

INDIA SPEAKS

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No. 30

January 2012

Bilateral Issues

a. Iran

1. Report on nuclear programme of Iran, New Delhi, 1 December 2011

Question:

Will the Minister of External Affairs be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that recently International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has published a report about Nuclear Programme of Iran;
- (b) if so, whether it is also a fact that there is mention of assistance to Pakistan and assistance being provided to other countries of the world in it; and
- (c) if so, the facts thereof and whether any diplomatic action has been taken on international level by India in this context and if so, the details thereof?

Answer

The Minister of State In The Ministry Of External Affairs (Mr. E. Ahamed)

(a) & (b) On 8 November 2011, the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) issued a report on “Implementation of the NPT Safeguards Agreement and relevant provisions of Security Council resolutions in the Islamic Republic of Iran”. There is a mention of Pakistan in a footnote of the report.

(c) India has said that the DG’s Report highlights once again the need for international focus on the role of the so-called Clandestine Proliferation Network.

Source: Rajya Sabha (Council of States), Unstarred Question No.1130 asked by Mr. Shivanand Tiwari and Mr. Ram Jethmalani

2. Agreement for rail line between Iran and Afghanistan, New Delhi, 2 December 2011

Question:

- (a) whether India has signed an agreement to construct a 900 km railway line to connect Chabahar Port in Iran to the mineral rich region Hajigak in Afghanistan;
- (b) if so, the details and the estimated cost of the rail link; and
- (c) whether this has any reaction from Pakistan; if so, the reasons therefor?

Answer

Minister of State in the Ministry of Railways (Mr. Bharatsinh Solanki)

(a) No, Sir.

(b)&(c) Do not arise.

Source: Rajya Sabha (Council of States), Unstarred Question No.1392 asked by Mr. Kalraj Mishra

3. New modality of payment for Iranian oil, New Delhi, 13 December 2011

Question:

Will the Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Iran is the 2nd largest supplier of crude oil to India;
- (b) if so, the quantity imported from Iran during the last three years;
- (c) whether the Reserve Bank of India disallowed payments to Iran on oil imports through Asian Clearing Union (ACU) since December, 2010;
- (d) if so, the reasons therefor;
- (e) whether a new modality of payment has been found out; and
- (f) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

The Minister of State in the Ministry Of Petroleum And Natural Gas (Mr. R.P.N.SINGH)

(a) Yes, Sir

(b) The quantity imported from Iran during the last three years is given below:

Year	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
Quantity (MMT)	21.81	21.197	18.499

(c) to (f): After the Asian Clearing Union was withdrawn by the RBI in December 2010, the Government has operationalised a new payment mechanism in August, 2011 under which all the outstanding payments due to National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) have been settled successfully, and payment for crude oil import from Iran is made through this mechanism as and when due.

Source: Rajya Sabha (Council of States), Unstarred Question No.2302 asked by Mr. Tapan Kumar Sen

4. Joint Statement furthering the India-Russia Strategic Partnership to meet the Challenges of a Changing World, Moscow, 16 December 2011

...India and the Russian Federation expressed concern over the situation emerging around Iran's nuclear programme. Both sides support a comprehensive and long-term settlement of the situation through exclusively political and diplomatic means by promoting dialogue. The sides noted in this context that unilateral sanctions could be counter-productive. They recognized Iran's right to develop research, produce and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes in conformity with its international obligations. India and the Russian Federation urged Iran to comply with the provisions of the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions and extend full cooperation to the IAEA...

Source: Press Information Bureau, New Delhi,
<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=78857>

5. Statement by Mr. Vinay Kumar, Minister, on Briefing: 1737 Committee concerning Iran, at the United Nations Security Council, New York, 21 December 2011

Thank you, Mr. President.

I would join other colleagues in thanking Ambassador Nester Osorio for presenting the twentieth 90-day report of the 1737 Committee. We commend the professionalism with which the Committee has been implementing its mandate under the stewardship of Ambassador Osorio.

I would also like to thank the Panel of Experts for its hard work since the extension of its mandate for one year by Resolution 1984 in June this year. We note the Panel's mid-term report and its recommendations. We are carefully studying the reports and views expressed by member states.

