

INDIA SPEAKS

(Monthly Digest of Official Indian Statements on Middle East)

No.86

September 2016

BILATERAL ISSUES

a. BAHRAIN

1. Independence Day 2016 - Flag Hoisting Ceremony, Manama, 14 August 2016

On the Occasion of the 70th Independence Day of India, a Flag hosting ceremony will be held at 07.00 a.m. on Monday, the 15th August, 2016, at the Embassy premises in Adliya (Building No. 182, Road 2608, Block 326, Adliya, Bahrain) and a cultural evening on the occasion will be organized at Bahrain Keraleeya Samajam (Building No. 32, Road 2801, Block 328, Segaiya – 328) from 8 pm to 10 pm.

All Indian nationals, including families in the Kingdom of Bahrain are invited to attend the events.

Source: Embassy of India, Cairo, <http://eoi.gov.in/bahrain/?5331?000>

b. EGYPT

2. State Visit of the President of Egypt to India (01-03 September 2016), Cairo, 24 August 2016

At the invitation of His Excellency Pranab Mukherjee, President of India, His Excellency Mr. Abdel Fattah Al Sisi, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt is paying a State Visit to India from 01 to 03 September, 2016. President Al Sisi is accompanied by high-level delegation comprising of Ministers, Officials and business leaders.

During the visit, President of India will receive President Al Sisi and host a Banquet in his honour. Vice President of India, His Excellency Mohammad Hamid Ansari would call on him. Prime Minister of India, His Excellency Narendra Modi would hold bilateral discussions with President Al Sisi and host a lunch for him. Her Excellency Sushma Swaraj, Minister of External Affairs of India would call on President Al Sisi. President Al Sisi is expected to meet business leaders both of India and Egypt during his visit.

India and Egypt enjoy excellent relations marked by strong, traditional and civilizational ties and contribute towards peace and development in the world.

Source: Embassy of India, Cairo, http://www.indembcairo.com/en-us/presscentre/pressreleases.aspx?udt_656_param_detail=48515

3. State Visit of the President of Egypt to India (01-03 September 2016), New Delhi 24 August 2016

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Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, https://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/27331/State_Visit_of_the_President_of_Egypt_to_India_September_0103_2016

c. IRAN

4. India-Iran Relations, New Delhi, 3 August 2016

Will the Minister of External Affairs be pleased to state:

- (a) Whether the India-Iran bilateral relations has been helping us to deal with terrorism;
- (b) If so, the details thereof;
- (c) Whether India and Iran have signed some MoUs with regard to sharing information about terrorism and if so, the details thereof;
- (d) Whether the Government has achieved/gained considerable ground by engaging with Iran recently and effectively; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

The Minister Of State In The Ministry Of External Affairs Gen. (Dr) V. K. Singh (Retd.)

(a) to (e) During the recent visit of Prime Minister to Iran on 22-23 May 2016, Prime Minister and President Rouhani of Iran noted with deep concern that terrorism and ideologies of violent extremism continue to infest and ingress the region posing a grave threat to peace, security, stability and development. They stressed the need to completely eradicate all forms of terrorism, and defeat the forces of extremism. They urged an immediate end to all support and

sanctuaries enjoyed by terrorist groups and individuals and were of the view that States that aid, abet and directly or indirectly support terrorism should be condemned. They called upon all States to have zero tolerance towards terrorism, explicitly reject and stop the use of terrorism against other countries, dismantle terrorism infrastructure where it exists, end forthwith all support and financing to terrorists using their territories to harm other countries and ensure that all perpetrators of terrorism who are in their jurisdiction are brought to justice.

The two sides reiterated their resolve to strengthen the international consensus and legal regimes against terrorism, including effective cooperation among the states in resolving the outstanding issues related the draft Comprehensive Convention against International Terrorism conducive to its finalization. Government also supported the initiative, taken by Islamic Republic of Iran in the United Nation General Assembly in 2013, titled World against violence and extremism (WAVE).

There is no specific MoU between India and Iran on information exchange related to terrorism. However, there is growing interaction between the National Security Councils of the countries since 2002. National Security Advisor visited Iran in February 2015 to discuss ways of enhancing cooperation between the two countries regarding security and related matters.

