

INDIA SPEAKS

(Monthly Digest of Official Indian Statements on Middle East)

No. 45

April 2013

BILATERAL ISSUES

a. BAHRAIN

1. Visit of His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Bahrain to the Indian state of Kerala, Kerala, 17-18 March 2013.

His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Bahrain paid a visit to the Indian state of Kerala during 17-18 March 2013. Oommen Chandy, Chief Minister of Kerala and other senior officials received him at the airport. During the meetings Government of India was represented by Minister of State for External Affairs, E. Ahmed and he also made the Opening Remarks at the delegation-level talks. His Royal Highness was accompanied by: Shaikh Khalid bin Ahmed bin Mohamed Al Khalifa, Minister of Foreign Affairs; Kamal Ahmed, Minister of Transport and Acting Chief Executive of the Bahrain Economic Development Board; Shaikh Mohamed bin Essa Al Khalifa, Political and Economic Advisor to HRH the Crown Prince; Shaikh Khalifa bin Daij Al Khalifa, President of the Crown Prince Court of Bahrain; Shaikh Ahmed bin Khalifa Al Khalifa, Advisor to HRH the Crown Prince; along with a delegation from the Bahrain Economic Development Board and Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry; and representatives from the private sector.

In the meetings, His Royal Highness remarked on the rich, historic relations between Bahrain and India, noting the strong commercial and economic links the nations share. Expressing his keenness to further bolster economic and trade ties, His Royal Highness highlighted that India is one of Asia's most significant economies. His Royal Highness underlined the valuable contribution of the Indian community to the economic and social life of Bahrain. He also lauded Kerala's multi-religious and pluralistic polity.

Source: Embassy of India, Ghudaibiya,

http://www.indianembassybahrain.com/cp_bah_visits_india_mar2013.html

b. EGYPT

2. India-Egypt agree to strengthen economic relations, Cairo, 11 March 2013.

The India-Egypt Joint Trade Committee held its first meeting in Cairo on 10 March 2013. The Indian delegation was headed by D.S. Dhesi, Additional Secretary (Vice Minister) in India's Ministry of Commerce & Industry while Said Abd-Allah, First Under Secretary in the Ministry of Industry & Foreign Trade headed the discussions from the Egyptian side. The meeting, coming on the eve of the forthcoming visit of President Mohamed Morsi to India, gave the two sides an opportunity to review the existing position with regard to bilateral trade, examine issues that need to be resolved and explore the future potential in new areas of cooperation.

Both sides expressed satisfaction that bilateral trade between India and Egypt has shown impressive growth despite the ongoing global economic slowdown. They noted that according to data released by CAPMAS, trade has grown from US\$ 2.5 billion in 2006-07 to US\$ 4.3 billion in 2011-12. The trade balance currently lies in Egypt's favour with its exports to India touches US\$ 2.3 billion as against imports of a little under US\$ 2 billion. This trade profile makes India the 7th largest trading partner of Egypt and the second most important destination for its exports.

During the discussions, both sides welcomed the significant increase in Indian investments in Egypt and agreed to work towards early resolution of some of the issues being faced by major Indian companies that are operating projects in different parts of Egypt. Thanking the Egyptian Government for its warmth and hospitality, the leader of the Indian delegation Dhesi said "The convening of the first ever meeting of the Joint Trade Committee marks an important step in our efforts to ensure that our trade and investment relations achieve their full potential. We have always worked closely on multilateral platforms such as the WTO and our collaboration reflects the true spirit of South-South Cooperation. I had extremely meaningful and productive discussions with our friends in Egypt and we hope that in the coming years, these will pave the way for the emergence of India as the preferred source of high quality and competitively priced products in vital sectors such as pharmaceuticals and vaccines, agricultural commodities like wheat for which India now has a substantial surplus and state-of-the-art products and services in information and communications technology sector".

For more information, please contact Bijay Selvaraj, Second Secretary (Information) at 27355794. infoemb@indembcairo.com

Source: Embassy of India, Cairo,

http://www.indembcairo.com/en-us/presscentre/pressreleases.aspx?udt_656_param_detail=440

3. Transcript of Media Briefing on Egyptian President's Forthcoming Visit to India, New Delhi, 14 March 2013.

An Official Spokesperson (Syed Akbaruddin): Good afternoon friends and thank you very much for coming for this briefing today.

Before I begin, I would like to introduce my colleagues who are here with me. On my right is Navdeep Suri who is our Ambassador in Egypt; and on my left is Rajeev Shahare who is Joint Secretary (West Asia & North Africa).

What we have today primarily is a briefing regarding the forthcoming state visit of President of Egypt Dr. Mohamed Morsi to India from 18 - 21 March 2013. The programme is still evolving and we will provide to you a detailed advisory of all his engagements, but I can just try and share with you a little bit of information before I ask my colleague Joint Secretary (WANA) to brief you in a little bit more detail.

President Morsi is expected to be accompanied by senior Ministers and a Business Delegation. As is the practice, he will be received ceremonially at the Rashtrapati Bhavan. He will have delegation-level talks with the Prime Minister. There will be a meeting with the President followed by a banquet. And there will be calls on him by the External Affairs Minister, the Vice-President, and the Chairperson of the UPA. In addition, there is a business segment to his visit, i.e., he will be interacting with businessmen here in Delhi before he departs.

Those are my brief remarks. With that I will request Shahare to brief you in a little bit more detail about the visit. Then the floor will be open for any questions that you would like to ask either to Shahare or to Ambassador Suri. As is the norm, we will first exhaust this topic before I am willing to take any other questions that you may have on any other topic. With that I will ask the Joint Secretary (WANA) to make his opening remarks. Rajeev.

Joint Secretary (WANA) (Rajeev Shahare): Thank you. Like Akbar has said, the visit of Dr. Mohamed Morsi is from 18-20 March 2013. We are looking at the date of departure, it is still being evolved.

The visit, if I may say so, is happening at a very important juncture of our bilateral ties and also regional developments. What we have witnessed in the North Africa, West Asia region over the past two years with the Arab Spring, the political tumult that the countries have gone through, and some of the countries have come out of it and are presently undergoing the phase of democracy, of bringing in institutions which can usher in reforms. So this is a very crucial juncture for Egypt to undertake this visit. We in India look forward to receiving President Morsi and partner Egypt in these areas that they want to strengthen their ties with India.

As you are all aware, our ties are historic, dating back to many centuries, millennia for that matter. But in the recent times we have shared a colonial past, and together have launched the Non-Aligned Movement which is still very fondly remembered in Egypt.

Coming to the more recent times, even after the political tumult and after the 25 January Revolution that took place in Egypt in 2011, we were very quick to link up with the new dispensation in Egypt. Our Minister of State visited very early on to Egypt. Last year we had the visit of External Affairs Minister in March 2012, where we also met up with the leadership and held the Joint Commission meeting. In fact, that Joint Commission meeting set the tone and pace of how we will be engaging with the new Egypt and that was very well appreciated by Egypt as well.

In this visit we will be looking at interaction at various levels. It has all components of a very strong relationship: on the political level, on the economic level, on the level of engagement in the science and technology areas, cutting edge technology areas, frontier areas of science, in information technology. So these will be certainly on the table for discussion.

Importantly and very significantly at that has been our economic engagement. Despite the political tumult, we saw a record increase in our economic engagement. We saw an increase of almost 30 per cent. From US\$ 3.2 billion, our trade went up to US\$ 4.5 billion. But I have just been told by our Ambassador that the figures correspond to the Egyptian financial year, according to our financial year it has reached US\$ 5.5 billion. So, this is a significant increase and it shows that despite the political situation, despite the political scenario, what has really come up is that the will form both sides to engage with each other in the economic sphere. We certainly hope to carry this forward during the visit of President Morsi.

He will be accompanied by a very high-level Business Delegation. So far they have told us maybe 15 to 20, but very high-level business people are to accompany him. We have a separate business segment which of course is being organized more with the Egyptian Mission and our three apex business houses – FICCI, CII and ASSOCHAM – in which FICCI is taking the lead role. There will be various elements to that. I think they are still being developed. So we will not be in a position to give you the details of the economic segment. But I think to some extent the Commerce Ministers from both sides would be chairing some sessions; there is a likelihood of the President also addressing the session. But I think I would leave to the Egyptian side to give more details on that. They are the ones who are doing this segment.

As happens in the Presidential visits, they are also accompanied by a high-level delegation. We are expecting at least four to five Ministers accompanying Dr. Morsi. We will get to know the details, but as of now we have been given to understand that their Foreign Minister, Minister for

Information and Technology, Trade and Commerce Minister, and Investment Minister would also be coming. So, we have four Ministers so far who would be there with us.

Might I also add here that last year we had a visit by the counterpart Chief Election Commissioner. His name is Bugato. Commissioner Bugato had visited and signed a MoU for cooperation in the field of electoral issues. This shows the Egyptian will to partner India in this very important segment. Before that, our Chief Election Commissioner had also visited. We were also Observers in the first round of the Presidential elections. I think this is an important area. I think that also would be looked at during the visit.

