asia is a vital part of India's extended neighbourhood and millions of Indians live and work here. We commend Jordan's active and untiring efforts for peace in the region. India has always appreciated the vision of His Majesty, the Late King Hussein (May his soul rest in peace) and His Majesty, King Abdullah in pursuing, with all concerned at both the regional and the global level, a just solution to the Palestine-Israel issues. Like Jordan, India's traditional support to the Palestinian cause remains steadfast and unwavering while we pursue strong relations with Israel. Our bilateral relations with Israel are independent of our relations with Palestine. 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. We desire to see Palestine living side by side at peace with Israel as endorsed in the Quartet Roadmap and relevant UNSC Resolutions. India has played a proactive role in garnering support for this cause in all multilateral fora. We have called

upon both sides to exercise restraint and work towards a comprehensive resolution of the Palestinian issue. We have been happy to provide budgetary, economic and developmental assistance to Palestine. I would like to recall the words of Mahatma Gandhi, as also quoted by Her Majesty, Queen Noor in her recent book, "Leap of Faith 'and I quote, "Palestine belongs to the Arabs in the same sense that England belongs to the English and France to the French". India stands ready to work with all like-minded nations for the amicable resolution of this protracted conflict.

4. India also remains deeply concerned at the ongoing violence in Syria. We are saddened by the tragic loss of lives and the long suffering of millions of displaced citizens - including innocent women and children. We laud Jordan's humanitarian assistance and sheltering of 1.4 million refugees - despite its own severe domestic constraints; and believe that this human tragedy should never have been allowed to happen in the first place. India has been consistently calling for all sides in the Syrian conflict to abjure violence so that conditions can be created for an inclusive political dialogue. We see this as the only path to a comprehensive, permanent, political solution as there can be no military solution to this conflict. We have been stating that such a dialogue must take into account the legitimate aspirations of the people of Syria. India believes that Syria has a key and fundamental part to play in achieving peace and stability in West Asia. Prolonged conflict in Syria has already begun to have a severe impact on the region and beyond.

5. Ladies and Gentlemen, the fragile security situation in Iraq is, no less, a matter of grave concern. The rise of intolerance and sectarian violence calls for a comprehensive approach for achieving a political solution in Iraq. On our part, India is committed to non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries. However, we are directly affected by terror and strife in this region. We sincerely desire stability and prosperity for the friendly people of Iraq with whom also we have close ties that are ancient and civilization.

6. I am reminded of the prophetic words of Mahatma Gandhi, Father of our Nation, which I would like to share with you as they have proven to be more relevant now than ever before: I quote," What difference does it make to the dead, the orphans and the homeless, whether the mad destruction is wrought in the name of totalitarianism or the holy name of liberty and democracy.?" Unquote.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

7. The high academic and cultural tradition of the Arab world is not only well known to us in India, but it is inseparably linked to our own. We know that Arab masters translated and preserved teachings from Greece, India and Persia, inspiring a mass movement in the field of education during the 12th Century. This resurgence produced the great Arab mathematicians, scientists and scholars. Regular cross pollination of theories and concepts inspired thought, exploration and discoveries that changed the world. We, in India, cherished these invaluable

exchanges and collaborations that enriched our traditions of learning, culture, religion, language and people to people contacts. The weakening of these links over the decades due to a variety of reasons can certainly be remedied. A re-connect of Arab and Asian ideas and culture will undoubtedly enrich humanity once again. There is wide popular support in both our countries for enhancing our relations. My visit reflects India's deep interest in strengthening our partnership with Jordan in every field.

8. We admire Jordan's endeavour, guided by the vision of His Majesty King Abdullah – II, to modernize its educational infrastructure and develop in its youth a scientific temper while preserving all the richness of Jordan's cultural heritage. It is a vindication of your investment in these values that you have succeeded in building a modern, inclusive and pluralistic nation while the rest of the region remains entrapped in continuous cycles of conflict and instability. Your success is, therefore as important for the region as it is for the world. India has always recognized the importance of education in social empowerment and a nation's progress. This assumes greater salience and urgency at this time - when the world is tackling the challenges of unemployment and radicalization. Our strongest focus should remain on human resource development. We are happy to have partnered Jordan in training its students and professionals in India. I am told that the Jordanian alumni of various Indian universities are now 2500 strong. Our educational systems must upgrade and fine tune themselves to better equip our youth for employment. The knowledge economy is an area where we can have promising collaborations. Friends, as Visitor of 114 institutions of higher education in India, I am deeply committed to fostering educational exchanges and cross pollination of ideas. Accompanying my official delegation are the Vice Chancellors of prominent Indian Universities and educational institutions in India. I am happy to see that Delhi University and the University of Jordan have signed an MOU for co-operation today. Several other Indian universities and premier institutions have also entered into understandings with their Jordanian counterparts. I am told that the University of Petra and Talal Abu Ghazaleh University are already in successful partnerships. Similar tie-ups for providing online education, could, if encouraged, afford vast opportunities for fruitful collaborations.

9. India is emerging as one of the largest economies in the world. It has experienced an average annual growth rate of more than 7 per cent over the past decade, and is, presently, one of the fastest growing emerging markets in the world. India seeks greater Foreign Direct Investment in the insurance, construction, defence and railways sectors. We have opened up these sectors through policies that will encourage investors. Our bilateral trade with Jordan has crossed US \$ 2 billion last year and we have set ourselves a trade target of US \$ 5 billion by 2025. We can achieve this if we expand the range of items in our trade basket, increase the share of high-technology and value-added products and enhance exchanges and cooperation in the services sector. Our priorities are healthcare, IT & IT-enabled services, financial services, transport and logistics.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

10. India has and will remain committed to peaceful recourse in its external as well as internal policies. Instability in our neighbourhood can threaten our security and slow down our progress. At a time when the entire world is affected by the scourge of terrorism, it is important to recognize that India has been preoccupied with this menace for over four decades. Terrorism emanating from our neighbourhood remains a major security threat to us. We believe that addressing this challenge should be a major priority of the international community. India believes that countries adopting a policy of selectiveness in identifying and dealing with terrorists - especially those who allow these forces to thrive on their territories - will eventually be endangered by the very same actors. India condemned the brutal killing of the Jordanian pilot, Muath al-Kasasbeh. We commend Jordan's efforts in confronting the menace of terrorism and your participation in regional and international efforts in this direction. India has been actively working for strengthening the international regime against terrorism. We seek full and universal compliance, by all countries, with the counter-terrorism measures initiated under the aegis of the United Nations, particularly UN Security Council Resolution 1373 (2011) and United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism (GCTS) adopted in 2006. India would like to see a collective effort by all the member States of the United Nations for the early conclusion and adoption of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism. It has been pending for over a decade. This Comprehensive Convention would serve the cause of humanity by prohibiting States from facilitating or allowing their territories to be used for terrorist acts. It would enable States to cooperate in suppressing terrorism and in punishing the perpetrators, abettors, financiers, facilitators and collaborators of terrorism.

11. Friends, in my meetings with His Majesty, King Abdullah and the pragmatic leadership of Jordan, I have reflected on these concerns and objectives – particularly the goal of peace in this region. I am happy to share that I am convinced that under the guidance of His Majesty, King Abdullah II, Jordan will definitely reap the positive outcomes of all the efforts made for the development and progress of its people. The world also looks forward to the healing and renewal of the other great communities of this region. I wish His Majesty and the Government of Jordan every strength and unmitigated success as they provide leadership to this process.

12. On the bilateral agenda between India and Jordan, I am now more confident than ever before that we are proceeding in the right direction. We both realize that we must seize the present opportune moment to work together and collaborate for our mutual benefit. The understandings that have been reached during my visit will undoubtedly enhance our mutual understanding and take our co-operation to new levels.

13. Above all, Ladies and Gentlemen, as I see the young and optimistic faces of the young people around me today, I am inspired by the energy and hope that I perceive. I see in you the future – and a better and brighter world led by your enlightened generation. I wish all the

students gathered here today every success in their academic careers. May your endeavours for peace and nation-building be fruitful.

14. Once again, I thank you all and convey, through you, to the people of Jordan , my sincere wishes for the progress and the prosperity of your great country.

Thank you.

