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Compiled by

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Bilateral

a. Iran

1. Speech by Foreign Secretary at IDSA-IPIS Strategic Dialogue on India and Iran: An Enduring Relationship, 5 July 2010

N.S. Sisodia, Ambassador Nabizadeh, Dr. Mostafa Dolatyar and the distinguished participants from India and Iran in this Strategic Dialogue.

2. Over the years, the IDSA-IPIS Dialogue has become an important forum for in-depth discussion on a wide range of issues concerning the bilateral, regional and global context of our relations with Iran. I am therefore delighted to be here this morning to deliver the keynote address of the IDSA-IPIS Dialogue. Your deliberations today will no doubt, provide important inputs and insights on the India-Iran interaction as also new thoughts and ideas on the future path of this relationship.

3. The question often asked is how we define the importance of Iran for India in strategic terms. I shall attempt to do so. First of all, Iran is part of what has been defined as India's "proximate neighbourhood"; secondly, it has a strategic position with a long coastline along the Persian Gulf, including the narrow entrance to the Gulf at the Straits of Hormuz – a region within the security parameter of India; thirdly, it is a major source of our energy and hydrocarbon supplies; fourthly, in a globalizing world where there are immense opportunities for Indian business and investment, and as both our societies seek socio-economic

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transformation, the scope for technical and economic cooperation with Iran is self-evident; fifthly, the threats we face from terrorism and extremism require intensified dialogue and cooperation between our two governments; and to round this off, we share many common interests in the multilateral sphere. The narrative of our relations against the background of our long-standing civilizational ties, is therefore one of fundamental complementarities and natural affinities.

4. It is certainly true that the civilizational relationship between India and Iran is unique in the world. Speaking in Tehran in 1958, India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru had said that he doubted if there are any two countries in the wide world which have had such close and long historical contact as Iran and India. It is true that when we look at our monuments, our culture and our language, our cuisine and literature as also our intuitive societal reaction to the world around us, there is much that is in common between our two nations. And, where links between our two peoples are concerned, India and Iran are particularly blessed, because of the close people-to-people connection and constant interaction that has spanned centuries of trade and commerce and cultural exchanges and journeys of the mind. Most importantly, ties at the popular level remain vibrant, driven by not just businessmen, students and tourists but also the millions of people in both countries who may have never set foot in the other country, but are conscious of their rich shared heritage, and have an instinctive feeling of goodwill towards the other.

5. This then provides us the bedrock on which to build our contemporary relations. I would argue that the India-Iran relationship will become even more important with the inevitable rise of both India and Iran in this century, which has been dubbed by many as the Asian century. Most scholars foresee a resurgence of the Asian Continent, not just in economic terms, where India's economy is among the fastest growing in the world, but also in science and technology, in new and renewable energies, and in all the fields that are at the cutting edge of human innovation and progress.

6. The challenge we face is the following: First, how do our two countries grasp the strategic opportunities for cooperation between India and Iran? Second, how do we build a pragmatic, and therefore enduring relationship, rising above hoary ideological positions, ensuring that our multi-faceted ties are not held hostage to merely one or two issues? Thirdly, do we have the tools to leverage such a relationship to benefit our people and their standard of living, which is ultimately the goal of our foreign policy?

7. Let me say that India desires to promote and enhance relations with Iran in a way that serves the interests of our two countries. Our approach to Iran is embedded within the rationale that defines our foreign policy— our developmental priorities, our independent national interest, our commitment to multi-polarity over uni-polarity, our consciousness of the inequities in the global order today. Our relations with Iran are a fundamental component of our 'Look West' policy in our immediate region, just as our "Look East" policy has propelled our relations with the countries of ASEAN and East Asia.

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8. If we consider the specific areas where our interests converge and potential for cooperation is the greatest, the most important is regional stability. India and Iran shared a common border till 1947. We are both neighbours of Afghanistan and Pakistan and have both long suffered from the threat of transnational terrorism emanating from beyond our borders. India, like Iran, is supportive of the efforts of the Afghan Government and people to build a democratic, pluralistic and peaceful Afghanistan. Neither of our countries wish to see the prospect of fundamentalist and extremist groups once again suppressing the aspirations of the Afghan people and forcing Afghanistan back to being a training ground and sanctuary for terrorist groups. Our vision of Afghanistan as a hub for economic activity, trade and transit linking South and Central Asia is shared by the Iranian side. India and Iran also share an interest in the stability of Central Asia and the Persian Gulf. It is but natural that our assessment of the regional situation is very similar. We need to move beyond mere articulation of positions as the Afghan conundrum deepens and could have a deleterious impact on our two countries and the region in case the forces of extremism and obscurantism are made arbiters of the fate of the Afghan people. Our cooperation and information sharing on counter-terrorism must be the subject of more intensive focus and attention in the future.

