

# **INDIA SPEAKS**

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## **BILATERAL ISSUES**

### **a. BAHRAIN**

#### **1. Agreement with Bahrain, New Delhi, 27 April 2016**

Will the Minister of External Affairs be pleased to state:

- (a) Whether the government has entered into an agreement with Bahrain to tackle the menace of international terrorism and smuggling of narcotic drugs;
- (b) If so, the details thereof and the time by when the said agreement will come into effect;
- (c) Whether the intelligence inputs are also likely to be shared under the said agreement, and if so, the details thereof?

#### **Answer**

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

(a) Yes.

(b) An agreement between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the Kingdom of Bahrain on cooperation in combating international terrorism, trans-national organized crime and trafficking in illicit drugs, narcotic and psychotropic substances and precursor chemicals was signed on 2 December 2015 at New Delhi. The agreement is in the process of ratification. The agreement shall come into force from the date of exchange of the instruments of ratification.

(c) The agreement provides for exchange of information between the competent authorities of the two countries relating to international terrorism, transnational organized crime and illicit drug trafficking, etc.

**Source: Lok Sabha (Council of People), Unstarred Question No. 650, asked by Kanwar Singh Tanwar,**

[http://mea.gov.in/lok-](http://mea.gov.in/lok-sabha.htm?dtl/26672/QUESTION_NO650_AGREEMENT_WITH_BAHRAIN#)

[sabha.htm?dtl/26672/QUESTION\\_NO650\\_AGREEMENT\\_WITH\\_BAHRAIN#](http://mea.gov.in/lok-sabha.htm?dtl/26672/QUESTION_NO650_AGREEMENT_WITH_BAHRAIN#)

### **b. IRAN**

#### **2. Visit of External Affairs Minister to Iran, 17 April 2016**

External Affairs Minister (EAM) Sushma Swaraj visited Tehran on 16-17 April 2016 at the invitation of her counterpart Dr. Javad Zarif, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Iran. EAM called on Honourable President of Iran Dr. Hassan Rouhani, met Dr. Ali Akbar Velayati, Advisor to Supreme Leader and held delegation level talks with Javad Zarif.

In her cordial and forward-looking discussions with Iranian dignitaries, EAM highlighted the long-standing civilizational ties between the two countries. She stressed the desire of India to expand all-round cooperation with Iran particularly in energy, connectivity, ports, infrastructure, trade and culture. She expressed the hope that the two sides will sign at an early opportunity the bilateral contract on Chabahar Port, and also the trilateral Agreement involving India, Iran and Afghanistan on Trade and Transit Corridor through the Chabahar port. Iran supported India's desire to join the Ashgabat Agreement. Both sides highlighted the importance of International North South Transport Corridor. The Iranian side welcomed the prospects for participation of India in railway projects, such as Chabahar-Zahedan, which will enhance regional connectivity.

India welcomed the outcome in cooperation in energy sector from the recent visit of Minister of State (IC) Petroleum and Natural Gas to Iran, including the exploration and development of Farzad B and participation of India in setting up fertilizer projects. The concerned companies have been directed to complete their contractual negotiations on Farzad B in a time bound manner. Iranian side had earlier communicated their gas pricing formula and welcomed Indian investment in the Chabahar SEZ.

EAM also emphasized the need for early finalization of trade related agreements including on Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement, Bilateral Investment Protection And Promotion Agreement and an early launch of negotiations on Preferential trade Agreement. She conveyed that India was ready to repatriate the oil payments to Iran through the mutually workable banking channels as per the understanding reached between the relevant authorities of the two countries.

Both sides took note of the good cooperation between the National Security Council structures of the two countries and agreed to intensify this engagement.

Given the civilizational links between India and Iran, both sides agreed to promote and strengthen the existing cultural exchanges, inter- alia, by observing Weeks of Iran and India in each other's country, publication of manuscripts, organizing conferences and events related to language, literature and religion. They also agreed to positively consider the establishment of a Hindi Chair in Tehran University sponsored by ICCR and to renew the Cultural Exchange Programme.

Both leaders expressed satisfaction at the recent exchange of visits and called for more high level exchanges to give fresh impetus to India Iran relations.

The Iranian side assured all cooperation in addressing a few specific matters of interest to the Indian community staying in Iran and the difficulties faced by Indian seafarers working in Iran. EAM had earlier in the day met members of the Indian community in Iran and attended an event at the Kendriya Vidyalaya.

The two ministers also reviewed global and regional issues, in particular the situation in Afghanistan.

*Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi,*

[http://mea.gov.in/press-](http://mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/26630/Visit_of_External_Affairs_Minister_to_Iran_April_16_17_2016#)

[releases.htm?dtl/26630/Visit of External Affairs Minister to Iran April 16 17 2016#](http://mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/26630/Visit_of_External_Affairs_Minister_to_Iran_April_16_17_2016#)

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### **3. Finalization of Trilateral Chabahar Agreement, New Delhi, 17 April 2016**

The second meeting of experts from India, Afghanistan and Iran was held in New Delhi on 11 April to finalize the text of the Trilateral Agreement among the three countries on Transport and Transit Corridors (Chabahar Agreement).

The draft Agreement envisions trilateral cooperation for providing alternative access to seas to Afghanistan, inter alia for Afghanistan's trade with India. When the Agreement comes into force it will significantly enhance utilization of Chabahar Port, contribute to economic growth of Afghanistan, and facilitate better regional connectivity, including between India and connections to Afghanistan and Central Asia. The Agreement will be a strategic bulwark for greater flow of people and goods among the three countries as well as in the region.

It has been decided to sign the Agreement at a high level at an early opportunity after completing necessary internal procedures in the three countries.

*Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi,*

[http://mea.gov.in/outgoing-visit-](http://mea.gov.in/outgoing-visit-detail.htm?26625/Finalisation+of+Trilateral+Chabahar+Agreement#)

[detail.htm?26625/Finalisation+of+Trilateral+Chabahar+Agreement#](http://mea.gov.in/outgoing-visit-detail.htm?26625/Finalisation+of+Trilateral+Chabahar+Agreement#)

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### **4. List of Media Delegates who accompanied External Affairs Minister during her visit to Iran, New Delhi, 17 April 2016**

1. Manash Pratim Bhuyan, Senior Diplomatic Correspondent, PTI
2. A. M. G. Surender, Cameraperson, DD News
3. Ajay Kumar Sharma, Senior Cameraman, ANI

*Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi,*

[http://mea.gov.in/Uploads/PublicationDocs/26632\\_Iran.pdf](http://mea.gov.in/Uploads/PublicationDocs/26632_Iran.pdf)

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## **c. ISRAEL**

### **5. India Water Week-2016 to begin from 4 April, Israel to be partner country, New Delhi, 3 April 2016**

The fourth edition of India Water Week will be observed from 4 to 8 April 2016. Making this announcement in New Delhi, the Union Minister for Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation Uma Bharti said that the theme for this year's India Water week is "Water for all: Striving together". The Minister informed that Israel will be associated as the partner country for this mega event.

Bharti said the Inaugural session of India Water Week will be followed by plenary session and Water Resources Ministers conclave on first day. About 1500 delegates from India and 20 from other countries will be attending the conclave.

The Minister informed that the event has been divided into Seminars (eight nos.), Brainstorming sessions (six nos.), Panel Discussions (seven nos.), Case studies (six nos.) and Side Events (five nos.). These events will take place at ITPO, Pragati Maidan. Apart from this, an Exhibition

‘Water Expo-2016’ showcasing the technologies and solutions in water resources sector is also being organized at Hall No. 9, Pragati Maidan for the benefit of delegates.

She said it will be a multi-disciplinary conference enriching the theme with dialogue by national and international community along with the exhibition. Delegates of the event will be immensely benefitted from Israeli experience in efficient management of water resources as well as other national and international experiences. Many reputed National and International Organizations, Research Institutes, Educational Institutions and NGOs from water resources, agriculture, power sectors etc. are participating in the event to share their knowledge and experience in the sector. Most important stakeholder of water, i.e. farmers from different parts of the country are also going to participate in this important event as a part of INPIM Programme on Participatory Irrigation Management and share their experiences.

The Union Water Resources said that the multi-disciplinary dialogue will be addressing the important initiatives of the Minister and priority programmes like Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojna (PMKSY), Jal Kranti Abhiyan, More crop per drop, Interlinking of Rivers, etc. apart from other important topics such as (a) Water and Health – managing water quality (b) Agriculture and Irrigation (c) Water and Power – hydro and thermal (d) Industrial water efficiency (e) Water supply and sanitation for rural and urban areas (f) Environment, climate change and water resources sector. She recalled that in Jal Manthan-2 Programme held at New Delhi in February 2016, important issues like bridging gap between irrigation potential created and irrigation potential utilized, fast-tracking of 89 AIBP projects under PMKSY, ground water protection and augmentation, National Hydrology Project, etc were discussed in detail. Such issues are also proposed to find important place in discussion during the present event.

Partner country Israel will exclusively organize two sessions viz. (i) Role of Micro Irrigation in existing command and (ii) Israel makes in India – COE’s and commercial success stories, water management. International Commission for Irrigation and Drainage (ICID) has planned to organize first in the series “India Irrigation Forum-2016” as a part of India Water Week-2016.

Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, Government of India has been organizing India Water Week since 2012 as an international event to focus on water related issues. Three editions of India Water Week have been organized so far in 2012, 2013 and 2015.

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

#### **d. KUWAIT**

##### **6. Embassy is organizing a ‘Yoga session’ at the Circle of Peace, Kuwait, 5 April 2016**

On the initiative taken by Government of India, the United Nations has declared 21 June as the International Yoga Day. As part of its celebrations, Embassy of India celebrated the First International Day of Yoga (IDY) on 21 June 2015 which witnessed great amount of enthusiasm from people of all walks of life.

2. The Embassy is pleased to inform that 2nd International day of Yoga will be celebrated on Friday, 24 June 2016 at the Embassy premises from 0600 hours onwards. In the run up to the 2nd

IDY celebrations, Embassy is organizing a 'Yoga session' at the Circle of Peace, Al-Shaheed Park, Kuwait City on Friday, 8 April 2016 from 0700-0930 hrs. The event is organized in association with the 'Art of Living', 'Harmony House' 'Artistic Yoga', 'Isha Foundation' and 'Sahaj Marg', all based in Kuwait. Different Yoga Asanas will be performed which will be followed by meditation and Pranayam sessions. All are therefore cordially invited to register themselves at <http://www.indembkwt.org/IYD/>

3. Please bring in your Yoga mats and enjoy the festivities of Yoga with your family and friends and feel rejuvenated. Kindly, note that no eatables are allowed inside the Park.

*Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait, <http://www.indembkwt.org/DispNews.aspx?ID=932>*

### **7. Participation of Indian Community in Kuwait in India's social and development programmes, Kuwait, 5 April 2016**

During the visit of Honourable PM and other senior leadership to foreign countries, Indian diaspora has shown keen interest in participating in India's social and development programs, and flagship initiatives of Government of India such as, Swachh Bharat and Namami Gange.

2. To facilitate contributions/philanthropy by NRI/PIOs to India, Government of India had set up a not-for-profit Trust known as India Development Foundation of Overseas Indians (IDF-OI) in 2008 to serve as a single window for overseas Indian philanthropy/contributions by NRIs/PIOs to India. Following the merger of Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs with Ministry of External Affairs, IDF-OI is now under the Ministry of External Affairs and is chaired by Honourable External Affairs Minister. The IDF-OI has gathered a pool of nearly 100 social and developmental projects pertaining to Swachh Bharat, sanitation, education, women's empowerment and sustainable livelihood after consultation with States in India. Following are the highlights of IDF-OI mechanism:

(a) IDF-OI has received exemption from MHA under the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA 2010) owing to which it has necessary permissions to receive contributions in foreign currency.

(b) IDF-OI does not charge/deduct any administrative charges from the contributions it receives from NRIs/PIOs. Except the bank transaction charges the entire amount received from NRIs/PIOs is transferred to the project implementing agency.

(c) To enable oversight of implementation of programmes funded by overseas Indian donors, an agreement will be signed between IDF-OI and project implementing agency.

(d) Implementing agency for the programme will send regular feedback reports, photos and statement of utilization of funds to the donor. These will also be posted on IDF-OI's website.

(e) At the site of project funded by the NRI/PIO donors will get an acknowledgement with a signage which states that "The project has been funded by /..... through IDF-OI".

3. As a result of revamping and outreach efforts, it may be noted that IDF-OI has already received the following contributions from overseas Indians in the last six months:-

(i) Rs.72 lakh for construction of community toilets in Kerala; and

(ii) Rs. 26 lakh for the Namami Gange project.

4. IDF-OI is setting up a Payment Gateway through its website which will enable NRIs and PIOs to contribute even small amounts ranging from a few dollars using their credit cards or debit cards online to projects of their choice offered by IDF-OI.

5. The Embassy of India in Kuwait seeks active support/participation of 8.8 lakh strong Indian Diaspora in Kuwait to above social and developmental programmes/flagship initiatives of GOI for contribution to the projects offered by IDF-OI.

6. Further information is available at IDF-OI website [www.idfoi.org](http://www.idfoi.org).

**Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait, <http://www.indembkwt.org/DispNews.aspx?ID=933>**

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### **8. Visa & Passport Services by the Indian Embassy, Kuwait, 12 April 2016**

Frequent visitors to India from Kuwait, both Kuwaiti nationals as well as expatriates residing in Kuwait, are strongly advised to take 5-year or 1-year, multiple entry Business visas to India. The Indian Passport and Visa Service Provider, M/s Cox & Kings Services (CKGS), Kuwait has been providing visa services to Kuwaiti nationals and expatriates in Kuwait through their three centres- Sharq (City), Fahaheel and Abbasiya (Jleeb Al Showaikh) as well as passport services to Indian community. The above centre functions from 8 AM - 12 noon and thereafter from 4 PM - 8 PM on all working days. However, on closed holidays on Fridays and Saturdays, the working hours are from 4 PM -8 PM only. Attestation services are provided at the Embassy premises only.

2. Visas issued has increased during the last two years due to streamlining of visa procedures, with grant of 5-year and 1-year business visas (multiple entry) and 6- month tourist visas (multiple entry) to Kuwaiti nationals (as well as foreign nationals resident in Kuwait). All those travelling to India regularly are advised to apply for tourist visa (6-month multiple entry) or long-term business visa (5-year or 1-year, multiple entry). All visas are granted within 72 hours. Visa fee structure for Kuwaiti nationals is as below:

Visa fees for Kuwaiti nationals

[Exclusive of service charge of KD 3.250 by CKGS, Kuwait and KD 1.000 for ICWF by the Embassy]

- (i) Tourist visa: 6- months/ Multiple entry - KD 13.00
- (ii) Business visa: 1- year/ Multiple entry - KD 38.00
- (iii) Business visa: 5- years/ multiple entry - KD 63.00
- (iv) Transit visa: 15 -days single/double entry - KD 07.00



- (v) Student visa: 1- years /Triple entry - KD 24.00
- (vi) Medical visa : 1- year /Multiple entry - KD 38.00
- (vii) Medical Visa : 6- Month/Multiple entry - KD 25.00
- (viii) Employment visa: up to 1- year/Multiple entry - KD 38.00

3. As the visa work of the Embassy has been outsourced to M/s CKGS, Kuwait since August 2014, applicants are advised to visit Passport and Visa Centres of CKGS at (a) Indian Visa and Passport Application Centre, 17 Floor, Behbahani Building, Sharq, Kuwait : Tel. No. 22440392 (e- mail: [indiavisa.kuwait@ckgs.com](mailto:indiavisa.kuwait@ckgs.com) ) or ; (b) Indian Visa and Passport Application Centre, Complex Kais Alghanim, 4 Floor, Mecca Street, in front of Annod Complex, Fahaheel, Kuwait: Tel. No. 22909229 ( e-mail: [indiavisa.kuwait@ckgs.com](mailto:indiavisa.kuwait@ckgs.com)). (c) Jleeb Al Showaikh (Abbasiya) 2nd Floor, Jleeb Al Shuyoukh Block 1, Street 1, Xcite building, Kuwait Tel. No. 24342428) ( e-mail: [indiavisa.kuwait@ckgs.com](mailto:indiavisa.kuwait@ckgs.com)). The website of CKGS, Kuwait is <http://www.kw.ckgs.in/>

4. In emergency cases, the Embassy will also accept the visa applications at its Visa Wing from applicants. Arvind Srivastava, Visa Officer may be contacted at Tel. No. 22550600 Extn. 279 and for passport related queries applicants may call K.K. Pahel, First Secretary (Consular) at Mobile No. 97229948. Fee structure for passport is as below:

[Exclusive of service charge of KD 3.250 by CKGS, Kuwait and KD 1.000 for ICWF by the Embassy]

- (i) New Passport for 10 years validity 23.000
- (ii) Jumbo Passport (60 pages) 31.000
- (iii) New Passport for Minor below 18 years 15.500
- (iv) New Passport in Lieu of Damage/Lost Passport 46.000
- (v) Passport for New Born Baby 31.000

*Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait, <http://www.indembkwt.org/DispNews.aspx?ID=935>*

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## **e. LEBANON**

### **9. Ambassador's Talk on India, Beirut, 14 April 2016**

Ambassador's talk on India: Where the Past Meets the Future, at Mugar Building, Haigazian University, at 6:30pm.

*Source: Embassy of India, Beirut, <http://indianembassybeirut.org/notice/display/62/13#sthash.EtFJNTX4.dpuf>*

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## **f. LIBYA**

### **10. Advisory for Indian Nationals, Tripoli, 1 April 2016**

The Embassy has issued several advisories to Indian nationals to exit from Libya in the wake of continued worsening of the security situation and armed clashes in different parts of Libya putting their life at risk. Our last advisory was issued on 1 March 2016. In a recent unfortunate incident an Indian paramedic and her infant son died when a rocket hit their apartment during armed clashes between rival groups in Zawia. There is an imminent risk of getting caught up in

crossfire or falling victim. The overall security situation remains fragile and is likely to further deteriorate, including in the conflict zones, Zawia, Sirte, Derna, Ajdabia, part of Benghazi, western region and several other regions throughout the country.

The Embassy reiterates its advisory once again for all its citizens to exit from Libya at the earliest using all available means in view of imminent safety and security risks. Those in conflict zone are advised to move to safer places while exercising extreme caution and vigil, avoid sensitive places, and restrict their movements. They need to take extreme precaution while moving within Libya and to plan their movement/ travel after ensuring the safety of the route.

