

INDIA WATCH

No. 22

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POLITICAL ISSUES

Iran

1. Lok Sabha Speaker's visit to Iran aims to deepen strategic ties

New Delhi, Wednesday, 19 October 2011

Lok Sabha Speaker Meira Kumar would travel to Iran on a five-day visit from November 2 to 6. Kumar agreed to the visit, the invitation for which had been received from Iranian authorities over a year ago.

Source: The Times of India, New Delhi

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Lok-Sabha-Speakers-visit-to-Iran-aims-to-deepen-strategic-ties/articleshow/10408737.cms>

2. Indian Minister: India resists pressure not to expand ties with Iran

Tehran, Thursday, 20 October 2011

Indian Minister of Water Resources Pawan Kumar Bansal said on Thursday that India would not bow down to any pressures regarding expansion of cooperation with Iran and that talks with Iran on expanding cooperation in water fields was constructive.

Source: Islamic Republic News Agency, Iran

<http://www.irna.ir/ENNewsShow.aspx?NID=30622072>

3. President: Region is capable of meeting human needs

Tehran, Saturday, 22 October 2011

In a meeting with the new Indian Ambassador to Iran D. P. Srivastava, President Ahmedinejad said that Iran-India ties are rooted in the history and that bilateral cooperation would develop further. Indian ambassador said that the long history of cultural, economic and social ties between the two nations would help further promote bilateral ties.

Source: Islamic Republic News Agency, Iran

<http://www.irna.ir/ENNewsShow.aspx?NID=30625301&SRCH=1>

Israel

4. Settlement activities by Israel, a stumbling block: India

United Nations, Tuesday, 25 October 2011

India has asked Israel to stop settlement activities in occupied Palestinian territories, terming it a stumbling block in Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations. Minister of State for External Affairs E. Ahamed said that New Delhi welcomed the recent agreement between Israel and Hamas on exchange of prisoners and hopes this move would “ease tension and build confidence.”

Source: Firepost.com, Mumbai

<http://www.firstpost.com/fwire/settlement-activities-by-israel-a-stumbling-block-india-116323.html>

Libya

5. Delhi reacts cautiously to Qaddafi killing

New Delhi, Thursday, 20 October 2011

India on Thursday reacted cautiously to the reports on the killing of deposed Libyan ruler Colonel Muammar Gaddafi and pledged all assistance to the North African country in its transition and rebuilding process.

Source: Deccan Herald, Bangalore

<http://www.deccanherald.com/content/199422/delhi-reacts-cautiously-gadhafi-killing.html>

See Also, The Hindu, Chennai

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/article2557350.ece>

6. Indian political party accuses US-NATO for Gaddafi killing

New Delhi, Friday, 21 October 2011

Left parties blamed the US and NATO for the killing of deposed Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi, accusing them of launching a 'blatant aggression' for a regime change to gain control over oil reserves and for strategic dominance.

Source: Islamic Republic News Agency, Iran

<http://www.irna.ir/ENNewsShow.aspx?NID=30623189&SRCH=1>

See also, The Hindu, Chennai

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/article2560070.ece>

Syria

7. India doesn't vote on Syria, bucks western pressure

New Delhi, Thursday, 6 October 2011

India abstained on a UN draft resolution on Syria in the Security Council on Monday, bucking the western pressure to vote in favour. The resolution on Syria scraped through with nine votes in the Council before being voted down by China and Russia. Along with India, Brazil, South Africa and Lebanon abstained on the vote.

Source: The Times of India, New Delhi

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/India-doesnt-vote-on-Syria-bucks-western-pressure/articleshow/10249836.cms>

8. Syria FM: Syrian People have the Ability to overcome Crisis

Damascus, Thursday, 20 October 2011

Syrian Foreign Minister Walid al-Moallem on Wednesday stressed the importance of the Indian delegation's visit in conveying the real image of what is taking place in Syria and indicated towards the misleading media campaign launched against Syria. He expressed Syria's firm resolve to move forward with implementing what was agreed upon during President al-Assad's visit to India and the Indian President's visit to Syria in 2010.

