

INDIA WATCH

No. 18

July 2011

Political Issues

Egypt

1. India relieves Egyptian vessel of threats from Somali pirates.

New Delhi, Wednesday, 15 June 2011

The Indian government allayed fears of a fresh threat to an Egyptian merchant vessel that has been freed by Somali pirates, saying that the ship and its crew of 22, including six Indians, was safe and was on its way to Salalah in Oman.

Source: Deccan Chronicle

<http://www.deccanchronicle.com/channels/nation/north/freed-merchant-vessel-crew-safely-proceeding-oman-india-581>

2. India and Egypt to sign MOU on water, irrigation.

Cairo, Saturday, 18 June 2011

A memorandum of understanding (MoU) is under preparation between Egypt and India, said Egypt's Minister of Water Resources and Irrigation Hussein al-Atfi. The MoU aims at mutual experiences in fields of underground water and water desalination.

Source: Egypt News,

<http://news.egypt.com/english/permalink/12893.html>

3. India and Egypt to get together for a PET plant

Cairo, Tuesday, 21 June 2011

India and Egypt come together for the construction of a polyethylene terephthalate (PET) plant in Ain Sokhna at a cost of US\$160 million. The plastic products will include bottles, food containers, bottled water, bottled drinks, shampoos and cosmetics.

Source: The Daily News Egypt

<http://www.thedailynewsegypt.com/industry/egypt-india-plan-160-mln-pet-plant-in-ain-sokhna.html>

Iran

4. Japan banks unlikely to settle India-Iran oil payments

New Delhi, Tuesday, 7 June 2011

Iran has offered India various options to end an impasse on payments, including a choice of currencies and paying on a cargo-by-cargo basis, after India's central bank scrapped a long-standing payment system in December under pressure from the United States. Japan is unlikely to allow India to use Japanese banks to provide a clearing house mechanism for India to pay for Iranian oil imports, Japan's deputy foreign minister told Reuters on Tuesday.

Source: Reuters

<http://in.reuters.com/article/2011/06/07/idINIndia-57544220110607>

Also see:

http://www.iranfocus.com/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=23314:japan-banks-unlikely-to-settle-india-iran-oil-payments&catid=4:iran-general&Itemid=26

5. Iran-India US\$180 million deal for power station equipment

Tuesday, 14 June 2011

The Indian Company BHEL is going to sign a contract over the delivery of US\$180 million worth equipment for a hydro power station in Iran. If signed then it will be the second contract awarded by Iran to BHEL.

Source:

[http://www.iranwpd.com/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=1749:iran-india-\\$180-million-deal-for-power-station-equipment&Itemid=66](http://www.iranwpd.com/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=1749:iran-india-$180-million-deal-for-power-station-equipment&Itemid=66)

6. Iran calls off talks with India over IPI gas pipeline

New Delhi, Thursday, 16 June 2011

Tehran called off talks with India on the ambitious project which was also called the “peace pipeline”. Iran last year signed a bilateral deal with Pakistan for the construction of the much-delayed US\$7.6-billion project without India’s participation.

Source: <http://www.tribuneindia.com/2011/20110617/main4.htm>

7. India backs UNSC sanctions against Iran

Wednesday, 24 June 2011

India called for the full implementations of United Nations Security Council resolutions imposing sanctions against Iran without harming its legitimate economic activities. New Delhi underlined the need to resolve the row over Tehran's nuclear programme peacefully.

Source: <http://www.rediff.com/news/report/india-backs-unsanctions-against-iran/20110624.htm>

Iraq

8. Indian Lanco-Ministry awarded US\$81.3 M power plant deal by Iraq

Amman, Monday, 20 June 2011

Lanco Infratech Ltd. (LANCI), an Indian energy and construction company, signed an US\$81.3 million deal to build a gas-fired power plant in the Anbar province in western Iraq. The power station, which will be built in Al-Qaim district in Anbar governorate, will be fed from a nearby Akkas gas field which the Iraqi government has recently awarded to Korea Gas Corp.

Source: Iraq Dinar News

<http://iraqidinarnews.net/blog/2011/06/21/iraq-awards-81-3m-power-plant-deal-to-india%E2%80%99s-lanco-ministry/>

Israel

9. Israeli Ambassador Mark Sofer finishes his stint in India

Monday, 13 June 2011

Israel's Ambassador Mark Sofer is finishing his stint in India and is returning to Israel. This is a crucial time in Indo-Israel ties, as the two countries are all set to celebrate 20 years of their diplomatic relations in 2012. Mark Sofer answered questions on Indo-Israel ties and compared both the countries in his interview.

