



MEI INDIA SPEAKS

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By
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Bilateral

a. Algeria

1. Kuldeep Singh appointed as the next Ambassador of India to Algeria, 16 April 2010

Mr. Kuldeep Singh Bhardwaj, presently Joint Secretary at Headquarters has been appointed as the next Ambassador of India to Algeria.

He is expected to take up his assignment shortly.

Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi
<http://meaindia.nic.in/pressrelease/2010/04/16pr01.htm>

b. Egypt

2. India- Egypt Defence Cooperation, 12 April 2010

The third India-Egypt Joint Defence Committee meeting was held in Cairo from 10-12 April 2010. The Indian side was led by Mr. R. K. Mathur, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Defence and the Egyptian side was led by Brigadier General Mohamed Masry Ali, Chief of the Planning Branch, Armed Forces Operations Authority.

Both sides discussed issues of mutual interest in the field of military cooperation and have agreed to further strengthen and increase military cooperation levels. Over the last three years, there has been a steady increase in the levels of military cooperation activities between two friendly nations.

A number of mutual exchange visits of military delegations to be carried out in 2010-2011 have been agreed upon.

Source: Indian Embassy, Cairo, Egypt

<http://www.indembcairo.com/Web%20Pages/Archives%20Eng%202010/Apr%2012a.htm>

c. Iran

3. Briefing by Foreign Secretary on Prime Minister's Visit to Washington for the Nuclear Security Summit, 4 April 2010

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Question: Madam, how much focus do you expect the American Administration to give to Iran during the Summit?

Foreign Secretary: I told you this is not about country-specific situations. We are discussing the issue of nuclear security in the global context.

...

Question: Madam Foreign Secretary, two countries that are not part of the 43 are Iran and DPRK.

Foreign Secretary: And Cuba and Venezuela.

Question: ... (Inaudible)... in terms of those which are in actual possession of fissile material or stuff that is meant to be addressed by the Conference. In the run up to the preparation for Washington, did India or any of the other 42 countries raise with the United States that this initiative would be more effective if every country which has material that requires physical protection takes part in the Summit? If not, why not?

Foreign Secretary: The issue did not really come up I must confess, during the preparations. But when we talk about nuclear security and the threat of nuclear terrorism, we are referring to it in a global context. All responsible members of the world community, international community, have a stake in ensuring that we have comprehensive nuclear security.

Question: One clarification. Since you speak of responsible members of the international community having a stake in nuclear security, does that by implication mean that Iran is not a responsible member?

Foreign Secretary: No, I never said that. Iran is a country with which we have bilateral relations which go back many many years. It is a substantive relationship. We regard Iran as a very important country in the region and a country with which we have had, as I said, extensive bilateral relations and dialogue and cooperation. It is a responsible country.

...

Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi

<http://meaindia.nic.in/pressbriefing/2010/04/04pb01.htm>

4. Briefing by Foreign Secretary on PM's meeting with President Obama, 11 April 2010

...

Question: Foreign Secretary, did the issue of Iran come up in this bilateral mini-summit? Even if it did not and the fact that it is not on the formal agenda of the Nuclear Security Summit either - obviously the US is trying to mobilise support to isolate Iran - how is India in this instance going to walk this tightrope? When you were at the Woodrow Wilson Centre that became sort of a lead question and even India's friends in Congress sort go ballistic on this whole Iran issue. So, how is India going to walk this tightrope even if it did not come up in the discussions?

Foreign Secretary: I believe our views in this regard are very well-known to the United States. Yes, the issue of Iran did figure in the discussions. This was especially with reference to the ongoing discussions in New York on the possibility of a UN Security Council Resolution to deal with the Iranian nuclear issue. So, the President briefed the Prime Minister on these discussions. Our Prime Minister made known India's position very clearly in this regard. You are aware of the fact that we have always stressed that Iran has certain obligations to fulfil as a member of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty on the nuclear issue as it concerns Iran. Also, on the issue of sanctions, our position that sanctions when they target ordinary people have always been counter-productive was mentioned by the Prime Minister. Both sides agreed to keep in touch on this issue and to continue their discussions.

...

Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi
<http://meaindia.nic.in/pressbriefing/2010/04/11pb01.htm>

5. Minister's Visit to Iran, 15 April 2010

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

- (a): whether it is a fact that he has called off his forthcoming visit to Iran;
- (b): if so, the reason therefore; and
- (c): whether Government of Iran has not shown any interest with regard to this visit?

Answer: The Minister of External Affairs (S.M. Krishna):

(a) to (c): I had received an invitation from the Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran to attend a celebration to be organized in Tehran and Shiraz on the occasion of the celebration of the Nowruz Festival. Dignitaries from other countries were also invited for the celebration. The Iranian side subsequently changed the dates for the celebration twice. After the first change of dates, I had conveyed to the Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran that I would be delighted to join in the Nowruz celebration. Unfortunately my prior commitments precluded my attending the event when the dates were changed a second time.

Source: *Rajya Sabha*, Unstarred Question No. 2189 asked by Brij Bhushan Tiwari,
<http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/QResult.aspx>

d. Israel

6. Defence Deals with Blacklisted Companies, 19 April 2010

Question: Will the Minister of Defence be pleased to state:

(a): whether the Government has opted to resume defence deals with the companies blacklisted in connection with corruption cases;

(b): if so, the details thereof along with the firms allowed for trials of equipment;

(c): the reasons for continuing with deals from such firms;

...

Answer: The Minister in the Ministry of Defence (A. K. Antony):

(a) to (c): In the light of the names of certain firms figuring in a FIR filed by the CBI on 17th May, 2009, it had been decided that all procurement cases in the pipeline with any of these firms may be put on hold till further orders. Subsequently, the matter was reviewed and it was decided that multi-vendor procurement cases, held up at various stages of technical evaluation/trials, may be progressed further as per the Defence Procurement Procedure, 2008. Accordingly, trials are being progressed in respect of such procurement cases relating to ... M/s IMI, Israel. However, no tender will be awarded to the companies mentioned in the FIR, unless the CBI investigation clears them totally.

...

Source: Lok Sabha, Unstarred Question No. 3652 asked by Asaduddin Owaisi, <http://164.100.47.132/LssNew/psearch/QResult15.aspx?qref=85097>

7. Greening of Thar Desert, 23 April 2010

Question: Will the Minister of Agriculture be pleased to state:

(a): whether the Indo-Israel 2006 Agricultural Plan relating to transfer of technology for greening Thar desert, by replicating Negev desert Israeli technique, is proving effective in our deserts, keeping in view the terrain and climatic variations;

(b): the result of the trials of Bealel's (Israeli) technologies which have been conducted at an Alphonso orchard in Kerala; and

(c): whether the Israeli irrigation model can be implemented in the Thar Desert, due to nearly zero availability of water?

Answer: The Minister of Agriculture (Sharad Pawar):

(a): ... In order to further Government's efforts in this regard a work plan was signed in 2006 between India and Israel for cooperation in the field of Agriculture and allied sectors. The focus of work plan is to benefit from Israeli expertise in development of agriculture with efficient use

of water such as micro, sprinkler irrigation, high value agriculture in desert conditions and post harvest management etc. Government's efforts have proved effective in desert development.

(b): Government of Kerala has informed that no study has been undertaken with Israeli technology in Alphonso Orchards in Kerala.

(c): Because of its high water use efficiency-fertigation, drip and sprinkler Irrigation system is being promoted not only in Rajasthan but in the entire Country under a Centrally Sponsored Scheme on Micro Irrigation.

Source: Rajya Sabha, Starred Question No. 419 asked by Vijay Jawaharlal Darda

<http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/QResult.aspx>

8. India gifts "Collected works of Gandhi" to Haifa University, 27 April 2010

Ambassador of India Navtej Sarna gifted the "Collected Works of Gandhi" to the President of the University of Haifa, Prof. Aaron Ben-Ze'ev on April 26, 2010 coinciding with the Ninth Annual Israeli Asian Studies Conference at the University of Haifa.

While receiving the volumes, Prof. Ben-Ze'ev said that "anyone looking to enrich their lives with the writings of a great man, and anyone searching for a philosophy of truth, love and non-violence, is invited to the University of Haifa Library to read through the writings of Mahatma Gandhi." He further added that, "It is very easy to follow Gandhi's teachings in times of peace; the challenge is to follow his teachings in times of conflict."

