

INDIA WATCH

No. 39

APRIL 2013

POLITICAL ISSUES

EGYPT

1. Egypt's Morsi pitches for 'E-BRICS'

Cairo, Tuesday, 19 March 2013

Confident of navigating his country's post-revolution transition, Egypt's President Mohamed Morsi arrived in India on Monday, 18 March to anchor a special relationship and flag his country's ambition of joining the ranks of the world's "emerging countries." Morsi expressed Egypt's deep interest in joining the Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa (BRICS) combine and turning the grouping into E-BRICS.

Source: The Hindu, Chennai

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/egypts-Morsi-pitches-for-ebrics/article4523988.ece>

2. India can help Egypt build defence industry

Cairo, Tuesday, 19 March 2013

The Egyptian President, Mohamed Morsi acknowledged that he foresaw India fitted prominently into Cairo's plans to develop Information Technology (IT), small and medium enterprises as well as a national defence industry. The President said Egypt wanted to establish a "unique relationship" with India in the area of defence as "in military industry also, India is quite advanced" and identified military navigation, electronics and maintenance as some of the priority areas.

Source: The Hindu, Chennai

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/india-can-help-egypt-build-defence-industry/article4524012.ece>

3. India, Egypt to step up defence ties

New Delhi, Wednesday, 20 March 2013

India and Egypt agreed to intensify their defence relationship which had remained in limbo after a period of intense cooperation on the international stage in the 1950s. "We also agreed to enhance our defence exchanges and cooperation," said Prime Minister Manmohan Singh after a summit meeting with the Egyptian President, Mohamed Morsi.

Source: The Hindu, Chennai

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/india-egypt-to-step-up-defence-ties/article4527895.ece>

IRAN

4. India set to halt Iran oil imports over insurance

New Delhi, Friday, 8 March 2013

India is set to halt all crude imports from Iran because insurance companies in the country have said refineries processing the oil would no longer be covered due to Western sanctions, the head of refiner Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Ltd (MRPL) said.

Source: Reuters, U.K.

<http://in.reuters.com/article/2013/03/08/iran-india-imports-idINDEE92707620130308>

5. India asks EU to clarify stance on Iran oil insurance

New Delhi, Friday, 22 March 2013

India has sought clarification from the European Union on insuring oil supplies from Iran as trade with Tehran gets tougher due to Western sanctions, India's Foreign Minister said on Friday.

Source: Reuters, U.K.

<http://in.reuters.com/article/2013/03/22/india-iran-idINL3N0CE0PE20130322>

KUWAIT

6. High-level delegation from Kuwait to visit India this month

Dubai, Monday, 4 March 2013

A high-level delegation from Kuwait would be visiting India later this month, which would pave the way for further economic cooperation, India's Ambassador to Kuwait, Satish C Mehta, has said. The visit would be followed by the meeting of the Joint Ministerial Commission in Kuwait.

Source: Business Standard, New Delhi

http://www.business-standard.com/article/international/high-level-delegation-from-kuwait-to-visit-india-this-month-113030400199_1.html

SAUDI ARABIA

7. Saudi Malayalis jittery as Nitaqat deadline ends today

Kochi, Wednesday, 27 March 2013

Tens of thousands of Malayali workers in Saudi Arabia are on edge as the deadline for the Saudization programme called *Nitaqat* (meaning neutralization) ends on Wednesday. They face the prospect of being forced to wind up and leave on their own or face deportation, should the Saudi government stick to its plan of Saudization. Nearly two million expatriate workers, the largest chunk being Indians, would have to leave Saudi Arabia as the firms, companies, and businesses they work for have failed to comply with the *Nitaqat* programme.

Source: The Hindu, Chennai

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/saudi-malayalis-jittery-as-nitaqat-deadline-ends-today/article4552883.ece>

8. New Saudi law may hit Indian jobs

Dubai, Thursday, 28 March 2013

South Asian workers — a majority of whom are from India employed in the small and medium enterprises in Saudi Arabia — are likely to be hit hard as the Kingdom goes ahead with its plans to expand employment avenues for its own nationals in the backdrop of the Arab Spring.

