

# **INDIA SPEAKS**

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**No. 41**

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## **BILATERAL ISSUES**

### **a. BAHRAIN**

#### **1. Press Release, Ghudaibiya, 5 November 2012**

In view of recent incidents, the Embassy of India advises all Indian citizens to exercise utmost vigilance. In particular, Indian citizens are asked to avoid handling suspicious packages and report anything unusual to the authorities.

*Source: Embassy of India, Ghudaibiya,*

[http://www.indianembassybahrain.com/images/PR\\_nov5\\_2012.pdf](http://www.indianembassybahrain.com/images/PR_nov5_2012.pdf)

#### **2. Bomb blasts in Bahrain, 5 November 2012**

In response to a media query on the series of bomb blasts in Bahrain, the Official Spokesman said:

"We have seen reports of series of bomb blasts in Bahrain this morning. We have also been informed that one Indian has been killed and another injured in the blasts.

We strongly condemn the violence. We conveyed our serious concern to the authorities in Bahrain.

We hope, and are confident, that the authorities in Bahrain will ensure security to our citizens living and working in Bahrain."

*Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi,*

<http://www.mea.gov.in/media-briefings.htm?dtl/20772/Bomb+blasts+in+Bahrain>

### **b. EGYPT**

#### **3. Captains of Indian Industry Visit Egypt, Cairo, 1 November 2012.**

A 11- member Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) business delegation led by Mr. Sreeni Tripuraneni, Chairman & CEO of 4G Identity Solutions Private Ltd is visiting Cairo from 2-6 November 2012 to explore business opportunities and to increase economic and commercial

exchanges between India and Egypt. The Indian companies represent sectors such as Information Technology including smart ID card solutions for the government and private sector using biometric technology, agriculture machinery including tractors, electrical cables and wires, telephone cables, optic fibre cables, energy-generation, transmission and distribution, construction, civil engineering and infrastructure, water & sewage treatment plants, irrigation, armoured combat vehicles, multi-utility vehicles, sports utility vehicles etc.

During their visit, the delegation will hold a meeting with Egyptian Business Development Association (EBDA) and also hold a meeting at Egyptian Business Association (EBA) on 4 November 2012. The delegation will also call on the Minister of Industry and Foreign Trade of Egypt and also meet senior officials in the Ministry of Administrative Development and Ministry of Communication and Information Technology.

Egypt has traditionally been one of India's most important trading partners in the African continent. During 2011-12, total bilateral trade increased 33 per cent from US\$ 3.2 billion to US\$ 4.2 billion. India is Egypt's seventh largest trading partner. During the year 2011-12, India was eleventh largest source of Egyptian imports while India ranked second in the list of top target countries of Egyptian exports. Indian exports increased by 29.36 per cent, rising from US\$ 1.5 billion to US\$ 1.94 billion. Indian imports during the same period have grown 36.41 per cent rising from US\$ 1.7 billion to US\$ 2.3 billion. Over 50 Indian companies are investing over US \$ 2.5 billion in the fields of textiles and garments, power, chemicals including specialty chemicals, adhesives, pharmaceuticals, information technology, paints, consumer goods, healthcare, PVC, caustic soda, PET Resin, plastics, paper, packaging, auto and auto-components, education and hospitality sector, providing employment to approximately 35,000 Egyptians.

The governments and the business communities in India and Egypt are working closely to promote bilateral economic relations and the visit of the CII Business delegation is part of the efforts to expand commercial and economic relations between Egypt and India.

*Source: Embassy of India, Cairo,*

<http://www.indembcairo.com/Web%20Pages/Archives%20Eng%202012/Nov%2001.htm>

#### **4. Indian Business Forum Launched in Egypt, Cairo, 6 November 2012**

The India Business Forum (IBF) in Egypt was launched by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) to coincide with the visit of a CII delegation to Egypt from 3-6 November 2012.

The CII IBF will be a platform for Indian companies in Egypt to share information and raise issues of concern to authorities in Egypt and India. IBF also aims to promote and support the activities of its members in Egypt and play a catalyst role in enhancing trade and investment between the two countries. The Ambassador of India to Egypt H. E. Mr. Navdeep Suri will be the Patron of the IBF.

The IBF, which is already operating in various countries including UK, US, China, Singapore and South Africa will be the voice of the Indian Industry in Egypt by showcasing India and the Indian Industry and promoting “Brand India”.

The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), founded over 117 years ago, is India’s leading chamber of commerce with a direct membership of 7,100 companies and indirect membership of 90,000 companies in India. CII has 63 branches in India and 7 overseas. It has institutional partnerships with 223 counterpart organizations in 90 countries.

During its recent visit to Egypt, CII also formalized a MoU with the Egyptian Business Development Association (EBDA) to enhance cooperation between the two organizations. The CII delegation also called on H.E Mr. Hatem Saleh, Minister of Industry and Foreign Trade of Egypt in Cairo on 5 November 2012. The delegation also met officials from Ministry of Communications & IT and Department of Administration. The Egyptian Business Association (EBA) also organized a meeting for the visiting CII delegation with its members.

More details about CII can be seen at [www.cii.in](http://www.cii.in).

*Source: Embassy of India, Cairo,*

<http://www.indembcairo.com/Web%20Pages/Archives%20Eng%202012/Nov%2006.htm>

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### **5. Counsellor Hatem Bagato: The Indian Constitution is one of the greatest and most developed in the world, Cairo, 8 November 2012**

The Maulana Azad Centre for Indian Culture (MACIC) yesterday organized a lecture titled “Elections and Democracy: The Indian and Egyptian Experience” by Counsellor Hatem Bagato, Deputy Chief of the Supreme Constitutional Court.

In his opening remarks, Ambassador of India Navdeep Suri said, “India’s most important achievement since its independence in 1947 is the establishment of a democratic polity in a country whose billion plus people live in a multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-lingual society.” He also complimented Egypt for its successful conduct of Presidential elections and earlier the Parliamentary elections. “The Chief of the Election Commission of India,” he added, “was the only foreign election official whom Egypt officially invited to share experiences after the 25 January revolution.”

Counsellor Bagato said, “India, being the second largest country in the world with a well developed software industry and having the most prestigious schools of mathematics, successfully developed the Electronic Voting Machines (EVM) to overcome the problems of illiteracy and overpopulation. I have tried this machine during my visit to India last September and also here in the Indian Embassy in Cairo. It is a wonderful machine using simple, user-friendly and robust technology. Since 2004, India has been using these machines in the elections all over the country.”

Elaborating on the Indian Constitution, Mr. Bagato said, “In 1950, the Indian Parliament adopted the Constitution, which is one of the greatest and most developed in the world.” He cited many features of the constitution like an independent Election Commission, which ensured free and fair elections.