The presentation of the "Collected Works of Gandhi" by Embassy of India is expected to provide a further fillip to the Modern Indian Studies program at the University's Department of Asian Studies, which is the only program of its kind in Israel. University of Haifa's library has now become the only library in all of Israel to possess the entire collection of the works of Mahatma Gandhi.

Noted Indian author and historian Prof. Ramachandra Guha delivered the keynote address at the Conference.

Source: Indian Embassy, Tel Aviv, Israel

<http://www.indembassy.co.il/Haifa%20University.htm>

e. Libya

9. Indians trapped in Libya, 22 April 2010

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

(a): whether Government is aware that more than fifty Indians have been trapped in Libya, by their Indonesian employer/sponsor companies, without giving them salary or proper food, for more than one year;

(b): whether it is a fact that these employees are being detained against their will, even after expiry of the period of their work visa;

(c): if so, the details thereof; and

(d): the details of action being taken by Government for speedy repatriation of these hapless employees from Libya to India?

Answer: The Minister of External Affairs (S. M. Krishna):

(a) to (c): Yes. The Government is aware of the problems that were being faced by Indian workers employed in M/s. Citramegah Karya Gemilang (CKG), an Indonesian company in Libya.

(d): The matter was immediately taken up by the Indian Embassy in Tripoli with the Management of M/s. CKG. The Embassy also sought immediate intervention of the Libyan Foreign Ministry in the matter. At our Mission's intervention, dues of workers were paid till October 25, 2009 and repatriation to India of those workers who had completed their contract term began in October/November 2009. Our Mission in Tripoli is in regular touch with the Management of the Company and the Libyan Government for early repatriation of the Indian workers after settlement of their dues.

Source: *Rajya Sabha*, Unstarred Question No. 2956 asked by Prof. P J Kurian
<http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/QResult.aspx>

f. Palestine

10. The Government of India has contributed \$10 Million as Budgetary Support to the Palestinian National Authority, 25 April 2010

The Government of India has contributed US\$10 million as budgetary support to the Palestinian National Authority. The grant is in fulfilment to the commitment made by H.E. Prime Minister of India Dr. Manmohan Singh during the visit of H.E. President Mahmoud Abbas to New Delhi earlier this year.

The contribution comes within the frame of India's financial assistance to the Palestinian National Authority and other humanitarian assistance efforts for the well-being of the Palestinian people. In March 2009, India has also contributed a sum of US\$10 million as budgetary support to PNA, and has completed the construction of the Palestinian Embassy building and residences in New Delhi as a gift to the Palestinian people. In addition to the above, the Government of India, along with its IBSA partner-countries, has been contributing towards construction of an indoor sports complex in Ramallah, increased its contribution to UNRWA, and has also raised its annual training slots under its ITEC training program from 40 to 100 for Palestinians.

India's support to Palestine and its just cause is not new or unknown. India has always supported the Palestinian people in realizing their legitimate aspirations for a sovereign, independent and viable State of Palestine, existing side-by-side in peace with the State of Israel. To that end, India

has underlined its support for the Arab Peace Initiative and the Quartet Road Map and has repeatedly called for the implementation of relevant resolutions of the United Nations Security Council.

India shall continue to do all within its capacities to assist Palestine in its endeavours in capacity and institution-building.

Source: Representative Office of India, Ramallah, Palestine

<http://www.roi-ramallah.org.ps/2010/25-4-2010e.html>

g. Saudi Arabia

11. Visit of His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud, Governor of Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (11-15 April 2010), 9 April 2010

At the invitation of Hon'ble Vice President of India, Mr. Mohammad Hamid Ansari, His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud, Governor of Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, will visit India from April 11-15, 2010. During the visit, His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud will be received by the Hon'ble President of India and will have substantive discussions with the Hon'ble Vice President of India on matters of mutual interest. His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud will also address the Indian business community.

India and Saudi Arabia have historic and friendly relations which have deepened and diversified over a period of time and were given a great impetus by the landmark and historic visit of Dr. Manmohan Singh, Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia from February 27 to March 1, 2010. Saudi Arabia is an important trading and energy security partner of India. The bilateral trade between India and Saudi Arabia during 2008-2009 exceeded US\$ 25 billion. This visit will further strengthen these ties.

Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi

<http://meaindia.nic.in/pressrelease/2010/04/09pr02.htm>

12. Official Visit of His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud, Governor of Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 12 April 2010

Today, Hon'ble Vice President of India Mr. M. Hamid Ansari received HRH Prince Salman bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud, Governor of Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, who is on an official visit to India from April 11-15, 2010. Both the leaders underscored the excellent state of bilateral relations, marked by historic and strong ties that are a part of our history and culture.

The two countries have forged a strategic partnership pursuant to the historic and landmark visits of The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, His Majesty King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz, to India in 2006, and Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Dr. Manmohan Singh, to Saudi Arabia this year.

The Vice President mentioned that given our common interests and concerns, our capabilities and needs, the two countries are poised for a qualitatively substantive and stronger relationship. Saudi Arabia figured prominently in India's energy security matrix, he added. The Vice President welcomed Saudi investments in Indian infrastructure. HRH Prince Salman bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud emphasized the need for increasing economic and business interaction to promote greater mutual investments. He invited Indian business leaders to explore the Saudi market. He also acknowledged the stellar contribution made by the Indian community in the economic development of Saudi Arabia.

Both the leaders reiterated that extremism and terrorism, in all its forms and manifestations, are inherently destructive and must be fought irrespective of their source with all available means.

Later in the day, HRH Prince Salman addressed the leaders of the Indian business community urging them to explore possibilities for trade and investment in the Kingdom. It was decided to exchange more business delegations between the two countries.

HRH Prince Salman bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud also paid a courtesy call on the Hon'ble President Mrs. Pratibha Devisingh Patil.

Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi

[http://meaindia.nic.in/cgi-](http://meaindia.nic.in/cgi-bin/db2www/meaxpsite/coverpage.d2w/coverpg?sec=pr&filename=pressrelease/2010/04/12pr01.htm)

[bin/db2www/meaxpsite/coverpage.d2w/coverpg?sec=pr&filename=pressrelease/2010/04/12pr01.htm](http://meaindia.nic.in/cgi-bin/db2www/meaxpsite/coverpage.d2w/coverpg?sec=pr&filename=pressrelease/2010/04/12pr01.htm)

13. Governor of Riyadh Region calls on the President, 12 April 2010

The Governor of Riyadh Region in Saudi Arabia, His Royal Highness, Prince Salman Bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud called on the President of India, Mrs. Pratibha Devisingh Patil at *Rashtrapati Bhavan* on April 12, 2010. This was part of the on-going high level consultations between the two countries. The two discussed matters of mutual interest.

Source: Office of the President of India, New Delhi

<http://presidentofindia.nic.in/re120410.html>

14. Indo-Saudi Joint Commission, 15 April 2010

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

(a): whether it is a fact that India and Saudi Arabia have recently agreed to grant long-term multiple entry visas to businesspersons and also entered into agreements on Science and Technology, oil, gas and minerals in the recently held Indo-Saudi Joint Commission;

(b): if so, details of the agreements entered into between India and Saudi Arabia; and

(c): in what manner the above agreements benefit India?

Answer: The Minister of State in the ministry of External Affairs (Dr. Shashi Tharoor):

(a): During the Indo-Saudi Joint Commission meeting held in Riyadh from October 27-31, 2009 both sides expressed their satisfaction with the development of their commercial relations and facilitation of issuing multiple entry business visas to their respective business communities, and encouraged them to take full advantage of these facilities. To this effect, both sides agreed to grant six months multiple entry visas to business persons on production of a letter from the concerned chambers of commerce and export promotion councils in the country of the applicants.

(b) & (c): No agreements were signed with Saudi Arabia during Indo-Saudi Joint Commission meeting held in Riyadh from 27-31 October 2009.

Source: *Rajya Sabha*, Unstarred Question No. 2177 asked by R. C. Singh
<http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/qsearch.aspx>

15. PM's visit to Saudi Arabia, 15 April 2010

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

- (a): whether the Prime Minister visited Saudi Arabia recently;
- (b): if so, details thereof;
- (c): the Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) signed, so far;
- (d): the purpose behind such visit; and
- (e): the implementation status of projects arising from this visit?

Answer: The Minister of External Affairs (S.M. Krishna):

(a): Yes Sir. The Prime Minister visited Saudi Arabia from February 27- March 1, 2010.