During the visit of Prime Minister in May 2016, it was agreed to enhance regular and institutionalized consultations between the National Security Council of India and Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) of Iran and others concerned on terrorism, security and related issues such as organized crime, money-laundering, narcotics trade and cyber crime.

Source: Lok Sabha (Council of People), Unstarred Question No. 2940, asked by B.

Shreeramulu,

<http://164.100.47.192/Loksabha/Questions/QResult15.aspx?qref=38660&lsno=16>

d. ISRAEL

5. Ambassador Pavan Kapoor presented his credentials to H.E President Reuven Rivlin, Tel Aviv, 3 August 2015

Ambassador Pavan Kapoor presented his credentials to H.E President Reuven Rivlin at the President's House in Jerusalem on 3 August 2016.

Source: Embassy of India, Tel Aviv, Source,

<http://www.indembassy.co.il/gallery.php?album=67>

6. Contract with Israeli Organization, New Delhi, 3 August 2016

Will the Minister of Space be pleased to state:-

- (a) whether the Government proposes to examine the commercial activities of Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO);
- (b) if so, the major areas decided to be inquired into;
- (c) whether the deals including the commercial contract with certain Israeli organizations are also likely to be re-examined; and

(d) if so, the details in this regard along with the estimated financial benefits likely to accrue to Indian as a result thereof?

Answer

The Minister of State in the Ministry of Personnel, PG & Pensions and in the Prime Minister's Office Dr. Jitendra Singh

- (a) No Madam.
- (b) Does not arise.
- (c) No Madam.
- (d) Does not arise.

Source: Lok Sabha (Council of People), Unstarred Question No. 2998, asked by P. Karunakaran,

<http://164.100.47.192/Loksabha/Questions/QResult15.aspx?qref=38494&lsno=16>

7. Defence Cooperation Between India and Israel, New Delhi, 5 August 2016

Will the Minister of Defence be pleased to state:-

- 1) Whether the Government proposes to further expand its strategic ties with Israel through the Research and Development (R&D) projects to develop hi-tech weapon systems;
- 2) if so, the details thereof along with the details of projects currently underway and proposed to be developed;
- 3) whether the Government has signed any Memorandum of Understanding with Israel for the development of combat equipment for defence purposes and if so, the details thereof;
- 4) whether any Joint Working Group is reviewing the project-wise partnership between the two countries and looking into probable joint R&D projects in the fields like high endurance, UAVs, micro satellite surveillance systems, armoured vehicles etc.; and
- 5) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

Minister of Defence Manohar Parrikar

(a) to (e): DRDO has signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Israel for various programmes in the field of Missiles, Electronic Warfare Systems, etc. The details of such tie-ups are sensitive in nature and disclosure of the same will not be in the interest of National Security. Overall, these projects are progressing as per schedule though there have been some slippages on account of technology absorption, delayed supply of essential components, contractual issues etc., which are addressed from time to time. However, the collaboration with the foreign countries for strategic tie-ups is ongoing process based on the needs of the Services & Nation.

Source: Lok Sabha (Council of People), Unstarred Question No. 3382, asked by Prem Singh Chandumajra, Manoj Kumar Tiwari, Poonam Mahajan and Chandra Prakash Joshi,
<http://164.100.47.192/Loksabha/Questions/QResult15.aspx?qref=39166&lsno=16>

8. Celebration of 70th Independence Day of India, Tel Aviv, 15 August 2016

The Embassy of India in Israel celebrated the 70th Independence Day at the Embassy Residence. Ambassador Pavan Kapoor hoisted the national flag, which was followed by the singing of the national anthem. Ambassador read out the President of India's address to the nation on the eve of the 70th Independence Day of India. The function was attended by more than 350 people, comprising Embassy officials, their families, the Indian community in Israel, Indian students in Israel, and Indian soldiers deployed at UNDOF. Patriotic songs were sung, followed by a colourful Bhangra performance.

