



MEI INDIA SPEAKS

(Monthly Digest of Official Indian Statements on Middle East)

No. 15

October 2010

By
Anjani Kumar Singh

Bilateral Issues

a. Bahrain

- 1. Mr. Mohan Kumar appointed as the next Ambassador of India to Bahrain, 16 September 2010**

Mr. Mohan Kumar, presently Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of India, Paris, has been appointed as the next Ambassador of India to Bahrain in succession to Dr. George Joseph.

2. He is expected to take up his assignment shortly.

Source: MEA, New Delhi, <http://www.mea.gov.in/mystart.php?id=290016505>

b. Egypt

- 2. Celebration of Indian Technical & Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Day in Cairo, 22 September 2010**

ITEC day was celebrated in Cairo on 21st September, 2010. H.E. Mrs. Fayaza Aboulnaga, the Hon'ble Minister of International Cooperation, Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt, was the Chief Guest of the function. A large number of Egyptian nationals, who have attended various courses organized under the ITEC scheme in India in the past, were present. A documentary on the journey to T. Nagar, produced by two ITEC alumni was screened during the celebration.

In her address, H.E Mrs. Fayaza Aboulnaga said that India was one of the biggest emerging economies in the world and Egypt was closely following the developments in India especially in the fields of human resource development, scientific research and development and technical

innovation. She also said that the Egyptian nationals through the ITEC programme had an opportunity to acquaint themselves with the richness of India civilization and culture. Calling for more such cooperation, the Minister said that this programme enhances south-south cooperation between the developing countries.

Ambassador Swaminathan recalled that each year, India spends \$100 million on the ITEC programme in extending training to nationals from more than 158 countries. He also underlined that last year, 45 Egyptian nationals availed training under ITEC and about 70 are expected to attend various training courses this year. He praised the role being played by the Ministry of International Cooperation under the leadership of H.E Mrs. Fayaza Aboulnaga in enhancing India-Egypt relations in general and implementing the ITEC programme in particular.

Launched in 1964 as a programme of cooperation and partnership by India to address the needs of the friendly developing countries, the ITEC programme includes training of nominees of ITEC partner countries in educational, technical and vocational institutes in India, projects and project related activities such as feasibility studies and consultancy services, deputation of Indian experts abroad, study tours and aid for disaster relief etc.

Source: Embassy of India Cairo

<http://www.indembcairo.com/Web%20Pages/Archives%20Eng%202010/Sep%2022.htm>

3. Visit of H.E Mr. Suresh K Goel, Vice Minister & Director General, Indian Council for Cultural Relations from 24-27 September 2010, 27 September 2010

In connection with the on-going Indian Cultural Week in Egypt (26 September -3 October 2010), Mr. Suresh K Goel, Vice Minister & Director General, Indian Council for Cultural Relations, (ICCR) New Delhi paid an official visit to Cairo from 24-27 September, 2010. During his visit Mr. Goel called on H.E Dr Zahi Hawass, Secretary General, Supreme Council for Antiquities, ARE on 26 September 2010 and on H.E Mr. Farouk Hosni, Minister of Culture of ARE on 27 September 2010 to discuss bilateral cultural issues. On 26 September, 2010 he jointly inaugurated the Indian Film Week along with H.E Mr. Hossam Nassar, First under Secretary for Foreign Cultural Relations, Ministry of Culture and H.E Mr. R Swaminathan, Ambassador of India to Egypt. The Indian Film Week began with a panel discussion held at the Supreme Council of Culture of ARE on "Indian Cinema :Then and Now" in which many Egyptian film critics, actors, film directors and media persons participated followed by the screening of the famous period film 'Jodhaa Akbar'.

Mr. Goel heads the ICCR which was established in 1950 by India's first Education Minister Maulana Abul Kalam Azad to promote understanding of Indian culture among foreign peoples. ICCR has sponsored the visit of four cultural troupes and an exhibition of contemporary Indian art in connection with the Indian Cultural Week in Egypt.

Source: Embassy of India, Cairo

<http://www.indembcairo.com/Web%20Pages/Archives%20Eng%202010/Sep%2027.htm>

4. High Level Business delegation from India visits Egypt, 28 September 2010

A high level business delegation from India consisting of CEOs of 12 prominent industrial houses will be visiting Cairo 1-3rd October 2010.