(b): The Prime Minister's visit to Saudi Arabia took place 28 years after the last visit by an Indian Prime Minister, that of late Mrs. Indira Gandhi in 1982. Prime Minister and the Saudi King reviewed the progress in bilateral relations in recent years and in particular the implementation of the Delhi Declaration signed by the two leaders during the visit of King Abdullah to India in January 2006. They also discussed regional and global issues of mutual interest. We import about 20% of our crude requirements from Saudi Arabia which may be further increased over a time to meet our energy and development needs. We have been assured of continued Saudi understanding and support in this regard. The two leaders renewed their condemnation of the phenomena of terrorism, extremism and violence, affirming that it is global and threatens all societies and is not linked to any race, colour or belief. The international community must, therefore, resolutely combat terrorism.

(c): The following Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs)/ agreements were signed during the visit:

- (i) Extradition Treaty;
 - (ii) Agreement for Transfer of Sentenced Persons;
 - (iii) Memorandum of Understanding between the Indian Space Research Organization and the King Abdul Aziz City for Science and Technology for cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space;
 - (iv) Agreement on scientific and technological cooperation between the Department of Science and Technology and the King Abdul Aziz City for Science and Technology in Saudi Arabia; and
 - (v) MOU on Cultural Cooperation between the respective Ministries of Culture.
 - (vi) MOU between Centre for Development of Advance Computing (C-DAC) and King Abdul-Aziz City for Science & Technology (KACST) on Cooperation in Information Technology and Services;
 - (vii) Agreement on News Cooperation between Saudi Press Agency (SPA) & Press Trust of India (PTI); and
 - (viii) MOU between Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore and King Saud University, Riyadh for Cooperation in the field of Research & Education.
- (d): The purpose of the visit was to further strengthen the bilateral relations and maintain interaction at the highest level. Riyadh Declaration signed by the Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh and His Majesty King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud during the visit provides a detailed strategy to this effect and to raise our cooperation to a strategic partnership covering security, economic, defence and political areas. In particular, both leaders emphasized the importance of strengthening the strategic energy partnership.
- (e): No projects were set up during the visit.

Source: *Rajya Sabha*, Starred Question No. 294 asked by Mohd. Ali Khan
<http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/qsearch.aspx>

h. Syria

16. India-Syria Relations, 17 April 2010

India and Syria enjoy friendly relations based on historic and civilizational ties, similar perceptions on many international and regional issues and membership of NAM, positive sentiments towards India at the popular level, and India's traditional support for just Arab causes. There have been numerous exchanges of high level visits. President Dr. Bashar Al Assad visited India in June 2008. From our side, Prime Minister Mr. A. B. Vajpayee visited Syria in November 2003.

In relation to India, the Syrian leadership has preserved a secular understanding of India's sensitivities in respect of Jammu & Kashmir, a neutral attitude in the OIC, respect for India's size and independent foreign policy, and support for India's aspirations, credentials and candidacy for permanent membership of the UN Security Council.

BILATERAL TRADE

Following are the trade figures of Indian exports to/imports from Syria for the last two years: (Figures in US\$ millions)

Year	2007-2008	2008-2009
Export	673.22	362.35
Import	20.27	166.11
Total	693.49	528.46

Major commodities of Export

Textiles and yarn, Petroleum products, Transport equipment, Machinery & instruments, Drugs, pharmaceuticals & fine chemicals,

Major commodities of Import

Petroleum, crude & products and minerals, Machinery except electric & electronic, Leather, Pearls, precious and semi-precious stones.

Over the last few years, the following activities have taken place:

(a): An Agreement between EXIM Bank and the Syrian side for a US\$ 25 million credit line has been concluded. (The credit line was announced during the visit of former PM A. B. Vajpayee in November 2003.). The credit line has been allocated to the Ministry of Industry for the rehabilitation and modernization of an Iron & Steel Plant of the Syrian public sector undertaking, GECOSTEEL. An Indian company, Apollo International has won the contract for the project through an international tender in which 2 other Indian companies and a Turkish company participated, for a price of Euro 21.7 million.

(b): In October 2009, another agreement for a credit line of US\$ 100 million (first tranche of US\$ 240 million credit) has been signed by EXIM Bank. The credit line will part finance the power augmentation project at the Tishreen Power Plant. Countering several obstacles, BHEL finally signed the contract in October 2009 for installing 2X200 MW power plants. The project is to be completed in 33 months.