The Indian nationals are further advised not to travel to Libya and not to take up employment in Libya till the situation normalizes.

*Source: Embassy of India, Tripoli, [http://indianembassylibya.in/news\\_detail.php?id=24](http://indianembassylibya.in/news_detail.php?id=24)*

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## **g. OMAN**

### **11. The Embassy of India in Muscat, on behalf of the Embassy and Indian community in Oman, extends a warm welcome to His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said Al Said on his return to Oman after successful completion of medical check-up in Germany, Muscat, 13 April 2016**

The news of His Majesty's return has been received with great delight by the Indian community, which shares the joy of their Omani brothers and sisters on this happy occasion.

Under the wise leadership of His Majesty, India and Oman have strengthened their centuries old civilizational links and their historical relations have evolved into a strategic partnership.

The Embassy and the Indian community in Oman express their sincere gratitude to His Majesty Sultan Qaboos, his Government and the people of Oman for their contribution in deepening the strategic partnership and nurturing the enduring friendship between India and the Sultanate of Oman, and providing the Indian community conducive living and working conditions, enabling them to contribute to the growth and development of Oman and India.

We wish His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said Al Said good health and long life and wish the people of Oman continued peace, progress and prosperity.

*Source: Embassy of India, Muscat,*

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

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### **12. Indian Embassy hosts 'Yoga & Ayurveda' Workshop on Diabetes Management and Prevention as part of its celebration of the 2nd International Day of Yoga (21st June 2016), Muscat, 20 April 2016**

As part of various Yoga events being organized in run up to celebration of 2nd International Day of Yoga (21 June 2016) in Oman, Embassy of India, Muscat, in association with Sri Sri Ayurveda clinic, Muscat, organized 'Yoga & Ayurveda Workshop' at the Embassy auditorium on Wednesday, 27 April 2016 at 1900 hrs. Ambassador of India to the Sultanate of Oman, H.E Indra Mani Pandey, opened the Workshop.



The Workshop was attended by around 200 Omani and Indian nationals, both women and men. The theme of the Workshop was “Diabetes Management and Prevention through Yoga & Ayurveda”. It focused on diet, lifestyle, Yoga & breathing exercises, herbs and therapies which are effective in Diabetes. Dr. Abhishek Kumar, Sri Sri Ayurveda clinic, Muscat, conducted an interactive session on Management and Prevention of Diabetes. He offered valuable tips to the participants, including yoga postures and meditation techniques, which may help in prevention of diabetes. Shubhashree Sathapathy, a Yoga expert from Art of Living, demonstrated some Yoga postures and breathing exercises which are beneficial in Diabetes and reduce stress levels.

*Source: Embassy of India, Muscat,*

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

### **13. The Indian embassy Hosts “Sahaja Yoga Mediatiation with Music” at embassy auditorium, Muscat, 21 April 2016**

The Embassy is working together with leading Yoga organizations in Oman to organize various Yoga events with a view to popularize Yoga in Oman leading up to 2nd International Day of Yoga on 21 June 2016. In this context, Sahaja Yoga Oman organized “Sahaja Yoga Meditation with Music” on 21 April 2016 at the Embassy auditorium.

Ambassador of India underlined the relevance of Yoga for the people of all ages for their physical and spiritual health and the need for the countries to work together to make Yoga popular among the people in line with the recommendation of the UN General Assembly Resolution of 2014, which unanimously declared 21 June as International Yoga Day.

The theme of the Session was ‘Yoga meditation with music’. Experts of Sahaja Yoga Oman demonstrated some basic Yoga exercises for physical health and relaxation. It was followed by live instrumental Music Concert by two renowned artists from India Avaneendra Sheolika and Sandesh Popatkar. The Session was attended by hundreds of Omani and Indian nationals, both women and men. They enthusiastically participated in practicing Yoga Asanas, breathing exercises and meditation with music.

The Second International Day of Yoga (21 June 2016) will be observed throughout the world by holding yoga sessions, talks, symposia etc. The Embassy of India, Muscat will be organizing a number of other events in coming weeks in order to celebrate the above anniversary.

*Source: Embassy of India, Muscat,*

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

### **14. Oman Post Issues Special Postal Stamps to Mark the 60th Anniversary of establishment of Diplomatic Relations with India in 1955, Muscat, 26 April 2016**

Oman Post issued on 25 April 2016 in a ceremony at the Indian Embassy in Muscat a special Postal Stamp to mark the 60th Anniversary of establishment of Diplomatic Relations between India and Oman in 1955. The Stamp was unveiled by Ambassador of India to the Sultanate of Oman Indra Mani Pandey, and Chief Executive Officer of Oman Posts Abdul Malik Abdul Karim Al Balushi, in presence of Guest of Honour, Dr. Ali bin Ahmed Al-Isa’eei, Under Secretary for Diplomatic Affairs at Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Oman. Senior Officers from Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Oman Post, Ambassadors and other members of diplomatic corps,

prominent members of Indian Community, Indian academicians from Sultan Qaboos University, philatelists, and Indian and Omani media persons attended the ceremony.

This is the first time when Oman Post has issued a special commemorative stamp to mark an important milestone in India's historical relations with Oman. The unveiling ceremony of special Postal Stamp also marked the culmination of the yearlong celebrations to commemorate the 60th anniversary of establishment of India-Oman diplomatic ties, which began with the visit of External Affairs Minister of India, Sushma Swaraj, to Oman on 17-18 February 2015. It was her first visit to Oman and provided a new momentum to bilateral relations. Some of other commemorative events held in 2015 were:

- a. An Indian Film Festival, which was held, in association with City Cinema and Yash Raj Films, in Muscat during 27 – 29 April 2015.
- b. A Lecture on 'India-Oman Relations in a Historical and Contemporary Perspective' by Talmiz Ahmed was organized on 14 May 2015.
- c. Four Indian Naval Ships from Western Fleet visited Muscat port on 19 - 22 September 2015.
- d. Display of "Vastram- Splendid World of Indian Textiles", an Indian Council of Cultural Relations Collection, was held at Muscat from 15– 25 October 2015.
- e. Indian Navy Sailing Ship, INS Tarangini, and the Royal Navy of Oman Sailing Ship 'Shabab Oman' undertook a joint voyage from Muscat to Kochi from 24 November to 3 December 2015, tracing the ancient trading route between India and Oman.

The design of the Postage Stamp issued by Oman Post depicts the key historical monuments of the two countries: Oman's iconic Grand Mosque and India's Taj Mahal in Agra in subtly fused colours. The First Day Cover of the Stamp depicts historical Muscat Gate and Mumbai's Gateway of India.

*Source: Embassy of India, Muscat,*

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

### **15. Enhancement of Investment by Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited in Bharat Oman Refineries Limited, New Delhi, 27 April 2016**

The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given its approval to enhance investment by Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) in Bharat Oman Refineries Limited (BORL). The investment amount could be enhanced up to a maximum of Rs 3000 crore by way of subscription of convertible warrants / other instruments giving right to convert it into equity shares to be issued by BORL, beyond DPE guidelines dated 5 August 2005.

The infusion of funds by the BPCLs will enable BORL to overcome the implications on account of the erosion of the net worth. Besides it will enhance the availability of petroleum products in the Northern and Central parts of the country, industrial development of Madhya Pradesh and substantial increase in employment and tax earnings in the State.

#### **Background:**

Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) is a public sector undertaking under the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas. It has promoted a joint venture company with Oman Oil

Company Limited (OOCL) named Bharat Oman Refineries Limited (BORL). The BORL has commissioned the six MMTPA (120 Thousand Barrels Per Day) Refinery at Bina in Madhya Pradesh, in June 2011 at a project cost of about Rs. 12,754 crore. Currently, the refinery is operating at 100 percent of its installed capacity.

The company now proposes to undertake a debottlenecking project at the refinery to further increase the refining capacity from 6 MMTPA to 7.8 MMTPA. The estimated project cost is Rs.3,072 crore, with an overall implementation schedule of 36 months from date of receipt of environmental clearances (Zero Date). The highlights of the proposal for debottlenecking project include certain modifications to produce products in accordance to the new Auto Fuel Policy.

Hence, there is a need for immediate infusion of funds in BORL by the shareholders. OOCL while expressing their support for the project, had indicated that they are not prepared to commit further funds for the project at this stage. Therefore, BPCL Board has decided to infuse funds to the tune of Rs 3,000 Crore for funding the debottlenecking project and for meeting the extraordinary losses suffered on account of the sharp fall in the prices of crude oil and finished products.

Government has, accordingly, decided to grant approval to the proposal of BPCL to enhance its investment in BORL by an additional amount of up to Rs. 3,000 crore for completion of the debottlenecking project.

*Source: Press Information Bureau, New Delhi,*

<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=142376>

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#### **h. SAUDI ARABIA**

##### **15. India-Saudi Arabia Joint Statement during the visit of PM to Saudi Arabia, New Delhi, 3 April 2016**

1. At the invitation of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques His Majesty King Salman bin Abdul-Aziz Al Saud, Honourable Prime Minister of the Republic of India Narendra Modi paid a two-day official visit to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia from 2-3 April 2016.