Counsellor Bagato also said “India has become the largest democracy in the world in terms of the numbers of voters” and dwelt on the complexities of the management of elections in India.

“I find the Indian experience in the field of elections and democracy is the closest to us, because we share many commonalities, like challenges of illiteracy, shortage of electricity supply in some areas and climate conditions. So, whoever does not read about the Indian experience misses a lot of valuable information.”

Counsellor Bagato also traced the history of the Parliamentary and Presidential forms of government in Egypt from the time of the Monarchy.

Two short documentary films on Egyptian and Indian electoral system were screened during the event.

The lecture was attended by a group of prominent politicians, including Ambassador Mohamed Shaker, the Chairman of the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Ahmed Hagag, the Chairman of the African Association and Dr. Osama El Ghazali Harb, the Honorary President of Democratic Front Party and several judges from the Supreme Constitutional Court.

*Source: Embassy of India, Cairo,*

<http://www.indembcairo.com/Web%20Pages/Archives%20Eng%202012/Nov%2008.htm>

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### **6. My Name is Khan – Film Discussion at MACIC, Cairo, 12 November 2012**

The Maulana Azad Centre for Indian Culture (MACIC), Embassy of India, Cairo, will be screening the Hindi film ‘My Name is Khan’ at 16.30 hours on 14 November 2012 at its premises at 23, Talaat Harb Street, Downtown Cairo.

The screening of the film will be followed by a discussion steered by an expert on Indian films Mrs. Nadia Jereidini, who has wide knowledge of Indian cinema. Mr. Mahmoud Kassem, renowned film critic, will also attend the discussion.

The film, ‘My Name is Khan’, directed by Karan Johar and starring Shahrukh Khan and Kajol was a hit, when it was released in early 2010. Shahrukh Khan plays the role of Rizwan Khan, the autistic Indian Muslim hero who emigrates to the US, marries a Hindu divorcee (Kajol) with a lovable son Sameer and witnesses the breakdown of his idyllic family life in the US after 9/11. Although a commercial film, it resonated among audiences all over the world because it handled many sensitive issues including that of religion, gender, marriage and divorce etc in a realistic manner.

Light refreshments will be served after the discussion.

For further details, please contact: the Maulana Azad Centre for Indian Culture, Tel: 23933396/23960071; Fax: 23936572; e-mail: [macic@indembcairo.com](mailto:macic@indembcairo.com)

*Source: Embassy of India, Cairo,*

<http://www.indembcairo.com/Web%20Pages/Archives%20Eng%202012/Nov%2012.htm>

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### **7. Iman El Baher Darwish Distributes Prizes to Winners of the “Glimpses of India” Painting Competition at Gomhouria Theatre on 22 November 2012, Cairo.**

The Maulana Azad Centre for Indian Culture (MACIC), Embassy of India, Cairo, is pleased to announce that veteran Egyptian Singer Iman El Baher Darwish and Ambassador of India to Egypt, H. E. Navdeep Suri will distribute prizes and certificates to the 80 winners of the 18th annual “Glimpses of India” painting competition at a ceremony that will be organized at the Gomhouria Theatre at Abdeen at 1800 hours on 22 November 2012.

Iman El Bahr Darwish is an Egyptian singer whose grandfather, singer Sayed Drawish has been dubbed as ‘the singer of the people’. Iman is probably one of the best singers Egypt has produced in the last few decades. To commemorate the birthdays of Mahatma Gandhi, father of the nation, Jawaharlal Nehru, India’s first Prime Minister and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, independent India’s first Education Minister, the Maulana Azad Centre for Indian Culture (MACIC) has been conducting a painting competition for Egyptian school children called the “Glimpses of India” painting competition in November every year in cooperation with the Ministry of Education of ARE.

This year, around 4500 children in the age groups from 6-18 years including children with special needs from 437 government, private and national institutes in Cairo and Giza governorates participated in the competition which was held from 7-17 October 2012 at the Orman Botanic Garden. A 3-member independent jury selected 100 winners. A catalogue carrying all the winning paintings of the children will be distributed at the ceremony.

For further details, please contact the Centre at:

Tel: 23933396 / 23960071; Fax: 23936572; e-mail: [macic@indembcairo.com](mailto:macic@indembcairo.com)

*Source: Embassy of India, Cairo,*

<http://www.indembcairo.com/Web%20Pages/Archives%20Eng%202012/Nov%2015.htm>

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### **8. Design a poster and win an air trip to India, Cairo, 22 November 2012**

The Indian Community Association of Egypt is sponsoring a trip to India to the winner of the 'Did you sense the spirit of Gandhi in Tahrir' contest. The visit to India will include a workshop at India's prestigious National Institute of Design, Ahmadabad in Gujarat state in India.

The contest was announced as a tribute of India to the peaceful Egyptian revolution on 2 October 2012 coinciding with the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi, who embodied the spirit of non-violence in India's struggle for independence. The Embassy of India in Cairo plans to organize an exhibition with the leading entries on 25 January 2013, the second anniversary of the Egyptian revolution. The Last date for the entries to the contest is 15 December 2012.

More details of the contest can be had from the website of the Embassy at [www.indembcairo.com](http://www.indembcairo.com) or the face book page of the Embassy [www.facebook.com/IndianEmbassyCairo](http://www.facebook.com/IndianEmbassyCairo) or from the press office of the Embassy at 23925162 and 23925243.

*Source: Embassy of India, Cairo,*

<http://www.indembcairo.com/Web%20Pages/Archives%20Eng%202012/Nov%2022.htm>

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### **9. Iman El Bahr Darwish distributes prizes for ' Glimpses of India' painting competition, Cairo, 24 November 2012**

To commemorate the birthdays of Mahatma Gandhi, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Jawaharlal Nehru, the Maulana Azad Centre for Indian Culture organized the prize distribution function for the annual ' glimpses of India' painting competition for the year 2012 on 22 November 2012. Renowned singer Iman El Bahr Darwish was the guest of honour. Mrs. Camellia Sobhi, the First Undersecretary, Ministry of Culture and Mr. Mohamed Naguib El Babli, Art Education Counsellor, Ministry of Education were also present. A minute of silence was observed as a mark of respect for the children who lost their lives at the Assuit train accident.

Around 4500 children from 437 schools participated in the competitions and over 100 winners in different categories were given prizes and certificates during the function.