We support the continued work of the Panel in accordance with its mandate and preparation of its reports in consultation with member states and by inclusion of inputs provided by them.

Mr. President, India has consistently supported the right of all states to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, consistent with their respective obligations. Iran, as a non-nuclear weapon state signatory to the NPT, has all the rights and obligations that go with its membership pertaining to the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. We underline the importance of the full and effective implementation of all obligations undertaken by

states. We also underline the need for international focus on clandestine proliferation activities.

Mr. President, India has consistently underlined the critical importance of continued dialogue between the IAEA and Iran. We support the intensification of dialogue between Iran and the Agency aimed at the urgent resolution of all outstanding substantive issues, including providing clarifications regarding those issues that have been highlighted in the reports of the DG-IAEA. India would also like to reiterate its support for a diplomatic solution. We believe that it is necessary to expand the diplomatic space to address all outstanding issues in restoring international confidence in the exclusively peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme. It is, therefore, essential to keep the door open for dialogue and avoidance of confrontation.

Mr. President, we support the full implementation of the UN Security Council Resolutions 1737 and 1929 by all states. At the same time, all efforts should be made to ensure that legitimate trade and economic activities do not suffer.

In conclusion, Mr. President, we support open briefings by the Committee's Chair and the Coordinator of the Panel to interested member states on implementation procedures and believe that all member states should provide their support, as appropriate, to the discharge of the mandate of the 1737 Committee.

Thank you.

Source: Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations, New York,
<http://www.un.int/india/2011/ind1977.pdf>

b. Israel

6. Purchase of Israeli Phalcon AWACS, New Delhi, 7 December

There is a proposal for procurement of additional IL-76 based Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) from M/s ELTA Systems Limited, Israel, under Option Clause of previous Contract signed in March, 2004.

This information was given by Defence Minister Mr. AK Antony in a written reply to Mr. N. Balaganga in Rajya Sabha today.

Source: Press Information Bureau of India,
<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=78226>

c. Oman

7. India, Oman Extend MOU on Military Cooperation to 2015, New Delhi, 28 December 2011

India and Oman have extended the validity of the existing bilateral Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Military Cooperation, signed in December 2005, for a further period of five years. The documents were signed by the Defence Minister Mr. AK Antony and the visiting Minister Responsible for Defence Affairs of the Sultanate of Oman, His Excellency Badar bin Saud bin Harib al Busaidi here today.

Bilateral defence cooperation between India and Oman has been growing over the years. The Navies of both countries are conducting a joint exercise “Naseem Al Bahr off the coast of Mumbai from December 26-31, 2011. The IAF and the Royal Air Force of Oman held a joint exercise “Eastern Bridge” at Jamnagar, Gujarat in October earlier this year.

During the delegation level talks both sides noted that bilateral defence cooperation activities have been progressing satisfactorily. The 5th meeting of the India-Oman Joint Military Cooperation Committee was held recently in India in September, 2011.

Both the Ministers discussed important issues relating to regional and maritime security. Mr. Antony noted that incidents of piracy were taking place close to the Oman coast and have also been spreading close to the Lakshadweep Islands. Both Ministers stressed the need for continued and concerted efforts of the world community to effectively address the problem. Mr. Antony conveyed that the visit of the Oman Defence Minister is an important step in continuing the dialogue on defence and security issues between the two countries.

The Indian delegation included the Defence Secretary Mr. Shashikant Sharma and Chief of Integrated Staff to the Chief of Staff Committee (CISC) Vice Admiral Shekhar Sinha.

Source: Press Information Bureau, New Delhi,

<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=79251>

d. Saudi Arabia

8. Indian expatriates deported from Saudi Arabia, New Delhi, 1 December 2011

Question:

- (a) whether there were around 50,000 Indian expatriates mainly unskilled labourers deported from Saudi Arabia;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and whether Government has also taken into consideration other Indian workers, if any, in Gulf countries and taken action to relieve from there; and
- (c) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

- (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) & (c) The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia had announced a royal amnesty in September 2010 for 'Hajj', 'Umra', 'Visit' and other types of Visas' overstayers to leave the country without undergoing any punishment. The last date to avail the amnesty was upto September 14, 2011. During this Amnesty period, the Missions in Riyadh and Jeddah issued 30,100 and 17,743 Emergency Certificates respectively. Though the Saudi authorities have not revealed any statistics about the number of Indians who availed this amnesty, it is estimated that around 50,000 Indians who overstayed in Saudi Arabia have availed of the amnesty. Both the Missions in Riyadh and Jeddah visited the deportation centres in Riyadh, Jeddah and Dammam on a regular basis to issue Emergency Certificates (travel documents) to those who did not possess passports to enable them to return to India.

