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# **MEI INDIA WATCH**

**(Monthly survey of India's relations with the Middle East)**

**No. 8**

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**Compiled by**

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## **Political Issues**

### **Iran**

#### **1. To engage Iran, India looks to beat US, UN sanctions by being 'creative'**

**New Delhi, Tuesday, 3 August 2010**

In the clearest indication so far of New Delhi's intent to do business with Tehran despite the growing international isolation of Iran over its nuclear weapons programme, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has proposed "creative mechanisms" to insulate Indian enterprises from the adverse impact of UN and US sanctions. Last week, a Committee of Secretaries headed by the National Security Advisor decided to first approach Washington to keep Indian entities out of the sanctions. Pending that, Indian enterprises would be advised to consider venturing into Iran in consortium with Russian, Chinese or Kuwaiti companies.

**Source:** *The Indian Express*, New Delhi

For full report: <http://www.indianexpress.com/news/to-engage-iran-india-looks-to-beat-us-un-sanctions-by-being-creative/655365/>

## **2. India, Iran discuss 'regional solution' in Afghanistan**

**New Delhi, Saturday, 7 August 2010**

India and Iran on Friday (6 August) rounded off extensive discussions on Afghanistan, which included an Indo-Iranian initiative to develop a new trading route to the land locked country and a “regional approach” to bringing peace and stability. The talks appear to have further coordinated the positions of both the countries on national reconciliation in Afghanistan. Talks between visiting Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Mohammad Ali Fathollahi and senior Foreign Office officials here also touched on the possibility of a trilateral meeting involving India, Iran and Afghanistan, to discuss how the situation can be stabilised.

**Source:** *The Hindu*, Chennai

For full report: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/article555905.ece>

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## **3. India, Iran discuss Afghanistan, Chabahar port**

**New Delhi, Saturday, 7 August 2010**

Afghanistan and expansion of Iran’s Chabahar port dominated discussions between visiting Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Mohd Ali Fathollahi and the Indian leaders on Friday (6 August). Fathollahi dismissed fears that sanctions imposed by the UN and the US would have any “drastic impact” on Iran’s trade ties with Asian countries, including India. Saying that Iranian and Indian views on the situation in Afghanistan are “close”, he said his country did not give much importance to the leaked US military documents showing that Pakistan’s ISI was supporting the Taliban.

**Source:** *The Indian Express*, New Delhi

For full report: <http://www.indianexpress.com/news/india-iran-discuss-afghanistan-chabahar-port/657223/>

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## **4. Iran wants India at Afghanistan meet**

**New Delhi, Monday, 16 August 2010**

As India attempts to enlist support from Iran over the issue of political settlement in Afghanistan, Tehran wants India to attend a conference it plans to hold on the situation in the war-ravaged country. At the same time, however, it has conveyed to New Delhi that Iran attaches importance to Pakistan's role ensuring stability in the region. The conference is likely to take place soon and as many as seven countries in the region, including Pakistan, are likely to participate. While the conference will focus on Taliban reconciliation, Iran is likely to reiterate its demand for immediate withdrawal of the US-led forces from the country, a clear impediment in India's engagement with Iran over Afghanistan.

**Source:** *The Times of India*, New Delhi

For full report:

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Iran-wants-India-at-Af-meet/articleshow/6316779.cms>

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## Oman

### 5. Indian envoy hails Oman ties on I-Day

Muscat, Tuesday, 17 August 2010

India's ambassador in Oman underlined the "excellent progress" in ties between the two countries as Indians in the Sultanate celebrated their nation's Independence Day on Sunday (15 August) with gaiety and patriotic fervour. Addressing the gatherings, Wadhwa highlighted India's economic achievements and hailed the steady expansion of India-Oman relations. The ties, he pointed out, had been particularly noteworthy in the economic field.

**Source:** *Khaleej Times*, Dubai

For full report:

[http://www.khaleejtimes.ae/displayarticle.asp?xfile=data/international/2010/August/international\\_August852.xml&section=international&col=](http://www.khaleejtimes.ae/displayarticle.asp?xfile=data/international/2010/August/international_August852.xml&section=international&col=)

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## Energy Issues

### Algeria

### 6. Algeria invites India Inc for \$10-billion gas pipeline project

New Delhi, Sunday, 22 August 2010

Oil-rich Algeria, the second largest country in Africa, has invited Indian companies to participate in a US\$10 billion project to build an ambitious trans-Saharan gas pipeline originating from Nigeria via neighbouring Niger. "We need more foreign partners outside Europe for this 4,000-kilometre -long project," Algerian Ambassador to India Echarif Mohammed-Hacene said that the pipeline aims to provide some European companies alternatives to Russia gas. The ambassador said Algeria, one of the largest producers and exporters of natural gas in the world, has had some good experiences with the state-run Indian Oil Corp that has a US\$3-billion pact with his country's public sector company Sonatrach. The two state-owned firms had successfully bid for major hydrocarbon blocks in Libya.

**Source:** *The Economic Times*, New Delhi

For full report: <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/news-by-industry/energy/oil--gas/Algeria-invites-India-Inc-for-10-bn-gas-pipeline-project/articleshow/6391662.cms>

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## Economic Issues

### Egypt

#### **7. India, Egypt trade touch US\$3 billion**

**Cairo, Wednesday, 11 August, 2010**

Despite global financial crisis, trade volume between India and Egypt stood at US\$3 billion in the last fiscal, Indian Ambassador to Egypt R. Swaminatan has said. At a press briefing to mark the Indian Independence Day, Swaminatan hailed the historic relations between Egypt and India and referred to them as “two champions among the developing world and leader countries in their respective regions.”

**Source:** *Business Standard*, New Delhi

For full report: <http://business-standard.com/india/storypage.php?autono=104750&tp=on>

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### Kuwait

#### **8. India, Kuwait sign pact to boost labour welfare**

**Dubai, Thursday, 19 August 2010**

India and Kuwait have signed a document to move forward a process set in motion by a Joint Working Group on Labour, Employment and Manpower Development, the Indian embassy in Kuwait has said. The Indian Ambassador in Kuwait Ajai Malhotra and Kuwait's Under Secretary, Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour Mohammed Al-Kandari signed a document to move forward the process started by the second meeting of the Joint Working Group that was held in Kuwait in January this year.

**Source:** *Business Line*, Chennai

For full report: <http://www.hinduonnet.com/businessline/blnus/14191301.htm>

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**As part of its editorial policy, the MEI@ND standardizes spelling and date formats to make the text uniformly accessible and stylistically consistent.**

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