Source: President of India, New Delhi, <http://presidentofindia.nic.in/speeches-detail.htm?436>

16) University of Jordan confers honorary doctorate on president, Amman, 11 October 2015

Countries adopting a policy of selectiveness in identifying and dealing with terrorists especially those who allow these forces to thrive on their territories will eventually be endangered by the very same actors, says President in address to students and faculty

The University of Jordan conferred Honorary Doctorate in Political Science on President Pranab Mukherjee today (11 October 2015) at a ceremony in Amman.

Speaking on the occasion, the President said India attaches high importance to its friendship with Jordan. Over the years, relationship between India and Jordan has been enhanced by the excellent understanding between the Governments on regional and global issues and their support for each other in multilateral for a including the United Nations. The two countries' convergence of views on Palestine, the Middle East Peace Process, Syria, Iraq and the challenges confronting in the region today and the agreement on the need to expedite UNSC reforms reflect common approach to these important issues.

The President said India has and will remain committed to peaceful recourse in its external as well as internal policies. Instability in the neighbourhood can threaten the security and slow down progress. At a time when the entire world is affected by the scourge of terrorism, it is important to recognize that India has been preoccupied with this menace for over four decades. Terrorism emanating from our neighbourhood remains a major security threat to us. We believe that addressing this challenge should be a major priority of the international community. India believes that countries adopting a policy of selectiveness in identifying and dealing with terrorists - especially those who allow these forces to thrive on their territories - will eventually be endangered by the very same actors. India commends Jordan's efforts in confronting the menace of terrorism and its participation in regional and international efforts in this direction.

The President said India's traditional support to the Palestinian cause remains steadfast and unwavering while we pursue strong relations with Israel. India's bilateral relations with Israel are independent of its relations with Palestine. 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. India desires to see Palestine living side by side at peace with Israel as endorsed in the Quartet Roadmap and relevant UNSC Resolutions. India has

played a proactive role in garnering support for this cause in all multilateral fora. India has called upon both sides to exercise restraint and work towards a comprehensive resolution of the Palestinian issue. India has been happy to provide budgetary, economic and developmental assistance to Palestine.

The President said India also remains deeply concerned at the ongoing violence in Syria. India has been consistently calling for all sides in the Syrian conflict to abjure violence so that conditions can be created for an inclusive political dialogue. We see this as the only path to a comprehensive, permanent, political solution as there can be no military solution to this conflict. We have been stating that such a dialogue must take into account the legitimate aspirations of the people of Syria. India believes that Syria has a key and fundamental part to play in achieving peace and stability in West Asia. Prolonged conflict in Syria has already begun to have a severe impact on the region and beyond.

The President said he was indeed happy to be associated with the University of Jordan, one of the oldest and most acclaimed centres of learning in the Arab world, through the Honorary Doctorate. He expressed the hope that his visit to University of Jordan will result in the strengthening of the existing partnerships and forging of new collaborations between the University of Jordan and Indian centres of higher education. India looks forward to welcoming more and more students and researchers from this great nation.

Source: President of India, New Delhi, <http://presidentofindia.nic.in/press-release-detail.htm?1819>

17) India concerned about instability in the Middle East region resulting in increased terrorist activities across the world, says president, Amman , 8 October 2015

The President of India, Pranab Mukherjee has said that India is concerned about the spill over effects of instability in the Middle East Region, resulting in increased terrorist activities across the world, including in South Asia. He was replying to written questions from the Jordan Times on the eve of his visit to Jordan, Palestine and Israel from 10 to 15 October 2015.

The President said the reality of global expansion of terrorism, including in Syria and Iraq and globalization of the supply chain of terrorism is a matter of great concern to India. India has faced terrorism for almost four decades, largely sponsored from across our border. India has sought to challenge and repudiate the terrorist narrative that global counter-terrorism efforts are directed against any particular religion or ethnic group. India is convinced that terrorism can be rolled back only through comprehensive, coordinated international cooperation combined with a strengthened, enforceable international legal regime.

The President said India and Jordan share similar views and perceptions on regional and international issues, including Syria and the Middle East Peace Process. India strongly rejects religious fundamentalism and extremism as well as terrorism in all forms and manifestations.

Given the commonality of security concerns of both the countries, India looks forward to further strengthening cooperation in the area of security and counter terrorism.

Source: President of India, New Delhi, <http://presidentofindia.nic.in/press-release-detail.htm?1809>

18) India considers Jordan to be an oasis of peace and progress in the region, says president Mukherjee, Amman, 11 October 2015

The President of India, Pranab Mukherjee attended a reception hosted by Anil Trigunayat, Ambassador of India to Jordan for Indian Community and Jordanian friends of India yesterday (10 October 2015) in Amman, Jordan.

Addressing the gathering, the President said India considers Jordan to be an oasis of peace and progress in the Middle East Region. India lauds the progressive policies of the King of Jordan and deeply appreciates his humanity in offering refuge to almost one and a half million innocent men, women and children who have been displaced from their homes by the ravages of war. India appreciates his efforts and tireless endeavours within this region and beyond to inculcate tolerance and understanding amongst communities. We believe that it is urgent and imperative for all sides to give up sectarian violence and hatred and, instead, embrace tolerance, humanity and harmonious coexistence.

Source: President of India, New Delhi, <http://presidentofindia.nic.in/press-release-detail.htm?1818>

19 Full Text of the Interview of the President of India, Pranab Mukherjee to an Arabic Daily of Jordan “Al Ghad”, Amman, 8 October 2015

Q1. How do you describe the Jordanian Indian bilateral relations?

Ans.: Our relations with Jordan are close and historic. We attach utmost importance to our friendship with Jordan. Bilateral ties between the two countries have always been cordial and warm. We have similar approaches on major global issues. The two countries have been partners in peace and progress over the last 65 years even since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1950. We share similar views and perceptions on regional and international issues, including on Syria, Iraq and the Middle East. We both reject religious fundamentalism and extremism as well as terrorism in all forms and manifestations. Given the commonality of security concerns of both our countries, India looks forward to further strengthening cooperation in the security field. India is today Jordan’s fourth largest trading partner and probably the biggest investor, especially in the phosphates and textiles sector. We must work together to achieve the bilateral trade target of US\$5 billion by 2025. My current entourage includes a high level academic delegation. Leaders of Indian institutions of higher learning will sign MoUs on cooperation in the field of higher education with their respective counterparts from Jordan. These MoUs will provide a desired momentum for our academic exchanges besides providing a platform for people-to-people contacts. In addition, there have also been continuous exchanges under the Cultural Exchange Programme (CEP). India has provided scholarships for Jordanians under the Indian

Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme as well as through the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR).

In order to promote tourism, the Government of Jordan has liberalized its visa-regime for Indians since November 2009. India has also extended e-Tourist Visa on Arrival [TVoA] facility to Jordan since November 2014. These schemes will further enrich people to people contacts. I am happy that our relations have grown from strength to strength in these six and a half decades and now encompass all areas. I am confident that my visit will lead to a significant up gradation of our relations.

Q2. The reasons for the visit to Jordan, and what does it indicate?

Ans.: India fondly recalls the landmark State visit of Their Majesties King Abdullah II and Queen Rania in December 2006, which signalled a new era in our bilateral relations. During the visit, a number of bilateral agreements were signed to enhance multi-faceted cooperation between the two countries in the field of culture, agriculture, bilateral investment promotion and tourism. I am visiting Jordan in response to the invitation from His Majesty King Abdullah II. This visit re-establishes high level contact between our two countries. It affords us an opportunity to review the entire gamut of our bilateral relations and exchange views on regional and international issues of mutual interest. We will also discuss measures to strengthen trade and economic relations between the two countries. In the back drop of regional turmoil and unrest, my visit to Jordan will serve the purpose of sending the message that India and Jordan stand together in the fight against global terror and all forms of instability. I intend to also reiterate India's support for Jordan in its fight against terrorism and extremism. We will sign several MoUs and Agreements which will enhance the institutional framework of cooperation between the two countries.

Q3. Does it indicate improving the relations with Jordan, more interest in the region as a whole?

Ans.: As I said earlier, our relations have always been free of any dissonance or friction. They have been moving on an upward trajectory. We share common views and concerns on array of regional issues including Middle East Peace Process and the situation in Syria and Iraq. We are united on terrorism and extremism which have become a global menace. This visit will serve the dual purpose of improving bilateral relations and providing an opportunity to exchange views on regional and global developments.