2. The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques received Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 3 April at the Royal Court. The two leaders held discussions in the spirit of the strong friendship that binds the two countries and their peoples. During the visit, Prime Minister Modi also met with His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed bin Naif bin Abdul-Aziz Al-Saud, Crown Prince, Deputy Premier & Minister of Interior and His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdul-Aziz Al Saud, Deputy Crown Prince, Second Deputy Premier & Minister of Defence. Prime Minister Modi also received Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of Health & Chairman of the Executive Board of Saudi Aramco.

3. The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdul-Aziz and Prime Minister Modi exchanged views on bilateral, regional and multilateral issues of mutual interest. The two leaders underlined the close and friendly bilateral ties, deep-rooted in shared history and sustained and nourished through growing economic partnership, multi-faceted cooperation and vibrant people to people contacts. The wide-ranging and constructive discussions were held in a

cordial atmosphere and enabled better understanding and appreciation of each other's concerns and perspectives, recognizing the close inter-linkage of the stability and security of the Gulf region and the Indian subcontinent and the need for maintaining a secure and peaceful environment for the development of the countries of the region.

4. Both leaders expressed appreciation for the successful transformation of bilateral relationship in political, economic, security, defence, manpower and people to people exchanges, in recent years, which have enriched bilateral ties. They expressed satisfaction at the regular exchange of high-level visits between the two countries, underlining that the Delhi Declaration (2006) and the Riyadh Declaration (2010) elevated the mutually beneficial bilateral relations to the level of 'Strategic Partnership'.

5. Cognizant of their responsibility for promoting peace, stability and security in the region and the world, the two leaders emphasized the importance of further cementing bilateral strategic engagement, including in the areas of security and defence cooperation, to serve the common interests of the two countries and their peoples.

6. Prime Minister Modi acknowledged that the MoU on Defence Cooperation signed during the visit of His Majesty King Salman bin Abdul-Aziz Al Saud to India in February 2014 as the then Crown Prince, Deputy Premier and Defence Minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was an important milestone in strengthening the strategic partnership between the two countries. The two leaders agreed upon the need to intensify bilateral defence cooperation, through exchange of visits by military personnel and experts, conduct of joint military exercises, exchange of visits of ships and aircrafts and supply of arms and ammunition and their joint development. They also welcomed the decision for convening of the second meeting of Joint Committee on Defence Cooperation in Riyadh to follow up on the visit of Prime Minister Modi.

7. The two leaders agreed to enhance cooperation to strengthen maritime security in the Gulf and the Indian Ocean regions, vital for the security and prosperity of both countries. They further agreed to promote bilateral collaboration for humanitarian assistance and evacuation in natural disasters and conflict situations.

8. The two leaders expressed strong condemnation of the phenomenon of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, irrespective of who the perpetrators were and of their motivations.

9. Affirming that the menace of extremism and terrorism threatens all nations and societies, the two leaders rejected totally any attempt to link this universal phenomenon to any particular race, religion or culture. They called on all states to reject the use of terrorism against other countries; dismantle terrorism infrastructures where they happen to exist and to cut off any kind of support and financing to the terrorists operating and perpetrating terrorism from their territories against other states; and bring perpetrators of acts of terrorism to justice.

10. The two leaders agreed to further strengthen cooperation in combating terrorism, both at the bilateral level and within the multilateral system of the UN. The two leaders called upon the international community to strengthen multilateral regimes to effectively address the challenges posed by terrorism. The two sides agreed to work together towards the adoption of India's proposed Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism in the United Nations. The Prime Minister lauded Kingdom's efforts at fighting terrorism in all its aspects and its active participation in international efforts towards this end. The Indian side was briefed on the Kingdom's initiative in bringing together Islamic Alliance against terrorism.

11. Acknowledging and commending their strong bilateral security cooperation, the two leaders agreed to enhance cooperation in counter-terrorism operations, intelligence sharing and capacity-building and to strengthen cooperation in law enforcement, anti-money laundering, drug-trafficking and other transnational crimes. They welcomed the signing of an MOU on cooperation in exchange of intelligence related to money laundering, related crimes and terrorism financing. The two sides further agreed to take action against illegal transfer of money.

12. Both leaders agreed to promote cooperation in cyber security, including prevention of use of cyber space for terrorism, radicalization and for disturbing social harmony. The two leaders directed their relevant agencies to coordinate efforts to counter radicalization and misuse of religion by groups and countries for inciting hatred, perpetrating and justifying terrorism for pursuing political aims. The two leaders welcomed exchanges and dialogue between religious scholars and intellectuals of both countries and the organization of conferences and seminars to promote values of peace, tolerance, inclusiveness and welfare, inherent in all religions.

13. Reiterating the significance of regular bilateral interactions in reinforcing the momentum for bilateral cooperation, the leaders noted with satisfaction the increase in high-level exchanges between the two countries in recent years. They underlined the importance of regular exchange of visits, including at the levels of ministers and senior officials.

14. Both leaders appreciated the well-functioning bilateral institutional mechanisms in the field of trade & investment, energy, defence and manpower. They noted that new and potential areas of cooperation identified during the meetings held under these mechanisms had a constructive effect on the expanding bilateral ties and further called for effective implementation of the decisions made under the framework of these mechanisms.

15. The two leaders welcomed the positive outcomes of the 11th session of the Joint Commission Meeting held in New Delhi in May 2015 and its Review Meeting held in Riyadh in December 2015. The two leaders mandated the Saudi-India Joint Commission to continue follow up of the decisions taken at the highest levels for cementing the bilateral strategic partnership.

16. Acknowledging the on-going positive transformation of the economies of India and Saudi Arabia, the two leaders emphasized the importance of expanding trade and investment ties to

drive the strategic engagement forward. They directed their Finance and Trade Ministers to work together to find ways and means to substantially increase the flow of bilateral investments and growth of trade ties.

17. Acknowledging the steady increase in bilateral trade over the last few years, the two leaders expressed satisfaction at the USD 39 billion trade in 2014-15. Taking note of the excellent trade and economic engagement, with the two countries being among the top trading partners for each other, the two leaders agreed upon the need to further strengthen these ties, particularly through diversifying non-oil trade.

18. Both leaders expressed satisfaction at the growing presence of Indian and Saudi companies in each other's market and agreed to further encourage trade promotion measures and participation in fairs and exhibitions. They welcomed the meeting of Saudi India Business Council in New Delhi in December 2015 and agreed that Council was a useful platform for furthering trade and economic cooperation.

19. The two sides conveyed satisfaction at the holding of the 4th India GCC Industrial Forum at King Abdullah Economic City, Jeddah in November 2015. The Saudi side thanked India for active participation of a large number of Indian companies in the International Fairs and Exhibitions held in Riyadh and Jeddah.

20. The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman Bin Abdul-Aziz lauded the strong growth shown by Indian economy and expressed appreciation for Prime Minister Modi's remarkable vision for the future of the country. He commended Prime Minister Modi's worthy initiatives of "Start Up India", "Make in India", "Smart City", and "Clean India", noting their strong potential to provide Indian economy a positive thrust for growth.

21. The Indian side highlighted the key initiatives taken by the Government of India to improve the ease of doing business in the country and India's key efforts to simplify and rationalize existing rules and relax the foreign direct investment norms in key areas, including railways, defence and insurance. Inviting Saudi Arabia to be a partner in India's growth story, Prime Minister Modi encouraged Saudi Aramco, SABIC and other Saudi companies to invest in the infrastructure sector in India and to participate in projects creating mega industrial manufacturing corridors, smart cities as well as the Digital India and Start up India programmes.

22. The Saudi side expressed its interest in investing in infrastructure development in India, especially in priority areas such as railways, roads, ports, and shipping. The Saudi side welcomed interest of Indian side in investing in the Kingdom, especially taking advantage of the competitive investment opportunities offered by the Saudi economic and Industrial cities.



23. Both leaders also welcomed the signing of the framework agreement between the General Investment Authority in Saudi Arabia and Invest India aimed at facilitating investments by the private sectors in the two countries.

24. Keeping in view the importance of energy security as a key pillar of the strategic partnership, the two leaders expressed satisfaction at their growing bilateral trade in the energy sector, acknowledging Saudi Arabia as the largest supplier of crude oil to India.

25. The two leaders agreed to transform the buyer-seller relationship in the energy-sector to one of deeper partnership focusing on investment and joint ventures in petrochemical complexes, and cooperation in joint exploration in India, Saudi Arabia and in third countries. The two sides also agreed to focus on areas of training and human resources development and cooperation in research and development in the energy sector. In this regard, the two leaders expressed the need for regular meetings under the umbrella of India-Saudi Arabia Ministerial Energy Dialogue.

26. The two leaders agreed to strengthen cooperation between educational institutions, universities and higher research institutions of the two countries.

27. Both leaders emphasized the importance of continued promotion of scientific and technological collaboration, including in the areas of renewable energy including solar, Information and Communication technology, space technology, sustainable development, arid agriculture, desert ecology, urban development, healthcare and bio-technology. The two sides further agreed to collaborate on areas of food security.

28. The Saudi side appreciated the initiative taken by the Prime Minister of India leading to the formation of International Solar Alliance. They acknowledged the importance of this Alliance in advancing new solar technologies worldwide.