Source: DP-news.com

<http://www.dp-news.com/en/detail.aspx?articleid=100522>

Turkey

9. Ataturk's leadership an inspiration for freedom movement

Ankara, Tuesday, 11 October 2011

Vice President Mohammad Hamid Ansari has remarked that the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk was a source of inspiration for India's freedom movement.

Source: Newstrack India, New Delhi

<http://www.newstrackindia.com/newsdetails/245175>

10. Davutoglu holds talks with Indian Vice President

Ankara, Tuesday, 11 October 2011

Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu has held talks with Indian Vice President Hamid Ansari to discuss bilateral relations and regional developments. They discussed Iraq and Davutoglu briefed the Indian vice president on the latest situation of Turkish-Iraqi relations. They also discussed violence in Syria and unrest in the Middle East, along with possible cooperation between India and Turkey over energy.

Source: Todays Zaman, Istanbul

<http://www.todayszaman.com/news-259602-davutoglu-holds-talks-with-indian-vice-president.html>

11. India supports Palestinian people's right for state

Konya, Wednesday, 12 October 2011

India fully supports the Palestinian people's struggle for a sovereign and independent state with East Jerusalem as its capital, existing at peace with Israel, Vice President Hamid Ansari said in Konya.

Source: Deccan Herald, Bangalore

<http://www.deccanherald.com/content/197550/india-supports-palestinian-peoples-right.html>

12. Ansari re-lives his great granduncle's visit to Turkey

Ankara, Wednesday, 12 October 2011

On Tuesday Vice-President Hamid Ansari relived the historical visit of his great granduncle Mukhtar Ahmed Ansari who led a medical mission to Turkey nearly a century ago by going

through a set of documents from the State Archives of Turkey. The documents were presented to Ansari by the Speaker of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey Cemil Cicek. Earlier, Ansari paid homage at the mausoleum of Kemal Ataturk, the founder of modern Turkey

Source: The Hindu, Chennai

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-international/article2529780.ece>

13. Counter-terrorism cooperation figures in talks
Ankara, Wednesday, 12 October 2011

It was agreed by India and Turkey during the bilateral talks that greater international cooperation was needed to counter the curse of terrorism that is affecting both countries. Vice-President Hamid Ansari reiterated New Delhi's position on Afghanistan that any solution to Afghanistan must be led by its people with Ankara recognising the role being played by New Delhi in assisting Kabul in reconstruction.

Source: The Hindu, Chennai

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-international/article2530355.ece>

See also *Source: Newstrack India, New Delhi*

<http://www.newstrackindia.com/newsdetails/245065>

14. Ansari for greater engagement with Turkey
Konya, Thursday, 13 October 2011

Vice-President Hamid Ansari talked about the greater role India and Turkey can play in the region. He also outlined the broad contours of India's "Look West" policy, which included an endorsement of Palestinian aspirations in the United Nations.

Source: The Hindu, Chennai

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/article2532312.ece>

15. In Istanbul, Ansari keeps his date with ancestor's mosque
Istanbul, Saturday, 15 October 2011

Vice-President Hamid Ansari made a personal pilgrimage here on Friday, offering prayers at the mosque of his ancestor Eyup Sultan, revered as a companion of Prophet Mohammed. Later, Ansari, along with the delegation which included Union Minister Mukul Wasnik and MPs Sitaram Yechury, Vijay Pal Singh and Ingrid McLeod, visited the Sultan Ahmed Mosque and the Hagia Sophia museum.

Source: The Hindu, Chennai

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-international/article2538969.ece>

16. Foreign interference in Afghanistan must go, says Ansari
New Delhi, Sunday, 16 October 2011

Vice President described his six-day visit as "substantive" following exchange of views in Ankara with the top Turkish leadership and in Istanbul with business and industrialists. He ensured India's presence at the conference on Afghanistan in Istanbul next month and a follow-up at Bonn. Vice President said that the solution to the Afghan problem lies in a transparent and

inclusive Afghan-led initiative. He underscored the fact that there should be no foreign interference in the process barring creating structures.

