



INDIA SPEAKS

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BILATERAL ISSUES

a. BAHRAIN

1) President of India's message on the eve of National Day of Bahrain, 15 December 2015

The President of India Pranab Mukherjee has extended his greetings and felicitations to the King and people of the Kingdom of Bahrain on the eve of their National Day (16 December 2015).

In a message to His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa, the King of the Kingdom of Bahrain, the President has said, "On behalf of the Government, the people of India and on my own behalf, I have great pleasure in extending warm greetings and felicitations to Your Majesty and the people of the Kingdom of Bahrain on the occasion of your National day.

The close and friendly relations between India and Bahrain, based on our cultural and economic exchanges over millennia, have, in the recent years, developed into a close and mutually beneficial partnership. I am confident that our multifaceted bilateral cooperation will continue to diversify and strengthen in the years to come.

I take this opportunity to convey to your Majesty my best wishes for your personal good health and well-being, as also for the continued progress and prosperity of the friendly people of the Kingdom of Bahrain".

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

b. BAHRAIN

2) MoU between India and Iran on visa facilitation, New Delhi, 2 December 2015

The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved the signing of the agreement between India and Iran on visa facilitation for Diplomatic, Official/Service and Ordinary passport holders.

Salient features of the agreement are as given below:

(i) Consequent upon this, upon presentation of an official note by the local Ministry of Foreign Affairs along with the visa application, the resident Diplomatic Missions in the host country would, within 20 working days, issue a gratis visa valid for 90 days for the holders of valid Diplomatic/Official/Service passports, assigned on long-term missions to the Diplomatic Missions or the Consulates General. Appropriate gratis visas of three months' validity for visiting close family members (blood relations such as parents, siblings, adult children as well as in-laws) and visas for other close relatives of the assignees, on payment of visa fees due would be issued.

(ii) On presentation of an official note by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs stating the purpose of the visit, a non-extendable gratis entry visa will be issued within three working days, with a validity of up to fifteen days, to political authorities and officials travelling for specific bilateral purposes or to participate in a conference or seminar.

(iii) A multiple-entry gratis visa of three months' validity, for stays up to 20 days during each visit, for the audit/financial and IT/computer officials who travel on stated official business to their respective Diplomatic Missions and Consulates General will be issued within 15 working days.

(iv) Under special administrative exigencies, a single-entry gratis visa of validity up to three months for temporary deployments to the Diplomatic Missions or Consulates General in the host country will also be issued within 15 working days.

(v) Upon presentation of an official note by the local Ministry of Foreign Affairs along with the visa application of the teachers and their dependent spouse and children, a single entry Service/Official gratis visa of three months' validity will be issued, within twenty working days.

(vi) This Agreement will come into force upon signing and exchange of official notes confirming that legal formalities on either side have been fulfilled.

(vii) This Agreement will be valid for an indefinite period. Each Party may, however, terminate this Agreement by giving a written notice for this purpose through diplomatic channels, at least 60 days in advance.

(viii) Either Party reserves the right to prevent the entry, shorten or terminate the stay of the nationals of the other party in accordance with their respective laws and regulations.

(ix) This Agreement can be amended at any time as decided and mutually agreed upon in writing by the Parties. Any dispute arising out of the interpretation, implementation or application of any provision of this Agreement shall be settled amicably through consultation or negotiation between the Parties.

Source: Press Information Bureau, New Delhi,
<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=132354>

3) 18th India-Iran Joint Commission Meeting, New Delhi, 28 December 2015

The 18th session of the India-Iran Joint Commission was held in New Delhi on 28 December 2015. The session was co-chaired by External Affairs Minister of India (EAM) and Ali Tayebnia, Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

H.E Ali Taiebnia called on the Prime Minister of India, who warmly recalled his meeting with the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Ufa earlier this year and reiterated the keen desire of India to expand its economic cooperation with Iran.

In the Joint Commission Meeting (JCM), EAM mentioned that India considers Iran as an important partner and expressed satisfaction at the growing bilateral interaction in diverse area. She underlined the efforts underway to enhance bilateral economic cooperation in energy, infrastructure – including shipping, ports and railways - and trade and commerce. She stressed that connectivity afforded by Indian participation in Chabahar Port will facilitate linking Afghanistan and Central Asia with India. The Iranian side suggested participation of India's public and private sectors in development of Chabahar Port and Chabahar Free Trade Zone (FTZ) and in setting up industrial units in the FTZ.

EAM emphasized the need for early completion of all necessary procedures for India's participation in Farzad-B field and pointed out India's desire to participate in other oil and gas explorations in Iran as well.

The two Ministers reviewed the progress in trade and economic cooperation and a number of related matters, and discussed the possibilities in cooperation in railways, including by supply of rails, rolling stock, signalling and other works and India's participation in Chabahar – Zahedan -Mashhad railway line.

The JCM was preceded by meetings of the Joint Working Group (JWG) on Trade & Commerce (18-19 November 2015), Joint Working Group on Energy (26 December 2015) and Joint Working Group on Infrastructure (26 December 2015).

Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, http://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/26249/18th_IndiaIran_Joint_Commission_Meeting

c. ISRAEL

4) PM tweets in Hebrew to greet people on the occasion of Hanukkah, New Delhi, 16 December 2015

The Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, has tweeted in Hebrew to greet the people on the occasion of Hanukkah.

Also tweeting in English, the Prime Minister said, "Wishing my Jewish friends a Happy Hanukkah! May this Festival of Lights and the festive season ring in peace, hope and well-being for all."

