

INDIA WATCH

No. 21

October 2011

Political Issues

Iran

1. In search of Afgan peace, India reaches out to Iran

New York, Sunday, 25 September 2011

While President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad caused dozens of diplomats to walk out of the General Assembly due to his speech, Indian Prime Minister accepted the invitation to visit Tehran though the dates are not decided as yet. This step might be in stark contrast with Tehran's fraught relationship with Washington but is significant in the context of the growing power of the Islamist insurgency in Afghanistan—the cause of deep concern in both New Delhi and Shi'a-majority Iran.

Source: *The Hindu, Chennai*

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/article2482785.ece>

See also, *The Statesman, Kolkata*

http://www.thestatesman.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=384368&catid=36

Israel

2. Indian soldiers to get a rare tribute in Israel

Haifa, Monday, 19 September 2011

As a tribute to the Indian soldiers who sacrificed their lives in Israel in the First World War, their stories got incorporated in Israeli books. India's Ambassador to Israel Navtej Sarna released a book, '*Memorials of Indian soldiers in Israel*', on the occasion in Haifa as part of an initiative that would spread more awareness and greater recognition for the supreme sacrifice made by these soldiers.

Source: *The Statesman, Kolkata*

http://www.thestatesman.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=383794&catid=36

3. India's decision on Palestine: A negative development

New Delhi, Friday, 23 September 2011

Indian support for the Palestinian bid for the UN or as Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh called it 'its support of the cause of Palestinian peoples' struggle' was not taken positively by Israel. Its ambassador to India Alon Ushpiz called the Palestinian bid to seek a full membership of the United Nations a 'negative development'.

Source: *The Indian Express, New Delhi*

<http://www.indianexpress.com/news/palestines-un-bid-a-negative-development-says-israel/850473/>

Kuwait

4. Indians may face visa restrictions from Kuwait

Manama, Friday, 30 September 2011

Kuwait plans to impose restrictions on the number of visas to be issued to Indians and Egyptians after a sharp increase was noticed in the number of visas given to the nationals of both countries who make up almost 69 percent of the country's total population.

Source: *The Economic Times, New Delhi*

http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2011-09-30/news/30218374_1_visas-cap-egyptians-gulf-news-reports

Libya

5. India's democratic experience can be of help to Libya: US

Washington, Thursday, 1 September 2011

US State Department spokesperson Victoria Nuland claims Indian democratic experience can help Libya move towards a representative form of government. India and America started a dialogue on the Middle East and North Africa and senior officials from around 60 countries would meet in Paris as the "friends of Libya" to secure financial and diplomatic support for the 'fledgling revolutionary regime'.

Source: *The Hindustan Times, New Delhi*

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/India-s-democratic-experience-can--help-Libya-US/Article1-740356.aspx>

6. India recognizes Libyan 'rebels'.

New Delhi, Saturday, 17 September 2011

India decided to extend support to former Libyan rebels' Transitional National Council (TNC) led by Mustafa Abdel Jalil.

Source: *The Hindu, Chennai*

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/article2462076.ece>

Palestine

7. India to back Palestinian bid for U.N. membership

New Delhi, Saturday, 17 September 2011

Indian Foreign Secretary Ranjan Mathai announced Indian support for the Palestinian bid for a seat in the UN at the General Assembly meeting.

Source: *The Hindu, Chennai*

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/article2462323.ece>

8. Defying US, India backs Palestine

New York, Saturday, 24 September 2011

Indian support for Palestinian bid for UN membership and the process of reiteration of ties with Iran are being seen as an act of defiance towards the United States.

Source: *Deccan Herald, Bangalore*

<http://www.deccanherald.com/content/193255/defying-us-india-backs-palestine.html>

Energy issues

Iran

9. U.S. makes India-Iran trade a hard struggle

New Delhi, Sunday, 18 September 2011

Iranian Ambassador to India, Syed Mehdi Nabizadeh blamed the United States for interfering in the Indo-Iran ties making it a 'hard struggle', referring to the ban that the Reserve Bank of India imposed on Indian companies from using the ACU to process current account transactions for oil and gas imports — a decision that has affected Indian energy imports from Iran.

Source: *The Hindu, Chennai*

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/article2462788.ece>

10. India, Iran seek to end oil payment row

Kolkata, Thursday, 22 September 2011

Reacting to the ongoing controversy over the payment of oil imports from Iran since December 2010, Commerce Secretary Rahul Khullar said the finance ministry was closing in on a 'permanent solution' to the payment issues in a month with regard to both Indian imports and exports. India has not made payments for oil shipments from Iran for the past few months and around US\$7 billion are due to Iranian oil companies.