*Source: Embassy of India, Cairo,*

<http://www.indembcairo.com/Web%20Pages/Archives%20Eng%202012/Nov%2024.htm>

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### **10. Egypt will develop her own model of growth and development: Ambassador Suri at Banha University, Cairo, 27 November 2012**

The Maulana Azad Centre for Indian Culture, the Cultural Wing of the Indian Embassy in Cairo, organized an 'India Day' at Banha University Kalyoubia Governorate on 26 November 2012. Ambassador Navdeep Suri and the Governor of Qalubaiya Dr. Adel Zayed jointly inaugurated the daylong festivities.

As part of the celebrations, a Photo Exhibition on India-Egypt relations tracing the ties between the two countries over a century was inaugurated by Ambassador Suri and Dr. Aly Shams El Din, President of Banha University. There was also a display of books, India tourism literature and Indian spices

The highpoint of the day was an interaction with over 1200 students of the Banha University following a speech on Indo-Egyptian relation in Arabic by Ambassador Suri. To a question on



the model that Egypt needs to follow, Ambassador Suri remarked that for a country with a 7000-year-old civilization, Egypt will develop her own model of development.

This was followed by Indian Fashion and Dance show organized by the student of the Maulana Azad Centre and Egyptian Folk Dance show organized by students of Banha University. Indian documentary films were screened and Indian snacks and Indian tea was also served at the end of the programme.

*Source: Embassy of India, Cairo,*

<http://www.indembcairo.com/Web%20Pages/Archives%20Eng%202012/Nov%2027.htm>

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## C. IRAN

### 11. Country's engagement with Iran, New Delhi, 22 November 2012

#### Question:

- (a) Whether India's engagement with Iran has decreased over last five years;
- (b) If so, the reasons therefore;
- (c) Whether Government is under pressure from western countries on Iran nuclear issue;
- (d) If so, the reasons therefore; and
- (e) The details of the impact on India's policy of Non-alignment?

#### Answer

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

- (a) No.
- (b) Does not arise.
- (c) to (e) Government takes decisions based on national interest and there is no question of coming under pressure from other countries. There has been no adverse impact on India's policy of non-alignment.

*Source: Rajya Sabha (Council of States), Unstarred Question No. 17 asked by Mr. Piyush Goyal, <http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/QRresult.aspx>*

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### 12. Crude Oil Import from Iran, New Delhi, 23 November 2012.

#### Question:

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

- (a) Whether the Government has banned United States (US) sanctioned Iranian crude oil ships from entering Indian waters;
- (b) If so, the commitment made by the Mangalore Refineries and Petrochemicals Limited (MRPL) for import of crude oil from Iran during the current year;
- (c) Whether the Government has withdrawn the Cost Insurance and Freight (CIF) contract;
- (d) If so, the details thereof and the reasons therefore; and
- (e) the alternate arrangements being made by the Government for import of crude oil along with the nature of insurance cover being provided for ships other than Iranian ships and the likely impact on prices of petroleum products in the domestic market as a result thereof?

**Answer**

The Minister of State in the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (Mrs. Panabaaka Lakshmi)

(a) No, Madam.

(b) Not applicable in view of (a) above.

(c ) to (e) The Department of Financial Services, Ministry of Finance, has advised the public sector insurers and GIC to extend insurance/reinsurance cover to Indian flag ships for importing crude oil from Iran to India subject to due diligence of assets and fixing up of premium accordingly as is done in normal course. GIC has informed that the insurance cover has been provided by the public sector insurance companies for US\$50 million each for Hull & Machinery (H&M) and Protection & Indemnity (P&I) covers and Ship Owners have already started availing of the same. The NOC given to oil PSUs on 22 June 2012 for importing Iranian crude oil on C&F/CIF basis for six months w.e.f. 1 July 2012 was withdrawn on 9 July 2012, when Indian National Ship Owners' Association (INSA) informed that General Insurance Corporation (GIC) had agreed to provide US\$50 million Protection and Indemnity (P&I) insurance cover and also insurance of US\$50 million for Hull and Machinery (H&M) cover at additional premiums to Indian Ships carrying Iranian crude oil.

However, Iranian crude oil could not be imported by the oil PSUs on FOB basis, as Indian Shipping companies did not offer their vessels for calling Iran, as some of the issues pertaining to the insurance remained un-resolved with GIC. With a view to assist the oil industry to import Iranian crude on CIF basis, Ministry of Shipping on the request of oil PSUs granted NOC to oil PSUs on a case-to-case basis. On 24 September 2012, NOC given earlier to oil PSUs was re-instated for six months effective 1 October 2012 for importing Iranian crude on C&F/CIF basis or until Indian vessel owners offer their vessels for loading Iranian crude or until US/EU sanctions are lifted whichever occurs earlier.

*Source: Lok Sabha (House of the People), Unstarred Question No. 273 asked by Mr. P. Viswanathan, <http://164.100.47.132/LssNew/psearch/QResult15.aspx?qref=130701>*

**d. ISRAEL**

**13. India Post Issues to Mark 20 Years of India Israel Diplomatic Relations, New Delhi, 12 November 2012.**

India and Israel diplomatic relations were established in 1992. To mark the occasion of 20 years of diplomatic relations, India Post has issued a set of two stamps (Joint Issue-each stamp of Rs. 5 denomination) depicting the festival of lights, Deepavali & Hanukkah, on 5 November 2012.

Hanukkah is a Jewish holiday commemorating the rededication of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem at the time of the Maccabean Revolt of the second century BC. Hanukkah is observed for eight night and days, starting on the twenty fifth day of Kislev according to the Hebrew calendar by lighting candles in windows or doorways on each of the eight nights of Hanukkah. The candles are lit in a unique candelabrum, the nine-branched Menorah or Hanukkah.



Like the 'diyas' of Deepavali, the Hanukkah candles symbolize the triumph of good over evil and the victory of justice over injustice.

The design of the Deepavali Stamps features a row of lit 'diyas' whereas a menorah is featured on the Hanukkah Stamp which is inspired by the wooden menorah used by the Jewish community in Mumbai.

The stamps are valid for postal use till the stocks last. India Post Commemorates National and International events by releasing Commemorative and Special Postage Stamps.

*Source: Press Information Bureau, New Delhi,*

<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx?relid=89000>

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e. KUWAIT

**14. Embassy of India, Kuwait, in association with India Tourism, Dubai, organized "Incredible India" evening, Kuwait, 1 November 2012.**

In his address, the Ambassador lauded the India-Kuwait bilateral relations and the bond of deep understanding and friendship between the peoples of the two countries and said that by promoting tourism from Kuwait to India, a new dimension will be added to bilateral relations.

Mr. Rustagi made a detailed presentation with slides and video clips on the wide range of opportunities for tourism in India covering inter alia, flora and fauna, wild life, heritage sites, palace hotels, heritage hotels, beaches, luxury trains and luxury stays, backwaters, adventure tourism, including white water rafting and mountaineering, skiing, spas, medical tourism, wellness centres, shopping possibilities etc. He underscored that India has something for everyone's liking. He requested the representatives of Kuwait tourism industry present at the event to promote India as a tourism destination. He said that more than 6.29 million foreign tourist visited India in 2011.