There are many other things we are looking at. Biotechnology, information technology, cyber security areas, all those things will be discussed. There will be delegation-level talks headed by the Prime Minister from our side. There will be the usual trappings of the state visit with the forecourt ceremony and the banquet by the President, etc.

We also have presence of a large number of Indian companies, almost 50 companies are there, big names are there. Aditya Birla is there, Kirloskar has been there for at least 60 years or so, Daburs are there. There is a new company that has come up called Sanmar who are manufacturing PVC and caustic soda. It is a huge company with a billion dollar plus investment. Our total investments are more than US\$ 2.5 billion in Egypt. Likewise Egypt is also investing here. There are a few companies here. So this is one area we would be looking at how to partner on the investments side.

I will stop at that and we can take questions thereafter. I think the Ambassador might like to add to that.

Official Spokesperson: I think I will ask Ambassador Suri to perhaps add a little bit before we take some questions.

Ambassador to Egypt (Navdeep Suri): Thanks Akbar. Good to see many old friends again.

On the trade side, one thing that I would add is that overall our trade with Egypt has increased so rapidly in the last three years that India is now Egypt's seventh largest trading partner. Last year it was the second largest source of its exports. Our own exports have comfortably crossed about US\$ 2.3 billion last year.

We have a much diversified export basket. In fact it is interesting to see how Indian products such as two-wheelers and three-wheelers are rapidly gaining ground over other competitors who had a head start and were dominating the market.

As Rajeev said, on investment as well, it is a fact that we have 50 Indian companies in a very diverse range of sectors – in petrochemicals, in chemicals, in paints, in consumer products, in healthcare products, in adhesives. Particularly when you talk to Indian companies that what is the driver for you, the first thing everybody says is - location. The geo-strategic location that Egypt enjoys enables them to look at markets not only the fact that Egypt itself is a US\$ 260 billion economy with 85 million consumers, the second largest in Africa, but also that by having a manufacturing base in Egypt they are able to access markets in Europe, in Africa, and in the Middle East. That is a major attraction for them.

We always discuss in general terms, yes we will have collaboration in IT, but how you concretize this? I think what you will see emerging out of this visit is a number of very interesting concrete ideas of taking relationships forward in a way that they stand out as visible symbols of cooperation. One for example will be in very advanced stages of discussing - a centre for excellence in IT in Al-Azhar University. As you know, Al-Azhar Sharif is the world's single most influential, respected, oldest organization in the field of Sunni Islam. And the request has come from them as recognition of the value that India can add to their curriculum.

We talk often in general terms about space technology and cooperation but here we are talking in specific terms about launching an Egyptian satellite. So, you will see some interesting things come out of the visit in the next few days.

I will leave it at that and if there are any questions, then Rajeev and I will be happy to answer them.

Question: What is the President looking for in India? What is it they want? Politically it is not that we have been very close. Maybe long ago, but in the recent past ... (Inaudible)...So, what is it that they want?

Ambassador to Egypt: The new Government is very clearly looking at a much deeper engagement with India. They are looking at diversifying their relationships, and you will see that emerge. They genuinely look at India as a country from which they can access our knowledge, experience and expertise in areas like information technology, in small and medium enterprises, in microfinance. They have done their homework; they are very focused on what they need from India.

Joint Secretary (WANA): I think Navdeep has very much said this. I sat on a meeting with Dr. Morsi when EAM had visited. At that time he very clearly articulated that he would like to learn from India and also gain from India's expertise. What he was saying about was about (a) capacity building, so that he can address the problem of unemployment there, how to increase on that; and (b) to learn from India's pluralism, a pluralistic society, how we are going about that, I

think this is another very important element which even Egypt is looking at. Of course certainly all these high-tech areas they want to partner India. I think that is what is driving them to look towards India.

Question: What are the new areas you are going to discuss as compared to the summit meeting with Mubarak? I think I remember during Mubarak's time there was space exploration. What is the new ground that you are going to cover?

Joint Secretary (WANA): As I indicated, what we are doing is moving from general agreements to specifics of collaboration. When we say that we are moving to the specific of a Centre for Information Technology, where we are establishing, in the hallowed premises of Al-Azhar University, we are moving on. So, there is progress that you can see in concretizing some of those ideas. I gave you the example of space as well. So, there is a MoU that creates an enabling framework, and then there is action on the ground to actually make something tangible happen. That is the stage we are at now. Also with regard to say small and medium enterprises, capacity building, more opportunities for employment. So, from a generic Memorandum of Understanding, going on to specific implementation of the MoUs, we are going to have vocational training centre specifically that we are going to set up in Cairo. These are the specificities, just to add to what Ambassador has said.

Question: Navdeep, considering your office-cum-residence is not too far from the Tahrir Square, the ongoing in Cairo; do they bother you at all? How does that affect the Indian companies there? The last time I went to Cairo I had to change planes in Dubai. Considering that they are a big trading partner now, do we have direct flights connecting India with Egypt?

Ambassador to Egypt: I think that is two separate questions. On the flights, there are flights between Mumbai and Cairo of Egypt Airlines four days a week, but there are none between Delhi and Cairo. But there are many connections through Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Bahrain, Muscat, Riyadh, etc.

On Tahrir Square, I keep telling my friends when they call up and express concern that Cairo is a city of 20 million. It is huge, sprawling. Tahrir is half a square kilometre or less, and detours are easily available if there are disturbances happening. Yes, the power of the visual medium to convey a certain image is very strong. But by and large, life goes on in the city which is the unreported fact of the situation there. There are a couple of Embassies which are right next to Tahrir Square and if there are clashes taking place in that area, they are impacted directly. But schools and colleges work, Embassies work, the malls are open till 1 o'clock at night. Life goes on.

Question: Navdeep, just now Shahare said that they are looking for pluralism from India. I just want to know what kind of political cooperation you are looking with Egypt so far as international fora are concerned.

Ambassador to Egypt: First of all on the issue of pluralism, just to expand it, that is one element that comes out almost unerringly in every major conversation that we have. The affection that they have for India is derived from Indian democracy and multiculturalism, the economic story, and the IT story, and then possibly Bollywood as well which has a very wide-ranging appeal.

Internationally, this is a visit at the highest level to give us an opportunity to compare notes on the situation both in our own part of the world and in their part of the world. I think maybe JS (WANA) wants to expand a little bit on that.

Joint Secretary (WANA): As far as India's democratic credentials and the pluralism aspect is concerned, I think we have a proven track record on that. Not only Egypt but many other countries are moving towards how our entire secular approach, the coexistence between various religions, and the whole concept of pluralism. How successful it had been in India has become in a way a role model for many of these countries. These emerging countries that are in transition are facing this, and definitely in the transition phase we are seeing what is happening in other countries as well. There are these problems which are cropping up. So, I think they feel that what is already there in India, the peaceful coexistence or the coexistence of various segments in our society whether it is linguistic diversification or ethnic diversification or religious, how we come together and exist peacefully, I think this is what these countries are looking at India for.

Official Spokesperson: Rajeev has to leave but Ambassador Suri is still here with us and I have still a fairly long list of questions.

Question: I would like to know if there are any proposals from Egypt for any kind of defence cooperation, defence capacity building, etc.

Ambassador to Egypt: We are waiting next month for the Joint Defence Committee. It will take place in Delhi. It is an institutional framework. This is going to be the fourth meeting of the Joint Defence Committee. I am sure they are going to explore new areas of cooperation, particularly since that Committee will be meeting in the wake of Dr. Morsi's visit. Beyond that we do have regular training exchanges. Our officers go to Egyptian establishments for training; theirs come to NDC, etc. That is part of an ongoing process. We make regular ship visits to Egypt. We have had a number of these in the recent past. But I think this Joint Defence Committee will really provide us an opportunity to take that agenda forward.

Question: You spoke about pluralism. How does India see a Government which is led by the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt?

Ambassador to Egypt: It is not a good idea for me to be commenting on the internal politics in a country. At some point maybe we will have a conversation about it.

Question: If I can just draw you back to the Muslim Brotherhood question, we have got Shahbagh happening in our neighbourhood, you have got Muslim Brotherhood and its emergence where you are. How do you intellectually make sense of these two contrasts? What explains the striking difference?

Ambassador to Egypt: Let me just give a general answer. What you are seeing is a region in transition from Governments that were somewhat authoritarian, less or more, to the yearning for democracy manifesting itself in different countries. In Egypt as a case in point and Tunisia and Gaza, as three areas where it has been tested, the elections that were widely regarded as free and fair have been won by parties that are broadly regarded as being of an Islamist leaning. So what you are seeing at play is a serious, pragmatic person, modern-thinking people trying to come out with how to reconcile the emerging idea of political Islam with the established idea of a modern democracy.

Question: Egypt is on the other side of the fence on the UNSC issue. Are we still in the business of persuading them to support us or have we given up? Will this issue come up at all during the PM's talks with the President?

Ambassador to Egypt: It will come up for discussion. We are grownups. We understand that each one has his own position. We are very confident about our position, they have a certain rationale for their position, and we are discussing this issue. It is not something that we have swept off the table.

Question: Ambassador, you said that India would be launching an Egyptian satellite. What kind of satellite would it be? Will any defence cooperation plus space cooperation agreement be signed for this satellite?