Source: Embassy of India, Tel Aviv, Source,

<http://www.indembassy.co.il/gallery.php?album=68>

e. KUWAIT

9. Unutilized claims in LIC, Kuwait, Kuwait, 1 August 2016

The Embassy informs that as per the records of Branch Office in Kuwait of LIC-International (Life Insurance Corporation) there are a number of claims lying unpaid at their end due to non-receipt of required documents from the customers. The LIC International has been sending discharge vouchers 3 months in advance to the clients where claims are payable. But due to incomplete address and wrong contact numbers, LIC International is not able to do so.

It may be informed that the details and address of the concerned family of the deceased is given in the attachment are shared with all Indian Associations. Some of the clients may have left Kuwait or shifted to a new country. They may be aware/unaware of their policy details. LIC International assures that all help in settling the claim will be extended from their end for the client. Moreover, if some clients have lost their original policy document then they will provide necessary assistance to get the claim amount on the basis of Indemnity forms.

All family members and relatives as per the list of claimants (Click here) may please contact Devesh Kumar, Resident Manager, LIC International-Kuwait Branch. Mobile- 99315881 & 66894179. Telephone number- 00965-22914255 and FAX-00965-22428775. Mail Id- (rm.kuwait@licinternational.com)

Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait, <http://www.indembkwt.org/DispNews.aspx?ID=969>

10. Grant of 5-year and 1-year multi-entry Business Visa to visit India, Kuwait, 3 August 2016

Frequent visitors from Kuwait to India are strongly advised to avail 5-year or 1-year, multiple entry Business visa facilities to India.

2. Visas granted by Embassy have been increasing due to streamlining of visa procedures, with immediate 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 visas are granted within 72 hours. Visa fee structure is as below:

Visa fees for Kuwaiti nationals

S. No.	Visa Type	Validity Period	Number of entries	Visa Fee (in KD)
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01	Tourist 6- month	Multiple	13
02.	Business	1-year Multiple	38
03.	Business	5-year Multiple	63
04.	Transit 15-days	Single/double	7
05.	Student	1-year Triple	24
06.	Medical Visa	1-year Multiple	38
07.	Medical Visa	6-months Multiple	25
08.	Employment	1-year Multiple	38

[Exclusive of service charge of KD 3.250 by CKGS and KD 1 towards ICWF by Embassy]

3. As the visa work of 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)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). (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). The website of CKGS, Kuwait is <http://www.kw.ckgs.in/>

4. The Indian Passport & Visa Service Provider, M/s Cox & Kings Services (CKGS), Kuwait has been providing visa services to Kuwaiti nationals and expatriates 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 - 8PM on all working days. However, on closed holidays on Fridays and Saturday, the working hours are from 4 PM-8PM only. Attestation services are provided at Embassy premises only.

5. In emergency cases, Embassy will accept visa applications at its Visa Wing from applicants seeking urgent service. Embassy's Visa Officer may be contacted at Tel. No. 22550600 Extn. 279 and for passport related queries applicants may call First Secretary (Consular) at Mobile No. 97229948.

Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait, <http://www.indembkwt.org/DispNews.aspx?ID=970>

11. Rescue of Indians from Kuwait, New Delhi, 3 August 2016

Will the Minister of External Affairs be pleased to state:-

- Whether the Ministry has received any request recently for rescue of Indians sentenced to death due to their involvement in drug trafficking in Kuwait; and
- If so, the details thereof and the steps taken by the Ministry to save them and bring back to India?

Answer

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

(a) There are 17 Indian nationals in Kuwaiti jails, awarded death penalty after being convicted to serious crimes. 13 of these are on death row on charges of drug trafficking. Our Embassy in Kuwait has been regularly receiving requests from the family, friends and relatives of these Indian nationals for their early release from Kuwaiti jails. We have also received queries from Hon'ble Members of Parliament, Hon'ble Members of Legislative Assemblies and other dignitaries in this regard.

(b) Our Mission has taken up the matter with the Kuwaiti Government, requesting them to show mercy and commute their sentences to life imprisonment. India and Kuwait have signed an Agreement for the Transfer of Sentenced Persons, which came into force in April 2015. This however, does not provide for transfer of prisoners on death sentences.