9. I had the pleasure of having detailed discussions with my Iranian counterpart, Deputy Foreign Minister Fathollahi, during my visit to Tehran this February for Foreign Office Consultations. I sensed on many of the above issues, a convergence of views with my Iranian colleagues. I would today reiterate the need for structured, systematic and regular consultations with Iran on the situation in Afghanistan. It is also important that we build upon the progress already made on our joint cooperation projects in the region, and put in place mechanisms for carrying forward our cooperation in these areas. I would like to mention, in particular, the Chabahar Port Project, and the need for accelerating our joint efforts to fully realize the potential of the Port as well as the associated railway project. These are projects that are in the common interest of India, Iran and Afghanistan, but also the countries of Central Asia. Improving the connectivity of Chabahar Port to the Zaranj-Delaram Highway (which was built with Indian assistance despite terrorist threats and with the sacrifice of Indian and Afghan lives, and has transformed the economy of Nimroz Province in Afghanistan) will open up the Indian market to Afghan agricultural and other exports. It will also help in combating the scourge of illicit drugs production and export which has affected Iran more than any other country, and assist the trade, transport and transit network of Iran. It will help India transport its goods, including humanitarian supplies, to Afghanistan, Central Asia and beyond.

This project is, thus, at the heart of the common vision that India and Iran have for Afghanistan and the region as a whole, of increased and easier flow of goods, and creation of a network of transport routes and energy pipelines that will bind our people together in an arc of stability, prosperity and peace. The International North South Corridor Project, which also includes Russia and the Central Asian Republics in addition to India and Iran, is also a concept awaiting operationalization on the ground. We would welcome greater interest on part of the Iranian Government and private sector in realizing these projects, which should be

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seen not only as commercial but also as strategic in nature, not just for India, but also for all the countries in the region.

10. Iran is a country extremely important to India from the perspective of energy security. There is a natural complementarity between the needs of energy-hungry India which hopes to grow at a rate of 8-10% in the coming years and Iran which is home to third largest proven oil reserves and second largest gas reserves. Iran is not only located relatively close to India permitting transportation of oil and gas at relatively low cost over sea as well as land, it also has the potential of being a transit country for supply of third country energy to India given its increasing links in this field with the landlocked countries of Central Asia. The Iran-Pakistan-India; Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India and SAGE undersea pipeline projects deserve special mention in this regard. These projects, if realised, have the potential of making Iran an important element of a large energy corridor stretching from Central Asia to India. India has repeatedly made clear the fact that accessing energy resources from all parts of the world is absolutely critical to the continued growth of its economy and Iran has the potential to play an important role in this regard.

11. Economic relationships, including in the energy sector help develop further complementarities and interdependencies, which are, in the modern world, more valuable than any number of political sermons or speeches of goodwill. We must strive to nurture these relationships, with a strategic perspective in mind. Our bilateral Joint Commission, headed by our External Affairs Minister and the Iranian Minister for Economic Affairs and Finance, will be meeting from July 8-9 to discuss a range of bilateral issues which are of direct benefit to our two peoples. The Indian side looks forward to these discussions and the follow up meetings to instill fresh momentum in India-Iran relations, particularly in the strategic areas that I have identified above.

12. Another potential area of cooperation for our countries is in maritime security. Indian interest in the Indian Ocean region and the proximate neighbourhood of which both our countries are a part, focuses on the need for regional peace and stability, mutually beneficial relations with littoral states, accessibility of oil and gas resources, the freedom of navigation through the Persian Gulf and the Straits of Hormuz, and access to regional markets for our goods, technology, investment, labour and services. The Indian Ocean touches both our nations, and we cannot remain immune to the challenges that we face, including an increase in piracy off the coast of Africa, and beyond. We welcome suggestions from the Iranian side on how to carry forward a dialogue on cooperation in this area. We would welcome Iran's participation in the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium.