Q4. IT sector is well prosperous in India, can Jordan benefit from your experience in this regard?

Ans.: I understand that Jordan has exceptionally good IT infrastructure and human resources. India is an acknowledged global player in this field. It is only natural for our two countries to harness synergies and promote cooperation in this sector. We believe that the established strengths in the area of IT of both our countries can spur greater cooperation. Our companies must cooperate to service domestic, regional and international markets.

I am happy to note that several leading companies of Jordan are already working closely with Indian IT Companies.

Q5. Your experience with the elections and the electoral laws, how can we benefit from it, as we are discussing a new Jordanian electoral law that should be more representative?

Ans.: India is the largest democracy in the world. The electorate for the last Parliamentary elections held in India in May 2014 was 834.1 million voters. The total voter turnout was 66.4% or 553.8 million. Conduct of peaceful elections every five years and bringing about changes in Government through the ballot box, reflects the strength of our democratic process. Every election also serves to showcase the formidable institutional strength and experience we have built over the years in holding elections on such a large scale, across our diverse and complex nation. We greatly appreciate the efforts in Jordan to further the democratic and political process in the country under the wise and prudent leadership of His Majesty King Abdullah. I believe the King has himself circulated several public discussion papers to further enrich the democratic traditions. There is also close collaboration between the Election Commissions of the two countries. Jordan will need to choose its own path towards electoral reform. On our part, we would be happy to extend whatever assistance possible, if requested so by the Government of Jordan.

Q6. How does India view the increasing of extremism and violence in the Middle East, and does India see itself as far away from this matter?

Ans.: India condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. We believe terrorism should be dealt in a comprehensive manner. Segmented and partial approaches as adopted by some of the countries have been unsuccessful in countering terrorism. Dealing with global terror requires coordinated international cooperation as well as a strengthened and enforceable international legal regime.

India has adopted a comprehensive approach to deal with the challenge of terrorism. We have initiated a number of measures to prevent the spread of extremist ideology, plug financing routes, build domestically a counter narrative to radicalization, strengthen laws to prosecute terrorists and forge a network of international partnerships for threat assessment and operational cooperation. The reality of global expansion of terrorism, including in Syria and Iraq and globalization of the supply chain of terrorism is a matter of great concern to us. India has faced terrorism for almost four decades, largely sponsored from across our border. We are concerned about the spill over effects of instability in the region resulting in increased terrorist activities across the world, including in South Asia. We have also sought to challenge and repudiate the terrorist narrative that global counter-terrorism efforts are directed against any particular religion or ethnic group. We are convinced that terrorism can be rolled back only through comprehensive, coordinated international cooperation combined with a strengthened, enforceable international legal regime.

Q7. How do you evaluate Jordan's role in the war against extremism and against ISIS? And how Jordan is dealing with this war?

Answer: I have noted the speech made by His Majesty King Abdullah in the UN General Assembly on September 29 this year in which he has proposed seven steps to promote values of tolerance and co-existence in the face of extremism. Tolerance and co-existence are basic tenets of our civilization. We hold them very dear to our hearts. Our first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru propounded the five principles of peaceful co-existence amongst nations. I agree with His Majesty King Abdullah that the world is confronted with a third world war to which we must respond with equal intensity. I also agree that we must go back to the essence of our respective faiths and creeds. Hate speech and fear mongering should come to an end. Our values should become part of our daily life. We must amplify the voice of moderation. We should not permit religion to be used as a mask to satisfy hunger for power and control of some individuals. I completely agree that leaders of every country, every belief, every neighbourhood need to take a clear and public stand against intolerance of any kind, as called for by His Majesty. Jordan like India is a frontline State in the battle against terrorism and extremism. Jordan has India's full support in this battle.

Q8. The Syrian crisis, what's the Indian stance about it?

Ans.: India supports UN efforts to assist the national authorities in the Middle East region, including Syria, Yemen and Libya, to promote internal dialogue with a view to resolving the crises and ensuring stability and prosperity. India contributed US \$ 2 million for UN humanitarian assistance in Syria in 2014 and has pledged another US \$ 2 million in March 2015. India will continue to support an inclusive political dialogue that resolves the current crisis and meets the legitimate aspirations of all sections of Syrian society.

Q9. How do you see the effects of this crisis on Jordan?

Ans.: India is aware of the impact of the Syrian crisis on Jordan's resources and truly commends Jordan, its leadership and people for their compassion and untiring efforts to mitigate the sufferings of the victims of the ongoing strife in Syria. In appreciation of the Jordanian government's efforts and in keeping with our historical and brotherly relations, the Government of India has extended bilaterally, cash assistance of US \$ 500,000 to the Government of Jordan as part of the pledge made at the 3rd Pledging Conference on Syria held in Kuwait in March, 2015. Last year, India also paid US \$ 500,000 to the Jordan Response Fund.

Q10. India's stance from the Palestinian Israeli conflict, which remains unsolved for decades?

Ans.: In line with our longstanding support to the Palestinian cause, India will continue to support initiatives at the UN for an early realization of a sovereign, independent, viable and united State of Palestine within secured and recognized borders, side by side and at peace with Israel, with East Jerusalem as its capital, as endorsed in the Arab Peace Initiative, Quartet Roadmap and relevant UN resolutions.

Source: President of India, New Delhi,

http://www.presidentofindia.nic.in/writereaddata/Portal/PressRelease/1811/1_O_A_Jordon-Al-Ghad.pdf

20) India considers Jordan to be an oasis of peace and progress in the region, says president Mukherjee, Amman, 11 October 2015

The President of India, Pranab Mukherjee attended a reception hosted by Anil Trigunayat, Ambassador of India to Jordan for Indian Community and Jordanian friends of India yesterday (10 October 2015) in Amman, Jordan.

Addressing the gathering, the President said India considers Jordan to be an oasis of peace and progress in the Middle East Region. India lauds the progressive policies of the King of Jordan and deeply appreciates his humanity in offering refuge to almost one and a half million innocent men, women and children who have been displaced from their homes by the ravages of war. India appreciates his efforts and tireless endeavours within this region and beyond to inculcate tolerance and understanding amongst communities. We believe that it is urgent and imperative for all sides to give up sectarian violence and hatred and, instead, embrace tolerance, humanity and harmonious coexistence.

Source: President of India, New Delhi, <http://presidentofindia.nic.in/press-release-detail.htm?1818>

d. KUWAIT

21) New Indian Passports on the same day under TATKAL SCHEME, Kuwait, 5 October 2015

Indian nationals in Kuwait are hereby informed once again that the new Indian passports can be issued the same day under the 'Tatkal' Scheme in cases such as damage / loss of passport, near exhaustion of all blank pages in passport, near or expiry of passport etc. Applications for new passport issued under urgent or emergency circumstances are received in the Embassy Consular Wing and passports issued within a short span of 6-8 hours on payment of 'Tatkal' fee of KD 46/- in addition to the normal passport fee.

2. The passport fees under the 'Tatkal' scheme are as given below:

- i) Ordinary passport (36 pages): KD 69.50
- ii) Jumbo passport (60 pages): KD 77.50
- iii) Passport in lieu of damaged/lost passport: KD 92.50 for ordinary and KD 100.50 for Jumbo passport.

This is to further inform that Kuwaiti nationals can apply for emergency visa at the Embassy which is issued the same day on payment of additional fee KD 12. Applicants may call the Embassy for any Tatkal passport and emergency visa related query at Tel. No. 22530600 Extn. 279 or call K. K. Pahel, First Secretary (Consular) at Mobile No. 97229948.

Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait, <http://www.indembkwt.org/DispNews.aspx?ID=855>

22) Value added services at CKGS, Centres in Kuwait, Kuwait, 7 October 2015

The Embassy has outsourced its passport and visa services to M/s Cox & Kings Global Services, (CKGS) since 3 August 2014. This agency has three Centres; viz., Sharq, Fahaheel and Jleeb Al Showaikh (Abbasiya) for providing services to Indian community, Kuwaiti nationals and other expatriates residing in or visiting Kuwait. They charge a service fee of KD 1.200 for passport services and service fee of KD. 3.250 for providing visa services. Following optional Value Added Services (VAS) are also available with CKGS, Kuwait:

Value Added Services (optional)

- (i) Photocopy: 100 fils per page
- (ii) Photo booth: KD 2.750 for 4 photos
- (iii) Internet kiosk: KD1.000
- (iv) Courier service: KD 1.250 for Indian nationals and KD 4.500 for foreign nationals;
- (v) Assisted form filling: KD1.000 for Indian nationals and KD3.000 for Foreign nationals.

2. It may be noted here that as instructed by the Embassy, the SMS charge of KD 0.400 has been discontinued by CKGS, Kuwait with effect from 30 September 2015.

3. It has been observed that service seekers visiting CKGS centres in Kuwait are at times misled by touts hanging around these locations. They often fleece by charging higher amount from unsuspecting customers. All concerned are hereby advised to beware of touts and not to fall prey to their solicitations.

Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait, <http://www.indembkwt.org/DispNews.aspx?ID=857>

23) ONGC Pavilion at Kuwait Oil & Gas Show 2015, Kuwait, 14 October 2015

Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Ltd. (ONGC) is participating for the first time in the Kuwait Oil and Gas Show (KOGS)-2015 being held at the International Fair Ground, Mishref from 12-14 October 2015. Dr Ali Saleh Al-Omar, Minister of Oil inaugurated the ONGC pavilion on 12 October 2015. The Minister showed keen interest in India's oil and gas sector.

ONGC, which was founded in 1956, has entered into its diamond Jubilee year with the resolution to increasingly fulfil India's need for oil and gas. ONGC accounts for 69 per cent of crude oil and 70 per cent of natural gas production in India. ONGC Videsh Limited, a subsidiary of ONGC, has activities in 36 projects spread across 17 countries.

ONGC's participation at the event is to showcase ONGC's capabilities in the oil and gas sector. ONGC's commitment is to realize the vision of Honourable Prime Minister to reduce India's energy imports by 10 per cent by 2022.

Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait, <http://www.indembkwt.org/DispNews.aspx?ID=860>

24) Advisory regarding narcotics/ drugs for Indian Community in Kuwait, Kuwait, 15 October 2015

In recent past, some cases have been reported wherein Indian nationals have been detained at Kuwait Airport, allegedly for carrying or possessing narcotics viz. marijuana. The Embassy earnestly requests Indian community members in Kuwait to bring our Advisories dated 29 May 2014 and 23 July 2015 to the notice of their relatives or friends, who are coming to Kuwait from India.

Drug peddlers are utilizing their agents at Indian airports, who approach unsuspecting India passenger to carry small parcel like eatables/ jar of pickle/ dry fruits/ homemade dishes etc. aimed to deliver the package to their contact in Kuwait, with request to adjust it with one's baggage. They generally avoid giving details of person to whom the item is to be delivered in Kuwait, saying the person concerned will himself come and collect it in Kuwait. Further, monetary temptation such as sharing of ticket expenditure/ extra luggage charges or facilitation on arrival at Kuwait by any stranger against carrying parcel should be avoided.

The Embassy would like to re-emphasize taking precautions so that one does not become a drug carrier. One should strictly avoid accepting any packet or gift from strangers at airport. Even if the person is known, never take a parcel without checking what is inside. Also, always remain attentive so that drug dealers do not hide drugs in your luggage at the airport. Always please get your luggage sealed at the airport and never leave your luggage unattended.

The above guidelines are indicative and issued in the interest of the Indian community for taking adequate precautions and to strictly observe the laws of land relating to narcotics/ drugs in Kuwait.

Your suggestions/ comments in the matter are most welcome and may please be sent to the Embassy.

Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait, <http://www.indembkwt.org/DispNews.aspx?ID=866>

25) Recruitment of Indian Nurses, Kuwait, 26 October 2015

It may be recalled that to streamline the recruitment of Indian nurses for work in Kuwait, the Government of India has restricted the recruitment of nurses through the following three State-run recruiting agencies since May 2015:

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

2. An Indian delegation comprising of NORKA and ODEPC top officials visited Kuwait in April 2015 in this regard to finalize basic modalities with the Ministry of Health, Kuwait pertaining to the recruitment of Indian nurses.

3. A written understanding was reached this afternoon between the Ambassador of India to Kuwait and Dr. Mahmoud Al Abdulhadi, Assistant Undersecretary for Legal Affairs and Legal

Adviser of the Ministry of Health and Dr. Jamal Al-Harbi, Assistant Undersecretary for Assistance Medical Service, Ministry of Health, in this important matter. A Kuwaiti Health Ministry delegation is now expected to visit India in December 2015 for practical implementation of the nurses' recruitment process.

Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait, <http://www.indembkwt.org/DispNews.aspx?ID=872>

26) KNPC awards contract worth US\$ 1.57 billion to Essar Projects Limited for Al-Zour Refinery Project in Kuwait, Kuwait, 28 October 2015

Essar Projects Limited, a global Indian EPC company, in a joint venture with Italy's Saipem S.P.A has won a contract worth US\$ 1.57 billion from Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC) for setting up Al-Zour Refinery Project (ZOR), Package-4, in the State of Kuwait.

The New Refinery Project at Al-Zour is Kuwait's biggest development project with crude processing capacity of 615,000 barrels per day (bpd). KNPC has awarded four contracts for the refinery's construction, worth over US\$ 13.2 billion to successful International bidders, making it the biggest contract signing for 2015. The contract signing ceremony was held on 13 October 2015 in Kuwait and was attended by Kuwaiti Minister of Oil; Chairperson of Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) and CEO of KNPC. Essar Projects Ltd. was represented by Shiba Panda (Managing Director and CEO), Gianluca Mosca (COO-Overseas), Rajesh Gang (CFO-Overseas) and B. Ravishankar (Head-Business Development, Kuwait).

The scope for the KNPC contract includes Engineering, Procurement, Construction, Pre-commissioning and assistance during commissioning, start-up and performance testing, in relation to Package-4 – Tank Farms for the of the Al-Zour Refinery Project (ZOR). Essar's portion comprises build-out of tankages, roads and bridges, as well as civil work, on an EPC basis. The project is expected to be completed by 2019.

Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait, <http://www.indembkwt.org/DispNews.aspx?ID=874>

e. OMAN

27) The United Nations International Day of Non-violence was commemorated by the Embassy of India, Muscat, together with Rajyoga Centre for Self Development at the Embassy of India, Muscat, 4 October 2015

The United Nations International Day of Non-violence was commemorated by the Embassy of India, Muscat, together with Rajyoga Centre for Self Development at the Embassy of India auditorium on 2 October 2015, the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi, the apostle of peace and non-violence.

Dr. Ali bin Saud Al Bemani, Vice Chancellor of Sultan Qaboos University was the Chief Guest at the event, which started with the national anthem of both Oman and India followed by a short video presentation, highlighting the achievement of peace and prosperity of Oman under the wise and benevolent leadership of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said as well as the basic tenets of Oman's Foreign Policy.

Many dignitaries were present at the commemoration which included Ambassadors of the Netherlands, Palestine, Russian Federation, South Africa, Thailand, Iran, Kenya and Indonesia, and representatives of the Embassies of other countries who joined the "candle lighting" ceremony on the stage. The students of Indian School Muscat as well as Omani youth presented a thought provoking talks, dance dramas and skit which conveyed the need to abjure violence and follow the path of non-violence, peaceful coexistence and harmony.

Indra Mani Pandey, the ambassador of India to the Sultanate of Oman addressed the audience and highlighted the views of Mahatma Gandhi on Ahimsa (Non-Violence), Satyagraha, tolerance, and Universal brotherhood. Underlining the significance of Gandhi's message, he highlighted how Oman has followed the philosophy of non-violence and peaceful co-existence under the exemplary and benign leadership of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said Al Said, which is also reflected in the foreign policy of Oman and its role at regional and global fora.

The key note speaker, B. K. Arti, Director of Brahma Kumaris Inner Space, London, underlined that the world is currently witnessing violence in various forms and non-violence, co-operation and love are the need of the hour. She also said Oman is "hope" for others in restoring peace and harmony and Oman's policy of peace-building and non-interference in anyone's internal policies was hailed.