Source: The Hindu, Chennai

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/article2542121.ece>

ECONOMIC ISSUES

Bahrain

17. Bahrain-India dual tax avoidance deal sought

Manama, Monday, 10 October 2011

Businessmen in Bahrain have called for a double taxation avoidance agreement (DTAA) with India, to spur trade ties between the two countries. Indian Ambassador Mohan Kumar was handed over a letter by Bahrain India Society (BIS) chairman Abdulnabi Al Sho'ala to be sent to Indian authorities. Once the DTAA comes into effect, businessmen from both countries would be taxed only for business they do in either Bahrain or India, and that too at low rates

Source: Gulf Daily News, Manama

<http://www.gulf-daily-news.com/NewsDetails.aspx?storyid=315127>

18. Bahrain's role highlighted

Manama, Friday, 21 October 2011

Bahrain was promoted as a business friendly investment oasis at Indian chemical conference in Ahmadabad, Gujarat on October 15 and 16. Mashal Group chairman Dr Yousef Mashal gave a speech on the benefits of investing in Bahrain and highlighted the advantages of setting up a chemical industry in Bahrain.

Source: Gulf Daily News, Manama

<http://www.gulf-daily-news.com/NewsDetails.aspx?storyid=315844>

Iran

19. India, Iran Advance in Trade-Settlement Talks

New Delhi, Wednesday, 5 October 2011

On Wednesday India agreed on a mechanism with Iran to resolve issues related to trade settlement and that both countries would continue talks on the matter. The announcement came after the conclusion of two days of talks between the countries in New Delhi.

Source: The Wall Street Journal, New York

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970203476804576612792290236546.html>

20. India, Iran agree on payment mechanism for trade

New Delhi, Friday, 7 October 2011

To resolve the India-Iran payment crisis for import of oil as well as exports, both countries have agreed to set up a payment mechanism to facilitate bilateral trade. Both sides agreed on the mechanism to be put in place for the purpose, including for the payment to Indian exporters and project exporters.

Source: The Hindu, Chennai

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-business/article2516409.ece>

21. Iran, India work on improving trade

New Delhi, Friday, 7 October 2011

Iran's ambassador to India Seyyed Mahdi Nabizadeh said on Friday that banking delegation from Iran headed by the Vice-Governor of the Central Bank of Iran Seyyed Kamal Seyyed Ali has met with an Indian delegation led by the country's Department of Economic Affairs Secretary R. Gopalan about settlement of oil payments. He further said that the banking and economic officials of the two countries have found new ways to improve bilateral oil and non-oil trade exchanges.

Source: Press TV, Tehran

<http://presstv.com/detail/203325.html>

22. €2.5b in the local rupee accounts for clearing dues to Iran

Tehran, Thursday, 12 October 2011

In a recent meeting between Indian finance ministry officials and a delegation from the Central Bank of Iran, India and Iran have worked out a payments solution to the bilateral trade. India would pay for at least half of the oil and non-oil imports from Iran by depositing the equivalent rupees in accounts opened with Indian banks. The balance trade would be settled through dollar payments routed via foreign banks.

Source: Tehran Times

<http://www.tehrantimes.com/index.php/component/content/article/3498>

23. Iran to open accounts in Indian Banks for Settlement

Tehran, Thursday, 13 October 2011

To resolve the issue of Indian crude payments, Iran's Central Bank decided to open accounts with two Indian banks, namely, IDBI Bank Ltd. and UCO Bank through which it would receive 20 percent payments for its crude supplies to India, and this money would then be used to pay for Indian exports. Indian Oil companies would continue to pay the remaining 80 percent of the dues in Euros through Halbank.

Source: FARS News Agency, Tehran

<http://english.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=9007160756>

Saudi Arabia

24. SBI rolls out foreign travel card in Saudi Riyal

Mumbai, Friday, 21 October 2011

State Bank of India has introduced a foreign travel card christened as *Vishwa Yatra Foreign Travel Card* in Saudi Riyal. It was rolled out for the benefit of overseas travellers to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and would particularly benefit over 170,000 and 500,000 Hajj and Umra pilgrims respectively from India on annual basis.

Source: Moneycontrol.com

http://www.moneycontrol.com/news/business/sbi-rolls-out-foreign-travel-cardsaudi-riyal_603906.html

Turkey

25. Complaint against Turkey with WTO over yarn imports

New Delhi, Saturday, 8 October 2011

India would soon file a complaint with the World Trade Organization against "illegal" duties imposed by Turkey on cotton yarn imports. The commerce and industry ministry is consulting lawyers to file a case before WTO's Dispute Settlement Body, a senior official said.