It is stated that as and when any country in the Gulf declares amnesty for the illegal workers, Indian Mission in that country makes necessary arrangements for the workers to avail the benefits of amnesty.

Source: Rajya Sabha (Council of States), Unstarred Question No.1150 asked by Mr. S. Thangavelu

9. Indians Detained In Saudi Arabia, New Delhi, 14 December 2011

Question:

Will the Minister of Overseas Indian Affairs be pleased to state

- (a) the details of Indians detained in the jails of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) especially from Kerala;
- (b) the details of the Indians especially from Kerala whose dead bodies are still lying in the hospitals of KSA due to legal issues;
- (c) whether the Government has taken any action in this regard; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

Minister of Overseas Indian Affairs (Mr. Vayalar Ravi)

(a): As per the information received from the Embassy of India, Riyadh, the number of Indians arrested/convicted during the last three years is as under:

Year	Number
2009	1519
2010	1303
2011(till 30th November)	1207

State-wise details are not available. The local authorities do not inform about the number of Indians leaving the Kingdom after completing their jail terms. However, it is estimated that the number of Indians in various Saudi jails at a given time may be around 1400.

(b) to (d): There are 207 death cases from the State of Kerala registered in the Indian Missions at Riyadh and Jeddah. Out of this, after fulfilling all formalities, 197 bodies have been despatched. For 09 other bodies, the process is underway and the bodies are likely to be despatched soon on completion of the necessary formalities.

Source: Lok Sabha (House of the People), Unstarred Question No. 3429 asked by Mr. Suresh Kodikunnil

e. Sudan

10. Statement by Ambassador Hardeep Singh Puri, Permanent Representative, at the UN Security Council meeting on Sudan (ICC), New York, 15 December 2011

Thank you, Mr. President.

At the outset, I would like to thank the Prosecutor, Mr. Luis Moreno Ocampo, for his briefing today. We have taken note of his 14th report on the situation in the Sudan, submitted in pursuance of paragraph 8 of Resolution 1593 of 31 March 2005.

Mr. President, India is not a signatory to the Rome Statute and not a member of the International Criminal Court (ICC), for reasons that are well known, and I need not reiterate them.

India strongly believes that the right to life is one of the fundamental rights and foundation of any social order. It is the obligation of all States to take appropriate measures to protect the right to life of their citizens, while maintaining social order. We strongly condemn all acts of violence committed against civilians.

The continuing conflict in Darfur is one of serious concern. We support all efforts to bring this conflict to an end. We also support the activities of UNAMID aimed at protecting civilians and, in cooperation with the African Union's High-level Implementation Panel led by President Thabo Mbeki, to restore an enduring environment of peace and stability in Darfur. An inclusive political process to address the demands of all sections of Darfuri population will go a long way in resolving this conflict.

Mr President, all Sudanese parties have to accept that there is no military solution to the problem in Darfur. We call upon all the parties to join the political process without preconditions or any further delay. In this connection, it is necessary that this Council seriously consider measures against the armed groups which have so far refused to join the peace process.

In conclusion, Mr President, it is necessary that the proceedings in connection with the case concerning the attack on the AU mission in Darfur in 2007 be carried out on sound legal principles without political considerations and attempts to seek publicity. The goal of the international community should remain an early establishment of peace and security in Darfur so as to afford all sections of Darfuri population opportunities for economic development and peaceful co-existence.

Thank you.