13. I would like to briefly touch on the Iran nuclear issue. India's position on the issue has been consistent. We support the right of all States to undertake peaceful uses of nuclear energy consistent with their international obligations. We have conveyed to our interlocutors that all concerned should adopt a flexible approach to achieve a comprehensive solution to all issues. India has always supported dialogue and avoidance of confrontation.

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14. The IAEA continues to provide the best framework for addressing technical issues related to the Iranian nuclear programme. We are justifiably concerned that the extra-territorial nature of certain unilateral sanctions recently imposed by individual countries, with their restrictions on investment by third countries in Iran's energy sector, can have a direct and adverse impact on Indian companies and more importantly, on our energy security and our attempts to meet the development needs of our people.

15. As in the case of all multi-faceted, constructive relations between old friends, it is natural that we may have differences on one or the other issue, but I would submit that the areas of convergence far outweigh any differences. It is vital that we keep the larger picture of our relations in mind, in particular the strategic potential of our ties. I am confident that in the coming decade, the impulse in both our countries towards similar positions on a whole range of economic, political and strategic issues will remain strong. We are of the region and will belong here forever, even as outsiders come and go. Our region is, moreover, one that is rising, though yet to realize its full potential. It is in this long-term context that we must see India-Iran relations.

16. I look forward to carefully studying and learning from the outcome of your deliberations. I extend to our Iranian guests the warmest good wishes of the people and Government of India and through you to your leadership and your Government. The India-Iran relationship is good for the people of our two countries, for the region and for the world as a whole, and it is our historical responsibility to further enhance these relations.

Thank you.

Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi

<http://meaindia.nic.in/speech/2010/07/05ss01.htm>

2. India-Iran Joint Commission Meeting, 7 July 2010

The 16th Session of the Joint Commission between India and Iran will be held in New Delhi on July 8-9, 2010. The Joint Commission is co-chaired on the Iranian side by H.E. Dr. Seyed Shamseddin Hosseini, Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance, Islamic Republic of Iran and on the Indian side by Hon. External Affairs Minister S.M. Krishna.

India and Iran have been holding discussions at regular intervals on issues relating to economic cooperation under the aegis of the Joint Commission mechanism, which was established in July 1983. The last session of the Joint Commission was held in Tehran, Iran from 30 October- 2 November 2008.

Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi

<http://meaindia.nic.in/pressrelease/2010/07/07pr01.htm>

3. India-Iran Joint Commission Meeting, 9 July 2010

The 16th Session of the India-Iran Joint Commission was held in New Delhi on 8-9 July 2010. The Session was co-chaired on the Iranian side by H.E. Dr. Seyed Shamseddin Hosseini, Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance, Islamic Republic of Iran and on the Indian side by External Affairs Minister S. M. Krishna. The meeting of the Joint Commission provided an opportunity to review bilateral economic and cultural cooperation. It was agreed that the next Session of the Joint Commission would be held in Tehran.

The following MoUs/Agreements were signed during the Joint Commission Meeting:

1. Air Services Agreement.
2. Agreement on Transfer of Sentenced Persons.
3. MoU on Cooperation in New & Renewable Energy.
4. MoU on Cooperation in Small Scale Industry between National Small Industries Corporation (NSIC) and Iranian Small Industries and Industrial Parks Organisation (ISIPO)
5. Programme of Cooperation on Science & Technology.
6. MoU on Cooperation between Central Pulp and Paper Research Institute of India (CPPRI) and Gorgan University of Agricultural Science and Natural Resources (GUASNR).

During his visit, Dr. Seyed Shamseddin Hosseini called on Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh. He also met Pranab Mukherjee, Minister of Finance and Shivshankar Menon, National Security Advisor, and inaugurated a business seminar organized by FICCI on 'Investment Opportunities in Iran'. The business delegation accompanying Dr. Hosseini also held meetings with ASSOCHAM and CII.

Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi

<http://meaindia.nic.in/pressrelease/2010/07/09pr01.htm>

4. New Air Service Agreement between India and Iran, 9 July 2010

On the sidelines of the 16th India – Iran Joint Commission Meeting, the Civil Aviation delegation of two countries discussed air services matters and signed an MOU today. The salient features of the MOU include facilitation of code share and cooperative marketing arrangement and an enhancement in the capacity entitlement for the designated airlines of each side from 23 services/ week presently to 31 services/ week. Two additional points of call in the respective countries, to be mutually decided upon later, has been agreed.

The new Air Services Agreement (ASA) will be based on the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) template. The revised ASA will supersede the ASA initialed between

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the two countries on 30 April 1980. It has the potential to spur greater trade investment, tourism and strengthening the cultural exchange between the two countries besides bringing it in tune with the developments in the international civil aviation scenario.

Source: Ministry of Civil Aviation Press Release, Press Information Bureau, New Delhi
<http://www.pib.nic.in/release/release.asp?relid=63135>

5. Sanctions on Iran over its Nuclear Programme, 29 July 2010

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

- (a) whether it is a fact that the UN has imposed fresh sanctions against Iran over its nuclear programme;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the countries which have supported this move in the Security Council; and
- (c) Government's stand on the issue?

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

(a) & (b): Yes. The UN Security Council recently adopted resolution 1929 (2010) on 9 June 2010 expanding sanctions against Iran over its nuclear programme. In the 15-member Security Council, the resolution was supported by 12 members, namely, USA, UK, Russia, France, China, Austria, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Gabon, Japan, Mexico, Nigeria and Uganda. Two members, Brazil and Turkey, voted against the resolution and Lebanon abstained.

(c) India's consistent position has been that Iran must observe all its international commitments as a state party to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). India also believes that Iran has the right to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

Source: Rajya Sabha (Council of States), Unstarred Question No. 459 asked by Mr. D. Raja
<http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/QResult.aspx>

b. Israel

6. Israeli attack on Gaza-bound ship, 28 July 2010

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

- (a) whether the Government's attention has been drawn to the recent attacks by the Israeli Commandos on a high profile Gaza bound aid flotilla; and
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the Government's reaction thereto?

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

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(a) Yes.

(b) On 31 May 2010, Israeli Defence Forces intercepted `Mavi Marmara` - along with five other ships in international waters in an attempt to prevent these ships from breaking the Israeli enforced naval blockade of Gaza. The Israeli action resulted in loss of nine lives and injuries to several others. The ships were brought to the Israeli port of Ashdod after interception and activists were subsequently allowed to return to their respective countries.

The Government of India issued a statement the same day, stating-“India deplores 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 condemn. We extend 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.”

Source: Lok Sabha (House of the People), Unstarred Question No. 507 asked by Mr. Gurudas Das Gupta

<http://164.100.47.132/LssNew/psearch/QResult15.aspx?qref=89603>

c. Oman

7. India and Oman Sign MoU on Cultural Cooperation, 12 July 2010

India and Oman signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) here today on bilateral Cultural Cooperation. The MoU was signed by Jawahar Sircar, Secretary, Ministry of Culture on behalf of the Government of India, and by H. E. Humaid Al-Maani, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman in India on behalf of the Oman Government. The MoU comes into force with immediate effect and will remain in force for a period of five years and shall stand renewed automatically thereafter for successive periods of five years.

The MoU seeks to:

- Encourage exchange of visits by the cultural, art and literature delegations.
- Promote cultural relations on heritage, including archaeology, museums and conservation of the ancient monuments.
- Encourage exchange of expertise, visits and publications between cultural institutions, establishments and authorities of the two countries. Exchange copies of documents and manuscripts relevant to the history of both countries.
- Encourage exchange of visits by delegations in the field of music, theatre and folklore and learn about the other party's experience in this context.
- Encourage exchange of visits by writers and literateurs and exchange of expertise in the field of scientific clubs and literature.

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- Encourage cultural and art weeks where fine arts and photography exhibitions may be held in each other's country.
- Encourage participation in the International Book Fairs in each other's country on commercial basis.
- Exchange experience on renovation, bibliography, documentation and categorization in order to maintain manuscripts or documents of historical importance.
- Exchange publications in the field of literature, culture and periodicals.
- Encourage cooperation in the protection of intellectual property rights.