Source: Embassy of India, Muscat,

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

28) Display of “Vastram- Splendid World of Indian Textiles”, an Indian Council of Cultural Relations Collection at Promenade Gardens, Oman Avenues Mall, Muscat from 15 – 25 October 2015, Muscat, 11 October 2015

The Embassy of India, Muscat is hosting the collection “Vastram- The Splendid World of Indian Textiles” with a view to showcase the diversity of textiles from different regions of India. These textile items were on display in Mekong Ganga Asian Traditional Textile Museum in Siem Reap, Cambodia, from where they have come for display in Oman. The collection will, thereafter, travel for display in four other countries, namely, Ethiopia, Turkey, Fiji and Nepal.

The opening ceremony will be held on 15 October 2015 at 2000 hrs at The Promenade Garden, 2nd floor, Oman Avenues Mall. Shelly Jyoti, fashion designer, visual artist and poet will talk about Indian Textiles. Some of the recent shows of Shelly include ‘Salt: The Great March,’ Indian Council of Cultural Relations, New Delhi (2015); ‘Indigo: New Works’, Gandhi Memorial Centre, Washington DC USA (2013-2014)

The display is open daily from 1000 hrs to 2200 hrs. There will be several dance performances showcasing the culture of different states of India from 1900 hrs every day. The traditional dress forms of different regions of India will also be showcased.

‘Vastram – The Splendid World of Indian Textiles’ collection features over 30 traditional Indian textiles and a large site-specific installation in three categories of painted/printed, woven/non-woven, embroidery and embellishments. The collection narrates the global influences on new materials, machine spun yarn for hand loom cotton and synthetic dyes for vegetable and mineral dyes. Indian culture has had the capacity of absorbing new influences and making them her own. The court workshops of the Mughal emperors at Ahmadabad, Agra and Fatehpur, and in the ateliers of Golconda had the finest weavers from India who worked alongside master craftsmen from Persia, and other centres of textile weaving. New textile structures were introduced and explored the new uses of gold thread and collared silks, creating infinite fantasies.

Indian textiles were a principal commodity in the trade of the pre-industrial age and were prized for their fineness in weave, brilliance in colour, rich variety in designs and a dyeing technology which achieved a brightness of colour unrivalled in the world. Both material and textual evidence attests to the consumption of Indian cloth from Gujarat to Sindh, Egypt to Iran and Central Asia and other countries in West Asia from as early as the 11th century. By the 15th Century, the export of cotton textiles to the markets in the Indian Ocean was carried out on a large scale. From the 16th century Indian cottons achieved global reach through trade dominating the world’s textile market.

The Embassy is delighted to invite all those interested to visit this display at Oman Avenues Mall. Any feedback on the collection is welcome and may be recorded in the visitor’s book on site or emailed to sspic-cw@indemb-oman.org.

Source: Embassy of India, Muscat,

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

f. PALESTINE

29) Visit of President to Palestine (12-13 October 2015), New Delhi, 6 October 2015

The President of India, Pranab Mukherjee will pay the first ever State visit to Palestine from 12-13 October 2015 at the invitation of Mahmoud Abbas, President of State of Palestine. The Honourable President will be accompanied by a high level delegation including Thawar Chand Gehlot, Union Minister of Social Justice, and Empowerment; Members of Parliament; senior officials; senior representatives of our educational and academic institutions and media representatives.

During the visit, the Honourable President will hold meetings and interactions with Palestinian President Abbas, Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah, and the leaders of major political parties in Palestine. The Honourable President will also address the Al Quds University and inaugurate Jawaharlal Nehru Secondary School at Abu Dees. During the visit, India will augment its efforts to support the capacity building initiatives of Palestine.

Palestine and India share a cordial and friendly relationship. India has been extending bilateral and multilateral support to Palestine in addition to developmental and budgetary support. This visit will further strengthen the bonds of friendship and renew the strong and unwavering commitment of India towards the Palestinian cause.

Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, http://mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/25891/Visit_of_President_to_Palestine_October_12_13_2015

30) India remains unwavering and steadfast in its support for the Palestinian cause, says President, Ramallah, 13 October 2015

President Mahmoud Abbas of the State of Palestine hosted yesterday (12 October 2015) a Banquet in honour of President Pranab Mukherjee in Ramallah.

In his banquet speech, President Mukherjee said India attaches great importance to its long standing friendship with Palestine. India's empathy with the Palestinian cause and its friendship with the people of Palestine have become an integral part of our foreign policy. India has always stood beside Palestine. India's policy on Palestine has three core dimensions: solidarity with the Palestinian people; support to the Palestinian cause; and, partnership in Palestine's nation and capacity building efforts. The Indian leadership, across the political spectrum, remains unwavering and steadfast in its support for the Palestinian cause.

The President said peace and stability in the region is in India's interest. India shares the perception that resolution of the longstanding Palestinian issue will contribute to the peace and stability of the region. India is, therefore, concerned about the stalled peace process. India supports a negotiated solution, resulting in a sovereign, independent, viable and united State of Palestine with East Jerusalem as its capital. India would like to see the people of Palestine 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.

The President said India firmly believed that dialogue is the only viable option in the search for a just, durable, comprehensive and peaceful solution of the Palestinian issue. Diplomacy and statesmanship have to prevail over hatred and violence in the search for lasting and durable peace. The President shared his sincere hope of early resumption of the peace process between all relevant parties and prayed that it will soon lead to the amicable resolution of conflict in this region.

The President also congratulated President Mahmoud Abbas on the historic installation of the national flag of Palestine at the United Nations on 30 September 2015 and said India shares Palestine pride and joy on this momentous occasion and also its sense of optimism that this is an

important step towards the realization of the dream of the people of Palestine for a separate homeland.

Source: Representative Office of India, Ramallah,

<http://www.roiramallah.org/press.php?id=52>

31) Remarks by President at the inauguration of Midan-Al-Hind (India Roundabout) and Shereya-Al-Hind (India Road), Ramallah, 12 October 2015

Your Excellency President Mahmoud Abbas

Mayor of Beitunia Ribhi Daula

Council Members of Beitunia Municipality

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very happy to be here with you on this historic occasion of the naming of the Midan al Hind and the Shereya al Hind. These are not only landmarks in the city of Ramallah, but they represent a landmark in the long standing and close friendship between the people of India and the people of Palestine.

I feel immensely privileged to be the first President of India to make a State Visit to Palestine. I thank you for the honour and for this very special gesture. India deeply values it as a manifestation of the warmth of the people of Palestine towards their brothers in India. This road will remind our future generations of the close partnership between our nations.

A few years ago, in 2004, India deeply appreciated the naming of the nearby Mahatma Gandhi Road after the Father of the Indian nation. I would like to reiterate how much India cherishes the respect and regard shown by the people of Palestine for Gandhiji who is still revered as an apostle of peace and non-violence throughout the world. Mahatma Gandhi had raised the strongest voice in support of the Palestinian cause. It is touching to see that his memory remains strong in the hearts of the people of Palestine.

The India Road and India Roundabout also establish a special connection between India and the Beitunia Municipality and the people of Beitunia. They have been wonderful hosts to the Representative Office of India, which is situated nearby on Mahatma Gandhi Road.

I thank them on behalf of the Government and the people of India. I take this opportunity to convey to the people of Palestine the warm greetings and sincere wishes of the people of India for peace, progress and prosperity in Palestine.

Once again, I thank you!

Source: Representative Office of India, Ramallah,

<http://www.roiramallah.org/pages.php?id=71>

32) Statement by Kamlesh Paswan, Honourable Member of Parliament of India at the Open Debate on the Situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian Question in the United Nations Security Council on 22 October 2015, Ramallah, 23 October 2015

1. Thank you for convening this quarterly open-debate on the situation in the Middle East including the Palestinian Question at the Ministerial level. I also thank today's briefers for their comprehensive briefing.

2. The situation in the Middle East region continues to remain fragile and unpredictable with unprecedented changes in several countries in the region. This quarterly debate gives us an opportunity to take stock of developments in the region especially the Middle East Peace Process. But more important however is the response by the Council. We have seen that 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 join others in urging the Council to step up its efforts and take the lead in resolving this problem.