Source: Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations, New York,
<http://www.un.int/india/2011/ind1973.pdf>

f. Turkey

11. Agreement between India and Turkey in coal sector, New Delhi, 12 December 2011

Question:

- (a) whether India and Turkey have agreed for cooperation in coal sector;
- (b) whether India has offered technical cooperation to develop coal and lignite deposits and coal washeries in Turkey;
- (c) if so, the details in this regard;
- (d) whether any agreement for development of coal sector was signed during the recent visit to Istanbul, Turkey; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

Minister of State in the Ministry of Coal (Mr. Pratik Prakashbapu Patil)

(a) to (c) : Yes, Sir. India has offered technical co-operation for (i) developing coal and lignite deposits in Turkey (ii) coal beneficiation (iii) capacity creation and (iv) skill development of miners.

(d) & (e): No formal agreement has been signed between India and Turkey for co-operation in coal sector, during the 22nd World Mining Congress and Expo 2011 held in Istanbul, Turkey.

Source: Rajya Sabha (Council of States), Unstarred Question No.2021 asked by Mr. Nand Kumar Sai

g. UAE

12. Agreement between India and UAE, New Delhi, 14 December 2011

Question:

Will the Minister of External Affairs be pleased to state

- (a) whether the Government of India and United Arab Emirates (UAE) have signed two key agreements recently;

- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the two countries also discussed issues pertaining to drug trafficking, exchange of criminals and workers; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

The Minister of State in the Ministry of External Affairs (Mr. E. Ahamed)

(a) to (d) Yes. On 23 November 2011, Government of India and the Government of United Arab Emirates signed the following two Agreements: (i) Agreement on Security Cooperation and (ii) Agreement on Transfer of Sentenced Persons. The Agreement on Security Cooperation seeks to strengthen the existing bilateral framework to enhance cooperation in the areas relating to combating terrorism, addressing activities of organized criminal groups, drug trafficking, illicit trafficking in weapons, ammunition, explosives, etc. The Agreement on Transfer of Sentenced Persons provides the opportunity to persons of each Contracting State sentenced in the other to serve their sentences in their own country..

Source: Lok Sabha (House of the People), Unstarred Question No.3308 asked by Mr. Suresh KodiKunnil, Mr.Suresh Chanabasappa Angadi and Mr. P. Venugopal

Specific Issues

f. Hajj

13. Highlights of this Year Hajj Operations, New Delhi, 13 December 2011

This year Hajj Air charter Operation has started on 29th September, 2011. Phase-1 of Hajj air charter operation concluded on 31st October, 2011 as per schedule. Return phase of Hajj Air charter operation has started on 10th November, 2011 and completed successfully on 12 December 2011 on schedule. A total of 1,25,000 pilgrims have been airlifted for performance of Hajj through Hajj Committee of India. Ministry of civil Aviation has provided air charters to these pilgrims with subsidy support from Government of India.

This year air carriers have been selected through sealed tender on competitive bidding inviting qualified airlines from India and Saudi Arabia. Accordingly, Saudi Arabian based airlines namely Saudi Arabian Airlines (SV) and NAS Air (NAS) have been given the contract to carry pilgrims from 21 embarkation points in India. Highlights of this year Hajj Operations are as under:

- Total of 875 flights were operated to carry the pilgrims to Saudi Arabia and back.

- Whole process of Hajj operation is completed on 12/12/2011 as per schedule. All Hajj flights have maintained almost 99 % schedule timings.
- It has been reported by the Co-ordination cell operated by Ministry of Civil Aviation at Jeddah and Medina airport that all baggage and Zamzam have been carried by the concerned airlines.
- This year no complaints with regard to left behind baggage and hotel accommodation / food in the event of delays have been reported from anywhere.

Source: Press Information Bureau, New Delhi,
<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=78630>

Multilateral Issues/ Regional Issues

h. India and the Middle East

14. Address by National Security Advisor Mr. Shivshankar Menon at Riyadh, 5 December 2011

Professor Abdulkhaleq Abdullah,
Fellow Speakers,
Excellencies and distinguished participants,

I wish to thank the Institute of Diplomatic Studies and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for the honour of speaking at this prestigious forum on the Gulf and the Globe.

Allow me to make a few points to start off a discussion on the topic that was suggested to me, namely, Global Power Shifts and the Role of Rising Powers.