Source: Lok Sabha (Council of People), Unstarred Question No. 2949, asked by Renuka Butta and Y.S. Avinash Reddy,

<http://164.100.47.192/Loksabha/Questions/OResult15.aspx?qref=38661&lsno=16>

12. 70th Independence Day celebrations in Kuwait, Kuwait, 15 August 2016

Despite extremely hot summer, approximately 3,000 Indian nationals joyously participated in the 70th Independence Day celebrations at the Indian Embassy premises. The function started with the unfurling of the tri-colour National Flag by Ambassador Sunil Jain and the singing of the National Anthem. Thereafter, Ambassador read out Hon'ble President's Address to the Nation. The Bohra Community band played a variety of marching tunes to the delight of the assembled gathering. The cultural programme concluded with the singing of patriotic songs which were sung by various Indian Cultural Academies and Indian Associations based in Kuwait.

Kuwait has about 9 lakh Indian nationals, working as businesspersons, doctors, engineers, chartered accountants, technicians in oil & gas sector, construction workers, nurses and domestic workers, etc. They participated in the Independence Day celebrations with great joy and enthusiasm, reflecting India's rich ethnic, linguistic, religious and cultural diversity.

Ambassador emphasized that the relations between the two countries have been historically close, warm and friendly, and commended the contribution of the Indian community in Kuwait's socio-economic development. On this auspicious occasion, he extended his warm greetings to the members of the Royal Family and to all members of the Indian community in Kuwait. The Ambassador highlighted several measures taken by the Embassy for the welfare of the community.

Hot chhole parathe, gulab jamuns, tea, juice and mineral water were served to all those present. Few Photographs taken on the occasion are attached.

Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait, <http://www.indembkwt.org/DispNews.aspx?ID=974>

13. Indian Embassy with Writer's Forum organized Multi-Lingual Kavi Sammellan/ Mushaira, Kuwait, 18 August 2016

The Indian Embassy in association with the Writer's Forum of Kuwait organized a Multi-Lingual Kavi Sammellan/ Mushaira at its Auditorium on the evening of 15th August 2016 from 6-10 pm on the occasion of 70th Independence Day of India. The event was attended by more than 300 persons from various Indian Associations resident in Kuwait.

The Multi-lingual Kavi Sammellan & Mushaira started with the song "Ae Mere watan ke Iogon" in accordance with the theme of 70th Independence Day (Yaad Karo Qurbani). The event had 24 poets & writers in ten regional languages of India, emphasizing National Integration. Besides, it also had one singer and Anchor. Keeping in line with the theme of the event, most of the participants focused on patriotism, secularism and National Integration.

Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait, <http://www.indembkwt.org/DispNews.aspx?ID=976>

f. OMAN

14. Vibrant Gujarat–Oman Roadshow and Business to Business Meeting, Muscat, 25 August 2016

The Embassy of India, Muscat, in association with Oman Chamber of Commerce & Industry (OCCI), is organizing a Roadshow and Business-to-Business Meeting (B2B) at the premises of the Chamber on Sunday, 4th September 2016 at 1000 hrs, hosting a high-level Vibrant Gujarat Delegation, which is visiting Oman under the auspices of the Government of Gujarat State of India, from 3-5 September 2016. In the evening on 4th September 2016 at 1800 hrs the Embassy will also host at its premises another B2B Meeting, comprising Vibrant Gujarat Delegation, Omani business community as well as Indian businessmen in Oman.

The Vibrant Gujarat Delegation comprises representatives of over 20 reputed Indian companies from various sectors, including Aviation, Education, Financial Services, Gems & Jewellery, Hospitality, Industrial Equipments, Information Technology, Infrastructure, Manufacturing (Industrial Equipments, Cables, Ceramics, Lighting, Ships, etc), Oil & Gas, Power, Textile, Travel and Tourism, in addition to representatives of Government of Gujarat and Indian Chambers.

The Gujarat Delegation aims to promote the upcoming Vibrant Gujarat Summit, to be held in Gandhinagar, Gujarat on 10-13 January 2017, and seek the participation of the government of Oman as well as businessmen from Oman at the Summit. The Delegation will also explore trade and investment opportunities in Oman, including collaborations and tie-ups with businesses and enterprises of Oman.