3. Our position on the Middle East Peace Process is very clear. 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 at peace with Israel as endorsed in the Quartet Roadmap and relevant UNSC Resolutions. India has always played a proactive role in garnering support for the Palestinian cause in multilateral fora. We supported the recent vote in the General Assembly on raising the flags of non-member observer states.

4. Recently, the Indian President concluded a State visit to Palestine where he met with the Palestinian leadership and discussed whole range of bilateral, multilateral and regional issues. The visit reinforces India's strong commitment to the Palestinian cause and renews our political and diplomatic support to the State of Palestine in its endeavours to realize an independent and sovereign State of Palestine.

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. President of India during his visit to Ramallah inaugurated the India-Palestine Centre for Excellence in ICT in the Al Quds University and also handed over a cheque worth US\$ 5 million as a budgetary support to the Palestinian authority. Government of India has also announced its decisions to set up another such Centre in Gaza with similar aims at an estimated cost of US\$ 1 million and an IT park in Ramallah at an estimated cost of US\$ 12 million and a Palestinian Institute of Diplomacy at an estimated cost of US\$ 4.5 million. This is a part of India's larger capacity building initiatives in Palestine.

6. India contributes US\$ 1 million annually to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). India pledged and contributed US\$ 4 million

in response to the National Early Recovery and Reconstruction Plan for Gaza. We are undertaking important bilateral development projects in health, education, skill development, vocational training as well as providing budgetary support to the Palestinian Government. 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.

7. Today's debate is happening at another inopportune time where once again incidents of violence and the military responses, reasons notwithstanding, are taking the toll of lives on both sides. We are distressed and saddened by the ongoing situation and loss of lives. We welcome efforts to mitigate the situation and urge both sides to exercise restraint to reduce the level of tensions and create a conducive environment for resumption of peace talks.

8. We are particularly worried that since last year there has been a downward trend in the Peace Process despite efforts for serious negotiations between the parties which remained inconclusive. Unilateral actions by the parties unfortunately are moving them further apart.

9. India remains firmly convinced that dialogue remains the only viable option that can effectively address the issue. The imperative need is for 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 soon, for a comprehensive, just and lasting resolution of the Palestinian issue.

10. We express our deep concern with the activities of proscribed outfits, radicalized and extremist groups in the West Asia and Gulf 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.

11. India remains deeply concerned about the worsening political and security situation in Yemen. We have been urging all concerned parties in Yemen to amicably resolve their differences and we hope that the UN-mediation efforts would assist the people of Yemen in finding a consensus-based solution.

12. Turning to Syria, we would like to express our continued concern at the ongoing violence in Syria and loss of human lives. India has consistently called for a comprehensive and peaceful

resolution of the crisis, bringing all parties to the conflict to the negotiating table. It has to be a Syrian-led process, taking into account the legitimate aspirations of the people of Syria in alignment with the Geneva Communiqué 2012. There can be no military solution.

13. The humanitarian crisis arising out of the situation has to be addressed effectively. It is with this conviction we contributed US\$ 2 million to the UN Syrian Humanitarian Response Plan in 2014 and contributed another US\$ 2 million in 2015. We are also hopeful and supportive of the efforts made by the UN Special Envoy on Syria De Mistura to carry forward the political process in carrying out parallel negotiations in four sub groups focusing on different issues. We urge all parties to demonstrate the requisite political will, exercise restraint, and commit to seeking common ground in accommodating their differences.

Source: Representative Office of India, Ramallah,

<http://www.roiramallah.org/press.php?id=47>

33) List of Agreements/MoUs signed during the visit of President to Palestine, New Delhi, 13 October 2015

S. No.	Title	Ministry/Organization	Signatory
1.	MOU between Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) and Ministry of Culture, State of Palestine	Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), MEA and Ministry of Culture, State of Palestine	Secretary (East) from Indian side.
2.	MOU between Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) and Birziet University	JNU and Birziet University	Prof. Sudhir Kumar Sopory, Vice Chancellor, JNU from Indian side and Dr. Abdellatif Abu Hijleh, President, Birzeit University from Palestinian side
3.	MOU between JNU and Al Najah National University	JNU and Al Najah National University	Prof. Sudhir Kumar Sopory, Vice Chancellor, JNU from Indian side and Dr. Maher Natsheh, Acting President, An-Najah National University, from Palestinian side
4.	MOU between Jamia Milia Islamia and Al Quds University	Jamia Milia Islamia and Al Quds University	Prof. Talat Ahmad From Jamia Milia Islamic from Indian side and Prof. Imad AbuKishk, President, Al-Quds

			University from Palestinian side
5.	MOU between Jamia Millia Islamia and Al Istiklal University	Jamia Millia Islamia and Al Istiklal University	Prof. Talat Ahmad, Vice Chancellor, Jamia Millia Islamia from Indian side and Prof. Abed Nassir Qadumi, President, Al Istiqlal University from Palestinian side
6.	MOU between Jamia Millia Islamia and Hebron University	Jamia Millia Islamia and Hebron University	Prof. Talat Ahmad, VC, Jamia Millia Islamia from Indian side and Dr. Salah Alzarou, President, Hebron University from Palestinian side

Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, http://mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/25943/List_of_AgreementsMoUs_signed_during_the_visit_of_President_t_o_Palestine

g. QATAR

34) Embassy open house, Doha, 29 October 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 October 2015. Ambassador Sanjiv Arora, Deputy Chief of Mission 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. Arvind Patil, 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.

Embassy officials regularly visit the Central Prison and Deportation Centre 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 100 and 204, respectively.

During the current year, the Labour and Community Welfare Section of the Embassy has received a total of 3432 complaints so far. The number of complaints received during 2014 was 3943.

The number of deaths registered in the Embassy in October 2015 so far is 27. The number of deaths registered till now during 2015 is 240. The number of deaths registered during 2014 was 279.

On the basis of requests received from the Qatari authorities for travel documents for Indian nationals in the Deportation Centre, the Embassy has issued 19 Emergency Certificates (ECs) in

October 2015. The Embassy also issued 26 air tickets to Indian nationals in distress for their return to India in October 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 October 2015 includes 3 air tickets for destitute workers.

Source: Embassy of India, Doha,

http://www.indianembassyqatar.gov.in/pages/press_release_arc_detail.php?id=134&page=1

h. SYRIA

35) Man Mohan Bhanot appointed as the next Ambassador of India to the Syrian Arab Republic, New Delhi, 6 October 2015

Man Mohan Bhanot, presently in the Ministry, has been appointed as the next Ambassador of India to the Syrian Arab Republic. He is expected to take up his assignment shortly.

Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, [http://mea.gov.in/press-](http://mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/25894/Man_Mohan_Bhanot_appointed_as_the_next_Ambassador_of_India_to_the_Syrian_Arab_Republic)

[releases.htm?dtl/25894/Man Mohan Bhanot appointed as the next Ambassador of India to the Syrian Arab Republic](http://mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/25894/Man_Mohan_Bhanot_appointed_as_the_next_Ambassador_of_India_to_the_Syrian_Arab_Republic)

i. TUNISIA

36) Monuments of India exhibition launched in Tunis on 1 October 2015, Tunis, 1 October 2015

An exhibition titled Monuments of India was jointly inaugurated by Latifa Lakhthar, Minister for Culture of Government of Tunisia and Nagma M. Mallick, Ambassador of India in Tunisia on 1 October 2015. The exhibition united two exhibitions: a set of watercolours depicting the monuments of India through the ages beginning from Mohenjo Daro, the Buddhist Stupas of Sanchi and Ellora, the temples of Mahabalipuram, Konark and Khajuraho through the European-influenced imperial architecture of the colonial period to the buildings of contemporary India. A second collection featured photographs of Islamic Monuments of India of the Delhi Sultanate and the Mughal period. Many Tunisians and media persons attended the inauguration.

2. The exhibition at Maison des Arts, Tunis, will be open to the public for seven days, after which it will be exhibited in other cities of Tunisia.

3. The exhibition is jointly organized by the Ministry of Culture of the Government of the Republic of Tunisia and the Embassy of India in Tunis under the bilateral Cultural Exchange Programme.