We live in a time of unprecedented change. No one knows this better than the sub-region where we are today. It is hard to think of another area which has been as transformed in the last fifty years as the Gulf. Often the scope and pace of change is beyond explanation or comprehension and our thinking still has to catch up with reality. This is true of the economic shift that has accelerated after the financial crisis of 2008. It is also true of the rapid shifts in regional and global balances of power. Some of the change is positive. For the first time in history 60% of mankind has been exposed to sustained growth rates of over 6% for an extended period. Balance of power shifts and technological change are creating a world where power is more widely held. We seem to be moving to a situation of multiple major powers in the international system with the ability to produce or influence outcomes.

Unprecedented change also brings with it unprecedented uncertainty and insecurity. This is evident around us. Globalisation has created interdependence, knitting the world together. If the centre of gravity of world politics, and soon the economy, has shifted to

Asia, including the Gulf, Asia is now also the cockpit of rivalries and the stage on which international competition is played out. Uncertainty and insecurity lead powers to follow hedging strategies, each acting on their own worst fears, and thereby risking making them come true.

But the same change that creates new challenges also opens up space for creative diplomacy. There is space opening up in the international system for medium powers and others to play a more active role in this world of multiple powers, economically interlinked and embedded in a new balance of power.

What are the drivers of this change? They range from technology (such as nuclear fission, ICT and uses of outer space), to economics, to politics, and to new issues like climate change and the uses of soft power in an interdependent world. Technologies like information and communications technology (ICT) have empowered small groups and individuals and the state itself, opening up new domains with new rules and practices, and new forms of contention.

We see the effects of these power shifts all around us. Developments in North Africa, West Asia and Gulf are evidence. The epicentre of global growth shifting to Asia is another. If this transformation is to be continued, for the benefit of the global economy, energy will be the key, and the Gulf will be critical to the rest of Asia's growth and therefore to global economic health.

The flip side of common prosperity is common security. Asia's security is also interlinked across this great continent. India has therefore argued for an open, inclusive Asian security architecture to be evolved by the powers of the region itself. We face common challenges of proliferation, terrorism, and maritime security and need to find a way to ensure the peace and stability that is essential to our futures.

What is the role of emerging powers in this situation? First, a problem of definition. Many of these so called emerging countries are really re-emerging powers, better described as rapidly developing countries rather than as rising powers. Today the world is fortunate to have several growth poles simultaneously in East Asia, South Asia, South East Asia, the Gulf and in Africa.

The larger countries in this category, (irrespective of whether you call them rising or emerging powers), are likely to continue to have several poor people even as they accumulate power in the international system, unlike the situation in the 19th or 20th centuries when Europe and North America developed. They are therefore unlikely to

behave as the older or traditional powers did, and their domestic imperatives will take priority in policy formulation.

I can only speak for India, and give you one Indian's view on the role of so-called emerging powers. We in India still have a long way to go in realising our domestic goal of transforming India to the point where each Indian has the opportunity to fully realise his potential. The scale of our domestic task is enormous, and for a long time to come our primary responsibility will be to sustain the pace of inclusive growth at home. I remember a Chinese friend saying once that the best contribution that India and China can make to global food security is to feed themselves. There is considerable truth in that.

Over the last two decades years India has averaged over 6% growth, which has accelerated to between 8-9% in the last five years. With a domestic savings rate of 35% and investment rate slightly higher than that the economy can sustain high growth rates. India's economic prospects are good and the fundamentals are strong.

We also recognise that we live in an increasingly interdependent world and that India's own success is increasingly bound to the fate of the rest of the world. When we began economic reforms twenty years ago only about 14% of our GDP was related to the external economy. Today that proportion is closer to 40%. (That figure is almost twice that for China.) We will therefore work with our international partners, contributing within our capacity to creating an enabling external environment for the domestic transformation of India. That is what India and Saudi Arabia have attempted to do together in the G-20.

This requires an external environment of peace. It is important that our strategic partnership also extend to creating that climate of peace working together on issues of regional security.

For India Saudi Arabia and the Gulf are vital partners. Almost 6 million Indians live and work here, and our trade is now over 100 billion dollars a year. India has a stake in issues relating to peace and stability in the wider Gulf region including Iran and Iraq.