A variety of Indian handicrafts were displayed by Indian Heritage, Kuwait. The participating Airlines – Air India, Jet Airways, Kuwait Airways and Air Arabia also showcased their products. A raffle draw was also part of the event during which four prizes – air ticket for Kuwait-India-Kuwait sectors were handed over to the winners from amongst the attendees from tourism industry and media by the Ambassador and the Airline representatives. The tickets were sponsored by participating Airlines – one each by Air India, Kuwait Airways and Air Arabia while Jet Airways offered two tickets.

*Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait,*

<http://www.indembkwt.org/ShowNews.aspx?ID=139&SECTION=1>

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**15. Minister of Overseas Indian Affairs visits Kuwait, Kuwait, 10 November 2012.**

Mr. Vayalar Ravi, Honourable Minister of Overseas Indian Affairs, visited Kuwait during 10-11 November 2012 for promoting the 11th Pravasi Bhartiya Divas (PBD) which would be held in Cochin from 7-9 January 2013. He was accompanied by Mr. T.K. Manoj Kumar, Joint Secretary,

Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs and Mr. V.N. Ajayan, APS to the Minister. Kuwait was the first stopover in the Minister's visit to the GCC region in connection with PBD 2013.

During the visit, the Embassy of India, Kuwait organized a Pravasi Bhartiya Divas promotional event at its premises, which was attended by about 200 people from the Indian community in Kuwait. The programme started with the welcome speech by the Ambassador Mr. Satish C. Mehta, followed by a short film on PBD 2013. Subsequently, Honourable Minister addressed the gathering and urged them to attend PBD 2013 in large numbers so as to make it successful. The Minister informed that during PBD 2013, focus would be on the issues facing Indians abroad and the participants would have the opportunity to interact with Chief Ministers of various States. He also highlighted various measures initiated by his Ministry aimed at the welfare of Indians working overseas. The Minister also answered the queries raised by the community members. This was followed by a reception organized by the Ambassador in honour of the Minister.

Earlier during the day, Honourable Minister interacted with members of the Indian Doctors Forum at a luncheon meeting. Later, he also attended a dinner hosted in his honour by the Indian Business Council.

Government of India has been organizing Pravasi Bhartiya Divas every year since 2003 to recognize and highlight the contribution of the Indian community abroad in the country's development. Pravasi Bhartiya Samman Awards are also conferred on the occasion every year. PBD has become a significant forum to connect the overseas Indians from across the globe. About 2000 NRIs/PIOs from all over the world are expected to participate in PBD 2013.

*Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait,*

<http://www.indembkwt.org/ShowNews.aspx?ID=145&SECTION=1>

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## f. LIBYA

### **16. Ambassador honouring Indian soldiers who died during the Second World War in Libya, Tripoli, 7 November 2012.**

On 7 November 2012 H.E. Mr. Anil Trigunayat, Ambassador of India laid the wreath on the Remembrance Day at the Tripoli Cemetery in honour of several hundred Indians who died during the Second World War in Libya. Their graves are located in Tripoli, Benghazi and Tubruk.

These brave Indian soldiers gave their lives for freedom and the greatest virtues of humanity, Ambassador paid his tribute and gratitude at the ceremony organized at the Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery in Tripoli.

*Source: Embassy of India, Tripoli,*

<http://indianembassy.ly/index.php?mact=News,cntnt01,detail,0&cntnt01articleid=20&cntnt01pagelimit=5&cntnt01returnid=15>

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**17. Statement by Ambassador Hardeep Singh Puri, Permanent Representative, during UN Security Council Meeting on the Libyan case in the International Criminal Court, Hague, 7 November 2012.**

Now I would like to make a statement in my national capacity.

I also would like to join others in thanking the Prosecutor, Mrs. Fatou Bensouda for her briefing today.

At the outset, let me state that India is not a party to the Rome Statute, for reasons that are well known. I need not reiterate them here. We, however, support the rights and obligations of the States that are members of the ICC.

India strongly condemns all acts of violence committed against civilians. We believe that the right to life is one of the fundamental rights and should be the foundation of any social order. It is the obligation of all States to take appropriate measures to protect the life of their citizens, while maintaining social order. The concerned States must also bring to justice those responsible for violations of this right.

During the conflict in Libya there were deaths and destruction on a massive scale by parties to the conflict. In the post-conflict scenario, proliferation of weapons has emerged as a major problem posing threat to stability in Libya as well as in the larger region. The Libyan government has to confront this challenge by undertaking an inclusive political process aimed at achieving national reconciliation, peace, security and stability in the country. In this connection, we welcome the progress achieved towards establishing democracy in Libya, and commend the people and Government of Libya for holding elections to the national congress. We hope that peace, stability, and socio-economic development will soon return to Libya.

The international community, including the Security Council and the ICC, should fully assist the Libyan authorities in this process. This inclusive approach to national reconciliation, anchored in state sovereignty, is the only way to overcome the problems that Libya is presently facing.

We have noted that the Prosecutor's comments today, and expect that she will carry out a thorough and impartial investigation of the situation in Libya in an impartial and transparent manner. The Council had referred a situation and, therefore, a report on the investigation of the situation so referred is important. All those responsible for committing alleged crimes should be held accountable. Political or other non-judicial considerations should not exonerate anybody from prosecution for the crimes committed.

Last, but not the least, it is also important to ensure that all actions by the ICC Prosecutor should fall strictly within the ambit of Resolution 1970, particularly paragraph 6 of the resolution that concerns the States that are not parties to the Rome Statute.

Thank you.

*Source: Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations, New York,  
<http://www.un.int/india/2012/ind2122.pdf>*

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**18. Message from H.E. Dr. Manmohan Singh, Hon'ble Prime Minister of India to H.E. Mr. Ali Zeidan, Tripoli, 14 November 2012.**

H.E. Dr. Manmohan Singh, Honourable Prime Minister of India conveyed his felicitations to H.E. Mr. Ali Zeidan on his appointment as Prime Minister of Libya, which reads as follows:

New Delhi: November 7, 2012

Excellency,

Please accept my congratulations on your election as the Prime Minister of Libya at a momentous time when Libya is making a historic transition towards democracy.

India and Libya have always shared warm and friendly relations. We look forward to further strengthen and diversify our bilateral cooperation under your able leadership. India will continue to extend all possible support to Libya in the true spirit of mutual respect and shared values.