Source: Ministry of Culture Press Release, Press Information Bureau, New Delhi

<http://www.pib.nic.in/release/release.asp?relid=63167>

8. India Oman Joint Investment Fund, Agreements Signed Between State Bank of India and State General Reserve Fund of Oman, 14 July 2010

State Bank of India and State General Reserve Fund of Oman signed a Joint Venture Agreement to form a Joint Investment Fund, here today. The Agreement was signed by O. P. Bhatt, Chairman, SBI and Warith Al-Kharusi, CEO, State General Reserve Fund (SGRF), Sultanate of Oman in the presence of Finance Minister, Pranab Mukherjee and Ahmed Macki, Minister of National Economy, Government of Oman. The India Oman Joint Investment Fund shall aim at making equity investments in various sectors of Indian economy.

This fund will start with a corpus of US\$ 100 million to be contributed equally by State General Reserve Fund of Oman (SGRF) and SBI. The fund will explore opportunity in all sectors without any specific preference. The Fund would, for the present, limit itself to Indian investment opportunities. There is no specific sector focus and the Fund will look for opportunities in all sectors of India permitted by regulations from time to time. The Fund can be expanded to have a corpus of up to US\$ 1.5 billion through future schemes, depending upon the experience of the initial fund. The purpose of the collaboration is to attract capital into India from that region.

The management company shall be owned 50:50 by SBI and SGRF, with equal profit sharing by both sides.

Speaking on the occasion, Mukherjee said that signing of Joint Venture agreement for the Fund is part of the overall cooperation in various areas between India and Oman. During the visit of Prime Minister of India to Muscat in November 2008, an MoU was signed between the SBI and SGRF to set up a Joint Investment Fund to make equity investments in various sectors of both the countries. The Finance Minister said that this Joint Venture Agreement will open a new chapter in the multi-dimensional relations between the two countries.

Source: Ministry of Finance Press Release, Press Information Bureau, New Delhi

<http://www.pib.nic.in/release/release.asp?relid=63237>

d. Yemen

9. Dr. Ausaf Sayeed appointed as the next Ambassador of India to Yemen, 19 July 2010

Dr. Ausaf Sayeed, presently Joint Secretary at Headquarters, has been appointed as the next Ambassador of India to Yemen.

Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi

<http://meaindia.nic.in/pressrelease/2010/07/19pr01.htm>

Miscellaneous

10. Media reports on arrangement of accommodation for Hajj pilgrims, 9 July 2010

In response to a question, the Official Spokesperson said that the Ministry of External Affairs is aware of some media reports regarding certain issues relating to hiring of accommodation for Hajj pilgrims in 2008. As and when information of such nature comes to Ministry's notice, immediate remedial steps are taken in consultation with the concerned Head of Mission /Post and their views and comments are sought. It is hereby also clarified that, regarding this particular matter, a detailed explanation of the procedures followed for hiring of accommodation for Hajj-2008 was provided by the Post concerned and the suggestions made have been implemented.

Due care is being exercised to ensure that accommodation hired both in 2009 and 2010 is strictly according to the guidelines laid down by the competent authority and in keeping with the local conditions.

Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi

<http://meaindia.nic.in/pressrelease/2010/07/09pr02.htm>

11. Indian workers abroad, 29 July 2010

Indian workers emigrate for seeking employment in all categories of work ranging from low skilled to high skilled professional jobs. Data is available only for ECR (Emigration Check Required) category of workers going abroad. This category includes those workers who have not passed class 10 level school certificate and are emigrating to 17 notified countries. The details of ECR Category workers who emigrated to 17 notified countries during 2008, 2009 and 2010 (upto 30.6.2010) are at Annexure-I.

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The details of Indians engaged in high skilled jobs and professional jobs, such as doctors, engineers, nurses, teachers, IT professionals and hotel management are not available as explained in (a) above. As regards Indians who emigrated seeking employment in unskilled jobs during the year 2008, 2009 and 2010(up to 30.6.2010), the details are in Annexure-I:

The details of ECR Category workers who emigrated to 17 notified countries during 2008, 2009 and 2010 (upto 30.6.2010)