The delegation is led by Mr. Tapan Ray, Managing Director, Gujarat State Petroleum Corporation (GSPC). Renowned Indian companies like Gujarat State Petroleum Corporation (GSPC), ESSAR, Suzlon Energy Ltd., L&T and the representative of Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) will be part of the delegation. The main objective of the delegation is to showcase the strengths of the Gujarat Province as an investment destination but also looking for potential joint venture partners in Egypt.

Gujarat is one of the most industrialized provinces of India and the State Government of Gujarat is organizing a Summit titled Vibrant Gujarat 2011 which is scheduled to take place at Gandhinagar, Gujarat on 12-13 January, 2011. Gujarat has been organizing summits biennially since 2003 and Vibrant Gujarat 2011 will be the fifth such Summit. The last four Summits have been a major success and have attracted investment proposals of over US \$ 385 bn.

The high level Indian delegation which will be in Cairo is also visiting several parts of the world in order to mobilize participation for the Summit. Vibrant Gujarat 2011 aims to facilitate investment alliances for the participating countries. The biennial Summit will be the ideal platform to discuss and deliberate business opportunities. It is expected that the Summit will attract leading global economies and a galaxy of international fora of business, policy makers, business and political delegations. The Summit will host extensive B2B interactions, mega exhibition, sectoral seminars and conventions and would provide a very friendly ambience to the business community.

In Egypt the Indian delegation is organizing a Road Show in collaboration with the Federation of Egyptian Industries (FEI) followed by one-to-one meetings between select business representatives from both Egypt and India at Aida Hall, Marriott Hotel on Sunday, 3rd October from 1130 hrs to 1700 hrs. The road-show will provide an excellent opportunity for close interaction between the Egyptian and Indian entrepreneurs.

The governments and the business communities in India and Egypt are working closely to promote the dynamism in bilateral economic relations. The visit of the Gujarat delegation is part of the efforts to expand commercial and economic relations between Egypt and India. The delegation's visit will open up new opportunities for Egypt and India and the Indian and Egyptian companies can cooperate in mutually beneficial manner.

Source: Embassy of India, Cairo

<http://www.indembcairo.com/Web%20Pages/Archives%20Eng%202010/Sep%2028.htm>

c. Iran

5. IPI gas pipeline, 25 August 2010

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

- (a) whether India wants Iran to take the responsibility of the gas pipeline passing through Pakistan;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether India also wants to make payments only after gas is received in India;
- (d) if so, the details thereof;
- (e) the views of Iran in this regard?

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

- (a) to (e) India has been involved in discussions on the India-Pakistan-Iran (IPI) pipeline project. Among the issues that have been focussed upon relating to the pipeline project are those relating to pricing, transit fee and transportation tariff, point of delivery, project structure and security of the pipeline. Such multilateral projects involve protracted discussions, as all the aspects have to be carefully examined and deliberated upon to the satisfaction of the participating countries to protect each country's interests and to avoid any problems in the future in the successful operation of the Project. India and Iran have agreed for an early meeting of the India-Iran bilateral Joint Working Group on Oil And Gas, which discusses bilateral cooperation in the energy sector, including the IPI Gas pipeline project.

Source: Lok Sabha(House of the People), Unstarred Question no. 4681 asked by Mr Nikhil Kumar Chaudhary, <http://www.mea.gov.in/mystart.php?id=220216464>

6. Effects of sanctions on Iran, August 26, 2010

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

- (a) whether it is a fact that the recent international sanctions by US as well as UN on Iran have affected India's business with Iran;
- (b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps being taken to insulate Indian enterprises from the adverse impact of these international sanctions on Iran?

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

(a) & (b) The UN Security Council passed UNSC Resolution 1929 on Iran with regard to its nuclear issue. Certain unilateral sanctions have also been imposed on Iran by US and EU. The latest round of sanctions has increased the difficulty for foreign entities to do business with Iran.

(c) Since UN Security Council Resolution 1929 has been adopted under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, it is mandatory for all UN member states to comply with its provisions. Indian companies doing business in Iran are required to comply with these provisions, if their business covers areas prohibited by the UNSC Resolution under reference.