India and Saudi Arabia enjoy cordial and friendly relations reflecting centuries of economic and social ties. The landmark visit of His Majesty King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz to India in January 2006 opened a new chapter in India-Saudi Arabia relations, which was carried forward by the visit of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in 2010, giving new impetus to our strategic partnership.

One thing I can assure you. India will not be like the traditional big powers. Mrs Indira Gandhi used to say India will be a different power, a power that works for development, peace and international understanding, in its own interest and in that of its friends and partners abroad, Asia is not Europe and our indigenous strategic cultures are strong and lasting. I am confident that, working together, India and the Gulf will be able to face the challenges that the new geopolitics are throwing up and take advantage of the opportunities that these changes are opening up.

Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi,
<http://www.mea.gov.in/mystart.php?id=530118686>

15. India Pursues oil diplomacy and Foreign Investment at Doha WPC, Doha, 6 December 2011

Mr. Jaipal Reddy, Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas who is leading the Indian delegation to 20th World Petroleum Congress(WPC) at Doha undertook a series of meetings with his counterparts from various countries on the sidelines of the WPC with a view to explore new opportunities for Indian oil companies and to seek investments . A number of areas were identified for cooperation during his bilateral meetings held over last three days.

In his meeting with Dr Mohammed Bin Hamad Al Rumhy, Minister of oil and Gas, Oman today, the two leaders reviewed the progress of Bina Refinery project, a joint venture of BPCL and Oman oil Company. The issues of possible investment by Oman in the projects in India including petrochemical projects were discussed. It was stated that the refinery production has now stabilized within a reasonable time. The refinery capacity could also be increased in view of the benefits that will accrue from higher capacity. Omani side assured to consider the interest shown by the Indian companies in participating in the downstream projects, consultancy & management, upstream opportunities and gas supply to India. Mr. G C Chaturvedi, Secretary, Petroleum and Natural Gas, Mr. A K Purwah, CMD EIL, Mr. R K Singh, CMD, BPCL, Mr. A K Balyan, MD, PLL and Ms Nishi Vasudeva, Director, Marketing, HPCL were also present.

Mr. Jaipal Reddy, also had a bilateral meeting with Mr LyazzatKiinov, Vice Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources, Kazakhstan. The meeting also attended by Mr. G C Chaturvedi, Secretary, Petroleum and Natural Gas and Mr Sidhir Vasudeva CMD, ONGC reviewed the cooperation in the upstream projects and expressed keen desire to continue expanding the relations further in the oil and gas sector.

During the meeting with Mr. Alexander BARRO CHAMBRIER, Minister of Mines, Oil and Hydrocarbons, Gabon on 6-12-2011, Gabon invited Indian companies to invest

in their oil and gas and sector. They invited representatives of Indian companies to visit Gabon for taking stock of the opportunities. It was informed that Shell is developing LNG facilities. PLL expressed desire to explore participation in the natural gas projects. Mr. G C Chaturvedi, Secretary, Petroleum and Natural Gas along with CMDs of Oil PSUs was also present.

Indian Petroleum Minister in his meeting with Dr Abdul Hussain Bin Ali Mirza, Minister of Oil and Gas Affairs, Bahrain today discussed possibilities of Indian investments in Bahrain oil projects and of greater supply of crude oil to India. Bahrain invited Indian oil companies to take up new projects available after restructuring of the oil and gas sector in the country. Mr Mirza said crude production has now increased by 50% which has earlier seen decline. India sought more supply of crude oil on term contract.

During another bilateral meeting between Mr. Jaipal Reddy and Mr Guenther Oettinger, Commissioner Energy, European Union, Mr. Oettinger proposed enhancing cooperation in developing common safety regulations based on best practices. Indian side informed that Oil Industry Safety Directorate formulates the standards for Indian oil industry . They asked EU to send a formal proposal which can be considered by India. The issues of rising oil prices, efficient use of fuels and alternative sources of energy were discussed in the meeting.