Interested Omani businessmen from the above mentioned sectors are invited to attend the Roadshow and B2B Meeting to be held at OCCI premises on Sunday, 4th September 2016 at 1000 hrs as well as to the B2B Meeting to be held at the Embassy at 1800hrs on the same day. For more information please contact Tel: 24684559 or commasst@indemb-oman.org

Source: Embassy of India, Muscat, <http://www.indemb-oman.org/inner.aspx?type=AllPressRelease&id=0>

15. India Embassy celebrates the 70th Independence Day of India, Muscat, 15 August 2016

Indian Embassy celebrated yesterday the 70th Independence Day of India at the premises of Indian Embassy in Muscat in presence of over 400 members of the Indian Community in Oman who joined the celebration.

HE Indra Mani Pandey, Ambassador of India to the Sultanate of Oman, unfurled the Indian Flag and read out the Address of President of India to the Nation delivered on the eve of the Independence Day. Students from the Indian School Al Seeb led the gathering in singing the National Anthem. They also sang other patriotic songs. Ambassador met with the members of Indian community individually to greet them and thank them for joining the celebration. On this occasion the Embassy screened Honourable Prime Minister's Independence Day speech delivered from the ramparts of Red Fort yesterday morning. A number of other documentary films, including a film outlining 70 initiatives of the Government, were screened.

In his remarks on the occasion, Ambassador greeted the Indian Community in Oman and thanked them for their outstanding contributions in strengthening India's friendly relations with Oman, and in development of Oman and India. Ambassador thanked the Government and people of Oman for their cooperation in expanding India's strategic partnership of Oman and in promoting the welfare of the Indian community in Oman. Ambassador expressed his appreciation for the support extended by the Indian community to the Embassy, including volunteers and social workers from within the community.

Earlier, Ambassador had unfurled the Tri-colour at Indian School Muscat in presence of thousands of students, teachers and parents. Other Indian Schools in Oman also celebrated India@70 in their unique ways. Celebrations were also organized by Indian communities in other cities of Oman. A number of other events have also been planned during the coming days and weeks and months.

With a view to mark the 70th year of India's independence, the Embassy will be organizing a number of special events throughout the year, leading up to August 2017, with the participation of Indian community in Oman as well as the Government and people of Oman.

Source: Embassy of India, Muscat,

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

g. QATAR

16. P Kumaran appointed as the next Ambassador of India to the State of Qatar, New Delhi, 26 August 2016

P Kumaran (IFS: 1992), presently Joint secretary in the Ministry, has been appointed as the next Ambassador of India to the State of Qatar.

He is expected to take up his assignment shortly.

Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, https://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/27335/P_Kumaran_appointed_as_the_next_Ambassador_of_India_to_the_State_of_Qatar

17. Embassy Open House on Wednesday, Doha, 31 August 2016

Embassy of India will hold an Open House on Wednesday, 31 August, 2016 to address any urgent consular and labour problems of Indian nationals in the State of Qatar.

The Open House will be held from 5.30 pm to 6.30 pm. written information on issues/cases proposed to be discussed with the Embassy may please be given from 5.30 pm to 6.00 pm. This will be followed by meeting with Embassy officials from 6.00 pm to 6.30 pm.

Salient information would be sent to the media after the Open House.

Source: Embassy of India, Doha,

http://indianembassyqatar.gov.in/pages/press_release_detail.php?id=175&page=1

h. SAUDI ARABIA

18. H.E. Ahmad Javed, Ambassador of India to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia called on the Governor of Najran Province H.H. Prince Jelawi bin Abdulaziz bin Musaed Al Saud, Riyadh, 2 August 2016

H.E. Ahmad Javed, Ambassador of India to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia called on the Governor of Najran Province H.H. Prince Jelawi bin Abdulaziz bin Musaed Al Saud today (August 2). Ambassador and Governor of Najran Province discussed issues of mutual interest and made special emphasis to strengthen and diversify the bilateral relations in various fields. Ambassador Ahmad Javed expressed his thanks to the Governor for ensuring the safety and welfare of the large Indian community in the Najran Province. August 18, 2016