Source: <http://www.rediff.com/news/special/india-israel-ties-a-work-of-art-in-the-making/20110613.htm>

10. India, Israel corporate honchos to begin four-day meet

Mumbai, Sunday, 19 June 2011

India and Israel, who are currently working closely in the field of homeland and border security, anti-terror applications plan to explore opportunities of cooperation and discuss financing models in the field of clean technologies, water and desalination and renewable energy. A select group of Indian corporate and banking honchos with their Israel counterparts would hold an interactive meeting titled 'Gyan Milan' in Tel Aviv from June 19-22.

Source: <http://www.business-standard.com/india/news/india-israel-corporate-honchos-to-begin-four-day-meet-today/439623/>

Kuwait

11. Satish C Mehta, ambassador of India to Kuwait

New Delhi, Thursday, 23 June 2011

Joint Secretary of the External Affairs Ministry Satish C Mehta was appointed as the next ambassador of India to Kuwait.

Source: http://www.dnaindia.com/india/report_satish-c-mehta-ambassador-of-india-to-kuwait_1558377

Libya

12. India announces humanitarian assistance to Libya.

Thursday, 9 June 2011

India announced a humanitarian assistance of US\$3 million to Libya. This comprises of US\$1 million cash through UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and relief material and medicines to the tune of US\$1 million to Benghazi and Tripoli each.

Source: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/article2089943.ece>

13. Gaddafi-controlled fund invests US\$29.6 m in ICICI Bank ADRs

Mumbai, Tuesday, 7 June 2011

ICICI Bank emerged as the only Indian company that has caught the imagination of Col Muammar Gaddafi's Libya Investment Authority (LIA). A report leaked in the NGO Global Witness showed that ICICI Bank ADRs were the only Indian investment made by LIA and constituted 0.61 per cent of the fund's "non-strategic equity assets" under management of US\$2.46 billion. The sovereign fund controlled by Gaddafi had invested US\$29.6 million in ICICI Bank ADRs which were worth US\$31.9 million as at the end of June quarter in calendar year 2010.

Source:
<http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/industry-and-economy/banking/article2085366.ece>

Oman

14. The Indian government tightens service contract regulations to protect Indian housemaids in the Gulf nations.

Muscat, Wednesday, 15 June 2011

The Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs has decided to introduce changes to the service agreements of housemaids being brought from India to Oman with effect from 20 June 2011.

Source:

http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2011-06-15/news/29660570_1_indian-housemaids-indian-embassy-employers

15. India, Oman --hold talks on ways to enhance cooperation in energy, economy

Dubai, Saturday, 18 June 2011

India and Oman today discussed ways to enhance their cooperation, especially in the fields of energy and economy. Minister of State for External Affairs E Ahamed met Omani Foreign Minister Yousuf bin Alawi bin Abdullah in Muscat and discussed bilateral issues and matters of mutual concern.

Source:

http://www.dnaindia.com/india/report_india-oman-hold-talks-on-ways-to-enhance-cooperation-in-energy-economy_1556581

Palestine

16. India supports Palestine in the recent reconciliation.

Wednesday, 1 June 2011

India welcomed the reconciliation agreement between Fatah and Hamas on the West Bank and Gaza. India affirmed a “continuing commitment to Palestine” and voiced support for “the Palestinian people’s struggle for a sovereign, independent, viable, and united State of Palestine.” This stand was taken by India on the 50th anniversary of the NAM.

Source:

<http://www.shoah.org.uk/2011/06/01/india-pledges-support-for-palestine/>

Saudi Arabia

17. Saudi Arabia to double crude exports to India

Monday, 6 June 2011

Saudi Arabia will double its crude oil exports to India. This will effectively reduce New Delhi's dependence on Iranian crude. The annual Indian crude imports from Saudi Arabia could rise to more than 800,000 barrels per day.