I take this opportunity to convey my best wishes for your personal health and well-being and for the continued progress and prosperity of the friendly people of Libya.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Sd/- (Manmohan Singh)

His Excellency Mr. Ali Zeidan  
Prime Minister  
Government of Libya  
Tripoli

*Source: Embassy of India, Tripoli,  
<http://indianembassy.ly/index.php?mact=News,cntnt01,detail,0&cntnt01articleid=21&cntnt01pagelimit=5&cntnt01returnid=15>*

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**19. An article by His Excellency Mr. Anil Trigunayat, Ambassador of India published in Libya Herald, titled "Libya and India- Towards a New Era", Tripoli, 15 November 2012**

BLS Libya and India- Towards a New Era

By Anil Trigunayat, Ambassador of India to Libya  
(Contributed to Libya Herald)

Free Libya is a testament to the will and determination of the great Libyan people who have charted their own destiny and will move forward by the true grit and dint of their courage. I have no doubt that they have an exemplary future ahead in which the newest democracy in the world

is bound to excel. However the path is not easy and challenges many. Some of the most important issues are the reconstruction, development and institution and capacity building. For the infrastructure expansion and maintenance be it in the housing, roads , railways, power generation or transmission, services ,industry, telecom or oil and gas sector huge and focused investments are essential in green field projects and up gradation of skills and equipment in the existing ones. Similarly the education sector perhaps needs a new orientation for which a pre requisite would be to have a mid and a long-term strategy of generating domestic resource pool combined with international cooperation and input. The most daunting task for the New Libya is to deal with security challenges for which integration of revolutionaries and militias into a meaningful and gainful retraining and reemployment paradigm matrix is absolutely essential. For democracy to horizontally and vertically prosper institution building and adherence to core values of tolerance and accommodation to rival opinion and freedom of expression with responsibility is a sine qua non for the progress of the country. Hence for all these initiatives to succeed significant investment and international assistance and cooperation including foreign investment and technology transfer is a priory. Similarly diversification of Libyan economy and development of SME sector in my view hold a good promise.

India has always subscribed to the idea that Libyans know what is best for them be it their polity or economy. But as a longstanding friend of Libyan people India has been and will be ready to render all possible assistance in their nation building enterprise. Major Indian construction and infrastructure companies have been actively engaged in the Libyan effort. During the revolution their camps and facilities were placed at the disposal of the revolutionaries. Despite huge losses to their equipment and property the Indian companies continue to employ their Libyan employees and have paid all their dues.

In the very beginning of the revolution Indian government extended US\$1 million in humanitarian assistance to NTC and on their request also provided life saving and essential drugs are costing another US\$ 1 million to new Libya. India is extending dozens of fully funded scholarships to Libyans across over 200 training programs. We are ready to gift and establish Vocational Training Centres as well as an artificial Limb camp and Centre for injured Libyans. We are also discussing establishment of several other regional research centres under the aegis of India Africa Forum Summit. Health care is yet another major area of cooperation. Already several hundred Indian doctors, nurses and technicians are serving the Libyan society while many injured Libyans received good quality treatment in world-class Indian hospitals. Recently we had a 15-member CEOs delegation from the Confederation of Indian Industries to Libya and they were able to discuss and engage in mutually beneficial business relationships including Joint ventures, mergers and acquisitions as well as trade.

India is an acknowledged global leader in information technology and this is yet another area where we could work together especially in banking, financial sector, education and other applications.

I am confident that given the mutual complementarities in our two economies the new Libya and a resurgent India can identify and build upon a new era of opportunity and newer vistas of cooperation.

*Source: Embassy of India, Tripoli,*

<http://indianembassy.ly/index.php?mact=News,cntnt01,detail,0&cntnt01articleid=22&cntnt01pagelimit=5&cntnt01returnid=15>

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**20. H.E. Minister of State for External Affairs felicitates H.E. Minister for International Cooperation of Libya, Tripoli, 28 November 2012.**

Excellency

Please accept my felicitations and best wishes on your appointment as the Minister for International Cooperation of 'New Libya'.

India and Libya share warm and friendly relations. I would also like to take this opportunity to reiterate Government of India's continued commitment to our Libyan friends.

I look forward to working closely with you to further strengthen and diversify our bilateral relationship and cooperation in the multilateral for a.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Sd/- (E. Ahamed)

H.E. Mr. Mohammed Emhemed Abdul Aziz

Minister for International Cooperation

Ministry of Foreign Affairs & International Cooperation

Tripoli

*Source: Embassy of India, Tripoli,*

<http://indianembassy.ly/index.php?mact=News,cntnt01,detail,0&cntnt01articleid=24&cntnt01pagelimit=5&cntnt01returnid=15>

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**21. India and Libya Sign MoU on Electoral Cooperation: Libya Seeks Training for its Election Officials and Evinces Interest in Indian Electronic Voting Machine, New Delhi, 30 November 2012.**

India and Libya today signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in New Delhi, for cooperation in the field of election management and administration, with Libyan Election Commission seeking training and electoral assistance from Election Commission of India.



The MoU was signed by the Chief Election Commissioner of India, Mr. V.S. Sampath and the Deputy Chairman of the High National Election Commission of Libya, Mr. Najeeb Abdessalam Mohammed Arrabiti. Election Commissioners from India, Mr. H. S. Brahma and Dr. Naseem Zaidi; Election Commissioners from Libya, Mr. Altaher Abd Allah Graf, Mr. Mohammed Alsadig Abo Hedma and Mr. Masud Amr Alnami; diplomats and senior officials of the Election Commission of India and Government of India were present at the signing ceremony.

The major aims of MoU are: promotion of exchanges of knowledge and experience in electoral processes; exchange of information, materials, expertise and training of personnel; production and distribution of materials pertaining to electoral systems, voting technology, voters' education and awareness, and participation of women and minorities in electoral process.

Mr. Sampath described the MoU as an appropriate framework for strengthening and improving mutual collaboration between ECI and the newly constituted Commission in Libya. He expressed the confidence that the MoU would facilitate sharing of best practices, skills and experiences between the two institutions for mutual benefit. He praised the HNEC for successfully conducting the July 2012 elections to the Libyan Assembly in a difficult and challenging environment. He expressed ECI's readiness to extend all technical and training support needed by the HNEC so that it could fulfil its responsibility for establishing a strong and durable democratic process in Libya.