Source: The Economic Times, New Delhi

http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2011-10-08/news/30258063_1_cotton-yarn-import-levy-yarn-imports

26. Trade ties on Ansari's Turkey visit agenda

New Delhi, Monday, 10 October 2011

Vice-president Hamid Ansari six-day visit to Turkey would address number of issues including bilateral as well as trade ties. The visit is expected to give a push to the move to set up a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between India and Turkey.

Source: The Asian Age, New Delhi

<http://www.asianage.com/india/trade-ties-ansari-s-turkey-visit-agenda-783>

27. Vice-President beckons Turkish investors

Istanbul, Saturday, 15 October 2011

Vice-President Hamid Ansari while addressing the Confederation of Businessmen and Industrialists of Turkey (TUSKON) here on Friday urged the Turkish businesspersons to explore the opportunity in infrastructure development being planned by India. Ansari assured the gathering that India remained committed to continuing its economic reforms, and is pressing ahead with tax reforms by introducing the Goods and Services Tax.

Source: The Hindu, Chennai

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-international/article2538968.ece>

28. Caglayan urges Turkey, India to sign FTA

Istanbul, Sunday, 16 October, 2011

Turkish Economy Minister Zafer Caglayan stated here at the Turkey-India Trade and Investment Forum in Istanbul on Friday that both countries complement each other and suggested that to improve commercial relations, the countries should sign a Free Trade Agreement (FTA).

Source: Today's Zaman, Istanbul

<http://www.todayszaman.com/news-260021-caglayan-urges-turkey-india-to-sign-fta.html>

29. Overseas demand declining but record-high exports likely

Ankara, Sunday, 23 October, 2011

TIM President Buyukeksi said that the Turkish Products Exhibition which would be held in November in India would serve as meeting point for Turkish and Indian businessmen. Noting the

importance of India as the second-largest economic power in Asia, Turkish exporters would have a chance to address approximately 4 billion people in the continent.

Source: Today's Zaman, Istanbul

<http://www.todayszaman.com/news-260695-overseas-demand-declining-but-record-high-exports-likely.html>

UAE

30. Abu Dhabi for long term partnership with India

Jeddah, Monday, 31 October 2011

Indian companies and investors were invited to Abu Dhabi to set up industrial units and to take advantage of the specialized economic zones and learn more about investment prospects in the country at the Abu Dhabi-Mumbai Investment Forum. The forum was organized by Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) in partnership with Abu Dhabi Department of Economic Development and would encourage long term bilateral investment and trade opportunities between Abu Dhabi and Mumbai.

Source: The Times of India, New Delhi

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/nri/other-news/Abu-Dhabi-for-long-term-partnerhip-wth-India/articleshow/10554657.cms>

Regional

31. Strife prompts tea exporters to explore alternative markets

Coonor, Friday, 28 October 2011

India is suffering from low exports in tea trade due to civil unrest in West Asia. Although India's tea production has increased by 34 million kg (mkg) till August this year over last year, its exports have fallen by 15 mkg.

Source: The Hindu Business Line, Chennai

http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/industry-and-economy/agri-biz/article2577299.ece?ref=wl_industry-and-economy

ENERGY ISSUES

Iran

32. Iran accounts for 20 percent of Indi's oil imports

Tehran, Friday, 21 October 2011

Indian Water Resources Minister Pawan Kumar Bansal during a meeting with Iran's Energy Minister Majid Namjou here on Thursday said that Iran supplies about 20 percent of India's oil imports and urged for the enhancement of bilateral cooperation in various fields of energy. The Indian Water Resources Minister represented India at the International Congress on Irrigation and Drainage in Tehran.

Source: Tehran Times

<http://www.tehrantimes.com/index.php/economy-and-business/3756-iran-accounts-for-20-of-indis-oil-imports>

33. Pranab goes to Tehran over outstanding bills.

New Delhi, Saturday, 22 October 2011

Finance minister Pranab Mukherjee on his way back from Paris after attending G-20 meeting stopped at Tabriz airport, north of Tehran, to assure the Mahmoud Ahmadinejad government that India would use Turkish, Russian and UAE banks to clear off the outstanding US \$2.6 billion dues for crude oil imported for Iran.