Source: Embassy of India, Muscat,

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

19. H.E. Ahmad Javed, Ambassador of India to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia called on H.E. Adel Al Jubeir, Hon'ble Minister of Foreign Affairs, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in his office, Riyadh, 18 August 2016

H.E. Ahmad Javed, Ambassador of India to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia called on H.E. Adel Al Jubeir, Hon'ble Minister of Foreign Affairs, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in his office today in Riyadh (August 18). Ambassador and Hon'ble Minister discussed the issues of bilateral interests and made special emphasis on further strengthening the trade and investment engagements between the two friendly countries. Ambassador Ahmad Javed also discussed about the welfare of the large Indian community in the Kingdom with the Hon'ble Minister. Ambassador also handed over to the Hon'ble Minister a letter from the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India addressed to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud.

Source: Embassy of India, Muscat,

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

i. SYRIA

20. IIM offers MBA under ITEC to Syrians, 31 August 2016

The Indian Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, is offering a post graduate programme at the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, (IIMA) under the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation Programme (ITEC) to Syrian nationals.

The institute is offering a PGPX programme which is a one-year full time MBA programme designed for managers with substantial work experience. The programme is ranked 24th in the Financial Times - Global MBA ranking 2016 and has consistently been ranked number one or two in career progression.

IIM Ahmedabad is the leading management institutions in India and many global CEOs and management thinkers are IIMA alumni.

Candidates with graduate degrees, valid GMAT score, and above 27 years of age can submit their applications on the website: www.iimahd.ernet.in External website that opens in a new window. More details related to the programme are available at www.iimahd.ernet.in/programmes/pgpx.html External website that opens in a new window.

Source: Embassy of India, Damascus, <http://eoi.gov.in/damascus/?5364?000>

j. TURKEY

21. Coup in Turkey, New Delhi, 3 August 2016

Will the Minister of External Affairs be pleased to state:

- (a) Whether the Government's attention has been drawn to the military coup bid in Turkey recently;
- (b) If so, the details thereof and the response of the Government thereto;
- (c) Whether many Indians including Indian contingent at the World Schools Championship got stuck in Turkey;
- (d) If so, the details thereof;
- (e) Whether any loss to life and property to Indians living in Turkey has been reported;
- (f) If so, the details thereof; and
- (g) Whether the Government has made any arrangement to evacuate the Indians from Turkey and if so, the details thereof?

Answer

The Minister of State in the Ministry of External Affairs M. J. Akbar

(a) & (b) Yes, a coup attempt took place in Turkey on the night of 15-16 July, 2016. The Government of India followed the developments in Turkey and called upon all sides to support democracy and mandate of the ballot, and avoid bloodshed.

(c) & (d) Some Indians were temporarily stranded in Turkey during the failed coup attempt. A contingent of 148 players and 38 officials had gone to Turkey to take part in the World Schools

Gymnasiade from 11-18 July, 2016 and the entire contingent of players and officials returned safely to India on commercial flights and there was no need for any special arrangement for lifting them to India.

- (e) There are no reports of any loss of life and property of Indian living in Turkey.
- (f) Not applicable.
- (g) Those who wished to leave Turkey travelled on commercial flights and there was no need for any special arrangement for evacuation of Indians.

Source: Lok Sabha (Council of People), Unstarred Question No. 2871, asked by Sunil Baliram Gaikwad, Sudheer Gupta, Jayakumar Jayavardhan, T. RadhaKrishnan, Gajanan ChandraKantb Kirtikar, Dhananjay Bhim Rao Mahadik, Heena Vijaykumar Gavit, Vijaysinh Mohite Patil, Rajeev Shankarrao Satav, Supriya Sadanand Sule and Bidut Baran Mahato, <http://164.100.47.192/Loksabha/Questions/QResult15.aspx?qref=38655&lsno=16>

22. Visit of Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey to India (18-20 August 2016), New Delhi, 18 August 2016

H.E. Mevlut Cavusoglu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey will be visiting India from 18-20 August, 2016. This is the first official visit to India of Minister Cavusoglu who was in India on a transit halt last year when he met Hon'ble Minister of External Affairs.