Mr. Arrabiti praised the expertise and experience gained by ECI in conducting the largest elections in the world in a peaceful, transparent and credible manner. He also stated that this MoU is an important step in mutual cooperation and would facilitate sharing of experience and skills. At their request, the Libyan delegation was given a detailed briefing on the Indian electoral system and management practices, and a demonstration on the working of the Electronic Voting Machine. Mr. Arrabiti requested for training facilities for the new election officials of Libya through mutual visits in near future, and by making use of ECI's India Institute of Democracy and Election Management (IIIDEM). HNEC would shortly communicate its training requirements to ECI. Election Commissioners Mr. H. S. Brahma and Dr. Nasim Zaidi and the Libyan Election Commissioners also spoke on the occasion. The four-member Libyan delegation earlier held consultations with the Indian Commission on challenges faced in the developing democratic set-up in Libya. They visited the IIIDEM and witnessed the training activities.

Election Commission of India has so far signed sixteen MOUs with Election Management Bodies and international organizations across the world. Some of the MoU signed recently are with Egypt, Venezuela, Republic of Korea and UNDP.

**Source: Press Information Bureau, New Delhi,**

**<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx?relid=89800>**

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## G. PALESTINE

### **22. Statement by Ambassador Hardeep Singh Puri, in his capacity as president of Security Council on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, New York, 29 November 2012.**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Let me begin by thanking the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for inviting me in my capacity as the President of the Security Council for November to address this meeting to commemorate the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

The Security Council remains committed to a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East, based on the vision of a region where two democratic States, Israel and Palestine, live side by side in peace within secure and recognized borders. The Security Council also remains committed to seeking a comprehensive resolution of other Arab-Israeli issues and in this regard, recalls its previous relevant resolutions and notes the importance of the Arab Peace Initiative.

Throughout the past year, developments in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, remained prominent on the Council's agenda. The Council has remained seized of these issues, and continued to receive monthly briefings on the situation from the Secretary-General's Special Coordinator and the Department of Political Affairs and held regular open debates. The Security Council also discussed these issues at a High Level Meeting, during the month of September 2012 on strengthening of the relationship between the Security Council and the League of Arab States. In the context of recent hostilities affecting the Gaza strip and Israel, the Security Council also held a private meeting on 14 November 2012.

The application of Palestine for membership to the United Nations was one of the main issues considered by the Security Council and its Standing Committee on Admission of New Members in the last quarter of the year 2011. The issue remains before the Council following adoption of the report by the Committee on Admission of New Members in November 2011. The Security Council also discussed early this year an invitation extended on behalf of President Mahmoud Abbas and the Palestinian leadership for the Security Council to undertake a visit to the region.

Over the course of the year, members of the Council expressed concern at, and many condemned, the steady expansion of Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory, terming them as illegal under international law or illegitimate. The members also reiterated their view that such actions undermine peace efforts and the viability of the two-State solution, and stressed the need for respect of international obligations in this regard.

Despite several commendable bilateral and multilateral initiatives leading to some notable developments, the Council members regret to note that the direct talks between the parties have not resumed. The members have repeatedly stressed the importance of resumption of Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, and encouraged both sides to keep direct contact so as to maintain positive momentum towards resumption of dialogue and negotiations.

Council members continue to view the situation in Gaza with concern and repeat their calls for the full implementation of Security Council resolutions 1850 and 1860, and in that context they stress the need for a sustained and regular flow of goods and people to Gaza, an end to the smuggling of weapons and rockets, as well as unimpeded provision and distribution of humanitarian assistance throughout Gaza.

The Council members also continue to express concern at, and many condemned the firing of rockets from Gaza into southern Israel. The Council, in a press statement on 21 November 2012 welcomed the ceasefire agreement reached in relation to the Gaza Strip in order to bring about a sustainable and durable cessation of hostilities affecting the Gaza Strip and Israel and expressed their continued support for the ongoing international efforts to consolidate the agreement. The members of the Security Council also deplored the loss of civilian lives resulting from the recent escalation.

Council members have noted the results of the most recent Ad Hoc Liaison Committee meeting on 23 September 2012. In the meeting, the donors based on reports and recommendations from the parties, the UN, the World Bank, the IMF and the Quartet Representative, reconfirmed their assessment that the institutions of the Palestinian Authority are above the threshold of a functioning State. Council members have welcomed this positive appraisal, and stressed the need for continued strengthening of Palestinian institutions. Council members are also cognizant of the importance of continuing financial support to the Palestinian Authority, in view of its critical financial situation.

The past year continued to witness historical developments in the Middle East. The momentous changes across the region have emphasized even further the urgency of realizing a peace agreement that ends the Arab-Israeli conflict, including the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and resolves all claims. The Security Council has thus called upon Palestinians and Israelis to seize the opportunity to reach a peaceful and final settlement.

The Security Council expresses the hope that urgent efforts will be made, based on UN Security Council Resolutions 242, 338, 1397, 1515, 1850, the Madrid principles including land for peace, the Roadmap, and the agreements previously reached between the parties, towards a comprehensive resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Such a solution should end the occupation that began in 1967 and result in the emergence of an independent, democratic, contiguous and viable Palestinian State, living side by side in peace and security with Israel and its neighbours.

The Security Council has recognized the key role of the Quartet in the efforts to re-launch the Middle East Peace Process and the importance of the Arab Peace Initiative as well. Council members have expressed their full support for the continued efforts of the Quartet and its statements, including that of 23 September 2011.

The Council urges the parties to work constructively with the Quartet towards this endeavour, and stresses that unilateral actions by either party cannot prejudice the outcome of negotiations and will not be recognized by the international community.

The Security Council remains fully committed to a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East based on the vision of two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security with mutually agreed and recognized borders. Council members have underscored that a peace agreement between Israelis and Palestinians and the final settlement of all core issues can only be achieved through direct negotiations. Council Members have also reiterated their support for an agreed, just and fair solution to the refugee issue. The Security Council remains committed to upholding its duties and supporting a credible negotiations process between the parties, aimed at the early conclusion of a peace agreement.

Finally, the Security Council commends the laudable efforts of humanitarian organizations and agencies on the ground, particularly those of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and its staff. The Council encourages all members of the international community to support the Agency with much needed financial contributions at this critical time.

In view of the critical situation on the ground and of the need for progress to be made in the political process, the Security Council will remain seized of the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, and will continue to consider the issue on a regular basis and to act to uphold its responsibilities under the Charter and consistent with the relevant Security Council resolutions on the matter.

In conclusion, allow me to assure all Member States of the commitment of the Security Council to the ultimate goal of achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East and to the realization of the legitimate and inalienable rights of the Palestinian people for an independent and democratic State.

I thank you.

*Source: Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations, New York,*  
<http://www.un.int/india/2012/ind2145.pdf>

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**23. Statement by Ambassador Hardeep Singh Puri, Permanent Representative, on Agenda Item 37 - 'Question of Palestine and the situation in the Middle East' at the United Nations General Assembly, New York, 30 November 2012.**

Thank you, Mr. President,

At the outset, please allow me to express our appreciation to you for convening this discussion on the Question of Palestine at the General Assembly. I also would like to thank the President of Palestine, H. E. Mahmoud Abbas, for his statement yesterday.