Source: <http://www.oilandgaseurasia.com/news/p/0/news/11570>

Also see:

<http://www.thenational.ae/business/energy/saudi-arabia-to-double-exports-of-crude-oil-to-india>

18. Darul Uloom asks Saudi Arabia to ban Ahmadiyas from Mecca visit.

Mumbai, Saturday, 30 June 2011

Islamic seminary Darul Uloom Deoband has asked the Saudi Arabian government to ban Ahmadiyas from visiting Mecca and Medina to perform Hajj and Umrah (mini-Hajj). The seminary's vice-rector, Maulana Abdul Khaliq Madrasi, has alleged that many Qadiyanis from India "disguise themselves as Muslims" and visit Mecca to perform Hajj and Umrah in a memorandum to Saudi ruler King Abdullah, the custodian of two mosques in Mecca and Medina.

Source:

<http://ahmadiyyatimes.blogspot.com/2011/06/india-darul-uloom-asks-saudi-arabia-to.html>

19. Foreign Minister Krishna asks Saudi Arabia to increase in Hajj quota.

New Delhi, Monday, 13 June 2011

External Affairs Minister on Monday asked the Saudi Government for an increase in the number of Indian pilgrims permitted to perform Hajj this year. Hajj Committee of India is taking all necessary steps to hire accommodation for the pilgrims well in time.

Source:

<http://www.andhranews.net/India/2011/Foreign-Minister-Krishna-asks-Saudi-Arabia-5342.htm>

Sudan

20. Sudan's State Minister for oil meets Indian Foreign Minister

Wednesday, 15 June 2011

The Sudanese Minister of State in the Ministry of Oil, Ali Ahmed Osman on Monday met with the visiting Minister of State in the Indian Foreign Ministry. The meeting discussed oil investment opportunities and future partnership between Sudan and the Indian Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) operating in bloc A5 and bloc E.

Source:

<http://gmsudan.com/20110615/state-minister-for-oil-meets-indian-foreign-minister/>

South Sudan

21. Indian Prime Minister greets the people of Southern Sudan

Thursday, 9 June 2011

The Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has greeted the people and government of South Sudan on the occasion of the declaration of the country's independence. In a letter to President General Salva Kiir Mayardit of South Sudan the Prime Minister applauded the new nation's commitment to addressing all outstanding issues with North Sudan in an amicable and peaceful manner.

Source:

<http://asiarelease.asia/pm-greets-the-people-of-south-sudan-on-their-proclamation-of-independence/>

Syria

22. India thinks as West intervenes in Syria.

New Delhi, Sunday, 5 June 2011

India is weighing its options as the West tries to report Syria to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), a move that could upset the delicate balance in West Asia amid unrest in many countries in the region. Chinmaya Gharekhan, India's

Special Envoy to the Prime Minister for West Asia said “In principle, India would not support the raising of the matter at the UNSC.”

Source:

<http://www.hindu.com/2011/06/05/stories/2011060555261600.htm>

Also see:

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/middle-east/IAEA-reports-Syria-to-United-Nations-over-nuke-allegations/articleshow/8793735.cms>

Turkey

23. Nucleus Software Exports partners with Turkey firm.

New Delhi, Tuesday, 7 June 2011

IT firm Nucleus Software Exports entered into a partnership with Turkey-based firm Gantek to capitalize their respective capabilities and experiences in that country. The established presence of Gantek in the region will help Nucleus enhance product sales and implementation in addition to providing first level support to the clients.

Source:

<http://www.business-standard.com/india/news/nucleus-software-exports-partnersturkey-firm/137652/on>

UAE

24. UAE gives full support to India’s candidature for permanent seat in the UNSC.

New Delhi, Tuesday, 28 June 2011

Foreign Minister of the United Arab Emirates Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan Al Nahyan called on Vice President Mohammed Hamid Ansari and Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh and held official delegation level talks with External Affairs Minister S. M. Krishna. Both sides reviewed the current state of bilateral relations and discussed recent developments in regional and international issues. Nahyan reiterated UAE's full support for India's candidature for a permanent seat in the UN Security Council.

Source:

<http://www.andhranews.net/India/2011/UAE-reiterates-full-support-Indias-candidature-5794.htm>

Also see:

<http://www.pravasitoday.com/uae-supports-india-for-unsc-seat>

<http://www.indiatalkies.com/2011/06/uae-backs-india-unsc-seat-enhance-investment.html>

25. India, UAE sign pacts on economy and energy ties

Monday, 27 June 2011

The Foreign Minister of the United Arab Emirates Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, on his visit to India is expected to sign pacts with India aimed at enhancing economic and energy ties. Abdullah will be accompanied by senior officials from the UAE foreign affairs ministry and top corporate honchos who are looking for opportunities in areas of shipping, aviation, telecommunication and energy.