Source: *The Hindu, Chennai*

http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/industry-and-economy/article2477025.ece?ref=wl_opinion_art

Oman

11. India and Oman consider import of natural gas from Iran

Tehran, Sunday, 25 September 2011

India and Oman are considering the import of natural gas from Iran via an under-sea pipeline. The caretaker of the National Iranian Gas Export Company Hossein Bidarmaghz said an Indian delegation would travel to Tehran for talks on building an independent undersea gas pipeline as a more economic option since that would avoid paying any transition fee for delivery of gas.

Source: *The Economic Times, New Delhi*

http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2011-09-25/news/30200726_1_gas-pipeline-iran-and-qatar-national-iranian-gas-export

Syria

12. Syria ONGC mulls bringing its Syrian oil to India

New Delhi, Thursday, 22 September 2011

In light of the embargo in crude exports imposed by the European Union and the United States, Indian oil and gas agency ONGC is thinking of exploring the "possibility" of refining the Syrian crude at a 236,400 bpd coastal refinery it runs through its subsidiary, Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Ltd, rather than cutting output at the Syrian fields.

Source: Reuters, United States

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/09/22/india-syria-idUSL3E7KM1IH20110922>

Economic issues

Israel

13. India-Israel forum to boost trade relations

New Delhi, Monday, 12 September 2011

The three key industry associations of India and Israel namely— CII, the Israel Export & International Cooperation Institute (IEICI) and the Manufacturers Association of Israel (MAI), set up India-Israel CEO's Forum to enhance the existing relationship between the two countries in the field of economic cooperation and to remove hindrances to two-way trade and investment.

Source: *The Economic Times, New Delhi*

http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2003-09-12/news/27563469_1_india-and-israel-trade-and-investment-anand-mahindra

14. Israel asks India to help in reducing poverty in Middle East

Jerusalem, Thursday, 8 September 2011

Israel's President Shimon Peres asked India to help the Arab states in 'addressing their developmental challenges' at the newly established India-Israel forum. Issues were discussed ranging from terrorism to setting up a "knowledge city" in India with Israel's help to underlining the need to conclude the ongoing negotiations on Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between the two countries.

Source: *The Economic Times, New Delhi*

http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2011-09-08/news/30130385_1_india-and-israel-india-israel-yuval-steinitz

UAE

15. India, UAE sign manpower agreement

New Delhi, Tuesday, 13 September 2011

India and United Arab Emirates (UAE) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on manpower to boost the Web Based Attestation Procedure for employment contracts for emigrant workers in UAE. This would help in facilitation of recruitment of Indian manpower for working in the UAE.

Source: *The Economic Times, New Delhi*

http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2011-09-13/news/30149447_1_uae-investment-india-uae-trade-uae-india

Miscellaneous issues

Saudi Arabia

16. Saudi Arabia brings cultural, religious exotica to India

New Delhi, Wednesday, 28 September 2011

In an attempt to build better 'people to people bridges between India and Saudi Arabia', the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), would organize a week-long Saudi Arabia cultural showcase from Sep 27-Oct 1 with an arts blitz at the Lalit Kala Akademi.

Source: *The Times of India, New Delhi*

http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2011-09-28/art-culture/30212256_1_digital-art-saudi-arabia-iccr

17. Arabian treat for Delhi

New Delhi, Thursday, 29 September 2011

“Saudi Cultural Week” showcasing the Arab country's rich cultural heritage, art and fashion has been organized on a big scale in New Delhi. As part of the cultural week, a 60-member cultural troupe from Saudi Arabia country would present music and popular folk performances at Siri Fort Auditorium-I.

Source: *The Hindu, Chennai*

<http://www.thehindu.com/arts/art/article2496413.ece>

UAE

18. Abu Dhabi lures Indian tourists

Dubai, Saturday, 22 September 2011

The Abu Dhabi Tourism Authority (ADTA) plans to organize promotional events in three Indian cities namely, Mumbai, New Delhi and Chennai to attract tourists to the UAE to capitalize on the undoubted growth potential of India's outbound tourism market.

Source: *The Times of India, New Delhi*

http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2011-09-22/travel/30130034_1_road-show-product-development-etihad-airways

Also see: Live Mint

<http://www.livemint.com/2011/09/07153352/Abu-Dhabi-to-hold-road-shows-i.html>

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