Source: The Hindu, Chennai

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/new-saudi-law-may-hit-indian-jobs/article4556571.ece>

9. No need for panic over Saudi job law: Ravi

Thiruvananthapuram/ New Delhi, Friday, 29 March 2013

At a news conference Minister for Overseas Indian Affairs Vayalar Ravi said the government was working through the embassy in the kingdom to minimize the impact of the new law. "There is no reason to panic, though there will certainly be some problems," said the Minister.

Source: The Hindu, Chennai

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/no-need-for-panic-over-saudi-job-law-ravi/article4561016.ece>

10. We're monitoring Saudi situation: Vayalar Ravi

New Delhi, Saturday, 30 March 2013

Overseas Indian Affairs Minister Vayalar Ravi on Friday said the Indian government was constantly monitoring the situation in Saudi Arabia through its embassy in Riyadh in view of the Kingdom's proposed implementation of the *Nitaqat* programme in its employment sector.

Source: The Hindu, Chennai

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/were-monitoring-saudi-situation-vayalar-ravi/article4563228.ece>

11. Minister asks PM to take up 'Nitaqat' issue with Riyadh

New Delhi, Sunday, 31 March 2013

The Saudi Arabia government's decision to strictly implement the *Nitaqat* law, under which 10 per cent jobs would be reserved for Saudi nationals, caused much worries among the Indian expatriates there, particularly those from Kerala. Union Minister of State for Civil Aviation K.C. Venugopal wrote a letter to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh seeking his immediate intervention and suggested that considering the friendly ties New Delhi had with Riyadh, the Prime Minister could take up the issue through a high level diplomatic mission.

Source: The Hindu, Chennai

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/minister-asks-pm-to-take-up-nitaqat-issue-with-riyadh/article4565949.ece>

12. No need for panic over Saudi Nitaqat law, says Chandy

Thiruvananthapuram, Sunday, 31 March 2013

There is no need for panic over Saudi Arabia's decision to impose the restrictive job law, *Nitaqat*, Kerala Chief Minister Oommen Chandy said.

Source: The Hindu, Chennai

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/no-need-for-panic-over-saudi-nitaqat-law-says-chandy/article4566326.ece>

SYRIA

13. Damascus hopes BRICS will help end violence

New Delhi, Saturday, 9 March 2013

Damascus hopes that (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) BRICS' summit in Durban would be able to come out with an initiative to ending the violence in Syria. "There are the BRICS countries who are at least introducing reason into what is happening in the international community," Bouthaina Shaaban, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's Special Envoy said in New Delhi.

Source: The Hindu, Chennai

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/damascus-hopes-brics-will-help-end-violence/article4490340.ece>

TURKEY

14. Turkey's relations with Pakistan should not impact India: Feridun Sinirlioglu

New Delhi, Friday, 1 March 2013

Turkey and India have converging interests in key areas like trade, anti-terrorism and regional development. However, Turkey's relationship with Pakistan remains a talking point. Feridun Sinirlioglu, undersecretary of Turkey's ministry of foreign affairs observed when discussing the issue of managing two important relationships.

Source: The Times of India, New Delhi

http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2013-03-01/interviews/37352689_1_india-and-pakistan-important-neighbour-feridun-sinirlioglu

UAE

15. Jet-Etihad deal: India working to assuage UAE's investments concerns; PM to visit Abu Dhabi

Mumbai, Tuesday, 5 March 2013

The Indian government is moving fast to assuage the UAE government's concerns regarding investments from that country in India, an assurance that is seen as a crucial prerequisite to successful completion of the Jet-Etihad deal.

Source: The Economic Times, New Delhi

http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2013-03-05/news/37470188_1_jet-etihad-bilateral-investment-uae-government

See Also: Reuters, U.K.

<http://in.reuters.com/article/2013/03/05/india-press-uae-idINL4N0BX16E20130305>

ECONOMIC RELATIONS

EGYPT

16. India, Egypt to strengthen economic relations

Cairo, Tuesday, 12 March 2013

India and Egypt have agreed to work towards early resolution of some of the issues faced by major Indian companies that are operating projects in Egypt. The India-Egypt Joint Trade Committee held its first meeting in Cairo on 10 March 2013 where both sides welcomed the significant increase in Indian investments in Egypt.