(c): Himalaya Herbals has a joint venture providing technical know-how and materials for manufacture and marketing of herbal drugs and cosmetics in Syria.

(d): Mahindra has signed a 10 year contract with M/s Al Furat Tractor Company for supply of tractors with a provision for joint venture assembly in the future that could amount to over Euro 30 million. 300 tractors were ordered in 2006 and 2007 but there is greater potential.

(e): A team of engineers from PDIL and RITES and led by MECON is carrying out feasibility study on augmentation of Syria's phosphate production. The study is to be completed by May 2010. An MOU is on the anvil.

(f): In 2003, during PM Vajpayee's visit, an offer of US\$ 1 million was made for providing equipment and training to Syria to set up a biotech centre. While we have fulfilled part of our commitment by presenting the equipment, we have yet to send training personnel.

(g): India has two significant investments in Syria in the oil sector. These are an agreement signed in January 2004 between ONGC and IPR International for exploration of oil/natural gas in Block 24 near Deir-e-Zor in northern Syria, and the more recent investment by ONGC India and CNPC China to jointly acquire the stake of PetroCanada in the Syrian Al Furat Petroleum Company.

(h): The Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement and the Bilateral Investment Promotion & Protection Agreement (BIPPA) were concluded in June 2008 during President Assad's visit to India.

Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi

<http://meaindia.nic.in/foreignrelation/syria.pdf>

j. United Arab Emirates

17. Death Sentence to Families of Punjab in UAE, 22 April 2010

Question: Will the minister of Overseas Indian Affairs be pleased to state:

(a): whether Government is aware of reported death sentence awarded by Sharjah Sharia Court to certain innocent families of Punjab who were picked up from the Airport while they were returning to India after their contracts ended in UAE;

(b): whether these families gathered on 31st March, 2010 in Jaitu village of Punjab and issued appeal both to State and Central Governments to intervene in this case as persons involved were neither produced in Court nor they knew nature of charges framed against them; and

(c): if so, the action Government proposes to take in this matter?

Answer: The Minister of Overseas Indian Affairs (Vayalar Ravi):

(a): Yes, Sir. The Indian mission in Dubai had reported the verdict pronounced by the Court of First Instance Sharjah, UAE awarding death sentence to 17 Indians for bootlegging and murder of a Pakistani national. The incident had occurred during a clash in January, 2009 in Sharjah Industrial Area, due to a dispute between two groups of persons. The Court found 17 Indians

guilty of murder of a Pakistani national besides injuring three other Pakistanis. The verdict was pronounced on 28.03.2010.

(b): It has been reported by Govt. of Punjab that the families of those awarded death sentence by Sharjah Court had gathered at a rally at Jaitu on 31.03.2010 and had appealed for intervention to get their sentences waived off, but no written representation/appeal has been received in this regard.

(c): Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs has instructed the Indian Mission at Dubai to engage the services of a leading legal firm to defend the accused. The cost for engaging the legal firm would be borne by the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs.

Source: Rajya Sabha, Unstarred Question No. 2951 asked by Ramdas Agarwal
<http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/QResult.aspx>

Multilateral

18. Export of Defence Equipment, 19 April 2010

Question: Will the Minister of Defence be pleased to state:

- (a): whether the Government has registered an increase in export of defence equipments;
- (b): if so, the details thereof including the names of equipments exported during the last three years;
- (c): the countries from which proposals for purchase have been received; and
- (d): the decision taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer: Minister of the State in the Ministry of Defence (M M Pallam Raju):

(a): No, Madam.

(b): The export of defence equipment during the last three years is as under: (All values in Rs. crores)

2007-2008-	187.43
2008-2009-	385.41
2009-2010-	171.63

The equipment exported during the last three years are arms and ammunitions, aircraft components and services, communication equipments, radars, night vision devices and harbour tugs.

(c): Proposals for purchase have been received and also executed from time to time from different countries viz. ..., Israel, Oman, Turkey, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Algeria, UAE,

(d): The decision is taken by the government on a case to case basis taking into account all relevant factors and in consultation with MEA.