Ambassador to Egypt: This is a nano-satellite called EgyCubeSat. It is a small satellite. It is essentially for scientific purposes. I think there is great pride in Egypt that it is entirely built in Egypt itself. And certainly they recognize the track record of our very successful satellite launch programme and look at us as preferred partners for this purpose.

Question: What is the size of this nano-satellite?

Ambassador to Egypt: The weight is about one kilogram that is how much it is usually. But with the trappings and everything, fixtures and all, it would probably come to about six to six and half kilos.

Official Spokesperson: Thank you very much friends.

(Concluded)

Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, <http://www.mea.gov.in/media-briefings.htm?dtl/21389/Transcript+of+Media+Briefing+on+Egyptian+Presidents+Forthcoming+Visit+to+India>

4. State visit of His Excellency Dr. Mohamed Morsi, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt to India (18-20 March 2013), New Delhi, 17 March 2013.

MOST IMMEDIATE/MEDIA ADVISORY

As on 15 March 2013 at 2000 hrs

State visit of His Excellency Dr. Mohamed Morsi, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt to India (18-20 March 2013).

Monday, 18 March 2013

2230 hrs

Arrive Delhi

Venue: Air Force Station, Palam

Photo op: AV Media

Tuesday, 19 March 2013

0900 hrs

Ceremonial Reception at Rashtrapati Bhavan

Venue: Rashtrapati Bhavan

Photo Op: AV Media

1000 hrs

Call by Salman Khurshid, Minister of External Affairs

Venue: Hotel ITC Maurya (TBC)

Photo Op: Agencies Only

1130 hrs

Meeting with Prime Minister

Venue: Hyderabad House

Photo Op: AV Media

1245 hrs

Signing of Agreements followed by Press statements

Venue: Hyderabad House

All Media

1500 hrs

Call by Sushma Swaraj, Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha

Venue: Hotel ITC Maurya

Photo Op: Agencies Only

1600 hrs

Call by the Vice President

Venue: Hotel ITC Maurya

Photo Op: Agencies Only

1630 hrs

Call by Chairperson UPA

Venue: Hotel ITC Maurya

Photo Op: Agencies Only

2000 hrs

Meeting with the President

Venue: Rashtrapati Bhavan

Photo Op: Agencies Only

Wednesday, 20 March 2013

1100 hrs

Business Meeting by Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) & Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry in India (ASSOCHAM)

Venue: Hotel The Oberoi

(Contact Organizer)

1330 hrs

Departure

Venue: Air Force Station Palam

Please note:

Media is requested to arrive 1(one) hr. before each event

Access restricted to holders of PIB/ Organization card only

Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, <http://www.mea.gov.in/incoming-visit-detail.htm?21395/State+visit+of+His+Excellency+Dr+Mohamed+Morsi+President+of+the+Arab+Republic+of+Egypt+to+India+March+1820+2013>

5. State Visit of President of Egypt to India, New Delhi, 17 March 2013.

President of Egypt Dr. Mohamed Morsi will be paying a State Visit to India from 18-20 March 2013. He will be accompanied by senior Ministers and a large business delegation on what will be his first official visit to India.

President Morsi will hold delegation level talks with the Prime Minister on 19 March 2013. Vice President, External Affairs Minister, the leader of Opposition and UPA Chairperson will call on the President. Later in the day President of India will host a banquet in his honour.

During his visit President Morsi will also address a business event organized by the apex chambers of commerce of India. Bilateral trade has increased significantly in the recent years in spite of the political transition and currently stands at US\$ 5.5 billion. India is Egypt's 7th largest trading partner and second largest source of its exports. More than 50 Indian companies have presence in Egypt in various sectors and the cumulative Indian investment in Egypt is more than US\$ 2.5 billion. Both countries are keen to further deepen and diversify the growing bilateral engagement during the President's visit.

Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, <http://www.mea.gov.in/incoming-visit-detail.htm?21396/State+Visit+of+President+of+Egypt+to+India>

6. List of documents signed during the State Visit of President of Egypt to India, March 18-20, 2013, New Delhi, 19 March 2013.

S.No	Title of MOUs	Signatory from Indian side	Signatory from Egyptian side	Remarks
1.	MoU between Ministry of Communications & Information Technology of Government of India and Ministry of Communications & Information Technology of Arab Republic of Egypt on Cooperation for Cooperation in Information and Communication Technology	Kapil Sibal Minister for Communications & Information Technology	Eng. Atef Helmy Minister of Communications and Information Technology	The MoU identifies a number of core areas which would be the focus of cooperation. These include e-governance and e-education, IT and electronics hardware, sharing of experiences in the creation of Technology Parks and IT clusters, and strengthening the cooperation between ICT companies in the private sector etc.
2.	MoU between Ministry of Communications & Information Technology of Government of India and Ministry of Communications & Information Technology of Arab Republic of Egypt on Cooperation in the area of	Kapil Sibal Minister for Communications & Information Technology	Eng. Atef Helmy Minister of Communications & Information Technology	MoU facilitates sharing of expertise by exchanging information on all aspects of cyber security and supporting each other in taking appropriate measures in order to prevent cyber security incidents.

S.No	Title of MOUs	Signatory from Indian side	Signatory from Egyptian side	Remarks
	Cyber Security			
3.	MoU between the Government of the Republic of India and Arab Republic of Egypt for the establishment of a Centre for Excellence in IT (CEIT) in Egypt	Salman Khurshid External Affairs Minister	Mohamed K. Amr Minister of Foreign Affairs of Egypt	The MoU for the establishment of a Centre for Excellence in IT (CEIT) in Al Azhar University marks an important step in actualizing the goals of technical and development cooperation between the two countries. Under the MoU, India will provide the human resources, as well as the hardware and software to set up a centre for the training of up to 500 students per year. Egypt will facilitate the establishment of the centre including the provision of space and logistical support.
4.	MoU between National Small Industries Corporation (NSIC), Republic of India and Social Fund for Development, Arab Republic of Egypt on Cooperation in the field of Micro and Small Enterprises	Dr. H.P. Kumar Chairman-cum- Managing Director National Small Industries Corporation (NSIC)	Ghada Fathy Waly Managing Director Social Fund for Development(SFD)	The MoU facilitates sharing of information, meetings between enterprises, technology transfers and to provide consultation services to enhance the abilities of business enterprises of India and Egypt
5.	MoU between Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage and the Ministry of State for Antiquities Affairs, Arab Republic of Egypt for cooperation in the fields of Protection, Preservation, Promotion and Management of Cultural Heritage	Maj. Gen. (Retd.) L.K. Gupta, AVSM, Chairman, INTACH	Ambassador Khaled Elbakly	Facilitates joint activities, sharing of information and exchange of expertise through conferences, workshops, joint projects etc. and cooperation in the field of protection of intellectual property rights and prevention of illicit traffic of antiquities
6.	Agreement between the Government of Egypt represented by Industrial Development Authority and the Government of the Republic of India represented by National Small Industries	Dr. H.P. Kumar Chairman cum Managing Director National Small Industries Corporation (NSIC)	Dr. Mahmoud El Garf. Head of Industrial Development Authority	As part of the MoU, NSIC will be upgrading the Vocational Training Centre at Shoubra El Kheima, Cairo especially in the technological upgradation required in the area of spinning, weaving, knitting and dyeing

S.No	Title of MOUs	Signatory from Indian side	Signatory from Egyptian side	Remarks
	Corporation (NSIC), New Delhi for Upgradation of a Vocational Training Centre at Shourba El Kheima, Cairo, Egypt			technology.
7.	Letter of Intent on India-Egypt Solar Energy Cooperation between Ministry of New and Renewable Energy of Republic of India and the Ministry of Electricity and Energy of the Republic of Egypt	Ratan P. Watal Secretary Ministry of New and Renewable Energy	Ambassador Khaled Elbakly	Envisages providing 8.8 kilowatt of power using solar energy to 40 households in a village in Siwa located in Martrouh Governorate of Egypt.

Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, <http://www.mea.gov.in/incoming-visit-detail.htm?21400/List+of+documents+signed+during+the+State+Visit+of+President+of+Egypt+to+India+March+1820+2013>

7. India to install solar power in Siwa, Cairo, 19 March 2013.

Collaboration in the field of solar energy

In a landmark development for Egypt's renewable energy programme, the Ministry of Electricity and Energy of Egypt and the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy of India have agreed to electrify a village in Egypt with solar power.

The Solar Electrification Project envisages providing 8.8 kilowatt of power using solar energy to 40 households in a village in Siwa located in Martrouh Governorate of Egypt. A village dispensary and a mosque would also be provided with power under this project. It will serve as an important model for providing solar power to communities based in geographically remote locations.

As a special gesture of friendship, the entire cost of the solar electrification project of the proposed village will be met by a special grant from the Government of India.

Under the Jawaharlal Nehru National Solar Mission, an initiative of the Government of India launched in 2010, India has set an ambitious target of installing 20,000 MW of grid connected solar power by 2022. Besides, the Mission also aims at making India a global leader in solar energy by constructively engaging in a mutually beneficial partnership with other countries.