29. Recognizing the vibrant people to people contacts that provided strong bonds between the two countries, the two leaders lauded the valuable role of the Indian community in Saudi Arabia and its contribution to the progress and development of both India and Saudi Arabia. They welcomed the signing of an agreement on labour cooperation for recruitment of General Category Workers. Both sides also welcomed the establishment of a Joint Working Group on Consular issues under the umbrella of the India-Saudi Arabia Joint Commission to discuss consular issues on a regular basis.

30. Prime Minister Modi conveyed his sincere appreciation for the excellent arrangements made by the Saudi authorities for the comfort of the Hajj and Ummrah pilgrims from India.

31. The two leaders noted that India and Saudi Arabia have shared civilizational ties over history that are enriched by the movement of goods, peoples and ideas. They believed that this common heritage can be drawn upon to strengthen their convergence on approaching contemporary

challenges. A broad approach of humanism and tolerance and a conviction that faith should unite rather than divide can be a positive factor in international relations.

32. The two leaders discussed regional and international issues of mutual interest, including the security situation in West Asia, Middle East and South Asia, in the light of their common interest in the regional and global peace, security and stability. Referring to the earlier declarations with regard to the situations in Yemen and Syria, they called for the implementation of relevant UN Security Council resolutions (2216, 2254 and 2268). They also expressed grave concern regarding security situation in Libya and Iraq. In this regard, they reiterated the importance of peaceful resolution of these issues through dialogue and political negotiations.

33. During their discussions on regional issues, the two sides emphasized the importance of the principle of good neighbourliness, non-interference in internal affairs, respect of independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity and resolution of dispute through peaceful means.

34. The two sides expressed their hope for achieving a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in accordance with the Arab Peace Initiative and the resolutions of international legitimacy, in a way that guarantees the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including the establishment of their independent, united and viable state, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

35. Both leaders emphasized the importance of an effective multilateral system, centered on a UN reflective of contemporary realities, as a key factor in tackling global challenges. They stressed upon the urgent need to pursue UN reforms, including of the Security Council through an expansion in both categories of its membership, to make it more representative, credible and effective.

36. The leaders agreed that the visit of Prime Minister Modi to Saudi Arabia helped in further consolidating and deepening the strategic partnership framework and further development of excellent bilateral relations in all spheres, to serve the common interests of the two countries and their peoples.

37. Prime Minister Modi expressed his sincere gratitude to His Majesty the King for the warm welcome and gracious hospitality. He invited His Majesty the King to pay an official visit to India at mutually convenient time, which was gladly accepted.

*Source: Press Information Bureau, New Delhi,*

[http://www.pmindia.gov.in/en/news\\_updates/india-saudi-arabia-joint-statement-during-the-visit-of-pm-to-saudi-arabia/?comment=disable](http://www.pmindia.gov.in/en/news_updates/india-saudi-arabia-joint-statement-during-the-visit-of-pm-to-saudi-arabia/?comment=disable)

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#### **16. Transcript of Media Briefing by Secretary(ER) in Riyadh on Prime Minister's visit to Saudi Arabia, New Delhi, 3 April 2016**

**Official Spokesperson (Vikas Swarup):** Good evening friends and welcome to this press briefing on Prime Minister's ongoing visit to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. As you all know, Prime Minister arrived yesterday from Washington D.C. It was a 12-hour journey.

He had some meetings with the community yesterday. In particular I think his visit to the L&T labour camp was very significant as also his interaction with members of the community at the reception organized by the Indian Ambassador.

This morning we began with the visit to the TCS IT Centre which, as you know, is an all-women facility which employs now more than 1,000 women. It started off with just 20 women and now it is more than 1,000. As Prime Minister said in his remarks, it is really the pride of Saudi Arabia and a message to the entire world.

After that, PM had a very useful economic interaction with leading business houses and leading business persons of Saudi Arabia including with some top Indian CEOs as well.

After that, we have had a series of official level engagements; a couple of Ministers had called on him; after that he went to the Palace to meet King Salman; and there was a welcome ceremonial reception there followed by delegation-level talks and restricted-level talks. And even as we speak now, the Crown Prince is meeting Prime Minister. There is one more meeting scheduled after this after which we will leave straight for the airport.

So to give you a bird's eye view of this entire visit, the significance that it holds and the very significant outcomes which have now been reached in the form of the Joint Statement, which I believe has just been uploaded on our website, I have with me Secretary (ER) Amar Sinha who is the points-person for India's relationship with the Gulf and in particular with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. He had come here earlier in an advance visit to tie up the substantive aspects of the visit. So he would be in the best position now to brief you on Prime Minister's visit to Saudi Arabia.

With that the floor is Secretary (ER)'s.

**Secretary (Economic Relations) (Amar Sinha):** Thank you. Good evening everyone.

As you know, it has been a hectic day. We started at nine in the morning with the visit to TCS which itself is a unique experiment with Saudi Arabia. As he mentioned, they started only in September 2013 and they initially had a target for 20 ladies. In fact it was a joint venture between General Electric, Aramco and TCS.

They had basically got guarantees that they would get BPO work worth 100 people. But they have far exceeded their expectations. In one and half years they have reached over a 1,000. They have over 2,000 waiting applications. They are expanding their operations. I understand that Wipro is following suit. Whether it will only focus on women, we do not know, but Wipro is also establishing a major BPO centre here.

Of course for the TCS, both Aramco and General Electric have become the guarantors. Most of their business process is being run by these. These are all very bright, young students out of various universities in Saudi Arabia. Importantly, there are 17 regional countries from where women have come to work here. Of course it is actually a matter of fulfilment for them that they are getting to utilize their educational qualifications.

Perhaps as you know, Saudi Arabia has one of the biggest programmes for educating its youth. Nearly 500,000 students are sent on scholarships each year to the best universities around the world and obviously it is paying dividends because they have all come back and interacted with a lot of these young people in policy making positions today. So that was the first part.

Of course Prime Minister did make an impromptu speech. There was a great resonance there among the women. We were surprised to even see 'Modi, Modi' chants in TCS by these young girls. It must be unique. I think he is the first leader who has gone. Several corporate leaders have visited these places but he is the first leader who has gone there. And of course he is well known. So it was a great selfie moment for people.

Then he talked about how they are actually, *Hindi mein bola tha ki aap toh aan, baan aur shaan Saudi Arabia ki hain* but more importantly you are also a role model for many women around the world.

After that he went to the Saudi Chamber of Business and Commerce which is like an umbrella federation here. And we had really the who's who of Saudi Arabian business. Over 30-35 business reps were present there and five from India. Of course these are well known names who have presence here like: L&T, Shapoorji, TCS, and of course Yusuf Bhai etc., were all there. There were five from India but there were 30 or 35 from the Saudi side.

Saudi Chamber of Commerce already has an institutional arrangement with FICCI. With CII and Assocham, they have had regular interactions. The one issue that they raised that while they have gone to India many times, they felt that not enough Indian business services except for the one's who already are exposed to Saudi Arabian market have not visited that often. So, we have said that we will try and correct this.

Some of the issues were raised. Of course we also pointed out that the fact that there are much more Indian investments in Saudi Arabia. Over USD 1.5 billion, nearly 430 Indian companies have been provided licenses for operations here. As against this, the Saudi investment in India is very nominal. It is around USD 16 million. So we did point out this lacuna, and we have been assured that this would be corrected at various meetings. I will come to that later.

Here one issue that they raised was banking presence. State Bank of India operates a branch here while there is no Saudi bank operating in India. So, they have requested the Prime Minister to look at first facilitating a Saudi bank operating a branch and also to see what could be done in the Islamic banking principles.

Just for your background I can tell you that as you know that the RBI is itself looking into the issue, a committee was formed under Dinesh Mohanty and it started with Prime Minister's remarks at the 80th anniversary of the RBI when the Prime Minister had mentioned that this is one area that we need to look at because this segment of what they call non-interest bearing banking segment is growing very very fast, and so how we could perhaps start that in India.

The report has come, it is generally supported, but no final decision has been taken. Basically the Government has tasked RBI to draw up the legal and operational framework because there would be two banking segments operating, one with interest and one without interest, and how to operate both, that is something to be figured out probably.

Then of course he came back. We had two visits in the morning. First one was by the Health Minister who also is the Chairperson of Aramco. As you know, Saudi Aramco is perhaps the largest petrol company in the world. And that was a very positive discussion both focusing on the health sector where they are looking at opportunities and Prime Minister particularly spoke about how the medical area itself is changing, that we are moving away from just doctors and nurses to equipment and the opportunities for manufacturing in India. Prime Minister talked about 1,000 dialysis centres because the way our dialysis centres are worked, they work in three shifts but still there is a queue. So, there is both an opportunity to come and manufacture equipment in India but also coming into business in India in health sector. So Aramco was very keen to look at that.

Then of course because other hat of the Minister is as Head of Aramco, he said that he has a very sizeable amount as a kitty for investment in India because India will look at a new horizon that he would like to invest. Rampa as you know, has been mainly in extraction but they have plans to expand both upstream and downstream. Upstream they would want to work with our companies in explorations both here and third countries. Downstream they are looking at various facilities in India which they would like to get both refining and perhaps distribution and marketing. And they are looking at every option either through a Greenfield alone or buying a Brownfield industry or even partnering with some of our majors. So this we thought was a very very positive and a concrete outcome where he actually put a number to his plans.

This is all being guided by what their Foreign Minister had said that both sides would want the buyer-seller relationship in every sector to evolve to become a strategic partnership.