Earlier, late yesterday, Mr. Jaipal Reddy had a bilateral meeting with Dy Minister of Natural Resources, Canada. The issues of possible participation of OVL and other Indian Companies in exploration of sand oil/tar sands and the shale oil/gas were discussed in the meeting. The Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas also met Mr. Rostam Ghasemi, Minister of Petroleum, Iran yesterday evening and the issues of enhancing cooperation in the hydrocarbon sector were discussed in the meeting.

Mr. Jaipal Reddy had a fruitful meeting with his counterpart Dr Mohamed Bin Saleh Al-Sada, Minister of Energy & Industry, Qatar after the Ministerial Session at the 20th WPC in the afternoon on 5-12-2011. Mr. G C Chaturvedi, Secretary, Petroleum and Natural Gas, Ms Deepa Gopalan Wadhwa, Indian Ambassador to Qatar and MD PLL Mr A K Balyan were also present. The two leaders discussed enhancing cooperation in the hydrocarbon sector including possibilities of more LNG supplies to India.

Mr.Reddy in his meeting with Mr. Mohammed bin Dha`en Al Hamili, Minister of Energy of United Arab Emirates on the opening day of WPC i.e. 04-12-2011 discussed possibilities of expanding mutual cooperation in the oil sector including the possibilities

of Indian companies being considered for participation in the upstream sector. UAE Minister assured to consider the proposal. India also proposed import of higher quantities of crude oil and LPG. The two Minister recalled long-standing friendly relations between two nations and called for strengthening the economic cooperation further.

Source: *Press Information Bureau, New Delhi,*

<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=78168>

16. Valedictory Address by Mr. R.P.N. Singh, Minister of State for Petroleum & Natural Gas, at the 3rd India-Africa Hydrocarbons Conference, New Delhi, 10 December 2011

...the current international economic and political situation is far from favorable, particularly for developing countries. The internal strife in some Middle East countries and the threat of a pre-emptive strike in the Gulf region have made the international oil markets even more uncertain, with attendant consequences for both oil producers and consumers...

Source: *Press Information Bureau, New Delhi,*

<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=78410>

17. Prime Minister's statement to media during joint press interaction with Russian President, Moscow, 16 December 2011

...We reviewed the significant developments that are taking place in West Asia and North Africa. We have agreed to keep in close touch on the developments in these regions...

Source: *Press Information Bureau, New Delhi,*

<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=78859>

18. Joint Statement furthering the India-Russia Strategic Partnership to meet the Challenges of a Changing World, Moscow, 16 December 2011

... In the context of the situation in the Middle East and North Africa, the sides reaffirmed their commitment to the principles of: searching the way to overcome crises in the region in compliance with law, exclusively through peaceful means, avoiding violence and outside intervention, through broad, inclusive national dialogue on democratic reforms, taking into account the legitimate rights and aspirations of the peoples of the region.

They agreed that the fundamental transformation taking place in the states of the Middle East and North Africa should not be used as a pretext to delay resolution of lasting conflicts, but rather as an incentive to settle them. They spoke in favour of achieving comprehensive, just and final settlement of the Arab-Israel conflict on the basis of universally recognized international legal framework including the relevant

UN resolutions, the Madrid principles and the Arab Peace Initiative. The sides support an early resumption of the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations aiming at the establishment of an independent, viable and territorially unified Palestinian State within the borders based on the lines of 1967, with negotiated mutually agreed territorial exchanges and East Jerusalem as its capital as well as joint efforts of the Middle East Quartet of international mediators. They called upon for early restoration of Palestinian unity. A common All-Palestinian position based on PLO principles and the Arab Peace Initiative would contribute to progress towards a Palestine-Israeli settlement, as also peace and security for all the countries and peoples of the region...

Source: Press Information Bureau, New Delhi,

<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=78857>

Note: The Exact web links for the questions in the Indian Parliament are non-functional due to technical reasons. They can be searched through the question number or the name of the Member of Parliament concerned at the Website of Rajya Sabha (www.rajyasabha.nic.in) and Lok Sabha (www.loksabha.nic.in).

Compiled By Anjani Kumar Singh

Anjani kumar singh is a Doctoral candidate in the School of Internatinal Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, new Delhi. **Email:** aks1511@gmail.com

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