Source: Press Information Bureau, New Delhi,
<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/pmreleases.aspx?mincode=3>

d. KUWAIT

5) Conference on “Presence of Indian EPC Companies in Kuwait and their role in the developmental process of Kuwait”, Kuwait, 9 December 2015

The Embassy organized a Conference on “Presence of Indian EPC Companies in Kuwait and their role in the developmental process of Kuwait” in Crowne Plaza Hotel on 9 December 2015. The representatives of Indian EPC companies gave presentation on the projects being executed by them in Kuwait and highlighted their areas of specialization to execute future projects in Kuwait. Indian companies’ expertise in EPC could help in doing cost-effective projects in Kuwait. About 100 representatives from Kuwaiti EPC companies, senior Kuwaiti officials and businesspersons attended the Conference and appreciated the role played by the Indian EPC companies in the developmental process of Kuwait. Indian EPC companies are executing various projects in the areas of oil & Gas sector, housing, hospitals, universities, power transmission etc.

This event was also used for promoting the Government of India’s initiative for ‘Make in India’ as well as the ‘Make in India Week’ being organized from 13-18 February 2016 in Mumbai, India. The achievements of the Indian economy in the past one and a half years were also highlighted during the Conference. Publicity material on promotion of ‘India Tourism’ was displayed during the Conference. The event provided an excellent opportunity to the Indian EPC companies to interact with the senior Kuwaiti Government officials and businesspersons in further enhancing their business prospects in Kuwait.

Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait,

<http://www.indembkwt.org/DispNews.aspx?ID=892>

6) Contribution to Prime Minister’s National Relief Fund for floods in Tamil Nadu, Kuwait, 10 December 2015

In view of the natural disaster in Tamil Nadu, all Indian nationals in Kuwait, who wish to provide assistance for the flood victims in Tamil Nadu, are requested to send their contributions directly to the Prime Minister’s National Relief Fund (PMNRF). More details about PMNRF are available at <https://pmnrf.gov.in/>

The Embassy will also accept all contributions towards PMNRF in cash or by cheque addressed to “Embassy of India, Kuwait”.

Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait,

<http://www.indembkwt.org/DispNews.aspx?ID=894>

e. QATAR

7) President of India’s message on the eve of National Day of Qatar, New Delhi, 17 December 2015

The President of India Pranab Mukherjee has extended his greetings and felicitations to the Emir and people of the State of Qatar on the eve of their National Day (18 December 2015).

In his message to His Highness Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani, the Emir of the State of Qatar, the President has said, “On behalf of the Government, the people of India and on my own behalf, I am pleased to extend warm greetings and felicitations to you and to the friendly people of the State of Qatar on the occasion of your National Day.

Our two countries have historically enjoyed close and friendly relations anchored in robust commercial exchanges and extensive people-to-people contacts. I fondly remember your State Visit to India in March this year which gave further momentum to our vibrant relationship. I am confident that our ongoing cooperation across the full spectrum of political, economic, defence and cultural activities will continue to diversify and strengthen in the years to come.

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

Source: Press Information Bureau, New Delhi,

<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx>

f. SAUDI ARABIA

8) Ahmad Javed appointed as the next Ambassador of India to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, New Delhi, 11 December 2015

Ahmad Javed has been appointed as the next Ambassador of India to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. He is expected to take up his assignment shortly.

Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi,

[http://www.mea.gov.in/press-](http://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/26173/Ahmad+Javed+appointed+as+the+next+Ambassador+of+India+to+t)

[releases.htm?dtl/26173/Ahmad Javed appointed as the next Ambassador of India to t](http://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/26173/Ahmad+Javed+appointed+as+the+next+Ambassador+of+India+to+t)
[he Kingdom of Saudi Arabia](http://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/26173/Ahmad+Javed+appointed+as+the+next+Ambassador+of+India+to+t)

9) Consular Visit to Arar on 18 Dec 2015- Change in Venue, Riyadh, 13 December, 2015

Due to some unforeseen circumstances, the Venue for the Passport, Consular and Attestation services has been moved from Hotel Al Mazaid to Al Afaf International Indian School (Girls), Arar on 18 December 2015. Members of the Indian Communities living in and around Arar are requested to make use of the services of Passport, Consular and Attestation at the new venue Al Afaf International School (Girls) on 18 December 2015.

Source: Embassy of India, Riyadh,

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

g. SYRIA

10) Yoga Classes at Embassy Premises, Damascus, 30 December 2015

Embassy of India in Damascus, in association with the Syrian Centre for Yoga and Meditation, proposes to conduct yoga classes for beginners at its premises w.e.f. 5 January 2016. There are no charges for the classes. The Syrian nationals who are willing to avail the facility may enrol for the classes in advance.

For more details, please call on Tel no. 3347351, extension 121 (Mustafa).

Source: Embassy of India, Damascus,

<http://eoi.gov.in/damascus/?4593?000>

h. UAE

11) President of India's message on the eve of National Day of UAE, 1 December 2015

The President of India Pranab Mukherjee has extended his greetings and felicitations to the Government and people of the United Arab Emirates on the eve of their National Day (2 December 2015).

In his message to His Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the President of the United Arab Emirates, the President has said, “On behalf of the Government, the people of India and on my own behalf, I have immense pleasure in extending warm greetings and felicitations to Your Highness and to the people of the United Arab Emirates on the occasion of your National Day.

India’s friendly and warm relations with the United Arab Emirates, rooted in ancient trade and cultural links, are nourished by people-to-people contacts and regular exchange of high-level visits. The successful visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the United Arab Emirates in August this year has provided a fresh impetus to our bilateral engagement and elevated it to a comprehensive strategic partnership. I look forward to working closely with Your Highness to further expand and deepen our bilateral relations.

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

Source: Press Information Bureau, New Delhi,

<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx>

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

1 Crore = 10 million. Lakh = 100,000

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