S.No	ECR Country	2008	2009	2010(upto30.6.10)
1.	UAE	349827	130302	64202
2.	Qatar	82937	46292	17030
3.	Oman	89659	74963	54896
4.	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia	228406	281110	120793
5.	Kuwait	35562	42091	17181
6.	Bahrain	31924	17541	7172
7.	Malaysia	21123	11345	6976
8.	Libya	5040	3991	2901
9.	Jordan	1377	847	1226
10.	Yemen	492	421	15
11.	Sudan	1045	708	574
12.	Afghanistan	405	395	196
13.	Indonesia	33	09	0
14.	Syria	74	00	0
15.	Lebanon	75	250	619
16.	Thailand	15	05	02
17.	Iraq	-	-	26
	Total	848601	610272	293809

Source: Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs Press Release, Press Information Bureau, New Delhi

<http://pib.nic.in/release/release.asp?relid=63739>

12. Exploitation of Indians in Gulf countries, 28 July 2010

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

- (a) whether the incidents of exploitation of Indian nationals in Gulf countries are on the rise;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether any Agreement has been signed by the Government with the Gulf countries to check incidents of exploitation;
- (d) if so, the details thereof;
- (e) whether the Government proposes to review the above Agreement; and
- (f) if so, the details thereof?

Answer: Minister of the State in the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (Vayalar Ravi):

(a): Complaints relating to exploitation of emigrant workers in Gulf Countries have come to the notice of the Government.

(b): Over the years emigration to Gulf Countries has risen (Annexure-I). The details of the complaints received against the registered agents as well as unregistered agents, during the last three years, pertain to 17 notified countries for which emigration clearance is required. Out of these six are in Gulf region.

(Annexure I) The Distribution of Annual Labour Outflows from India to Gulf Countries (2007-2009):

Country	2007	2008	2009
Bahrain	29966	31924	17541
Kuwait	48467	35562	42091
Oman	95462	89659	74963
Qatar	88483	82937	46292
S. Arabia	195437	228406	281110
U. A. E.	312695	349827	130302
Total	770510	818315	592299

(c) & (d): India has signed a Labour Welfare Agreement with Qatar. Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) on Labour welfare were signed with United Arab of Emirates (UAE) in December, 2006, with Kuwait in April, 2007, with Oman in November 2008, and with

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Bahrain in June, 2009. An Additional Protocol to the existing Labour Agreement between India and Qatar was signed in November, 2007.

Under these Agreements and MOUs, Joint Working Groups (JWG) have been constituted to ensure their implementation. Issues relating to the welfare of Indian workers are taken up during the regular meetings of these JWGs.

(e) & (f): No, sir.

Source: Lok Sabha (House of the People), Unstarred Question No. 465 asked by Mr. Hansraj Gangaram Ahir

<http://164.100.47.132/LssNew/psearch/QResult15.aspx?qref=89585>

13. Plight of Indian workers in Sharjah, 29 July 2010

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

(a) whether Government is aware that more than one thousand workers have been living in a local camp in Sharjah, where there is neither water nor electricity facility;

(b) whether it is also a fact that these workers have not been paid wages for more than six months; and

(c) if so, the steps being taken by Government to get the Indian workers paid their due wages and to bring them back to the country?

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

(a): Portland Marine Technical Services LLC, Sharjah, is essentially owned and managed by Indian nationals. One of its two Indian partners in the UAE, is in prison in Sharjah and the other is absconding. This company has been facing liquidity issues since the beginning of this year. The company employs 400 Indian workers, who were housed in two labour camps in Sajja area of Sharjah. One of the labour camps housing 100 Indian workers did not have regular electric supply and was being serviced by a generator.

(b) & (c): Yes. According to information available with the Consulate General of India, Dubai, the Indian workers have not been paid wages for about four months. The Consulate utilized the Indian Community Welfare Fund to provide food, water and fuel to the Indian workers in the two camps, with the assistance of the local Indian Associations. The Consulate tried, but without success, to encourage the company to assume its responsibility towards Indian workers. Then the Consulate liaised with the local Ministry of Labour for repatriation of the workers to India. 55 workers were repatriated on 3 July 2010 and 213 workers have also opted to return and are expected to leave shortly. The local Ministry of Labour is arranging for the return-tickets for the rest of the workers as well as paying the workers about AED 3000/- (approximately Rs.37,000/-) out of the security deposits made by the employer with whom workers were first employed. Officials from the Consulate have already visited the camps several times and are actively pursuing the matter.

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Source: Rajya Sabha (Council of States), Unstarred Question No. 461 asked by Mr. Satyavrat Chaturvedi

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

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