The next was of course Foreign Minister's visit which of course we went through the entire many of the issues on our agenda, and this of course was the second meeting with the Prime Minister within 15 days. So, he basically gave a low down on the programme on what to expect at these bilateral meetings.

Then I could come to the meeting with the King. He was of course ceremoniously received at the Palace by the King. His entire Cabinet and the people from Ministry of Defence and various security agencies were present there. They all sort of shook hands after the ceremonial guard of honour. They met when the entire Indian delegation was introduced to the King, and then of course we went into a huge hall which perhaps has entire royalty and the entire Cabinet present there. There must be over 300 people. They all individually met the Prime Minister. And they shook his hands.

Then the King hosted a lunch for the Prime Minister where all of us were there, all the invitees are present and then we went into the bilateral delegation level talks.

The King of course was accompanied by the Crown Prince and there is practically the entire Cabinet which at least we could identify the Commerce Minister, the Foreign Minister, the Minister for Finance, the Minister for Economy, Governor of Riyadh, so all the heavy weights of the Cabinet were present there. This of course was restricted to formal statements and those statements would be available. If you want, I can tell you some of the key points made by both Prime Minister and the King but I have to refer to my notes. I have been making notes since morning.

The King while welcoming him actually talked about the deep and historical relations between our two countries, praised the level of economic relations that we have today. He expressed happiness at our trade, investment and energy ties but he wanted to deepen it further.

He also valued India's interest in the region and peace and stability here. He said that he is encouraged by India's interest in the region and that India supports a peaceful and a sustainable solution in the region. He also mentioned that he is very happy to cooperate with India and coordinate with India in combating terror.

In response, Prime Minister talked about the memorable visit. PM referred to his visits to the L&T residential camp of the workers, to the TCS, etc. And this he thought that he has gained tremendous insight into the Saudi society. Of course this is first visit for this Prime Minister. So, he obviously expressed the happiness that he or perhaps the visit or the experiences that he had, he had not expected. I thought that was the sense he was conveying.

PM also talked about how new avenues are opening in new areas. He thanked the King for the welfare of the diaspora which lives here. As you know, we have the largest diaspora of three million people here. PM referred to the issue of combating terrorism which he said was a common challenge for both of us in our region and in this local region.

And PM earmarked energy security, trade, technology and investment. He said these are the four keys which could actually accelerate development both in India and in Saudi Arabia.

Then there was exchange of views on regional issues. Then we moved away but there was a restricted meeting between the Prime Minister and the King. And none of us have details actually of those.

Most of the things that they talked about have been captured in the Joint Statement. You can go through this. The key issues I would put in two or three different broad segments. One is, focusing on diaspora itself, the welfare, how they are looked after here, whether there is a legal framework when they work here. So, we are happy to report that, of course four years ago we had signed something on the domestic services sector workers, this year we have signed a labour agreement on general category workers which would give a more sort of definite framework in terms of their rights, what to expect. And of course all along they have always conveyed that they are very happy to cooperate with us that people who come here are not cheated in any way.



A lot of our problem arises from the fact that something is promised and after it is promised but eventually when they come here they realize that that they actually came for something else. So, that is something that we will have to also tackle at our end. But on their end there is a commitment that they will cooperate with us. In that we have formed for the first time a Joint Consular Working Group in a sense that the Embassy and the Ministry of Labour and there will be a mechanism where there will be reviewing all these petitions which come to them or any complaint that any worker has that comes. So they have clearly assured us that they are very keen that the workers who come here were contributing to their economic development are looked after and looked after well, and if there are some aberrations, it will be dealt within the Saudi law. I came here last week to discuss these issues. That was the sense and they have accepted that and signed that agreement today.

The next segment you would focus is actually, which I think is the key, is the joint or shared perception on terror and how to deal with terrorism in its various aspects. That includes individuals. And as you saw the report yesterday, in a coordinated move both the US and the Saudis issued a statement yesterday when PM was still in Washington on sanctioning some of the organizations. So, they have looked at individuals or the men and the material which is the finances. So, we have actually very strong elements. If you look at paras 9 through 12, it covers every aspect of terrorism – sanctuaries, cross border operations, how to deal with guys who actually conduct a terrorist activity and disappear, that sort of things.

Perhaps I should read it out. Para 9 says, "Affirming that the menace of extremism and terrorism threatens all nations and societies, the two leaders rejected totally any attempt to link this universal phenomena to any particular race, religion or culture. They called on all states to reject the use of terrorism against other countries, dismantle terrorism infrastructure where they happen to exist, and cut off any kind of support and financing to the terrorists operating and perpetrating terrorism from their territories against other states, and bring perpetrators of acts of terrorism to justice."

So we think that they have moved substantially. They understand what is affecting us and perhaps also affecting them. So, there was a great congruence of view on this. Actually there are four paragraphs. You read it. I do not want to repeat it.

Then they came out very strongly in favour of the long pending Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism in the context of the UN. In the context of the UN they also supported the expansion of the United Nations or restructuring the UN in both categories - permanent seats and non-permanent seats. That is also included there.

And then they devoted a separate paragraph on money laundering, hawala transactions and all illegal transfers of money which does not end up being used for the purposes it was intended. So we also signed an agreement on this between the financial intelligence units of the two sides. Not only we established a mechanism for regular exchange of information but they have also accepted that the two sides further agreed to take action against illegal transfer of money. That was a key concern that our side expressed that at times a lot of this money goes for different purposes but end up being used for other purposes. They accepted that and they realized it and so

they have included this here. And they said that illegal transfer of money even within their existing law is something to be sanctioned and they are very willing to commit themselves to doing this.

And of course the third was the regional aspect of Syria, Yemen, Palestine, etc., where both sides decided or agreed that a solution needs to be found within the framework of what the international community has been asking for which has been expressed in several UNSC resolutions, that it should be through dialogue, that it should be sustainable, and where the people who are involved or the citizens should also be fully involved. So, that is also reflected here I think in para 32.

One last thing, there were five MoUs that were signed. I must tell you about these MOUs. First I told you the labour agreement, the formal agreement on labour cooperation between the Ministry of Labour of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Ministry of External Affairs for recruitment of general category workers. Then the second one was basically a trade related issue because our exporters did find some difficulties in terms of the standards. So, we have signed an agreement between the two bodies who set standards, the BIS on our side and SASO on their side, to cooperate and to evolve common standards so that products which come in here do not face this non-tariff barrier.

Then we also signed something on handicrafts, which interestingly was a demand by Saudi Arabian Government because they also wish to preserve their heritage, their handicrafts in a way that we have been able to do. We train their artisans. So, they actually want to learn from us. So, this also we have got signed today.

Then, of course there was an MOU on Financial Intelligence Unit . Between Financial and Intelligence Unit of India and the FI unit of Saudi Arabia regarding money laundering, terrorism financing and related crimes. And the fifth was an investment promotion cooperation between Invest India which, as you know, is a body set up by DIPP along with FICCI with which MEA works very closely and the Saudi Arabian General Investment Authority. Now, this of course does not talk about any particular number in terms of investment but because both these bodies are really handholding organizations which guide investors, that is something they would like to do.

Of course, last but not the least, the Saudis saved a huge surprise, pleasantly surprised everybody by conferring on Prime Minister the highest civilian order - King Abdul-Aziz Special Sash. This actually came as a surprise to all of us.

**Question:** What is it exactly called?

**Secretary (ER):** It is called King Abdul-Aziz Sash (Special Class). Basically it is a sash and a medal which is provided. So, this is the highest civilian order and I guess this reflects the closeness between the two leaders. As you know, they have met twice in the past on the margins of G20. And PM said that because the King asked him that you should come more often, we should have more high-level visits. PM very rightly told that he will keep coming back to seek your blessings.

Thank you very much.

**Question:** Has the award been conferred on him?

**Secretary (ER):** Actually, yes. They honoured him right there soon after the MOU signing.

**Official Spokesperson:** We have to leave now. So, very quickly we can take just a couple of questions.

**Question:** Just a couple of clarifications. There is a major advance on terrorism. Saudi Arabia expressing support for CCIT for example...*(Inaudible)*...My question is, in terms of the way ahead you have started, whether this is the first time Saudi Arabia expressed support to CCIT? Secondly, on terror sanctuaries, is this the first time we have another declaration that terror sanctuaries have been mentioned in this form. Is not that very significant? And also in this context, was Pakistan at all discussed or excluded?

**Secretary (ER):** Sometimes, you do not have to discuss by naming countries. But everybody understands what is being discussed. So, yes, in that way yes it was discussed. This was something that we have given them that these were the points we had given them that we would want their affirmation of these concerns and they are happy to confirm it for us. I will have to check the last declaration.

**Question:** What about CCIT?OIC countries have been opposing that.

**Secretary (ER):** Actually, Prime Minister has consistently said that international terrorism has nothing to do with race or religion. That is what we have included here also. Once they hear it at this level, I guess they have a level of comfort where they said that they are willing to support it.

Their Foreign Minister was very candid. He said for us it is a very simple definition of terrorism. Anybody who kills somebody else is an act of terror. That can be as simple as that.