Commenting on the potential for solar energy in Egypt and India, Ambassador Navdeep Suri, Ambassador of India to Egypt said, "India and Egypt enjoy an abundance of sunshine and vast

open areas, ideal for establishing solar power units. It is imperative that with the challenges facing the environment on account of fossil fuels and the limitless potential of solar power, Egypt and India share their expertise and benefit from each other's experience."

More information, can be found at the website of the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy <http://www.mnre.gov.in/>, or contact Bijay Selvaraj, Second Secretary (Info.) at infoemb@indembcairo.com, tel. 2735-5794.

Source: Embassy of India, Cairo, http://www.indembcairo.com/en-us/presscentre/pressreleases.aspx?udt_656_param_detail=457

8. India to launch Egyptian Satellite, Cairo, 19 March 2013.

In a landmark development for Egypt's space programme, Egypt and India have signed a Letter of Intent that provides for Egycubesat-1 to be placed into orbit by an Indian launch vehicle. The Letter of Intent was signed today by National Authority for Remote Sensing and Space Science (NARSSS) of Egypt and Antrix, the commercial arm of the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO).

Egycubesat-1 is a nano satellite designed to have snap shots for Egypt's territories with resolution of 100 meters or better. The captured images would be useful for studying the earth surface geology together with applications in the fields of agriculture, environment and coastal studies.

As a special gesture of friendship, the entire cost of the launch of the Egyptian satellite will be met by a special grant from the Government of India.

Welcoming the development, Navdeep Suri, India's Ambassador to Egypt said "This Agreement opens an entirely new vista of cooperation between the two countries. It is a matter of great pride for Egypt that a satellite built entirely by the talented scientists and engineers of NARSSS will be placed in orbit by a launch vehicle that is entirely designed and built by the ISRO. This Agreement heralds a brilliant new chapter in 'South-South cooperation'."

Over the last few years, India's Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) has won global recognition as one of the most reliable and cost-effective launch vehicles. On 25 February 2013, the PSLV completed its 22nd continuously successful launch by placing Indo-French satellite into the polar orbit. Six satellites from Austria, Canada, Denmark and UK were also placed into their planned orbits on the same day. Since its first successful launch in 1994, PSLV has launched 27 Indian satellites and 35 satellites from South Korea, Mauritius, Russia, Indonesia, Argentina, Israel, Canada, Japan, Germany, Switzerland, Turkey, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Denmark, Norway, Algeria, Singapore, France, Austria, UK and European Space Agency. PSLV also launched India's first spacecraft mission to Moon, Chandrayaan-1 in 2008. It is scheduled to launch India's first interplanetary mission, the Mars Orbiter Mission spacecraft, by the end of this year.

India's ambitious space programme dates back to the 1950s and has provided the country with as many as 60 satellites that are currently in orbit. These include communications and remote sensing satellites and others that are dedicated for mapping ground resources, meteorological forecasting and other applications. A more detailed note on the ISRO and on India's space programme is enclosed.

For further information, please contact Bijay Selvaraj, Second Secretary (Info.) at infoemb@indembcairo.com, tel. 2735-5794.

Source: Embassy of India, Cairo, http://www.indembcairo.com/en-us/presscentre/pressreleases.aspx?udt_656_param_detail=456

9. Al Azhar University to have Indian Centre for Excellence in IT, Cairo, 19 March 2013.

In an example of the increased cooperation between Egypt and India in the critical field of Communication and Information Technology (CIT), a MoU was signed today between the Governments of Egypt and India for the establishment of a Centre for IT Excellence at Al Azhar University. The MoU was signed in New Delhi on March 19 during the visit of President Mohamed Morsi.

The MoU for the establishment of a Centre for Excellence in IT (CEIT) in Al Azhar University marks an important step in actualizing the goals of technical and development cooperation between the two countries. Under the MoU, India will provide the human resources, as well as the hardware and software to set up a centre for the training of up to 500 students per year. Egypt will facilitate the establishment of the centre including the provision of space and logistical support. The Indian implementing agency would run the CEIT for the initial period, after which it will be handed over to the appropriate Egyptian authority.

The Indian Ambassador in Egypt, Navdeep Suri, noted that, "We are greatly pleased at this evolving partnership, particularly with a University of the stature of Al Azhar. We hope to share our experiences and successes in the field of IT in a very substantial manner through the CIET, and build on relationship with the Egypt and its people through such projects."

India has made rapid strides in the development of its IT sector over the last decade, crossing US \$100 billion in revenues in the last financial year. Within the global outsourcing industry, India continues to lead the market, accounting for 58 per cent of the market share. The industry has also provided for large scale employment generation, employing 3 million persons directly and about nine million persons indirectly. India has also leveraged this expertise to successfully implement a number of e-governance projects in a diverse number of fields.

For further information, please contact Bijay Selvaraj, Second Secretary (Info.) at infoemb@indembcairo.com, tel. 2735-5794.

Source: Embassy of India, Cairo, http://www.indembcairo.com/en-us/presscentre/pressreleases.aspx?udt_656_param_detail=455

10. Cyber security is the new frontier in Indo-Egyptian Cooperation, 19 March 2013.

In a resolve to working together to tackle the increasing threats of cyber-crimes, a Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the area of Cyber Security was signed between the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) and the Egyptian Computer Emergency Response Team (EG-CERT).

There is a growing recognition on both the sides of a variety of cyber threats faced by governments, businesses and individuals and the need to enhance the security of communication and information infrastructure in both the countries. The MOU aims to promote closer cooperation and exchange of information pertaining to cyber security.

Navdeep Suri, the Ambassador of India to Egypt, said “we live in a digital age and are increasingly dependent on the reliability of our computer systems. It’s imperative that we share our expertise to keep our work safe and secure from falling into the wrong hands.”

CERT-In has signed similar agreements with many other countries including US, UK and Mauritius. The MOU provides for CERT-In and EG-CERT, to responding to computer security incidents as and when they occur. The system also helps in analyzing such incidents and helps implement proactive measures to prevent their recurrence. The two agencies will share their expertise by exchanging information on all aspects of cyber security and supporting each other in taking appropriate measures in order to prevent cyber security incidents.

For further information, please contact Bijay Selvaraj, Second Secretary (Info.) at infoemb@indembcairo.com, tel. 2735-5794.

Source: Embassy of India, Cairo, http://www.indembcairo.com/en-us/presscentre/pressreleases.aspx?udt_656_param_detail=454

11. Statement by Prime Minister to the Media during the State Visit of President of Egypt to India, New Delhi, 19 March 2013.

Your Excellency President Dr. Mohamed Morsi,
Ladies and Gentlemen of the Media,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome President Mohamed Morsi, the first democratically elected President of the Arab Republic of Egypt, on his State Visit to India. We deeply appreciate the fact that he has undertaken a State Visit to India despite his pressing domestic commitments. This is a reflection of his personal commitment to our relationship.

President Morsi and I have just concluded extensive and very productive discussions, marked by the warmth and friendship that characterizes the truly special nature of the relationship between our two countries. We agreed that his visit, at an important juncture for Egypt, offers us a great opportunity to renew our relationship and take it to a different level of engagement and cooperation.

We discussed the historic political transition underway in Egypt following the events of January 2011. I expressed our admiration for the courage and sacrifices of the people of Egypt in ushering in a new era of democracy in Egypt. I conveyed our full support to President Morsi and offered to share our experience, as he ably leads his nation in building strong institutions and frameworks for democracy, social justice and inclusive economic development. I am convinced that Egypt's successful transition would be an important model for the region and the world.

President Morsi and I agreed that India and Egypt have enormous potential for deepening our cooperation across the full spectrum of our relationship. Our economic partnership has rich possibilities. We agreed that information technology, services, electronics, small and medium enterprises, manufacturing, fertilizers, and renewable energy constitute important areas of cooperation. Egypt's location, as a bridge between Asia and Africa, astride a major global trade route, together with its skilled human resources, makes it an attractive business destination for India.

We also agreed to foster productive partnerships in socio-economic development programmes, skill development, higher education, agriculture and health care. We also agreed to enhance our defence exchanges and cooperation.

The agreements that we have signed today are a clear manifestation of our desire to impart a new dynamism to our relationship.

President Morsi and I also exchanged views on a range of regional and international issues. We have a shared interest in peace and stability in the Gulf, West Asia and the North African region. I conveyed our steadfast support to the Palestinian cause and expressed our deep appreciation for the role played by Egypt in trying to forge unity between the Palestinian groups and work towards a peaceful resolution of this long standing issue.

We also discussed the deteriorating situation in Syria and condemned the violence and loss of innocent lives there. We agreed on the urgent need for a peaceful resolution of all issues through dialogue.

President Morsi and I also underscored the importance of forging stronger regional and international cooperation between our two countries to address common challenges like climate change, food and energy security and terrorism. We agreed to intensify our efforts on issues that affect developing countries, and increase our coordination in various international forums, including the United Nations, G-77 and the Non Aligned Movement.

Before I conclude, I must mention the enormous reservoir of goodwill and trust, and the ties of history, culture and religion, which bind the people of India and Egypt. President Morsi and I agreed that this provides solid bedrock on which to build a strong and durable bilateral relationship and international partnership between our two countries.