Source: Hindustan Times, New Delhi

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/India-news/NewDelhi/Pranab-goes-to-Tehran-over-outstanding-bills/Article1-760471.aspx>

34. India clears oil debt to Iran through Russia's Gazprombank

Tehran, Friday, 28 October 2011

The director of the International Department of the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) announced on Friday that India has cleared all of its oil debt to Iran through Gazprombank of Russia.

Source: Tehran Times

<http://tehrantimes.com/index.php/economy-and-business/4026-india-clears-oil-debt-to-iran-through-russian-gazprombank>

35. Iran downplays report India paying for oil via Russia

Tehran, Saturday, 29 October 2011

An Iranian Oil Ministry Source played down on Saturday a report that Indian oil buyers had started paying for their crude through Gazprombank in Russia as a new way to get around sanctions related problems in making payments.

Source: Reuters, US

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/10/29/iran-india-oil-idUSL5E7LT06U20111029>

Qatar

36. India seeks 3 million tonnes extra LNG from Qatar: Source

New Delhi, Friday, 28 October 2011

India is seeking an extra three million tonnes of liquefied natural gas (LNG) per year from Qatar for its Dahej plant and Dabhol project under long-term contracts.

Source: The Economic Times, New Delhi

http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2011-10-28/news/30332701_1_petronet-lng-third-largest-oil-importer-gas-and-oil

37. India seeks more crude oil and LNG from Qatar

New Delhi, Friday, 28 October 2011

Petroleum and National Gas Minister Jaipal Reddy on Friday sought additional quantities of crude oil and LNG from Qatar for the upcoming projects executed by public sector companies in a meeting with Minister for Industry and Energy of Qatar Mohammed bin Saleh Al-Sada here.

Source: The Hindu, Chennai

<http://www.thehindu.com/business/companies/article2577386.ece>

38. India, Qatar disagree on pricing of LNG- energy

New Delhi, Saturday, 29 October 2011

India has sought an additional 3-4 million tonnes liquefied natural gas (LNG) a year from Qatar but talks were stuck on Friday over pricing of the fuel. Qatar sought a price of 15-16 percent of Japanese Crude Cocktail — the average price of customs-cleared crude oil imports into Japan, while New Delhi was willing to pay no more than 14.5 percent of JCC. At present, it is less than US \$105 per barrel.

Source: Business Standard, Mumbai

<http://business-standard.com/india/news/india-qatar-disagreepricinglng/453944/>

MULTILATERAL ISSUES

39. India, GCC lot to learn from each other: S M Krishna

Dubai, Tuesday, 11 October 2011

With the Gulf countries embarking on knowledge-based economic expansion, India and the six-member Gulf Cooperation Council have the opportunity to play a key role in each other's bid to achieve accelerated economic growth, External Affairs Minister S M Krishna has said. He said that this partnership provided solid foundation for the two sides to build on as the Gulf countries embarked upon knowledge-based economic expansion.

Source: The Economic Times, New Delhi

http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2011-10-11/news/30266698_1_gcc-gulf-countries-gulf-cooperation-council

MISCELLANEOUS

Iran

40. Iran inks MoUs to cooperate in Traditional Medicine

Tehran, Wednesday, 5 October 2011

Iranian official announced on Wednesday that the country has signed a number of MoUs with India on cooperation in the development and advancement of traditional medicine.

Source: FARS News Agency, Tehran

<http://english.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=9007130060>

41. Indian Minister asks for Food Security Cooperation with Iran

Tehran, Thursday, 20 October 2011

Attending the 21st ICID Congress on 'Water Productivity towards Food Security' and 8th Micro Irrigation Congress on 'Innovation in Technology and Management of Micro-Irrigation for Crop Production Enhancement' in Iran Indian Minister of Water Resources Pawan Kumar Bansal said

that Iran and India enjoy a strong cultural affinity which has provided the two states with great potential for cooperation in various sectors, including food security, irrigation, and water resource management.