During the visit, Hon'ble Minister for External Affairs will be holding talks with Minister Cavusoglu on 19 August. The entire gamut of bilateral relations as well as multilateral and regional issues is likely to be discussed during the talks. Additionally, Minister Cavusoglu is scheduled to call on Hon'ble Vice President of India on 19 August.

He is also scheduled to visit Hyderabad on 20th August to officially open the Turkish Consulate building.

India and Turkey enjoy deep-rooted ties. Our bilateral relations have been sustained and strengthened through regular high-level exchanges. Bilateral trade is also increasing and touched US\$ 6.3 billion last year. We hope the visit of the Turkish Foreign Minister will further strengthen our bilateral ties.

Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, http://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/27321/Visit_of_Minister_of_Foreign_Affairs_of_Turkey_to_India_August_18_20_2016

k. MULTILATERAL

23. Exploitation of Indian women in Gulf countries, New Delhi, 4 August 2016

Will the Minister of External Affairs be pleased to state:

- (a) Whether Government has taken note of the fact that the Indian women going abroad for various jobs are being exploited;
- (b) If so, the number of complaints received during the last three years in this regard, year-wise and country-wise, especially from the gulf countries;

- (c) Whether Government proposes to stop women under thirty years of age going to the Gulf countries as maids, and if so, the details thereof?

Answer

The Minister Of State In The Ministry Of External Affairs Gen. (Dr) V. K. Singh (Retd)

(a) & (b) Yes. Indian Missions/Posts in five Gulf countries namely, Bahrain, Oman, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Malaysia have reported that complaints have been received from Indian women workers, regarding non-payment of salaries and denial of legitimate labour rights and benefits such as non-issuance/renewal of residence permits, Overtime Allowance, weekly holidays, working for longer hours, refusal to grant exit/recruitment –entry permits for visit to India, refusal to allow the worker on final exit visa after completion of their contracts and non providing medical and insurance facilities etc. Incidents of confinement, abandoning of housemaids by their sponsors have also been reported. A statement showing the number of complaints received by the Indian Missions in the 18 Emigration Check Required (ECR) countries, including the gulf countries, during the last three years year-wise and country-wise, is at Annexure.

(c) The Government has already made the age restriction of 30 years mandatory in respect of all women emigrants emigrating on ECR passport, irrespective of the nature/category of employment. In addition, the foreign employers in the 18 ECR countries, who wish to employ Indian housemaids, have to deposit a Bank Guarantee equivalent to US\$2500 per person, in the Indian Mission, to safeguard and protect the interests of the Indian women Domestic Sector Workers (DSW). Further, a decision has been taken that recruitment of women workers for overseas employment in 18 ECR countries, henceforth shall be made only through State run recruiting agencies.

Source: Lok Sabha (Council of People), Unstarred Question No. 2000, asked by Pramod Tiwari, <http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/QResult.aspx>

24. Rescue of Indians from Gulf countries, New Delhi, 4 August 2016

Will the Minister of External Affairs be pleased to State:

- (a) Whether Government is aware that large number of youth are going to Gulf countries in search of employment and facing innumerable problems there;
- (b) Whether Government has any plan of keeping a data on this employment migration to Gulf countries, if so, the details thereof;
- (c) Whether the Ministry has received any request recently for rescue of Indians sentenced to death on the involvement of drug trafficking in Kuwait; and
- (d) If so, the details thereof and the steps taken by the Ministry to save them and bring back to India?