Source: Business Standard, New Delhi

http://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/india-egypt-to-strengthen-economic-relations-113031200510_1.html

17. Egypt considers India for wheat imports

Cairo, Wednesday, 20 March 2013

Egypt is considering buying Indian wheat as a way to diversify its sources, an Egyptian minister told an Indian newspaper, as the top global importer seeks to ensure supply to meet its economic crisis.

Source: Reuters, U.K.

<http://in.reuters.com/article/2013/03/19/egypt-wheat-india-idINL6N0CBILI20130319>

IRAN

18. India trumps Pakistan's Iran rice trade boom with oil rupees

Dubai, Friday, 8 March 2013

Indian rice exports to Iran have bounced back, thanks to shippers being paid up front in rupees from a huge pool of oil money owed to Iran by Indian refiners. "Now business is being done

directly because Iran is allowed to open letters of credit in Indian rupees because the government has to pay money to Iran for the oil," said Suresh Manchanda, marketing director of a Delhi-based company which exports rice, wheat and sugar globally.

Source: Reuters, U.K.

<http://in.reuters.com/article/2013/03/08/india-iran-rice-idINDEE92703K20130308>

TUNISIA

19. Tatas looks to expand in Africa; new CV plants, hotels on anvil

New Delhi, Monday, 18 March 2013

Tata Motors is looking to set up new assembly facilities through local partners in countries like Tunisia and the group's hospitality chain Taj Hotels Resorts and Palaces is considering "proposals from three-four" countries to set up new properties.

Source: The Economic Times, New Delhi

<http://m.economictimes.com/news/news-by-industry/auto/automobiles/tatas-looks-to-expand-in-africa-new-cv-plants-hotels-on-anvil/articleshow/19038882.cms>

See Also: Reuters, U.K.

<http://in.reuters.com/article/2013/03/19/india-press-tatamotors-idINL3N0CB6LM20130319>

MISCELLANEOUS

IRAN

20. Two arrested Iranians remanded in judicial custody

Madurai, Monday, 25 March 2013

Two Iranian nationals, arrested by the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) in Sivaganga district for manufacturing methamphetamine, were produced at a judicial court on Sunday, 24 March 2013.

Source: The Hindu, Chennai

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/two-arrested-iranians-remanded-in-judicial-custody/article4545827.ece>

21. Iranian held in drug racket was PoW

Chennai, Sunday, 31 March 2013

Mosavi Masoud (49), one of the two Iranian nationals arrested by the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) from a clandestine laboratory manufacturing methamphetamine in Sivaganga district on 22 March 2013, was a former Prisoner of War (PoW), agency sources said.

Source: The Hindu, Chennai

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/iranian-held-in-drug-racket-was-pow/article4566151.ece>

SAUDI ARABIA

22. Saudi restricts Hajj for private pilgrims

Kozhikode, Tuesday, 19 March 2013

Saudi Arabia has restricted the Hajj undertaken by pilgrims through private tour operators to only once in five years. On 18 January 2013, the Ministry of External Affairs directed the Hajj Committee of India (HCOI) to restrict the number of pilgrimage for an applicant going through it to "once in a life time" as against the earlier norm of "once in five years."

Source: The Hindu, Chennai

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/saudi-restricts-haj-for-private-pilgrims/article4524230.ece>

23. Migrant worker's body brought back

Eluru, Friday, 22 March 2013

Ponnaganti Lakshmi, a daily wage-earner from Adivarapupeta in city, has finally got the body of her husband, who died in Saudi Arabia, after a three-month-long wait. With the arrival of the body, her wish to perform the last rites of her husband, a construction worker, was fulfilled belatedly.

Source: The Hindu, Chennai

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/migrant-workers-body-brought-back/article4536145.ece>

24. Seven Indians killed in Saudi godown fire

Malappuram, Wednesday, 27 March 2013

Seven Indians, six of them Keralites, were killed in a fire in a furniture godown run by a Malayali at Gafara, 10 km from Hail town, in Saudi Arabia on Tuesday morning.

Source: The Hindu, Chennai

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/seven-indians-killed-in-saudi-godown-fire/article4553260.ece>

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