Thank you.

Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, <http://www.mea.gov.in/incoming-visit-detail.htm?21398/Statement+by+Prime+Minister+to+the+Media+during+the+State+Visit+of+President+of+Egypt+to+India>

12. Speech by the President of India, Pranab Mukherjee at the banquet in honour of the President of the Arab Republic of Egypt, H.E. Dr. Mohamed Morsi, New Delhi, 20 March 2013.

It gives me great pleasure to extend a warm welcome to you, Excellency, and the distinguished members of your delegation on your first State Visit to India. Your presence here today, as the democratically elected President of Egypt is particularly significant.

It has been now more than two years since the historic events at Tahrir Square. We, in India, watched with admiration and respect as the young crowds in Cairo chanted Selmiyya Selmiyya (peacefully, peacefully) and echoed the words of the Father of our Nation, Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhi himself, during India's long freedom struggle, had drawn upon the Egyptian experience in fighting colonialism, and held in high esteem leaders such as Saad Zaghloul. While returning from a Conference in London in 1931, he was prevented from disembarking at Port Said by colonial authorities. He instead issued a message to the Egyptian people wishing them all success in their struggle.

As your Excellency is well aware, our historical ties go back much further. Even prior to the Common Era, Emperor Ashoka's edicts record contact with Egypt under Ptolemy II. Traders, artisans and philosophers have crossed the seas time and again to enrich each other's composite cultures. It is really no surprise that commercial and cultural interactions continue to be at the forefront of our relations. I am happy to note that bilateral trade has increased steadily in the last 5 years, crossing US \$5 billion, despite the global economic slowdown. Indian companies across diverse sectors continue to invest in Egypt. During your visit a number of agreements have been signed, indicating our extensive cooperation in a variety of fields.

Excellency, the future will be determined by the youth of our nations. India and Egypt may be ancient cultures, but our people are young, and their aspirations, hopes and grievances will determine our progress. As we strive to provide greater economic opportunities, and channelize the energies of our youth towards nation building, we recognize that it cannot be business as usual. We must find new ways of engagement within our societies and between our countries. Democracy is incomplete without equity. The yearning for 'bread, social justice and equality' is universal.

At the international level, Egypt and India have worked together closely, recognizing that in our inter-connected world, threats and opportunities, whether it be climate change, terrorism or trade are truly transnational issues. We are confident of your support and participation in revitalizing

South-South cooperation, particularly in the Non-Aligned Movement and in the Group of 77. We seek your active cooperation in building a genuinely representative global order.

In the year 1926, the Indian poet and humanist Rabindranath Tagore arrived in Cairo to deliver a lecture. He was hosted at the house of the most celebrated of Arab poets, Ahmed Shawki, where to his surprise, many of the political leaders turned up to greet him, postponing the Parliament session by an hour. Tagore would write of the event in his diary "This was a novel way to show me their respect, a homage paid to knowledge by politics. This was possible only in the East." Tagore was referring to Egypt as a symbol of the East, where under the glory and might of the Arab and Islamic civilization, knowledge and scholarship were celebrated, and freedom of thought and individual rights were respected.

Excellency, we are confident that these same values inspire your thought and your action in Egypt, as well as in the larger politics of West Asia, where your sage counsel is so critically needed. We stand with you in our unequivocal support for the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people, and look forward to working closely with you in realizing that goal.

Excellency, two years ago, the people of Egypt chose to walk the long and difficult path of democracy. I use the metaphor of the road deliberately, since we in India know today, 65 years after independence, that democracy is neither a destination nor an absolute principle. It is more in the nature of a journey, with the steady creation of independent institutions and the careful accretion of compromises, all the while remaining faithful to the essential values of human dignity and freedom. And as much as any journey is made more fulfilling by the presence of companions, we in India stand ready to walk with your great nation as we move from our glorious past to a more perfect future.

With these words, Excellency, I once again welcome you and your distinguished delegation and wish you a comfortable stay in India. I am confident that your visit will be the beginning of a new era of enhanced cooperation and closer ties between our two great nations.

Please also accept, Excellency, our best wishes for your personal well-being and the progress and prosperity of the friendly people of the Arab Republic of Egypt.

Source: Press Information Bureau, New Delhi,

<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx?relid=94025>

13. India seeks Egypt's active cooperation in building a genuinely representative global order, says President, New Delhi, 20 March 2013.

The President of India, Pranab Mukherjee hosted a banquet in the honour of the President of the Arab Republic of Egypt, Dr. Mohamed Morsi at Rashtrapati Bhavan on 19 March 2013.

Speaking on the occasion, he said that he is confident that the visit of the President of Egypt would be the beginning of a new era of enhanced cooperation and closer ties between India and

Egypt. He said at the international level, Egypt and India have worked together closely. He said India is confident of Egypt's support and participation in revitalizing South-South cooperation, particularly in the Non-Aligned Movement and in the Group of 77. India seeks Egypt's active cooperation in building a genuinely representative global order, he added.

Source: Press Information Bureau, New Delhi,

<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx?relid=94026>

14. India and Egypt Hold Defence Talks, New Delhi, 20 March 2013.

The Egyptian Defence Minister (EDM), Gen. Abdel Fattah al Sisi called on the Defence Minister AK Antony here today. Gen. al Sisi is part of the delegation accompanying the Egyptian President during his visit to India.

Both sides took note of the gradual building up of defence exchanges and interactions, particularly in the area of training exchanges, since the establishment of the Joint Defence Committee in 2006. It was agreed that there was scope for enhancing bilateral defence cooperation in various areas, including by way of increased interactions between the Armed Forces of both countries and through technology collaboration between industries. It was decided that opportunities for increasing cooperation will be discussed by both sides during the next meeting of the Joint Defence Committee, which is expected to be held in the near future, at the mutual convenience of both sides.

The Egyptian Defence Minister also briefed Antony about the security situation in West Asia and in Egypt's neighbourhood.

The Egyptian Defence Minister extended an invitation to Antony to visit Egypt. Antony has accepted the invitation.

Source: Press Information Bureau, New Delhi,

<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx?relid=94079>

15. Textiles Industry Training to get a boost with new MoU, Cairo, 20 March 2013.

A MoU was signed between the National Small Industries Corporation (NSIC) and Egyptian Ministry of International Cooperation today.

As part of the MoU, NSIC will be upgrading the Vocational Training Centre at Shoubra El Kheima, Cairo. This MoU follows a decision taken during the second India-Africa Forum Summit (IAFS) for enhancing cooperation in the MSME sector. A Detailed Project Report (DPR) of the technological up-gradation required in the area of spinning, weaving, knitting and dyeing technology at the centre in Shubra El Kheima was carried out, evaluated and found feasible. On signing the MOU, the project, that would cost approximately US \$ 1 Million, is expected to be completed in 12 months.

IAFS, set up in April 2008, aims at enhancing cooperation between India and Africa in a range of sectors that inter alia includes cooperation in the MSME sector. Under the IAFS it was agreed

that India would offer institutional support for the development of SMEs in Africa through the VTCs and strengthening of linkages between SMEs on both sides. As Africa marches towards more rapid industrialization SMEs offer significant avenues for supporting industrialization, generating employment and enhancing local capacities that also holds true for Egypt. This MoU between the two countries is aimed at realizing this objective.

NSIC is an ISO 9001-2008 certified Government of India Enterprise that has been working to fulfil its mission of promoting, aiding and fostering the growth of small industries related to micro, small and medium enterprises in the country and beyond through sustainable international partnerships. Since its inception, NSIC has contributed to strengthening enterprise-to-enterprise cooperation, South-South cooperation and sharing best practices and experiences with other developing countries, especially those in the African, Asian and Pacific regions.

The sector is the second largest employer in India after agriculture and employs 35 million Indians. Ambassador Navdeep Suri, the Ambassador of India to Egypt said “Both India and Egypt have a large textile industry. It is crucial that the latest technological advancements in this field are shared and our young workforce is adequately trained in the latest tools, machines and methods of production. Only this could ensure that both the countries remain competitive in the international arena. India is happy to share its experience in this vital sector with our friends in Egypt.”

For further information, please contact Bijay Selvaraj, Second Secretary (Info.) at infoemb@indembcairo.com, tel. 2735-5794.

Source: Embassy of India, Cairo, http://www.indembcairo.com/en-us/presscentre/pressreleases.aspx?udt_656_param_detail=463

16. India, Egypt to collaborate for establishing Micro and Small Enterprises, Cairo, 20 March 2013.

In an effort to support budding entrepreneurs, India and Egypt have signed a Memorandum of Understanding in the field of Micro and Small Enterprises. The Agreement was signed today by National Small Industries Corporation (NSIC) of India and Social Fund for Development (SFD) of Egypt.

Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs) play a vital role in the economic and social development of developing countries. They make a vital contribution to employment generation, exports and industrial production besides helping achieve balanced regional growth. With globalization and economic liberation, small enterprises face immense competition from large scale industries on cost, quality, productivity, environment management and the sector is often struggling to cope with the new challenges.