Source: Rajya Sabha (council of States), Unstarred Question no. 3236 asked by Mr. M.P. Achuthan and Mr. D. Raja, 26 August 2010, <http://www.mea.gov.in/mystart.php?id=220116435>

7. Sanctions on Iran, 26 August 2010

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

(a) the stand of the country towards Iran in the wake of sanctions by US and other western countries against Iran; and

(b) the steps that are being taken to strengthen and improve our relations with Iran?

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

(a) The UN Security Council has passed UNSC Resolution 1929 on the Iran nuclear issue. Certain unilateral sanctions have also been imposed by US and other Western countries on Iran in the same context. India's consistent position has been that Iran has a right to develop peaceful use of nuclear energy while fulfilling all its obligations and commitments. The Iran nuclear issue should be resolved through peaceful diplomacy, and the framework of the IAEA provides the best forum to address technical aspects of the issue.

(b) There have been regular high-level exchanges between India and Iran including consultations at Ministerial level to discuss bilateral relations and issues of regional and global importance. Meetings of the Joint Commission and Joint Working Groups and exchange of delegations have been held to promote economic and commercial cooperation, cultural and educational ties and address consular matters. The interactions of academic and research institutions as also of chambers of commerce and industry and commercial entities have been facilitated. These include the organization of bilateral seminars, meetings and exchange of visits and promotional events.

Source: Rajya Sabha (council of States), Unstarred Question no. 3230 asked by Mr. Sabir Ali and Mr. Mohammed Adeeb. <http://www.mea.gov.in/mystart.php?id=220116429>

d. Kuwait

8. India and Kuwait to Enhance Cooperation in Oil Sector, 28 September 2010

Kuwaiti to Consider Investment in Petrochemicals and Crude Oil Storage Facilities

Mr. Mulri Deora, Minister of Petroleum & Natural Gas, and his counterpart from Kuwait Mr. Sheikh Ahamad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah emphasized enhancing cooperation between the two countries in a meeting here today. Stating that India would like to further strengthen relationship with Kuwait, Mr. Deora said that there are several areas where the two countries can work together in the oil and gas sector. These include long term arrangement of crude oil supply from Kuwait to India and mutual investments in various areas of hydrocarbon sector.

One of the important issues discussed was possible investment of Kuwait in the oil and gas sector particularly in petrochemical complexes and building of crude oil storage hub in India. Indian side invited participation of Kuwait in the E&P opportunities in India with the launch of ninth round of exploration blocks under new exploration licensing policy (NELP-IX) which India is launching soon. The talks also focused on participation of the companies of two companies together in E&P opportunities in third countries. India offered consultancy services of Engineers India Limited, a premier engineering and consultancy firm in the oil and gas sector. The cooperation in providing training facilities and building R&D facilities both in upstream and downstream sector were also deliberated. The two sides further discussed the offer of ONGC-TERI for bioremediation in Kuwait to clean up the soils affected by oil spills.

The bilateral meeting was also attended by Mr. Sudhir Bhargava, Additional Secretary and other senior officers of the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas and oil PSUs CEOs from India. Kuwaiti delegation included Mr. Hussain Esmail, President, KPI and Mr. Yusuef Al-Qabandi, Deputy MD (International Marketing), Kuwait Petroleum Corporation among other senior officers and executives.

Earlier visiting Minister called on the Vice President Mohammed Hamid Ansari and Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh. He also met Minister of Information & Broadcasting Mrs Ambika Soni. The Kuwaiti delegation had detailed discussions with the top executives of Indian Oil and ONGC separately over last two days.

Source: Press Information Bureau, New Delhi, <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=66041>

e. Oman

9. 6th Indo-Oman Joint Commission Reviews Bilateral Economic Relations, 6 September 2010

The 6th Indo-Oman Joint Commission Meeting held in Muscat yesterday has reviewed the entire gamut of bilateral economic relations and means of enhancing bilateral trade between the two countries. Mr. Anand Sharma, Minister of Commerce & Industry who led the Indian delegation to Oman also chaired the Joint Business Council Meeting held at Oman Chamber of Commerce which was organized by OCCI and Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industries (FICCI). Mr. Rajan Mittal, FICCI President represented the Indian Business while the Omani delegation was led by the Minister of Commerce & Industry, Maqbool Ali Sultan.