Source: Embassy of India, Tunis,

<http://www.embassyofindiatusis.com/pdf/Monuments%20of%20India%20Exhibition%20launched%20in%20Tunis%201st%20October,%202015.pdf>

37) Ambassador Nagma M. Mallick delivered a speech “Gandhi and Women’s Empowerment in India”, Tunis, 2 October 2015

Gandhi and Women's Empowerment in India – speech delivered by Ambassador Nagma M. Mallick at seminar in Tunis on 2 October 2015 At a seminar organized by the Mediterranean Development Initiative and Konrad Adenauer Sifting in Tunis on Women's Empowerment in Tunisia.

Ambassador Nagma M. Mallick delivered a keynote speech on Gandhi and Women's Empowerment in India. In her speech, she provided a detailed account of the freedom struggle of India and the role that Indian women played in it, responding to the call of Gandhiji. She also outlined the social and religious reforms that Gandhiji undertook in favour of Indian women along with his programme of political action. She then detailed the achievements and challenges of women in contemporary India. She went on to felicitate Tunisian women for their extraordinary achievements in building up Tunisian society, lauding the constitutional and legal safeguards secured to them over the years.

The seminar was inaugurated by Samira Merai, Tunisian Minister for Women and Family Affairs. Other dignitaries, both Tunisian and foreign, were present. The seminar also saw the launch of a report on women in Tunisia prepared by UK-based association Development Progress. The seminar was well attended by government representatives, intellectuals, media persons and ordinary Tunisians.

Source: Embassy of India, Tunis,

<http://www.embassyofindiatunis.com/pdf/Press%20Release%20-Speech%20delivered%20by%20Ambassador%20on%20Women's%20Empowerment%20Seminar%20on%202nd%20Oct%202015.pdf>

38) Meeting between Taieb Baccouche, Foreign Minister of Tunisia and Sushma Swaraj, External Affairs Minister of India, on the margins of third IAFS Summit in New Delhi, Tunis, 27 October 2015

Taieb Baccouche, Foreign Minister of the Republic of Tunisia met with Sushma Swaraj, External Affairs Minister of India, on the margins of the 3rd India Africa Forum Summit currently being held in New Delhi. Extremely cordial and wide ranging discussions were held between the two sides. Sushma Swaraj expressed her gratitude to Taieb Baccouche for his participation in the Summit meeting; Minister Baccouche thanked the Government of India for the hospitality extended to the Tunisian delegation. Minister Swaraj also extended her congratulations to Tunisia for the Nobel Peace Prize won by Tunisian National Dialogue Quartet. Issues of bilateral cooperation in the economic and political spheres were discussed. Regional issues, including the desire of the two sides for a peaceful settlement of the conflict in Libya and Syria, were also discussed. Minister Baccouche extended an invitation to Minister Swaraj to visit Tunis for the next meeting of the India-Tunisia Joint Commission, which Minister Swaraj accepted with pleasure. Earlier in the day, Taieb Baccouche had made his address and contributed to the deliberations of the India Africa Forum Summit.

Source: Embassy of India, Tunis,

<http://www.embassyofindiatunis.com/pdf/Press%20Release%20on%20meeting%20between%20OFM%20of%20Tunisia%20and%20EAM%20of%20India%20in%20New%20Delhi%20during%20IAFS-III%20on%2027%20Oct'15.pdf>

j. TURKEY

39) Port-call at Istanbul by INS Trikand, Istanbul, 5 October 2015

Port-call at Istanbul by INS Trikand, a Talwar-class Frigate of the Indian Navy from 4-7 October 2015.

Source: Consulate General of India, Istanbul, <http://www.cgiistanbul.org/Trikand>

40) Nirmala Sitharaman, Honourable Minister of State (IC) for Commerce and Industry at G20 Trade Ministers Meeting in Istanbul on 5-6 October, Istanbul, 6 October 2015

Nirmala Sitharaman, Honourable Minister of State (IC) for Commerce and Industry at G20 Trade Ministers Meeting in Istanbul on 5-6 October 2015. She also held meetings with counterparts from China, South Africa and Turkey.

Source: Consulate General of India, Istanbul, <http://www.cgiistanbul.org/TMM>

k. UAE

41) Nirmala Sitharaman visits UAE, Abu Dhabi, 13 October 2015

Nirmala Sitharaman, Minister of State of Commerce and Industry (Independent Charge) visited UAE for the third meeting of the India UAE High Level Task Force on Investment (HLTFI) on 12-13 October 2015. On 12 October, she called on His Holiness Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince at the Sea Palace in Abu Dhabi and had a bilateral meeting with His Holiness Sheikh Saif bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Deputy Prime Minister of UAE.

Speaking at a “Make in India” road-show hosted by Abu Dhabi Chamber, Minister Nirmala Sitharaman referred to her visit as an important follow up to Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s landmark visit to UAE in August this year and highlighted the measures already taken to improve ease of doing business in India to attract substantial investments.

Senior officials from different ministries in India and a business delegation led by Dr. Jyotsna Suri, President of FICCI accompanying the Minister, held sectoral sub-committee meetings on 12 October on fresh investment opportunities in energy, infrastructure, manufacturing, etc. to realize the ambitious targets for a comprehensive strategic partnership set by the leadership of both sides at the highest levels.

His Holiness Sheikh Hamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Managing Director of Abu Dhabi Investment Authority (ADIA) hosted a dinner in honour of the Indian Minister on 12 October, which was attended by a galaxy of Emirati and Indian dignitaries.

At the India-UAE High Level Task Force on Investment (HLTFI) held at Emirates Palace Hotel in Abu Dhabi on 13 October, both sides agreed to explore ways to expand the participation of the UAE’s investment institutions in appropriate infrastructure projects in India, especially in

railways, ports, roads and airports, in multi investment platforms and in a manner consistent with the established investment criteria and standards of these institutions.

Both sides also affirmed the commitment to realize their respective countries' vision of elevating their relationship to a strong and comprehensive strategic partnership. They acknowledged the potential to further enhance and expand bilateral investment relationship by collaborating closely to identify bottlenecks to trade, new areas of trade and cooperation and methods of trade promotion, with the target of increasing trade by 60 per cent over the next five years.

Source: Embassy of India, Abu Dhabi, <http://www.indembassyuae.org/he-s-nirmala-sitharman-visits-uae/>

MULTILATERAL ISSUES

42) Transcript of Media Interaction by the President en-route from Tel Aviv to New Delhi on conclusion of his state visits to Jordan, Palestine and Israel, New Delhi, 15 October 2015

I have just concluded successful state visits to Jordan, Palestine and Israel from 10-15 October 2015. My delegation included Thawar Chand Gehlot, Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment and six Members of Parliament representing major political parties, namely, Prof. K.V. Thomas, Meenakshi Lekhi, Dr. Subhash Rao Bhae, Prathap Simha, Vinod Chavda and Dr. Anupam Hazra. Senior officials of Rashtrapathi Bhavan, MEA, MHRD, Vice Chancellors of JNU and Jamia Millia Islamia, Director, IIT Kharagpur and Director, Cluster Innovation Centre, Delhi University were also part of my delegation.

My visits to Jordan, Palestine and Israel were first ever visits by an Indian President. They reflect the importance that India places on enhancing our partnership with countries of this region, which is our extended neighbourhood. I took the opportunity to brief the leaderships of these countries on the initiatives of our Government in various fields and to explore possibilities of enhanced cooperation in bilateral, regional and international context.

Jordan

India has close, warm and cordial relations with Jordan. We admire the leadership of His Majesties Late King Hussein and King Abdullah II that has ensured Jordan's continued progress despite many challenges. During the visit, I held meetings with His Majesty King Abdullah II and Prime Minister Abdullah Ensour of Jordan. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Nasser S. Judeh called on me. We discussed the entire gamut of bilateral relations and regional and international issues of mutual concern. In all my meetings, I found a significant convergence of mutual interests and a genuine deep-seated desire for closer cooperation.

We explored possibilities of opening up new synergies in different areas of mutual interest including counter terrorism, defence, IT, and energy. HM King Abdullah II expressed his keen desire to encourage Indian companies to work with the Jordanian ICT companies. Sixteen MoUs

and Agreements, including between academic institutions were finalized. A major avenue in Amman was named after Mahatma Gandhi during my visit.