I would like to congratulate the leadership and people of Palestine on the up gradation of Palestine's status in the General Assembly to a non-member observer state. While we have long supported the aspirations of the Palestinian people and leadership for the full membership to the United Nations, the vote yesterday in the General Assembly is an important milestone towards that goal.

Mr. President, the Arab world has been undergoing unprecedented transformation during the last two years. Democratic aspirations of people in several countries are being addressed through national political processes. It is, however, regrettable that the Palestinian question and the related Arab-Israeli issues have largely remained unaddressed and unresolved. Also, the Palestinian application for full membership of the United Nations submitted more than a year ago has not evinced any positive action from the Security Council, despite overwhelming support from the UN member states.

For more than two years now, there have been no direct talks between Israel and Palestine. Meanwhile, the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories has been deteriorating due to settlement activities in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. These activities are creating new realities on the ground, and threaten the very premise of a two-state solution. Settlements, roadblocks and the related infrastructure of occupation have also exacerbated the humanitarian problems of the Palestinian people and are affecting adversely the normal functioning of Palestinian state institutions. The Palestinian Authority is also facing a severe financial crisis that could erode the significant progress made by the Palestinian Authority in building state institutions.

The blockade of Gaza has entered its sixth year, and is causing severe hardship to the population. The humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate, and essential services, economic activities and infrastructure development have been disrupted. We strongly condemn the violence and deeply regret the loss of human lives during the recent hostilities. We hope both the parties will uphold the ceasefire agreement and implement its provisions in good faith.

Mr. President, we hope that the vote in the General Assembly yesterday will pave the way for the resumption of serious, direct talks between the Palestinians and the Israelis. India has a long history of solidarity with the Palestinian people. India was the first non-Arab country to recognize the state of Palestine nearly 25 years back. In his message to the friendly people of Palestine on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity, our Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh has reiterated India's unwavering support for the Palestinian People's struggle for a sovereign, independent, viable and united state of Palestine with East Jerusalem as its capital, living within secure and internationally recognized borders, side by side and at peace

with Israel as endorsed in the Arab Peace Initiative, Quartet Road Map and relevant United Nations Security Council Resolutions.

In conclusion, Mr. President, I would like to reiterate India's continued support for the Palestinian cause.

I thank you.

*Source: Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations, New York,*

<http://www.un.int/india/2012/ind2147.pdf>

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## h. QATAR

### **24. COP 18, Doha, 23 November 2012.**

Ms. Jayanthi Natarajan, Honourable Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Environment and Forests, will be leading Government of India's delegation to UNFCCC's Climate Change Conference [COP-18/CMP-8] scheduled to be held in Doha from 26 November - 7 December 2012. India's nearly thirty member official delegation to this important global conference includes, besides India's Ambassador to Qatar, senior officials from Ministries of Environment and Forests; External Affairs; Agriculture; Earth Sciences; Power; Shipping; and Commerce and Industry.

In the framework of the excellent relations between India and the State of Qatar, India was among the first countries to strongly support Qatar's candidature for the Presidency of the UNFCCC's COP-18/CMP-8. His Excellency, Mr. Abdullah bin Hamad Al Attiyah, President of the Administrative Control and Transparency Authority of Qatar and President of COP-18/CMP-8, visited India from 10 -12 September 2012 at the invitation of Honourable Minister Jayanthi Natarajan. During the visit, the two sides held highly cordial and useful discussions on a wide range of issues in the context of the Climate Change Conference Doha.

India deeply appreciates Qatar's leadership of the Doha Conference and is fully committed to ensure a successful outcome.

*Source: Embassy of India, Doha,*

[http://www.indianembassyqatar.org/press\\_release.php](http://www.indianembassyqatar.org/press_release.php)

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## i. SAUDI ARABIA

### **25. Saudi Business Delegation keen to invest in India, USD 750 Million Saudi – Indo Investment Fund in Offing, New Delhi, 22 November 2012.**

A delegation of Saudi – India Business Network (SIBN) which called on the Minister of State for Commerce and Industry Dr. S Jagathrakshakan in New Delhi, showed keen interest on investing in India and forming joint ventures with Indian companies. The fifteen-member ISBN delegation was led by its President Dr. Ghazi Binzagar. The Saudi delegation showed particular interest in petroleum, petrochemicals, fertilizers, infrastructure, food processing, health care, herbal and medicinal sectors.



Addressing the delegation, Dr Jagathrakshakan detailed the vast investment potential available in India following the spate of new initiatives and liberalization. He said the proposed US \$ 750 million Saudi – Indo Investment Fund, jointly set up by the Public Investment Fund of Saudi Arabia and the Infrastructure Development Finance Corporation (IDFC) will start in the near future. The fund focuses on channelizing Saudi investments into Indian infrastructure projects.

The Minister called upon the delegation to utilize the services of ‘India Invest’ a joint venture special purpose vehicle of the Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion with FICCI and the State governments. ‘Invest India’ gives a fillip to investment promotion and handholding services to foreign investors particularly to the Small and Marginal Enterprises (SMEs) and family owned overseas enterprises in a structured manner.

Dr. Jagathrakshakan also invited the Saudi business community to participate in the oncoming 4th GCC-India Industrial Conference (IGIC) to be held in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia from 19-21 February 2013.

*Source: Press Information Bureau, New Delhi,*

<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx?relid=89246>

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**26. Open House for the Indian community members at the Embassy of India, Riyadh on Thursday 29 November 2012 from 1000 hrs to 1200 hrs, Riyadh, 25 November 2012.**

The Embassy of India Riyadh would be holding next Open House for Indian citizens to address their problems / grievances on 29 November 2012, in the Embassy premises from 1000 hours to 1200 hours.

During the Open House, members of the community can meet His Excellency Mr. Hamid Ali Rao Ambassador of India and other officers of the Embassy to discuss their consular, labour-welfare and any other issues.

All interested members of the community are invited to attend the Open House.

*Source: Embassy of India, Riyadh,*

<http://www.indianembassy.org.sa/Content.aspx?ID=790&PID=691>

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## I. UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

### **27. Press Release, Abu Dhabi, 27 November 2012**

To assist the Indian nationals wishing to return to India during the Amnesty period from 4 December 2012 to 3 February 2013, the Embassy of India, Abu Dhabi and the Consulate General of India, Dubai have set up facilitation centres for collection of applications and dispatch/delivery of Emergency Certificates (OUTPASS) at the following 14 BLS Centres across the UAE. These centres will accept OUTPASS applications during normal working hours from 0800 hours to 1830 hours (Those who have valid passports may approach local immigration authorities directly for regularization of stay/exit formalities).