Source: FARS News Agency, Tehran

<http://english.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=9007270105>

See also *Source: Zawya.com, Dubai*

<http://www.zawya.com/story.cfm/sidZAWYA20111022060722>

42. Iran, India stress development of tourism cooperation

Tehran, Saturday, 22 October 2011

Deputy Head of Iran's Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization Hamed Dehghanan and Indian Charge d'Affaires in Tehran Sibi George stressed development of tourism cooperation between the two countries. The meeting underlined the execution of accords already signed in the field of tourism including establishment of a joint technical committee. Dehghanan invited the Indian tourism minister to visit Iran.

Source: Islamic Republic News Agency, Iran

<http://www.irna.ir/ENNewsShow.aspx?NID=30625293&SRCH=1>

43. Tagore's plaque in Iranian parliament

New Delhi, Saturday, 29 October 2011

A plaque of Tagore with his poem *Paroshye Janmodine* would be unveiled by Lok Sabha Speaker Meira Kumar in the Majles Museum during her visit to Iran on November 2. A statue of scientist Jagdish Chandra Bose would also be unveiled at the University of Tehran's Science and Technology Park.

Source: The Hindustan Times, New Delhi

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/newdelhi/Tagore-s-plaque-in-Iranian-parliament/Article1-762308.aspx>

Oman

44. Now file court case in Kerala from Oman

Dubai, Sunday, 9 October 2011

Keralites residing in Oman need not travel to India to file a court case and can do the same without leaving the Gulf country. Rajab Al Kathiri & Associates law firm in Oman has tied up with legal associates in the Supreme Court of India and courts in Kerala to help both non-resident Indians and Omanis to handle legal issues in India in a trouble-free way.

Source: The Times of India, New Delhi

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/nri/other-news/Now-file-court-case-in-Kerala-from-Oman/articleshow/10288509.cms>

45. India seeks to tap medical tourism demand in Oman

Muscat, Thursday, 20 October 2011

In a bid to tap the potential of medical tourism in India, an Indian Medical Tourism Destination event would be held in the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) premises on

October 31. The event is being held under the aegis of OCCI in association with the Embassy of India, FICCI and World Wide Business House, Muscat.

Source: Times of Oman, Muscat

<http://www.timesofoman.com/innercat.asp?detail=50945>

46. Second India-Oman joint air exercises end

New Delhi, Saturday, 22 October 2011

The Indian Air Force completed its second joint exercise with its counterparts from Oman whose northern tip is located at the Straits of Hormuz, entrance to the crucial Gulf and 35 km opposite Iran.

Source: The Hindu, Chennai

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/article2562726.ece>

Saudi Arabia

47. Indian Hajj pilgrims streaming to holy cities

Jeddah, Tuesday, 11 October 2011

A total of 42,929 Indian Hajj pilgrims have arrived from India via 156 Hajj flights scheduled by the Central Hajj Committee from different states of India. As many as 170,491 pilgrims from India would perform Hajj, among whom 1,25,000 pilgrims would be coming through Hajj Committee of India and the rest through India based private tour operators.

Source: The Times of India, New Delhi

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/middle-east/Indian-Haj-pilgrims-streaming-to-holy-cities/articleshow/10309821.cms>

48. Saudi consulate likely in Kerala

Thiruvananthapuram, Wednesday, 12 October 2011

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia would consider opening a consulate in Kerala, Ambassador of Saudi Arabia (in charge) in India Saqr Sulaiman al Qarshi has said during talks with Chief Minister Oommen Chandy here on Tuesday. Qarshi said that workers needed in Saudi Arabia would be recruited through Department of Non-Resident Keralites' Affairs (NoRKA) which would also be authorized to help with certification so that delays at the consulate level could be avoided.

Source: The Hindu, Chennai

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/article2530116.ece>

49. Indian expats urged to register with missions

Riyadh, Friday, 21 October 2011

Newly appointed Indian Ambassador Hamid Ali Rao urged his community to register their details with the Indian diplomatic missions as part of a plan to render better consular services and ensure more protection to Indians in Saudi Arabia.

Source: Arab News.com, Saudi Arabia

<http://arabnews.com/saudiarabia/article521676.ece>

50. Deoband slams allegations of Wahhabi link and funding

New Delhi, Friday, 21 October 2011

Reacting to the charges that the Deoband seminary supports hard-line Wahhabism and is funded by petro-dollars, Darul Uloom Deoband hit back saying it did not endorse extremism. Darul Uloom rector Maulana Abul Qasim Nomani said allegations of the Sunni Sufi organization All India Ulama and Mashaikh Board (AIUMB) were baseless and the seminary had never accepted funds from any government **Sources**.