Source:

<http://www.pravasitoday.com/india-uae-to-sign-pacts-on-economy-energy-ties>

Also see:

<http://www.prokerala.com/news/articles/a230288.html>

<http://kuwaitsamachar.com/index/news/uae-minister-holds-talks-boosting-india-ties>

<http://www.defence.pk/forums/india-defence/117213-india-uae-sign-pact-political-consultations-defence-related.html>

26. India, UAE To Boost Two-Way Investments, Enhance Trade And Economic Ties.

Monday, 27 June 2011

India and United Arab Emirates (UAE) have agreed to work towards enhancing the profile of India-UAE investment relations by boosting two-way investments. With 1.5 Indian Diaspora in the Emirate, both sides also decided to increase co-operation in technology transfer and research and development in areas related to space, agriculture, pharmaceuticals and bio-technology.

Source:

<http://indian-commodity.com/economy/india-uae-to-boost-two-way-investments-enhance-trade-and-economic-ties.aspx>

Also see:

<http://arabia.msn.com/News/MiddleEast/gf/uae/2011/June/7073310.aspx?ref=hptab>

Yemen

27. Indian Government sets up headlines for the stranded Indians in Yemen.

New Delhi, Sunday, 5 June 2011

India's External Affairs Ministry has set up help-lines for the stranded Indians in Yemen. Indian nationals in Yemen have been advised to exit the country through available commercial means. The ministry on Saturday said "keeping in view the evolving situation and to provide information/assistance to Indian nationals or their family members, MEA and the Embassy of India in Yemeni capital Sana'a have set up help lines."

Source:

<http://www.asiantribune.com/news/2011/06/04/govt-sets-help-lines-indians-stranded-yemen>

Also see:

<http://expressbuzz.com/world/yemen-india-sets-up-helplines-for-its-nationals/281178.html>

28. Indians asked to move from Yemen urgently.

New Delhi, Tuesday, 7 June 2011

With more people getting killed in clashes in Yemen, India on Tuesday renewed its appeal to its nationals and persons of Indian origin (PIOs) to leave the Arab country urgently and reminded them to avail of the Indian embassy's helplines which have been used by barely a dozen people so far. This was the third advisory issued by the Indian external affairs ministry in a fortnight.

Source:

<http://ibnlive.in.com/news/pios-indians-asked-to-leave-yemen-urgently/157446-3.html>

29. First batch of Indians returns from Yemen.

Mumbai, Friday, 10 June 2011

The first batch of Indians evacuated from strife-torn Yemen landed at Mumbai airport on Friday. The batch comprised of 49 Indians.

Source:

<http://www.ndtv.com/article/india/first-batch-of-indians-returns-from-yemen-111384>

30. India submits 161 cases of over-stay to Yemeni authorities and provides 61 free tickets.

New Delhi, Tuesday, 14 June 2011

India has submitted 161 cases of over-staying Indians in Yemen to Immigration authorities there for waiver of penalties of over 10 million Yemeni Riyal (YR) and has provided free tickets to 61 of its nationals in the war-torn country.

Source:

<http://news.oneindia.in/2011/06/14/indiasubmits-161-cases-of-over-stay-to-yemeniauthorities-aid0126.html>

Miscellaneous

31. Worries about the Hajj list

Kozhikode, Wednesday, 8 June 2011

The June 15 deadline that has been set for submitting passports at the office of the State Hajj Committee, as directed by the Central Hajj Committee, may dash the hopes of many of those selected to go for Hajj this time. The draw of lots to select the pilgrims was held only on May 31, and hence, they will find it difficult to meet the deadline for various reasons from short notice passport to the submission of documents.

Source:

<http://www.hindu.com/2011/06/08/stories/2011060860170100.htm>

32. HCL tries to enter the Middle East via UAE.

Sunday, 5 June 2011

HCL Technologies (HCL), which is a US\$5.7 billion (Dh20.93bn) company founded 35 years ago as one of India's original IT start-ups, plans to open an office in Abu Dhabi. Last year, the company opened its regional headquarters for the Middle East in Dubai. "Because of strong growth in the GCC, particularly the UAE and Saudi Arabia, we've done very well quickly," said Manish Mishra, the company's head of Middle East operations.

Source:

<http://www.thenational.ae/business/technology/indias-hcl-technologies-strengthens-uae-role>

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