**Question:** Have the Saudi companies shown some interest to invest in India?

**Secretary (ER):** Let me just paraphrase what all of them said. They said that in our corporate future planning, because they are also planning, as you know. Yesterday you would have seen that they are creating a fund for USD two trillion for a post-oil economy and they wish to diversify it. And they said that in our own investment, if they are not not investing in India is not an option for corporates today. So, all of us are looking at various areas they would want to invest, not only in oil and gas but willing to do it in other sectors.

Defence industry was one major area that they mentioned. And it was also mentioned In fact the gentleman who heads the Sovereign Wealth Fund, the PIF, will be coming and meeting the Prime Minister along with the Deputy Crown Prince but he met me at around 12.30. He said that the two areas that they are looking at is basically defence production - both joint production in India and Saudi Arabia. For some reason Saudi Arabia is one of the largest spenders on defence. It is the fourth I think we will follow very close by.

**Official Spokesperson:** I think we have to leave now. This press briefing is concluded.

*Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, [http://mea.gov.in/media-briefings.htm?dtl/26598/Transcript of Media Briefing by SecretaryER in Riyadh on Prime Ministers visit to Saudi Arabia April 3 2016#](http://mea.gov.in/media-briefings.htm?dtl/26598/Transcript+of+Media+Briefing+by+SecretaryER+in+Riyadh+on+Prime+Ministers+visit+to+Saudi+Arabia+April+3+2016#)*

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### **17. PM's gift to the King of Saudi Arabia, Riyadh, 3 April 2016**

The Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, gifted His Majesty King Salman bin Abdul-Aziz Al Saud a gold-plated replica of the Cheraman Juma Masjid in Kerala.

Situated in Thrissur district, the Cheraman Juma Masjid is believed to be the first mosque built in India by Arab traders around 629 AD, and symbolic of active trade relations between India and Saudi Arabia since ancient times.

According to oral tradition, Cheraman Perumal was the Chera King and a contemporary of the Holy Prophet who went to Arabia and embraced Islam after meeting the Holy Prophet at Mecca. Some years later, he sent letters to his relatives and the ruling chieftains of Malabar through his friends Malik bin Dinar and Malik bin Habib who, along with their companions, were then given permission by the local rulers to build the mosque at Kodungallur.

The mosque has an ancient oil lamp that is always kept burning and believed to be over a thousand years old. People from all religions bring oil for the lamp as an offering.

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

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### **18. PM's roundtable interaction with Saudi Business Leaders, Riyadh, 3 April 2016**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi interacted with 30 Saudi CEOs and Indian business leaders in Riyadh. He described India and Saudi Arabia as old friends, ready to take bold new steps to a golden future.

Emphasizing the strength of ties between the two countries, he recalled King Salman mentioning that he was taught by an Indian teacher.

He said India had a unique combination of democracy, demography and demand, and several policy initiatives had been taken over the last two years to spur growth and progress.

Speaking about the health sector, he said there was tremendous scope for investment in the manufacturing of medical devices. He said India's health sector which is globally extremely cost competitive, offers immense scope for health tourism. He added that Indian nurses, present in large numbers in the Gulf, are a testament to our well-trained manpower.

He called for taking the economic relationship beyond export and import, to technology transfers and joint investment.

He assured Saudi investors that retrospective taxation was a thing of the past, and his Government believes in a predictable long term taxation regime. He mentioned petroleum, renewable energy, infrastructure, and defence manufacturing, as possible areas for Saudi investment. He said Saudi investment in fertilizers, warehousing, cold chain facilities and agriculture, would be a win-win partnership, as it would ensure good quality food products for Saudi Arabia.

He said India and Saudi Arabia should look at working together in the field of cyber-security.

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

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### **19. PM visits TCS all-women IT and ITES Centre, Riyadh, 3 April 2016**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited the All Women IT and ITES Centre of Tata Consultancy Services in Riyadh.

The Prime Minister was given an overview of the operations, and interacted with the all-women workforce, who enthusiastically welcomed and greeted him. Speaking on the occasion, the Prime Minister said that it is a big message for the world that he is meeting with the people who are, in a way, the pride of Saudi Arabia.

Narendra Modi said that in today's competitive world we have to unite our strengths both natural and human, for optimum progress. He said that when women power becomes a part of the development journey, it gathers fresh momentum. He said that the atmosphere he is witnessing at this Centre today appears to be a harbinger of a positive force for the world. He invited the women IT professionals to visit India, and said their visit will make a huge impact even in India.

The Prime Minister emphasized the role of technology in governance, and said e-governance, for him, means easy governance, effective governance, and economic governance.

The Prime Minister invited them to see the "Narendra Modi App" and even share their views on women empowerment in India. "Vande Mataram. Matri Devo Bhavah" wrote the Prime Minister on the message board at the Centre.

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

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### **20. English rendering of the text of PM's address to L&T workers at L&T Residential Complex, Riyadh, 3 April 2016**

My dear friends! It is the fragrance of your sweat, which has tempted me to arrive here. Your toil not just fills the stomach of your family members, not just makes you able to issue the cheques in dollars and pounds, it also adds to the glory and splendour of India. Whenever we engage in a job, we are not much aware, we only think that we are involved in a project. However, if we look at the history, there are several great projects completed by Indian workers. If you visit Africa, the people over there tell with pride about a railway line, which was laid by Indians at 45 degree height during those days.

If you get the opportunity to visit Mauritius, you will see a grand monument constructed by the Government of Mauritius in the memory of Indian labourers, who first landed on that spot. That memorial portrays in details the time and situation, in which their Indian forefathers reached there, how they spent their life, how they shaped that island into a nation called Mauritius. It is a thrilling experience to see that memorial, which depicts how 150 years back; the people from India scripted a new success story in the history of mankind with their toil and perseverance even amid adverse conditions.

Perhaps you might not realize the significance of what you are doing today. But after centuries, when these things would be discussed, the story will be told of the Indian youngsters who came here and gave a new priceless treasure to Riyadh.

You people write very few letters to me directly, but you do write to your families, who sometimes forward these letters to me and I come across a lot of news about you. Your letters sometimes reflect the pain and concern and sometimes act as the treasure of delight. I also get the knowledge about the hardships you are facing overseas and your potential to take them on. When you send some good news, I feel happy as one of your family and whenever it is some worrying news, I feel as much pain as your family. It is because in a way, I'm a part of your family and you all are my family members and therefore your pleasures and pains are also mine.

For that reason, my government is making continuous efforts to help the Indian community spread all across the globe. I am immensely grateful to His Majesty the King for providing me an opportunity to discuss about Indians working here. On behalf of you, I conveyed your feelings and issues to him. When he praises and expresses satisfaction with you, my chest swells with pride.

You should continue working here, but that day is not far, when the work force of India will be working in several worldwide sectors. This is because only India holds the strength to deliver the manpower needed by world in coming days. Here, the work is going on (for Riyadh metro project) since long and for its completion millions and millions of hours and man-days have been devoted. Today you have given a presentation before me with immense pride. But, I will say that such an enormous task involving such a large number of people has not been succeeded all of a sudden.

This zero loss has been possible not just because of the use of technology or competence of management. Rather, this has been achieved just because of you. Its credit solely goes to you, as you have followed strict discipline without making haste on any phase. Until you felt full satisfaction on technical front, you have not put your step forward and as a result of this rigorous approach; nobody has suffered from any kind of loss so far.

If some part of a wall crumbles down, it can be made again. But, if a person leaves this world, then nothing remains. You have enhanced the prestige of India by carrying out your task with discipline. While doing your work, you might feel a lot of concerns about your family back home, for instance the education of your children. However, there is also a by-product of your work done with dedication and that is the excellent quality of your work, a good image of India is built up here. If people see these projects so accomplished, they will surely think to hire more youths from India to get such superb work done. In this way, you have brought laurels to India, gave a new enthusiasm and strength to the youth of India and have opened new doors of overseas employment opportunities for your compatriots. That's why, your talent, your dedication and your potential deserve a lot of kudos.

Your work sites may be located far from the embassy. Therefore, you might be facing a lot of trouble in undertaking any task related to embassy. Like when it is your holiday the embassy is also closed. On a working day, you don't get leave from office. Keeping in view all these issues



and the demand of digital age, the government has started a portal [madad.gov.in](http://madad.gov.in). You and any Indian at any remote corner of the world can very easily voice its concern to Government of India and avail benefit from it.

Currently, you must have observed that India has developed its distinct identity all around the world. It is its predominantly human nature, and human face in diplomacy. Government of India has quickly responded to help Indians caught in the crisis anywhere in the world. Recently, the lives of thousands of people were saved in Yemen. Today, if any help call is raised by a family from any corner of the world, our ministry of external affairs, External Affairs Minister Sushmaji and her entire team of officials immediately take action on priority. Government of India puts in more efforts in supporting overseas Indians in times of crises in comparison to the efforts for fostering diplomatic relations with other countries. Our MADAD portal has been launched with this sole aim.

Similarly, we have started another system called E-migrate, which has simplified the coordination between employers and employees as well as, between migrant Indian community and Government of India. While devising this system, we have laid focus to ensure that there is no last possibility of cheating and getting trapped in the hands of wrong people and brokers.

In days to come, we are trying to take some significant steps to regularize migration. One, we will set up two Workers' resource centres in Riyadh and Jeddah to ensure that most of your grievances get resolved here. Secondly, we would also launch a 24x7 help line call centre, which you would be able to access free of charge coupled with multilingual benefits. With this helpline, you can share your problems, whenever you feel the need.