Answer

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

- (a) It is a fact that about 7.5 lakh Indians emigrate to Gulf Countries every year legally after obtaining Emigration Clearance. However, age specific data of emigrants is not maintained. Indian Missions/Posts in four Gulf countries namely Bahrain, Oman, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates (UAE) have reported that some Indian workers, who emigrate through illegal channels, face problems such as non-payment of salaries, denial of legitimate labour rights & benefits, non-issuance /renewal of residence permits, overtime allowances, weekly holidays, working for longer hours, refusal to grant exit/re-entry permits for visit to India, refusal to allow the worker on final exit visa after completion of their contracts, non-providing of medical and insurance facilities etc. Incidents of confinement, abandoning of housemaids by their sponsors have also been reported.
- (b) The Government has implemented since 31.03.2015, a digital system of Emigration Clearance (EC) called e-Migrate, in which the data of all emigrants holding Emigration Check Required (ECR) passports, emigrating for overseas employment to 18 ECR countries is captured. Number of emigrants who have emigrated to the Gulf countries during the last three years and current year is at Annexure.
- (c) The Ministry has recently received a reference requesting to rescue a few Indians sentenced for involvement in drug trafficking in Kuwait and explore the possibility for reducing the death sentence to life imprisonment to be served in India.
- (d) The Embassy through advisories cautions Indian community in Kuwait about the menace of drug trafficking, possession/use. The Embassy of India in Kuwait have informed, that they have requested concerned authorities in the Ministry of Justice, to show leniency/compassion in cases of Indian nationals under death sentence and grant mercy by reducing the execution sentence to life imprisonment. The Indian Mission, however, has very limited role in the release process of persons accused in drug trafficking cases. The release of accused or convicted persons solely depends upon the verdict of the Court as per law of the land. The Indian Mission in Kuwait has approached the Kuwaiti authorities to expedite the process of transfer of inmates, qualifying under the Transfer of Sentenced Persons (TSP) Agreement, to serve the remaining period of sentence in jails in India.

Source: Lok Sabha (Council of People), Unstarred Question No. 2, asked by Pardeep Kumar Balmuchu and TG Venkatesh, <http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/OResult.aspx>

25. FTAS with Israel and Gulf Countries, New Delhi, 10 August 2016

The Department of Commerce is negotiating a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with Israel. The eighth round was held in Israel from 24-26 November, 2013 wherein discussions took place on market access in goods, rules of origin, custom procedures and trade in services. In the subsequent inter-sessional consultations, the focus has been on a balanced outcome in both goods and services. Although India is negotiating the India-European Union Broad-based Bilateral Trade and Investment Agreement (India-EU BTIA) which includes Austria, there are no bilateral negotiations. The EU BTIA negotiations began in 2007 with sixteen rounds of negotiations concluded. Moreover, three rounds of stocktaking meetings have been held recently on 18th January, 2016, 22nd February, 2016 and 15th July, 2016. A Joint Study Group (JSG) has been

set up for considering the feasibility of entering into an FTA between India and Eurasian Economic Union (EaEU) comprising of 5 countries namely Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Armenia and Kyrgyzstan. The first meeting of the JSG with EaEU was held on 31st July, 2015. A Free Trade Agreement is also being negotiated with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) which comprises Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates. The second round of negotiations was held on 9-10 September, 2008 in Riyadh, with the GCC now reviewing all their economic engagements. India's bilateral trade (in US\$ million) with Israel, Austria, Eurasian and Gulf countries during the last three years is as under:

Sl. No.	Country	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016
1.	Israel	6058.52	5617.89	4955.53
2.	Austria	1,165.24	1,179.02	1,167.02
3.	Eurasian Countries			
(i)	Russia	6,015.66	6,346.23	6,183.88
(ii)	Kazakhstan	917.84	952.35	504.84
(iii)	Belarus	211.11	230.31	200.61
(iv)	Armenia	74.17	92.29	37.59
(v)	Kyrgyzstan	35.18	38.53	26.90
4.	Gulf countries			
(i)	Kuwait	18,214.69	14,580.85	6,209.58
(ii)	United Arab Emirates(UAE)	59,540.24	59,167.99	49,729.88
(iii)	Saudi Arabia	48,622.60	39,268.98	26,714.15
(iv)	Oman	5,763.45	4,131.69	3,863.86
(v)	Bahrain	1,202.60	919.23	1,011.00
(vi)	Qatar	16,677.04	15,659.69	9,925.09

(Source DGCIS)

The full impact of the decision of Great Britain to leave the European Union may take some time to unfold. The opportunities for India would depend on Great Britain's negotiations of terms of exit with the European Union and their future negotiated trade relations.

This information was given by the Commerce and Industry Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in a written reply in Rajya Sabha today.

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

Note 1 Crore = 10 million. Lakh = 100,000

For Lok Sabha and Press Information Bureau the items can be searched by Date and Ministries concerned.

Compiled by Jatin Kumar

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