Source: Lok Sabha, Unstarred Question No. 3858 asked by Ashok Kumar Rawat
<http://164.100.47.132/LssNew/psearch/QResult15.aspx?qref=85143>

19. Extradition Treaties with Countries, 29 April 2010

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

(a): whether Government has decided to sign extradition treaties with a number of countries in the near future;

(b): if so, the details thereof;

(c): whether Government has recently signed any extradition treaties in the past few months; and

(d): if so, the benefits, if any, that have accrued from such extradition treaties?

Answer: The Minister of State in the Ministry of External Affairs (Mrs. Preneet Kaur):

(a) & (b): It is the policy of the Government of India to conclude Extradition Treaties with as many countries as possible. India has already initiated Extradition Treaties with ... Israel, Morocco, and ... to be signed in the near future.

(c) & (d): India has signed Extradition Treaties with Saudi Arabia in February 2010 in order to ensure availability of fugitive criminals for trial in India.

Source: Rajya Sabha, Unstarred Question No. 3753 asked by Mrs. Shobhana Bhartia
<http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/QResult.aspx>

Miscellaneous

20. Formation of Hajj Corporation, 22 April 2010

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

(a): whether Government has any concrete plan to remove hardship of Hajj pilgrims from India with regard to air lifting and arrangements of accommodation in Saudi Arabia;

(b): if so, the details thereof;

(c): whether there is also any plan to form a Hajj Corporation to handle Hajj arrangement properly; and

(d): if so, the steps taken by Government to provide lump sum aid to establish Hajj Corporation to ensure its smooth functioning?

Answer: The Minister of External Affairs (S. M. Krishna):

(a) to (d): For the Hajj pilgrims travelling on the quota of the Hajj Committee of India, set up under an Act of Parliament in 2002, the Government of India makes arrangements for the airlifting of such pilgrims and their accommodation in Saudi Arabia. The Consulate General of India, Jeddah is also actively involved in the making of such arrangements. The airlifting of pilgrims, which is subsidized by the Government, is arranged from several embarkation points in India. To facilitate the travel of pilgrims utilizing the services of Private Tour Operators, the Government has taken a number of decisions to streamline their functioning so that they provides the necessary services and facilities to the pilgrims. The Consulate General of India, Jeddah, Embassy of India, Riyadh and Hajj Committee of India, along with the State Hajj Committees, are involved in the hiring of accommodation for the pilgrims in accordance with well set procedures and norms. The Hajj Committee of India, in coordination with the State Hajj Committees, provides to the pilgrims information regarding confirmation of their seats, travel documents, transportation, accommodation, release of foreign exchange, embarkation points and departure dates etc. It is the constant endeavour of the Government to keep making improvements in the arrangements for the Hajj pilgrims and to provide them with better facilities after taking into account the feedback received from all concerned.

Source: *Rajya Sabha*, Unstarred Question No. 2962 asked by Ahmad Saeed Malihabadi
<http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/QResult.aspx>

21. Issuing of Passport for Hajj, 29 April 2010

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

(a): whether it is a fact that prominent separatist leaders are being issued passports for visits to different countries including Pakistan;

(b): whether it is also a fact that passports are denied to many persons desirous of performing Hajj on the ground that they are related to a low rung separatist political worker or a dead militant or even a surrendered militant; and

(c): if so, the rationale behind this policy and whether Government contemplates any change in this policy to provide travel documents to all aspirants for Hajj pilgrimage?

Answer: The minister of State in the Ministry of External Affairs (Mrs. Preneet Kaur):

(a): Yes.

(b): No. Hajj passports valid for eight months for Saudi Arabia only were issued to Hajj pilgrims without any police verification provided there was nothing adverse against the persons in the system.

(c): If a person applies for ordinary passport in the normal course, the application is subjected to usual police verification. However, if application is recommended by the Hajj Committee on the basis of draw of lots among Hajj pilgrim applicants, the application is processed without police verification. During 2009, almost all Hajj pilgrims whose names were recommended by the Hajj Committee were issued Hajj passports.

Source: *Rajya Sabha*, Unstarred Question No. 3749 asked by G N Ratanpuri
<http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/QResult.aspx>

Notes:

Core=Ten million;

Lok Sabha =House of the People, Lower House of Indian Parliament

Rajya Sabha= Council of States or Upper House of Indian Parliament.

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