The two way trade which rose to \$4.5 billion needs to increase further to reflect the growing India-Oman business relations. During the talks, Mr. Sharma noted with satisfaction that the US \$ 969 million Oman India Fertilizer Company (OMIFCO) at Sur; acquisition of the Shadeed Iron & Steel plant in the port city of Sohar for \$ 464 million; raising of its stake to 26% from 4% in the \$ 1 billion refinery at Bina in Madhya Pradesh by Oman Oil Company are a few shining examples of burgeoning economic and bilateral co-operation. “Mr. Sharma also called on the deputy Prime Minister for the Council of Ministers Sayyid Fahad bin Mahmoud bin Mohammed Al Said and held substantive discussions with Special Advisor to HM The Sultan for External Liaison Dr. Omar bin Abdul Muniem Al-Zawawi.

Mr. Sharma emphasized the priority attached by Indian Government for cooperation with Oman in Petroleum, Gas and fertilizer sectors while the Deputy PM underscored the need for greater cooperation in capacity building and information technology. Omani side agreed in-principle to invest in India for revival of few closed plants of Fertilizer Corporation of India (FCI) and Hindustan Fertilizer Corporation Ltd. (HFCL) and the expansion in RCF (PSU of Government of India) through investment by Oman Oil Company. Both sides agreed to form a Senior level Working Group representing Government of India, RCF, KRIBHCO from Indian side and Oman Oil Company from Omani side for initiating early due diligence. It is estimated that these will bring in investments of close to \$3billion. BPCL and Oman Oil Marketing Company agreed to collaborate and jointly study the possibility of setting up a lube blending plant in Oman and marketing in neighbouring countries.

The India-Oman Joint Investment Fund with a seed capital of US \$ 100 million, to be increased up-to US \$1.5 billion, has been agreed upon through an MOU signed between the two sides in November 2008. This initiative is expected to function as a catalyst to promote and partnership between the private sectors of the two countries and enhance the trade and investment between the two countries. Mr. Sharma stressed on the need for the fund to be operationalized and augmented immediately. A number of sectors have been identified for investment cooperation

such as (a) Agriculture (b) Air ports, sea ports and railways (c) Hospitals (d) Power including nuclear power (e) Renewable energy including solar and wind energy (f) Mining (g) Oil and gas (h) Education and skill development (i) Tourism (j) Healthcare (k) Infrastructure and (l) Chemicals and Fertilisers.

Both countries agreed to pursue cooperation in field of Human Resource Development especially skill development in the fields of Technology, Management and Information Technology (IT) including co-operation in Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) sector. The Omani side expressed its keenness for setting up super-specialty hospitals in India and diagnostic facilities in the form of Joint Ventures, for which an Omani delegation would go to India shortly. Investments in agro processing specially in Indian SEZs were also discussed. Oman has a strategic location, and has entered into Free Trade Agreements with several countries including USA, which offers huge opportunities for Indian products to these markets apart from the GCC.

Source: Press Information Bureau, New Delhi

<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=65564>

f. United Arab Emirates

10. India-UAE Political Consultations, 21 September 2010

India United Arab Emirates Political Consultations were held on 19th September 2010 in Abu Dhabi. The Indian side was led by Ms Vijayalatha Reddy, Secretary (East) and the UAE side by Dr. Anwar Mohammed Gargash, UAE Minister of State for Foreign Affairs.

The high level consultations reviewed the current state of bilateral relations between India and the UAE. Both sides expressed satisfaction at the friendly relations based on historic links and agreed to intensify high level bilateral exchanges to consolidate the excellent relations. In this context the need for early convening of the Ministerial level India-UAE Joint Commission meeting was underscored. The sides also expressed satisfaction at the growth of trade and economic links particularly that they had become largest trading partners for each other. Discussions focused on UAE investments in the aviation, ports, telecommunications and oil and gas sectors. The Indian side proposed that the India-UAE Trade policy forum set up by the two countries to facilitate bilateral trade should be made more active. It requested more investment from the UAE in India especially in the infrastructural areas.

The two sides reviewed the status of proposed agreements, such as on Security cooperation, Transfer of sentenced persons, Mutual Assistance on Customs Matters etc. They agreed to expedite the conclusion of these agreements.

The sides exchanged views on major regional and global issues, including the middle-east peace process, reform of the United Nations, reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan etc. They noted

similarity of perceptions and agreed to have regular consultations.

The two sides acknowledged the positive role of the Indian community in the development of India-UAE relations and the Indian side thanked the UAE side for protecting the welfare of the Indian community.