Considering the fact that the MSEs are keys to employment generation and balanced regional growth, the two apex organizations have reached an understanding to facilitate sharing of

information, meetings between enterprises, technology transfers and to provide consultation services to enhance the abilities of business enterprises of India and Egypt.

Welcoming the agreement between NSIC and SFD, Ambassador Suri, the Ambassador of India to Egypt, said that in India, the sector which accounts for 8 per cent of country's GDP, 45 per cent of manufactured output and a 60 million work force in India has positioned itself as a genuine partner for cooperation with various developing countries and contributed in enhancing their economic and social development. Egypt with its large skilled and semi-skilled workforce, and a considerable MSE sector would partner India leading to a mutually beneficial relationship and would go a long way in creating employment opportunities, enhance export earnings and help achieve balanced growth.

NSIC with its long history of experience in this field will assist SFD in its endeavour to promote and foster growth in MSEs in Egypt by establishing business alliances, joint ventures and interactions between MSEs of both countries.

More information can be found at the website of the National Small Industries Corporation <http://www.nsic.co.in/> or contact Bijay Selvaraj, Second Secretary (Info.) at infoemb@indembcairo.com, tel. 2735-5794.

Source: Embassy of India, Cairo, http://www.indembcairo.com/en-us/presscentre/pressreleases.aspx?udt_656_param_detail=462

17. MoU between INTACH and Ministry of State for Antiquities Affairs, Cairo, 20 March 2013.

"The Indus and the Nile-Cradles of Civilization; India and Egypt establish partnership in protection of their ancient culture"

In a step towards greater cooperation in the protection of our cultural heritage, the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage(INTACH) of India and Ministry of State for Antiquities Affairs for the Government of Egypt, have signed today a Memorandum of Understanding covering several areas of cooperation.

The rivers Nile and the Indus have nourished two of the world's greatest Civilizations. Through its arts and unique cultural heritage, the two civilizations have contributed immensely to mankind's collective past. Preservation of this cultural heritage is vital as it contributes towards the understanding of societies and develops a feeling of universal brotherhood.

Recognizing the need for further cooperation in the field of protection, preservation, management and promotion of our unique cultural heritage, INTACH and Ministry of State for Antiquities Affairs have reached an understanding to facilitate joint activities, sharing of information and exchange of expertise through conferences, workshops, joint projects etc to learn from each other's experience in this field.

Moreover, the cooperation in the field of protection of intellectual property rights and prevention of illicit traffic of antiquities forms a significant part of this MoU.

Ambassador Navdeep Suri, the Ambassador of India to Egypt said, “Egypt's experience in the field of protection and preservation of her invaluable heritage has received the appreciation of the world. In India, organizations like INTACH, have significantly helped us appreciate our own cultural heritage and its value. This agreement will go a long way in furthering the cause of protection, preservation, management and promotion of our cultural heritage.”

The Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) is India's largest non-profit membership organization dedicated to conservation and preservation of India's natural, cultural, living, tangible and intangible heritage. Egypt's Ministry of State for Antiquities Affairs, previously known as Supreme Council of Antiquities, is the nodal agency striving towards the goal of protecting and promoting the cultural heritage of Egypt, both independently and in cooperation with national and international organizations.

For more information, please visit the website of INTACH at <http://www.intach.org/> or contact Bijay Selvaraj, Second Secretary (Information) at infoemb@indembcairo.com or 2735-5794.

Source: Embassy of India, Cairo, http://www.indembcairo.com/en-us/presscentre/pressreleases.aspx?udt_656_param_detail=461

18. India, Egypt agree on wide-ranging collaboration in IT, Cairo, 20 March 2013.

In a significant development for bilateral relations, Egypt and India have signed a MoU to enhance cooperation in the field of Communications and Information Technology (CIT) through widening the scope of exchanges and instituting a mechanism for coordination. The MoU was signed today by the Egyptian Minister of Communications and Information Technology, Eng. Atef Helmy, and his Indian counterpart Kapil Sibal.

Given the importance of Information Technology in the promotion of trade and technical exchanges, as well as in social and economic development, the MoU has identified a number of core areas which will be the focus of cooperation. These include e-governance and e-education, IT and electronics hardware, sharing of experiences in the creation of Technology Parks and IT clusters, and strengthening the cooperation between ICT companies in the private sector. Further, a Working Group comprising representatives from both sides will be established under the MoU to review the implementation of projects and to discuss means of cooperation.

Welcoming the development, Navdeep Suri, India's Ambassador to Egypt said, “The MoU is an important step in moving our partnership in the field of Information Technology forward. We believe there is much India and Egypt can learn from each other, both in the research and development of IT, as well as in sharing our experiences in applying these technologies and processes. As developing countries, the case for the importance of IT in improving governance cannot be overstated.”

India has made rapid strides in the development of its IT sector over the last decade, crossing US \$100 billion in revenues in the last financial year. Within the global outsourcing industry, India continues to lead the market, accounting for 58 per cent of the market share. The industry has also provided for large scale employment generation, employing three million persons directly and about nine million persons indirectly. India has leveraged this expertise to successfully implement a number of e-governance projects in a diverse number of fields.

For further information, please visit the website of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology at <http://deity.gov.in/> or contact Bijay Selvaraj, Second Secretary (Info.) at infoemb@indembcairo.com, tel. 2735-5794.

Source: Embassy of India, Cairo, <http://www.indembcairo.com/en-us/presscentre/pressreleases.aspx?udt 656 param detail=460>

19. India-Egypt Joint Declaration on the State Visit of H.E. Dr. Mohamed Morsi, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt (18-20 March, 2013), New Delhi, 20 March 2013.

The President of the Arab Republic of Egypt, His Excellency Dr. Mohamed Morsi, paid a State visit to India from 18 to 20 March 2013 at the invitation of the President of India, Pranab Mukherjee. President Morsi was accompanied by a high-level delegation of Ministers, senior officials and business persons.

President Morsi called on the President of India, Pranab Mukherjee. The Vice-President of India, Mohammed Hamid Ansari, the External Affairs Minister, Salman Khurshid, Chairperson of the United Progressive Alliance, Sonia Gandhi and Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha, Sushma Swaraj called on President Morsi. The President, Pranab Mukherjee, hosted a banquet in honour of President Morsi.

The Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh held delegation-level discussions with H.E. President Mohamed Morsi on 19 March 2013. Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh congratulated President Morsi for being a democratically elected President of the Arab Republic of Egypt and expressed India's happiness in seeing democratic traditions taking root in Egypt. He offered all support in the democratic transition process in Egypt and expressed satisfaction with regard to the growing interaction between the Election Commission of India and its counterpart in Egypt.

The two leaders expressed satisfaction over the evolution of bilateral relations in recent years and directed that exchanges and consultations should be further intensified in order to realize the full potential of the relationship. They took note of the successful meeting of the India-Egypt Joint Commission in March 2012 at the level of Foreign Ministers and the India-Egypt Foreign Office Consultations at the level of Secretary/Assistant Foreign Minister in January 2013.

The two sides discussed bilateral defence ties and measures to enhance cooperation, including through the forthcoming Joint Defence Committee meeting scheduled to take place in Delhi in April, 2013.

The two leaders noted the growing bilateral economic interaction in recent years and particularly welcomed the growth in Indian investment in Egypt which today stands at US \$ 2.5 billion. They underlined the importance of taking all measures in order to provide better climate and opportunities for promotion of investments. They agreed that all investment related issues would be accorded utmost priority.

The two leaders also exchanged views on a wide range of issues of bilateral, regional and international interest including those relating to the situation in the Middle East and North Africa region; the Non-Aligned Movement; and the reform of the United Nations.

The two sides expressed deep concern over the deteriorating security situation and continued violence and bloodshed in Syria. The two sides, while expressing their support to the mission of Lakhdar Brahimi, asserted their position regarding the safeguards of the unity and territorial integrity of Syria, and called for the implementation of the Joint Communiqué of Geneva Action Group with a view to bring about a political solution to the conflict in order to achieve the just aspirations of the Syrian people for freedom, dignity and democracy.

The two leaders reiterated their well-known support for the Palestinian cause in line with their backing of the United Nations Security Council Resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) calling for a negotiated solution resulting in a sovereign, independent, viable, contiguous and united state of Palestine living within secure and recognized borders, side by side at peace with Israel as endorsed in the Quartet Roadmap and United Nations Security Council Resolution 1397 and 1515. The two leaders welcomed the overwhelming vote at the United Nations General Assembly to upgrade Palestine to non-member observer state in the United Nations. The two leaders called for an end to the expansion of Israeli settlements in occupied Palestine and for an early and significant easing of restrictions on the free movement of persons and goods within Palestine. Both sides agreed that peace in the region required sustained and substantive negotiations among the parties. They advocated active support of the international community and regional players for efforts in normalizing the situation in West Asia, and resuming the Middle East Peace Process.

India and Egypt strongly condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. Both sides considered terrorism, including cross border terrorism, to be one of the gravest threats to international peace and security, and affirmed that there can be no justification for any act of terrorism, irrespective of motivations, wherever and by whosoever committed. They are convinced that terrorism cannot, and should not, be associated with any nationality, religious, cultural or ethnic group. They reaffirmed their resolve to strengthen their cooperation in combating terrorism at all levels.