Source: The Times of India, New Delhi

http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2011-10-21/india/30305972_1_darul-uloom-deoband-maulana-abul-qasim-nomani-deoband-seminary

Syria

51. Indian Intellectual and Media Figures toured Syria

Damascus, Sunday, 9 October 2011

Director of Political Studies Centre in New Delhi, Sima Mustafa, clarified that she, along with an Indian delegation that includes intellectual and journalists, visited Syria to inspect the reality of what is going on in the country. Indian cultural and academic figures on Tuesday (6 October) underlined that what they have seen in Syria during visits paid to several Syrian cities refutes what was being broadcast by some misleading channels that aim at distorting the reality and deluding the local, Arab and international public opinions.

Source: DP-news.com

<http://www.dp-news.com/en/detail.aspx?articleid=100435>

52. The Indian People Are Aware of the Conspiracy against Syria

Aleppo, Monday, 17 October 2011

A number of Indian cultural and media figures said that Syria is facing a big conspiracy aimed at undermining its role and position in the world, highlighting the falseness of the news some channels broadcast about the situation in Syria with the purpose of misleading the local, Arab and international public opinion.

Source: SANA, Syrian Arab News Agency, Syria

<http://www.sana.sy/eng/337/2011/10/17/376175.htm>

53. Syria Targeting New Tourism Markets in India

Damascus, Wednesday, 19 October 2011

Minister of Tourism Lamia Assi during a meeting with a delegation of Indian intellectuals on Wednesday stressed the importance of bolstering cooperation in tourism between Syria and India as part of her ministry's efforts to target new markets in the east. She pointed out that there are plans to hold cultural and tourist activities in India to introduce people there to Syria, noting that India is a strong market that provides 8 to 10 million tourists each year.

Source: SANA, Syrian Arab News Agency, Syria

<http://www.sana.sy/eng/33/2011/10/19/376650.htm>

54. Indians in Syria struggle under US curbs

New Delhi, Monday, 31 October 2011

Indian diplomats working in Syria could no longer transfer money, account-to-account, to their families back home. India's oil facility in Syria had to cut down production for lack of willing buyers. The US sanctions against Syria, targeted against the Bashar Al-Assad regime, have affected the interests of Indians too. Indian diplomats then approached US embassy officials in Damascus for exempting diplomatic missions in Syria. Diplomats from other countries, similarly affected, too have raised the issue.

Source: The Indian Express, New Delhi

<http://www.indianexpress.com/news/Indians-in-Syria-struggle-under-US-curbs/868033/>

Turkey

55. Ansari conferred an honorary doctorate

Konya, Thursday, 13 October 2011

Vice President Mohammad Hamid Ansari was conferred an honorary doctorate for 'International Relations' by Mevlana University at a function in Konya today. He was also conferred the honorary citizenship of Konya. The Mayor of Konya, Tahir Akyurek, presented Vice President Ansari with the Key of the City on the occasion.

Source: The Indian Express, New Delhi

<http://www.indianexpress.com/videos/international/21/vicepresident-awarded-doctorate-degree-by-turkish-university/6328>

56. Temblor wrecks Turkey

Ankara, Sunday, 23 October 2011

Around 1,000 people were feared killed after a powerful earthquake struck southeast Turkey today. India tonight said its citizens in Turkey are reportedly safe. "As per information available with the embassy of India in Ankara, Indian nationals are reportedly safe," the ministry of external affairs said. The embassy has set up a helpline — 00905304403216 (during office hours) and 0090530 3142200 (outside office hours).

Source: The Telegraph, Kolkata

http://www.telegraphindia.com/1111024/jsp/foreign/story_14660931.jsp

UAE

57. UAE gets its first multi-faith crematorium

Dubai, Monday, 17 October 2011

The UAE has made operational its first multi-faith crematorium to serve all non-Muslims. The facility comes as a major relief especially to expatriates.

Source: The Times of India, New Delhi

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/middle-east/UAE-gets-its-first-multi-faith-crematorium/articleshow/10388853.cms>

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