Source: MEA, New Delhi, <http://www.mea.gov.in/mystart.php?id=290016499>

11. Visit of UAE delegation, 25 August 2010

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

- (a) whether a high level delegation of United Arab Emirates (UAE) visited India and held discussions on various economic and cultural issues;
- (b) if so, the details in this regard;
- (c) the details of non oil trade volume between the two countries during 2009-10 as compared to previous year; and
- (d) the details of issues on which both countries have agreed for cooperation?

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

(a), (b) & (d) A high level delegation led by His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Makhtoum, UAE Vice President & Prime Minister, Ruler of Dubai paid a working visit to India on March 11, 2010. The visiting dignitary called on Hon'ble Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh.

During the meeting issues of mutual interest to both the countries were discussed including greater collaboration in fighting the menace of terrorism and for enhancing security cooperation. The two leaders also reviewed the state of bilateral relations and agreed to increase cooperation in the area of advanced technologies, security, trade and investments.

(c) In 2008-09 and 2009-10 the non-oil trade between India and UAE was US\$ 48.26 billion and US\$ 43.47 billion respectively.

Source: Lok Sabha (House of the People), Unstarred Question no. 4617 asked by Mr. Pradeep Majhi, <http://www.mea.gov.in/mystart.php?id=220216458>

Specific Issues

g. Hajj

12. Increase in Hajj Quota, 25 August 2010

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

(a) whether the Union Government has received representations from various quarters including the Members of Parliament regarding increase in the Hajj quota; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the action taken by the Government in this regard?

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

(a) There are 17 States where the number of applications for Hajj 2010 are more than the quota allotted and from where, in general, there is a demand for allotment of more quotas.

(b) The quota of States is allotted on the basis of the percentage of the Muslim population as per the 2001 census and any increase will depend on the results of the ongoing census.

Source: Lok Sabha, Unstarred Question no. 4779 asked by Mr. Abdul Rahman.

<http://www.mea.gov.in/mystart.php?id=220216489>

13. Hajj 2010 operations, 16 September 2010

The Union Cabinet today gave its approval to various issues concerning the Hajj 2010 operations. This year approximately 1,70,000 pilgrims from India will be going for Hajj. Out of these 125,000 pilgrims will go through Hajj Committee of India. The number of pilgrims who could perform Hajj during a particular year is decided by the Saudi Arabian Government.

Air travel arrangements for these 125,000 pilgrims will be made by the Ministry of Civil Aviation. These pilgrims will be carried from 21 embarkation points through chartered flights. Bhopal and Goa have been added as new embarkation points this year.

This year each pilgrim going on Hajj through Hajj Committee of India will pay Rs.16,000 (plus airport charges) as air fare and the balance air fare (cost of operations) will be borne by the Government.

This year most of the pilgrims will be carried by Saudi Arabian Airlines, National Private Air Services Company Limited (NAS) and Al-Wafeer Air, which have been selected through a sealed tender process. Air India will coordinate the operations and provide support on cost basis, wherever required.

Source: Press information Bureau, <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=65803>

h. Palestine

14. External Affairs Minister's intervention at the Ministerial Meeting of the NAM Committee on Palestine, New York, 25 September 2010

Mr. Chairman,

Thank you for the opportunity to address this important committee. I recall the last meeting of the committee at Sharm el-Sheikh in July 2009, where India renewed its commitment to the just cause of the Palestinian people and, to seeking progress in the peace process.

2. In line with our support for UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, India renews its support for a negotiated solution resulting in a sovereign, independent, viable and united State of Palestine living within secure and recognized borders, side by side at peace with Israel as endorsed in the Quartet Roadmap and UNSC Resolutions 1397 & 1515. We have also supported the Arab Peace Plan, which calls for withdrawal of Israel to pre-1967 borders, along with recognition of Israel and the establishment of the State of Palestine with East Jerusalem as its capital.

3. We have also called for an end to illegal Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories and for an early and significant easing of restrictions on the free movement of persons and goods within Palestine. On the events of 31 May 2010, India deplored the tragic loss of life and the reports of killings and injuries to people on the boats carrying supplies for Gaza. There can be no justification for such indiscriminate use of force, which we condemned. We extended our sympathies to the families of the dead and wounded. It is our firm conviction that lasting peace and security in the region can be achieved only through peaceful dialogue and not through use of force.