His Excellency, President Dr. Mohamed Morsi addressed a meeting of the India-Egypt Business Forum where the potential of economic cooperation between the two countries was highlighted under the theme "Complementarities for Growth". Memoranda of Understanding on skill development and training, micro-finance and setting-up of an industrial park on plastics were signed by the Indian and Egyptian companies, during the India-Egypt Economic Forum.

The two countries agreed to collaborate in the field of technology, in particular in information and communications technologies; agriculture; biotechnology; and non-conventional energy technologies. They will work towards enhancing cooperation in the field of science and technology and in this regard agreed to set up a Joint Working Group. The two sides also set up a Joint Working Group to explore new initiatives for cooperation in the field of space science. They also agreed to work in the areas of tourism, youth affairs and sports, agriculture research and education, technical education and vocational training and other fields of mutual benefit.

The Egyptian side expressed its appreciation for the Pan African E-network Project for tele-medicine and tele-education at Alexandria University, solar electrification of a village in Siwa and establishment of a textile vocational training centre in Egypt. Both sides agreed to continue to cooperate closely in these areas.

Both sides expressed satisfaction at the significant growth in the bilateral trade in the recent past to cross US\$ 5 billion and agreed to achieve a target of US\$ 8 billion by March 2016. They welcomed the first meeting of the Joint Trade Committee held recently in Cairo on 10 March 2013 where the introduction of new commodities, including trade of wheat, cotton and fertilizers, was discussed. They also agreed to enhance the cooperation through appropriate trade arrangements.

India and Egypt discussed intensification of cooperation in the ICT sector by facilitating and providing assistance to help promote trade and technology sector. They welcomed the conclusion of MoUs on ICT cooperation and cyber security between the two countries to strengthen collaboration in the field of cyber security.

India and Egypt will work towards expanding cooperation between their respective oil companies, both in the public and private sectors, for establishing long-term relationships in supply of crude oil and petroleum products, upstream and downstream joint ventures, refineries, petrochemical industries and marketing, both in Egypt and India as permitted by their respective laws and regulations. They also agreed to explore the possible collaboration in the field of fertilizers.

India and Egypt welcomed ongoing efforts towards developing partnerships between institutions of the two countries in the areas of culture, Indian and Egyptian studies and languages. They also encouraged more interaction between civil societies and stressed on the importance of enhancing people to people contacts between the two countries.

The following Memoranda of Understanding/Agreement were signed at the conclusion of the talks between the Prime Minister of India and the President of Egypt:

- i. Memorandum of Understanding between Ministry of Communications & Information Technology of Government of India and Ministry of Communications and Information Technology of Arab Republic of Egypt for Cooperation in Information and Communication Technology
- ii. Memorandum of Understanding between Ministry of Communications & Information Technology of Government of India and Ministry of Communications and Information Technology of Arab Republic of Egypt on Cooperation in the area of Cyber Security.
- iii. Memorandum of Understanding between Government of the Republic of India and Arab Republic of Egypt for the establishment of a Centre of Excellence in Information Technology (CEIT) in Egypt.
- iv. Memorandum of Understanding between Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage and Ministry of State for Antiquities Affairs, Arab Republic of Egypt for cooperation in the fields of protection, preservation, promotion and management of cultural heritage.
- v. Memorandum of Understanding between National Small Industries Corporation, Republic of India and Social Fund for Development, Arab Republic of Egypt on cooperation in the field of micro and small enterprises.
- vi. Agreement between the Government of Egypt represented by Industrial Development Authority and Government of India Enterprise, the National Small Industries Corporation, New Delhi for up-gradation of a Vocational Training Centre at Shoubra El Kheima, Cairo, Egypt.

In addition to the above, the following two Letters of Intent were signed:

- i. Letter of Intent on India-Egypt Solar Energy Cooperation between Ministry of New and Renewable Energy of the Republic of India and Ministry of Electricity and Energy of the Republic of Egypt.
- ii. Letter of Intent concerning launch services of the Egyptian nano-satellite EGYCUBESAT-1 on-board the Indian polar satellite launch vehicle (PSLV) by Antrix Corporation Ltd. of India and the Egyptian National Authority for Remote Sensing and Space Sciences.

His Excellency President Mohamed Morsi invited the President and the Prime Minister of India to visit Egypt at a mutually convenient time. The invitations have been accepted.

His Excellency President Mohamed Morsi expressed deep gratitude and appreciation to the President and the Prime Minister of India for the warmth of the reception accorded to him and to his delegation during their stay.

Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, <http://www.mea.gov.in/incoming-visit-detail.htm?21436/IndiaEgypt+Joint+Declaration+on+the+State+Visit+of+HE+Dr+Mohamed+Morsy+President+of+the+Arab+Republic+of+Egypt+1820+March+2013>

C. IRAN

20. Oil Imports from Iran, New Delhi, 8 March 2013.

Question:

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

- (a) Whether oil imports from Iran has been affected due to sanctions imposed by the United Nations;
- (b) If so, the details thereof;
- (c) Whether Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) has been unable to pay for oil imports from Iran;
- (d) If so, the details thereof and the reasons therefore;
- (e) Whether the Government has managed to set up an alternate payment mechanism for imported crude oil shipments from Iran; and
- (e) If so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefore?

Answer

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

- (a) & (b) No, Madam. Imports of crude oil from Iran have not been affected due to sanctions imposed by the United Nations.
- (c) & (d) Payment by BPCL for imports of crude oil from Iran in 2011-12 had been delayed due to non-availability of payment channel. The payment was later settled in Indian Rupees (INR).
- (e) & (f) Yes, Madam. A mechanism has been put in place for part payment in INR.

Source: Lok Sabha (House of the People), Unstarred Question No. 1973 asked by Nama Nageswara Rao and Amarnath Pradhan, <http://164.100.47.132/LssNew/psearch/OREsult15.aspx?qref=136477>

21. Investment in Oil Fields in Iran, New Delhi, 22 March 2013.

Question:

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

- (a) Whether several oil companies of the country have invested capital in a number of oil fields of Iran;
- (b) If so, the details thereof;
- (c) The names of the oil companies and the oil fields they have been allotted till December, 2012, and the details of their respective allocation; and
- (d) The time-frame by which the work of oil production from these oilfields is likely to become operational?

Answer

Minister of State in the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (Panabaka Lakshmi)

(a) to (d) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Source: Lok Sabha (House of the People), Unstarred Question No. 4263 asked by Vikrambhai Arjanbhai Maadam, <http://164.100.47.132/LssNew/psearch/QResult15.aspx?qref=138572>

d. ISRAEL

22. Joint development programme with Israel to develop Iron Drone, New Delhi, 20 March 2013.

Question:

- (a) Whether Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO) proposes to have a joint development programme with Israel to develop Indian version of Iron Drone;
- (b) If so, the details thereof;
- (c) Whether our army has almost no protection against short range rockets or artillery fire; and
- (d) If so, the steps taken by Government for joint development of Iron Drone for the country?

Answer

Minister of Defence (A.K. Antony)

(a) to (d): Information cannot be divulged in the interest of National Security.

Source: Rajya Sabha (Council of States), Unstarred Question No. 2514 asked by Dr. Chandan Mitra, <http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/QResult.aspx>

e. KUWAIT

23. Speech by Ambassador Satish C. Mehta during the visit of CAPEXIL at KCCI - at 1000 hrs, Kuwait, 3 March 2013.

Excellency Fahad Yacoub Al-Joua'an, Board Member, KCCI

Excellency Rabah Al-Rabah, Director-General, KCCI

Senior officials of KCCI

Distinguished representatives of Kuwaiti business community,

Asalam Walekum!

I, on behalf of the Indian delegation, thank you for welcoming the Indian delegation and providing this opportunity at KCCI to interact with you and the Kuwait's business community. CAPEXIL, which has a significant share of about 10 per cent in India's total exports, has been sponsoring the visit of Indian delegation to Kuwait regularly for many years. CAPEXIL deals in mineral and non-mineral sectors. The 11-member Indian delegation, comprises of Indian manufacturers and exporters of sawn timber, commercial plywood, marine plywood, flush doors, film-faced BWP plywood, granite, sandstone, limestone, slates, polished granite slabs, tiles and other granite products, calendars, computer stationery, printed books, school note books and

paper, paper products, paper cups, tissue paper products for corporate, hotels, restaurants, households, etc. They seek to enter into mutually beneficial trade deals with their counterparts in Kuwait.

India and Kuwait enjoy traditionally friendly and historic relations. Geographic proximity, historical trade links, cultural affinities and presence of a large number of Indian expatriates continue to sustain and nurture this long standing relationship. They are present in almost all sectors in Kuwait.

Historically, India-Kuwait relations have always had an important trade dimension. India's total trade with Kuwait during 2011-12 was US\$17.56 billion, an increase of about US\$5.4 billion (which is 44.3 per cent) over US\$12.16 billion during 2010-11. Out of the total trade of US\$ 17.56 billion, non-oil trade accounted for approximately US\$1.9 billion (approx). India's exports to Kuwait during 2011-12 were US\$ 1181.41 million. For the second consecutive year, India's exports to Kuwait were over US\$ 1 billion mark. More is possible and desirable.