At present I've no work at all and I am free 24 hours. If at all I've work to do, that is for 125 crore citizens of my country, but I have no work to do. Therefore, you can share your thoughts directly through Prime Minister Office of Government of India. You can also send your issues or suggestion on [mygov.in](http://mygov.in), which is directly linked to me. Likewise, you can too download Narendra Modi App on your mobile phone. Then I will be in your pocket all the time. What else do you want, if Prime Minister of your home country remains ever in your pocket? Through this app, you can reach me and I can communicate with you, thus we would always stay connected.

Today, I got the privilege to meet with you all. You know very well that India is at present marching ahead at a fast pace. The whole world is looking up the way India is stepping on its journey to economic development. India has been successful in regaining its lost glory. Tell me, what response you receive, whenever you introduce yourself to anyone that you are from India? Doesn't that gentleman feel delight in meeting with you; shake hands with you and foster a lifelong friendship with you? Doesn't he say, 'Oh! You're from India. How was it earlier?' You see a sense of dignity, with which entire world has today started viewing the Indians. This is the new identity and strength build up for the youth power of India.

My heartiest best wishes to you all. It is my firm belief that you will bring laurels to India. Thank you very much.

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

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## **21. English rendering of the text of PM's address to Indian community, Riyadh, 3 April 2016**

My dear fellow citizen,

I've arrived here on my 2 days visit to Saudi Arabia. The way, India is today witnessing economic growth has captured the worldwide attention. This country of 125 crore citizens can do and give a lot to the whole world. The way India is making efforts placing importance to democratic values and carrying the mantra of Sabka Sath, Sabka Vikas (Participation of all, development of all) in it underlies a sense of new faith and hope for the entire world, which relies on human values. India has given rise to new expectations at the world stage in a short span of time.

Or else we were also in the line of other countries. But, today world has started viewing us as an important nation. One of the reasons behind it is the political stability of India, as a government of full majority has come into power after almost 30 years. While the world is caught today into an economical crisis, the IMF, World Bank and all the international credit rating agencies are looking at India as a ray of hope and as a shining star. And this is true that India has boosted its growth rate even amid adverse circumstances.

Third biggest strength of India is its eight hundred million youth population under the age of 35 years. In future, the world will feel the need of such workforce, which is talented and well-equipped with modern technology as well. India is marching ahead in this direction at a fast pace. Be it agricultural sector, industrial sector or service sectors in all these three fronts India is stepping ahead with firm conviction putting its best possible efforts.

Today, I got the opportunity to meet with you all. My best wishes to all of you! Thank you!!

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

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## **22. PM visits L&T workers' residential complex, Riyadh, 3 April 2016**

Prime Minister, Narendra Modi visited the L&T workers' residential complex in Riyadh. L&T is part of a consortium that is building a section of the Riyadh Metro.

Speaking on the occasion, the Prime Minister appreciated the efforts made by the workers for the project, and said "your hard work has brought me here."

He said that the work being done by Indian workers abroad, not only earns money, but also raises the stature of India. He said Indian workers were fondly remembered in various parts of the world where they had completed many prestigious projects. He said that in future, the Riyadh Metro too would similarly evoke memories about Indian workers who had contributed to its construction.

The Prime Minister said he often gets to know about Indians working abroad through letters he receives from their relatives. He added that he shares both their joys and their sorrows, through these letters. "I feel I am a part of your family," he said.

The Prime Minister mentioned the "e-migrate" initiative of the Union Government, which would facilitate people who wished to work abroad. He said more "worker resource centres" would be opened, and the MADAD portal was a way to immediately reach the Union Government. The Prime Minister said that India has the capacity to give the world the manpower it requires. The gathering of over a thousand workers, cheered enthusiastically on many occasions as the Prime Minister spoke. The Prime Minister later mingled with the assembled workers, and shared snacks with them.

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

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### **23. List of Agreements/MOUs signed during the visit of Prime Minister to Saudi Arabia, Riyadh, 3 April 2016**

1. Agreement on Labour Co-operation between the Ministry of Labour of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Ministry of External Affairs of the Republic of India for Recruitment of General Category Workers.
2. Technical Cooperation Program between the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) and the Saudi Standards, Metrology and Quality Organization (SASO).
3. Executive Program for Cooperation in the Field of Handicrafts between the Export Promotion Council for Handicraft (EPCH) in the Republic of India and Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage.
4. MoU between Financial Intelligence Unit - India and the Financial Intelligence Unit-Saudi Arabia concerning Cooperation in the Exchange of Intelligence related to Money Laundering, Terrorism Financing and Related Crimes
5. Framework for Investment Promotion Cooperation between Invest India and the Saudi Arabian General Investment Authority (SAGIA).

*Source: Ministry of External Affairs,* [http://mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/26594/List\\_of\\_AgreementsMOUs\\_signed\\_during\\_the\\_visit\\_of\\_Prime\\_Minister\\_to\\_Saudi\\_Arabia\\_April\\_03\\_2016#](http://mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/26594/List_of_AgreementsMOUs_signed_during_the_visit_of_Prime_Minister_to_Saudi_Arabia_April_03_2016#)

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## **i. SYRIA**

### **24. Registration of all Indians in Syria with the Embassy, Damascus, 12 April 2016**

All Indian nationals residing in the Syrian Arab Republic are advised to register with the Embassy either online by filling in Form 14 PDF file that opens in new window. To know how to open PDF file refer Help section located at bottom of the site and sending it to the following email addresses:

cons.damascusmea.gov.in

hoc.damascusmea.gov.in or in person as per their convenience.

*Source: Embassy of India, Damascus,* <http://eoi.gov.in/damascus/?4865?000>

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### **25. ITEC Courses 2016- 2017, Damascus, 26 April 2016**

Indian technical Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Programme - Courses 2016-2017

The Government of India has announced a list of courses conducted under the Indian Technical Economic Cooperation for 2016-17. These courses have already been uploaded on the public portal <http://itecgoi.in> External website that opens in a new window as "Training Brochure 2016-17" under "Apply for ITEC" head. A link is also provided in the Embassy webpage

[<http://eoi.gov.in/damascus>]. The information is also being forwarded to the concerned authorities of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic. All interested scholars are requested to forward their applications through the concerned authority so that the same can be forwarded to the respective institutes at the earliest.

For more information please contact the Embassy at: 3347900-3347351/2 (Maya)

*Source: Embassy of India, Damascus, <http://eoi.gov.in/damascus/?4865?000>*

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## **j. UAE**

### **26. Recruitment agencies in Dubai, New Delhi, 27 April 2016**

Will the Minister of External Affairs be pleased to state:

- (a) Whether the Government has asked the Indian embassy in Dubai to help workers who have been duped by placement agencies;
- (b) If so, the details thereof;
- (c) Whether the Government has taken up the issue with the Government of UAE; and
- (d) If so, the details thereof?

#### **Answer**

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

(a) to (d) No. However, the Government of India has a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Government of United Arab Emirates (UAE) signed in 2011, which inter alia includes provisions aimed at protection and welfare of workers under the labour law and regulations of the host country. As and when any complaints are received regarding Indian Recruiting Agents having caused distress to the emigrants, suitable action is taken against such agents under the provision of the Emigration Act 1983 and Rules made there-under.

*Source: Lok Sabha (Council of People), Starred Question No. 495, asked by Dr. D. K. Gopal, [http://mea.gov.in/lok-sabha.htm?dtl/26671/QUESTION\\_NO495\\_RECRUITMENT\\_AGENCIES\\_IN\\_DUBAI#](http://mea.gov.in/lok-sabha.htm?dtl/26671/QUESTION_NO495_RECRUITMENT_AGENCIES_IN_DUBAI#)*

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### **27. Memorandum of Understanding between Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India and the Insurance Authority, New Delhi, 27 April 2016**

The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given its ex-post facto approval for the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) and the Insurance Authority of United Arab Emirates. The MoU was signed in February 2016.

The MoU provides for enhanced cooperation between the two authorities in the field of insurance supervision by providing a framework for co-operation such as channels of communication. It will also result in increasing mutual understanding through the exchange of regulatory and relevant supervisory information including confidential information to enforce or ensure compliance with their respective laws and regulations.

*Source: Press Information Bureau, New Delhi, <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=142378>*

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## **k. YEMEN**

### **28. Travel Advisory for Indian Nationals travelling to Yemen, New Delhi, 1 April 2016**

The security situation in Yemen continues to remain fragile. We have already issued travel Advisories on 21 January, 19 March, 7 April and 30 July 2015 wherein Indian nationals have

been advised to refrain from undertaking travel to Yemen in view of the precarious security situation in the country. In light of the recent terrorist attacks in Aden, which resulted in killing of an Indian nun and abduction of one priest, Indian nationals are again strongly advised to avoid travelling to Yemen under any circumstances by any means for any purpose till further notice.

*Source: Ministry of External Affairs,*

[http://mea.gov.in/press-](http://mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/26588/Travel_Advisory_for_Indian_Nationals_travelling_to_Yemen#)

[releases.htm?dtl/26588/Travel Advisory for Indian Nationals travelling to Yemen#](http://mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/26588/Travel_Advisory_for_Indian_Nationals_travelling_to_Yemen#)

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

1 Crore = 10 million. Lakh = 100,000

**Compiled by Jatin Kumar**

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

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