Following documents MUST be attached with the applications for OUTPASS as PROOF OF IDENTITY:

Copy of the Passport along with Copy of visa

If the passport copy is not available, the NUMBER OF PASSPORT with PLACE and DATE of issue and COPY OF VISA

In case applicant has neither a PASSPORT copy nor PASSPORT DETAILS following documents could be submitted:

- VOTER Identity Card,
- Ration Card with photograph,
- INDIAN DRIVING LICENSE,
- NATIVITY CERTIFICATE issued by District Collector or Superintendent of Police forwarded directly to the Embassy/Consulate.

Fees: Applicants for out-pass will need to pay AED 60/- for the Emergency Certificate plus AED 9/- as Service Charge. Value added service like typing, filling of forms; dispatch etc. will be available at the above mentioned BLS centres. For normal passport services including the issue of fresh passport/renewal of passport etc. normal charges will apply.

See attachment:

<http://indembassyuae.org/drupal/sites/default/images/list%20of%20BLS%20centres.pdf>

*Source: Embassy of India, Abu Dhabi,*

<http://www.indembassyuae.org/drupal/node/810>

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## SPECIFIC ISSUES

### j. GAZA CRISIS

#### **28. Official Spokesperson's response to a media question on violence in Gaza, New Delhi, 18 November 2012**

In response to a media query regarding violence in Gaza the Official Spokesperson said:

"We are deeply concerned at the steep escalation of violence between Israel and Palestine, focused around Gaza that threatens the peace and security of that region.

It is, therefore, imperative that the situation be de-escalated urgently as the region is already undergoing turmoil. We urge both sides to exercise maximum restraint and avoid taking any action that may further exacerbate the situation. It may be mentioned that an emergency meeting on Palestine was held at the UN Security Council on 14 November under India's Presidency to send a strong message from the Council to those concerned to de-escalate the situation and to stop the violence immediately.

It is also necessary that direct talks begin without any further delay between Israel and the Palestinian Authority leading to a comprehensive resolution of the Palestinian situation."

*Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, <http://www.mea.gov.in/media-briefings.htm?dtl/20823/Official+Spokespersons+response+to+a+media+question+on+violence+in+Gaza>*

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**29. Statement issued by the IBSA member-states on the situation between Israel and Palestine, New Delhi, 22 November 2012.**

India, Brazil and South Africa express their strongest condemnation of the ongoing violence between Israel and Palestine that threatens the peace and security of the region. The IBSA countries deeply regret the loss of human lives and express their concern over the disproportionate and excessive use of force.

They urge the parties to immediately cease all violence, to exercise maximum restraint and to avoid taking any action that may further exacerbate the situation. They stress their expectation that the United Nations Security Council will do its utmost in the fulfilment of its responsibilities in regard to this serious situation.

They also stress the urgent need to lift the blockade on Gaza, which continues to worsen the already dire socio-economic and humanitarian situation in Gaza.

The IBSA countries express their strong support to the mediation efforts of the Government of Egypt, the League of Arab States and the UN Secretary-General aimed at achieving a negotiated ceasefire.

The IBSA countries believe that only diplomacy and dialogue will lead to the resolution of the current crisis, which makes it even more urgent to resume direct talks between Israel and Palestine, leading to a comprehensive solution to the Palestinian Question i.e. the achievement of a two-state solution.

In view of the upcoming UN General Assembly discussion on the Question of Palestine, India, Brazil and South Africa express their support for Palestine's request to be accorded Observer State status in the United Nations system.

*Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, <http://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/20836/Statement+issued+by+the+IBSA+memberstates+on+the+situation+between+Israel+and+Palestine>*

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**k. HAJJ**

**30. Quota of Hajj Pilgrims, New Delhi, 29 November 2012.**

**Question:**

- (a) The total number of Hajj pilgrims who performed Hajj this year, State-wise;
- (b) The quota allocated to each State, State-wise;
- (c) The total Hajj quota of Government; and

(d) The quota of Private Tour Operators (PTOs) and quota given to each PTO along with the norms therefore?

**Answer**

The Minister of External Affairs (Mr. Salman Khurshid)

(a) 1, 25,064 pilgrims performed Hajj through Hajj Committee of India during Haj-2012. State-wise details are attached at Annexure I.

(b) State-wise allocation of Hajj quota for Haj-2012 is at Annexure I.

(c) & (d) As per bilateral Hajj agreement signed between Government of India and Saudi Arabia, the quota allocated to India for Haj-2012 was 1,70,000 with 1,25,000 to go through the Hajj Committee of India (HCOI) and 45,000 through Private Tour Operators (PTOs).

335 Qualified PTOs were allotted quota during Haj-2012 on the basis of criteria laid down in the Hajj 2012 PTO Policy duly approved by the Hon'ble Supreme Court. Details of the qualified PTOs during Hajj 2012 may be seen at Annexure II.

For the annexure: <http://164.100.24.219/annex/227/As100.docx>

*Source: Rajya Sabha (Council of States), Starred Question No. 100 asked by Mr. Mohammed Adeep, <http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/QResult.aspx>*

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## MULTILATERAL ISSUES/ REGIONAL ISSUES

### I. Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)

**31. India rejects factually incorrect and misleading references to Indian State of Jammu & Kashmir by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), New Delhi, 20 November 2012.**

In response to a question on Resolutions adopted during the 39th Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers of Organization of the Islamic Cooperation (OIC) held in Djibouti from November 15-17, 2012, the Official Spokesperson said:

"We note with regret that the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation (OIC) has once again made factually incorrect and misleading references to matters internal to India, including the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir, which is an integral part of India. We reject all such references/resolutions."

**An extract from the Djibouti Declaration of OIC:**

... We underline the importance of the security, sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and legal rights of all OIC Member States, and stress the need for peaceful settlement of conflicts in accordance with the UN and OIC Charters and based on international law; we have issued resolutions in which we expressed our full solidarity with the Sudan, Union of the Comoros, Yemen, Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Jammu Kashmir ...

For the full resolution:

<http://www.oic-oci.org/english/conf/fm/39/DJIBOUTI%20DECLARATION-FINAL.pdf>

*Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, <http://www.mea.gov.in/media-briefings.htm?dtl/20832/India+rejects+factually+incorrect+and+misleading+references+to+Indian+State+of+Jammu+amp+Kashmir+by+the+Organization+of+Islamic+Cooperation+OIC>*

**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 Websites of <http://rajyasabha.nic.in/> of Rajya Sabha and <http://loksabha.nic.in/> of Lok Sabha.

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Compiled by Alvite N

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