King Abdullah II supported India's candidature to permanent membership of an expanded UN Security Council and the ongoing UN reform process. King Abdullah II and I inaugurated a US\$ 860 million project of Jordan-India Fertilizer Co., a joint venture between IFFCO and the Jordan Phosphate Mines Company to produce phosphoric acid for export to India. In response to my appeal, King Abdullah II expressed willingness to enter into long-term arrangements for supply of phosphates to India from Jordan and as well as establish more JVs to meet demand of phosphoric acid, rock phosphate and DAP. I announced a Line of Credit of US\$ 100 million to Jordan as Project Assistance and increase of the number of ITEC slots from 30 to 50. I invited their Majesties King Abdullah and Queen Rania to pay a State visit to India at the earliest opportunity, which was accepted graciously.

Palestine:

In Palestine, I was received with great warmth and affection by President Mahmoud Abbas, Prime Minister Dr. Rami Hamdallah and leaders of major political parties. President Abbas briefed me about the evolving situation in Israel-Palestine relations and emphasized that they were seeking a peaceful resolution of the Palestinian issue.

I reiterated India's principled support to the Palestinian cause and called for 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 at peace with Israel as endorsed in the Quartet Roadmap and relevant UNSC Resolutions.

President Abbas appreciated our support and thanked me profusely for staying overnight in Ramallah, being the first Head of State from any country to do so. He respectfully described us as 'brothers' and not just friends. He assured me that they were seekers of peace following in the footsteps of Mahatma Gandhi. He conveyed his conviction that non-violence is the only way for Palestine to realize its dream of an independent Palestinian State.

I announced increase of ICCR scholarships from 10 to 25 per annum, and ITEC slots from 50 to 100 for Palestine. We handed over a cheque worth US\$ 5 million as a budgetary support to the Palestinian authority.

I paid floral tributes at the bust of Mahatma Gandhi placed at the Garden of Nations in Ramallah and inaugurated along with President Abbas a roundabout named 'Maidan Al Hind'. I paid tributes at the Mausoleum of Yasser Arafat, who was a good friend of India and whom I had met personally on several occasions. I inaugurated the India-Palestine Centre for Excellence in ICT in the Al Quds University and announced India's decision to build one more India-Palestine Centre for Excellence in ICT in Gaza with similar aims and objectives at an estimated cost of US\$ 1 million. I announced Government of India's decision to set up an I T park in Ramallah at

an estimated cost of US\$ 12 million and a Palestinian Institute of Diplomacy at an estimated cost of US\$ 4.5 million.

The India-Palestine Higher Education Roundtable was held between premier institutions of our two countries and establishment of an Indian Chair in Al Quds University announced. In all, six MOUs and Agreements were signed during the visit. I invited President Abbas to visit India and he assured me of doing so at an early date.

Israel

In Israel, I was received with great warmth and friendship by President Reuven Rivlin, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Speaker of Knesset Yuli-Yoel Edelstein. We reviewed our multidimensional relations and explored ways and means to enhance them for the mutual benefit of our two countries. I was deeply honoured to be invited to address the Knesset and touched by the enthusiasm I found amongst Members of Parliament for better relations with India. I along with our Members of Parliament had a detailed interaction with Leader of the Opposition Isaac Herzog and his colleagues.

I visited Mt. Herzl and paid my respects to the victims of the Holocaust at the Yad Vashem, the World Centre for Holocaust Research, where I was accompanied by President Rivlin. I also placed a wreath at the tomb of Theodor Herzl.

I described Israel as one of the most important countries for India and conveyed the need for our two countries to reinvigorate bilateral ties in all areas of our engagement. Israel has provided defence equipment, platforms and systems at a time when India needed them the most. We discussed the need to expand cooperation in solar energy, dairy development, water management, horticulture, animal husbandry and agriculture as well as cooperation between Indian Space Research Organization and Israeli Space Agency. PM Netanyahu and I discussed new possibilities and synergies to diversify our trade as well as mutual investments. I informed the Israeli leadership about various initiatives taken by the Government of India like 'Make in India', 'Digital India', 'Clean Ganga', 'Smart Cities', 'Start-up India', etc. and invited investment as well as participation by Israeli companies.

I invited President Rivlin and Prime Minister Netanyahu to visit India. President Rivlin accepted my invitation and confirmed his intention to do so at an early date. I also invited Israeli Parliamentarians to come to India and engage with their Indian counterparts.

Nobel Prize winner and former Israeli President as well as Prime Minister, Shimon Peres called on me as an old friend. He described my visit as one carrying hope and peace. He said India with its democracy and multi cultural society is a model to Israel and all other countries.

Two agreements were signed between the Governments. Eight MoUs exchanged between the educational institutions of India and Israel. These will promote cooperation in the field of higher education between the two countries and provide for joint research, exchange of scholars, etc.

In public remarks, I expressed distress at recent incidents of violence, condemned all forms of terrorism and called for peaceful resolution of all disputes.

Honorary Doctorates were conferred by leading Universities of all three countries, the University of Jordan, the Al Quds University and the Hebrew University upon me, which I accepted in humility as symbol of their friendship and regard for India. I also addressed the Indian community as well as friends of India in Amman as well as Jerusalem.

I thank my hosts in Jordan, Palestine and Israel for the warm hospitality extended to me and my delegation. These visits have helped deepen our mutually beneficial relations. I return with the conviction that the governments of all the three countries are keen to take relations with India to much higher levels. India will actively work towards enhancing our partnership with Jordan, Palestine and Israel in the days to come.

Questions and Answers

Question: Sir, yesterday during your meeting with Israeli Leader of Opposition, you said that there cannot be a State on the basis of religion. My question to you is, but is not Israel like Pakistan also based on religion?

Hon. President: I said that religion cannot be the basis of State. For example, in large number of Arab countries Islam is the religion; but on the basis of religion all Arab countries have not converged into one State. Pakistan was created out of India on the basis of religion in 1947. A large chunk came out of Pakistan and became an independent sovereign State within 25 years. That is the point which I explained to the Leader of Opposition and other Members of Israeli Parliament.

Question: Before your visit, in your interview to a Jordan newspaper you had agreed with King Abdullah that the world is almost at the threshold of a third world war. After visiting these three countries, now what would be your assessment on what you said in your interview?

Hon. President: That is his perception and he wanted to indicate that terrorism has emerged as one of the major problems and disturbing and destabilizing factors in the international arena.

Question: How can India move further with balancing Israel- Palestine relations?

Hon. President: Almost 25 years ago, exactly not 25 years but 23 years ago we established full-fledged diplomatic relationship with Israel and we are maintaining our stated principled position of our relation with Palestine. Therefore, this job the Government of India is doing for more than last two and a half decades.

Question: Now that you have visited both the countries - Israel and Palestine - and you have talked to both the leaderships, what impression have you got? Is there any possibility of conflict resolution in the near future or is it farfetched?

Hon. President: In my conversation with the leadership of both the countries it appears, so far as I sense, that there is a desire to resolve the issue peacefully; and that is the sense I had.

Question: In your talks with the King of Jordan you had mentioned about the difficulty of Indian labour getting work permits and getting to work in Jordan, and he had promised to set up a unit in the Royal Court to monitor and help them. My question is, is there a similar problem in Israel also? And you as US Commerce Minister had taken it up in WTO and before that in GATT and all that about the flow of human resource? So, how do you look at the response of Jordan King and other countries?

Hon. President: This is a problem which we are having with many other countries in regard to the uninterrupted flow of working forces from one country to another country, and at the bilateral level we are trying to resolve it. And this is one of the important agenda of the Commerce Ministry.

Question: Sir, in your interview to the Jordanian paper which Gautam-da was referring to, you had invoked Jawaharlal Nehru and referred about the five principles of peaceful coexistence as expounded by the first Prime Minister. What is the importance of Nehru's message and ideas in today's context and today's polity?

Hon. President: Certain messages and principles have relevance for a very very long period of time. Peaceful coexistence is one such message and it is not bound within a time frame.

Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, <http://www.mea.gov.in/outgoing-visit-detail.htm?25938/Transcript+of+Media+Interaction+by+the+President+enroute+from+Tel+Aviv+to+New+Delhi+on+conclusion+of+his+state+visits+to+Jordan+Palestine+and+Israel+October+15+2015v>

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

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