4. We welcome the 'direct talks' between the Israelis and the Palestinians, which have resumed after a hiatus of almost 2 years. We are hopeful that the talks and negotiations would continue, leading to a comprehensive peace process for final resolution of the Middle East conflict.

5. Allow me, Mr. Chairman, to bring to your attention, India's continued developmental support to Palestine. Last year, we enhanced our annual contribution to United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East [UNRWA] to \$ 1 million, besides, making a special contribution of US \$ 1 million to UNRWA in response to UNWRA's flash appeal. Last year and this year, India contributed US\$ 10 million annually as untied budget support to the Palestinian National Authority. This year's budget support followed from discussions between His Excellency, President Mahmoud Abbas and Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh in New Delhi in February this year. These exemplify India's continuing commitment to Palestine.

6. Mr. Chairman, I avail myself of this opportunity to renew India's commitment to the work of this committee, confident that under your guidance, we would continue to contribute to the work of the Movement in support of the Palestinian people.

Thank you.

Source: MEA, New Delhi, <http://www.mea.gov.in/mystart.php?id=290016526>

Multilateral Issues/ Regional Issues

i. India and West Asia

15. Address by Foreign Secretary at Harvard on 'India's Global Role', 20 September 2010

...In our search for energy security, we must look not only at West Asia, but farther afield, to Africa, and to Latin America so that we can develop hydrocarbon resources in these regions and also import such resources for the successful pursuit of our development goals.... The Indian Ocean has a palpable human dimension, as one Indian strategic analyst put it recently, given the fact that millions of people from Saudi Arabia to India to Indonesia, live in close proximity of the Ocean. The demography of its littoral States and the hydrocarbon energy index associated with it give the Indian Ocean a distinctive identity. The strategic relevance of this area derives from the vast hydrocarbon resources in West Asia, the connectivity provided by the Suez-Malacca route, and the geo-political imperatives flowing from this reality...

Source: MEA, New Delhi, <http://www.mea.gov.in/mystart.php?id=290016512>

j. Gulf of Aden

16. Three Pirate Boats in Four Days, 16 September 2010

On 15 Sep 10, while on an anti piracy escort mission in the Gulf of Aden, Indian Naval Ship Delhi successfully neutralised another pirate boat, the third in four days, while escorting Merchant Vessels.

Deployed in the Gulf of Aden since mid July 2010, INS Delhi was escorting 06 merchant vessels with a cumulative strength of 40 Indians amongst the 147 crew on board the six ships. At about 1000h on 15 Sep 10 in a position 108km south of the Yemeni Coast, in the IRTC (International Recommended Transit Corridor), a dhow was detected approaching the formation. The dhow was intercepted and boarded by a team of Marine Commandos. A cache of arms including a 7.62 mm rifle, 06 Rocket Propelled Grenades (RPGs) and ammunition was found on board the dhow. The dhow was disarmed. The team from INS Delhi had thus successfully mitigated piracy threats in the Gulf of Aden. It is indeed notable that this was the fourth such action, taken by INS Delhi,

three being in the last four days. It may be recalled that INS Delhi had, earlier, similarly disarmed boats on 5th, 12th 13th September.

Since the Indian Navy started its anti-piracy operations in October 2008 this is the 18th piracy attack that has been prevented. The Indian Navy continues to ensure safety of ships and their crew irrespective of their nationality, in keeping with true naval traditions.

Source: Press Information Bureau, New Delhi,
<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=65787>

Miscellaneous

k. Indians in Middle East

17. Indians detained in foreign jails, 26 August 2010

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

- (a) the number of Indians detained in various countries; and
- (b) the number of Indians released and brought back to India due to the intervention of Indian Embassies?
- (c)

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

(a) & (b) A statement is annexed.

Source: Rajya Sabha (Council of States), Starred Question no. 432 asked by Mrs. Brinda Karat, <http://www.mea.gov.in/meaxpsite/parliament/rs/2010/08/26rs02.pdf>

Note: The Annexure contains details of Indians Detained in the Middle Eastern Countries along with similar information on other countries worldwide.

Anjani Kumar Singh is a Doctoral candidate in the School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, new Delhi.

The views expressed here are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views/positions of the MEI@ND.

Editor, MEI India Speaks: P R Kumaraswamy