The major items exported from India cover a broad range including food items, cereals, textiles, garments, electrical and engineering equipment, cars, trucks, buses, tyres, chemicals, jewellery, handicrafts, metal products, to name a few.

With India's petroleum imports from Kuwait of approximately US\$ 15.67 billion, Kuwait is the second largest supplier of oil from the GCC countries after Saudi Arabia and meets about 10-12 per cent of India's energy needs.

A number of Indian companies both private and public sector are present in Kuwait, including Life Insurance Corporation, The New India Assurance Company, Oriental Insurance Co. Ltd., Telecommunications Consultants India Ltd. (TCIL), L&T Ltd, Tata Consultancy Services, Shapoorji Pallonji, Kalpataru and Bridge & Roof, have their presence through investments or projects in Kuwait. Besides, the Indian community in Kuwait has made considerable investments across a broad range of sectors, including manufacturing, construction and services in Kuwait.

As such, there are no barriers for growing trade between India and Kuwait. What we need is more frequent exchange of business delegations so that business communities of the two countries get to know of the opportunities available in India and Kuwait. There is need to capitalize on these opportunities.

Indian economy is one of the most attractive for business and investment. It is the third largest economy in the world in terms of purchasing power parity (PPP) with GDP estimated at US\$ 4.46 trillion. It is a diversified economy with services sector backed by rapidly expanding IT sector constituting more than half of the GDP and a growing manufacturing sector which is becoming globally competitive. To give an example, India exported 3 million cars, buses, trucks, scooters and motorcycles last year. It has a sound financial system, well-developed and regulated

capital markets, talented manpower, and abundant availability of raw-materials. In the last two decades, it has grown at an average rate of about 7 per cent, making it the second fastest growing major economy. The inherent strength of the economy has kept it considerably insulated from the economic downturns in various parts of the world.

We will have a high-level visit from Kuwait to India later this month followed by the 3rd meeting of India-Kuwait Joint Ministerial Commission (JMC) in Kuwait, which would pave the way for further economic cooperation.

Excellency, we have sent a draft to KCCI on Partnership Agreement between FICCI, the apex Chamber of India and KCCI. We hope this would be finalized soon. This would facilitate more exchange of business delegations between our two countries.

Excellency, once again I thank you for sparing time from your busy schedule to receive the Indian delegation and provide this opportunity to them. I also request you to kindly join me for inaugurating the Buyer-Seller Meet in the Exhibition Hall on Ground Floor. I also take this opportunity to thank KCCI for making available the Hall on complimentary basis and other arrangements.

I would now request L. Rajamannar, Member-Secretary, CAPEXIL, to give his presentation to apprise you and the Kuwaiti business community about CAPEXIL and its activities. After that delegates would introduce themselves and speak and give presentations about their companies' activities.

Thank you!

Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait,

<http://www.indembkwt.org/ShowNews.aspx?ID=210&SECTION=1>

24. Visit of Indian business delegation to Kuwait, Kuwait, 3 March 2013.

The Embassy of India, Kuwait, in association with Chemical and Allied Products Export Promotion Council (CAPEXIL), an apex organization setup by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India, is organizing a visit of an 11-member Indian business delegation to Kuwait from 1-4 March 2013.

CAPEXIL, a non-profit organization, was setup in March 1958, to promote export of Chemicals and Allied Products from India. CAPEXIL has its headquarters at Kolkata with regional offices at New Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata and Chennai. It promotes India's export of a wide spectrum of chemicals and allied products and connects foreign buyers with Indian exporters. It has more than 3500 members across the country. It is an ISO 9001: 2000 certified organization.

CAPEXIL product portfolio consists of 16 product groups, 13 of which are in the Non-Mineral Sector and 3 in the Mineral Sector. These include animal bi-products, auto tyres and tubes, books, publications and printing, bulk minerals and ores, cement and clinkers, ceramics and refractories, glass and glassware, granite, marble, natural stones and products, graphite and

explosives, miscellaneous products, ossein and gelatine, paints and allied products, paper and products, plywood and products, processed minerals, rubber products.

The share of exports of products under CAPEXIL canopy is 9.5 per cent of India's total exports. During the year 2010-11 exports of products under CAPEXIL stood at Rs. 747.038 billion (US\$ 16.42 billion approx.) in comparison to Rs. 621.27 billion (US\$ 13.14 billion approx.) achieved in the year 2009-10 showing the export growth achieved of more than 20 per cent in Rupee term and 25 per cent in US Dollar term.

The visiting Indian delegation accompanied by H.E. Satish C. Mehta, Ambassador of India interacted with H.E. Fahad Yacoub Al Jouaan, Board Member, H.E. Rabah A. Al-Rabah, Director General, KCCI and other senior officials of Kuwait Chamber of Commerce & Industry (KCCI) and businessmen on 3 March 2013. A presentation was made by the leader of the visiting delegation L. Rajamannar, Member Secretary (CAPEXIL) and also by the members of the delegation, followed by a question-answer session.

In continuation of the above event, a Buyer-Seller Meet (BSM) was organized at the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce & Industry (Exhibition Hall, Ground Floor) on the same day from 1130 hours to 1300 hours and from 1500 hours till 2030 hours which was jointly inaugurated by the Head of the KCCI delegation and Board Member, H.E. Fahad Yacoub Al Jouaan and H.E. Satish C. Mehta, Ambassador of India, immediately after the business meeting at Al- Boom Hall.

The BSM provided an excellent opportunity to Kuwaiti companies to meet Indian manufacturers and exporters of sawn timber, commercial ply-woods, marine ply-woods, flush doors, film-faced BWP plywood, garnet sand, ilmentite, rutile, marble, granite, sandstone, limestone, slates, polished granite slabs & tiles, other granite products, calendars, computer stationery, printed books, school note books and paper, paper products, paper cups, tissue paper product for corporate, hotels, restaurants, households, etc, to enter into mutually beneficial trade relations.

The companies which are participating in the BSM include M/s Cauveri Saw Mill; Sri Vijayalakshmi Saw Mill; Bhavani Timber Depot; Neeraj Granites; Victory Plywood Distributors; Shri Prempuriji Granimarbo Pvt. Ltd; Transworld Wood Pvt. Ltd; Vimala Note Book; DC Press Pvt. Ltd; and J.P. Paper Products.

The visiting delegates will also be available for any business query on 4 March 2013 at Hotel Kuwait Continental. For any further information Commerce Section of the Embassy of India, Kuwait may be contacted at: Tel 22571193 or 22530600 Ext: 211, Fax: 22525811, Email: commercial@indembkwt.org

Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait,

<http://www.indembkwt.org/ShowNews.aspx?ID=209&SECTION=1>

25. Publishing of the Indian Business Directory, Kuwait, 4 March 2013.

The Embassy of India, Kuwait, in association with Prisma Media, Kuwait, has taken an initiative to publish The Indian Business Directory in Kuwait. The idea is to put together information on businesses owned or managed by Indians and other Indian establishments, including PSUs, schools, etc. in Kuwait in one compilation. As the directory will cover a wide-spectrum of information relating to exports and imports, including data/links to source the required information, e.g. contact details of export promotion councils, business chambers in India, it would help in enhancing trade and investments between India and Kuwait.

To launch the initiative, the Embassy and Prisma Media are organizing a function at the Embassy of India premises on 7 March 2013 at 1730 hrs.

Those interested in participating are requested to contact the Commerce Section, Embassy of India, Kuwait [Tel 22571193 (Dir), 22530600 Extn: 211, Fax: 22525811, Email: commercial@indembkwt.org].

Thank you very much.

Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait,

<http://www.indembkwt.org/ShowNews.aspx?ID=211&SECTION=1>

26. Indigo, the Magical Dye, Kuwait, 6 March 2013.

The Embassy of India, Kuwait, in association with Dar Al-Athar Al-Islamiyyah, Kuwait, organized a presentation on 'Indigo, the magical dye' Anjana Somany, Director, Mango Tree, India. The event was attended by Kuwaitis, diplomats and Indian community members. The presentation was very informative. Somany deliberated on Indigo's history, its usages and impact on society and economy and its importance in different cultures. The presentation was followed by a question-answer session. A small exhibition of textile material exhibiting different usages of Indigo, which was part of the presentation, also attracted much attention.

Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait,

<http://www.indembkwt.org/ShowNews.aspx?ID=212&SECTION=1>

27. Indian Business Directory, Kuwait, 9 March 2013.

The Embassy of India, Kuwait, in association with Prisma Media Advertising, Kuwait, organized a function at Embassy's premises on 7 March 2013 to launch the publishing of Indian Business Directory.

The programme was attended by more than 200 prominent Indian businessmen and community representatives in Kuwait. H.E. Satish C. Mehta, Ambassador of India, in his speech, deliberated on the importance of this initiative which would strengthen connectivity within the Indian community in Kuwait as well as between business communities of India and Kuwait. As India's product and service offerings increase, this would open new avenues for business for the Indian community in Kuwait.

In her presentations, Indu Malhotra, Project Manager, Prisma Media Advertising and head of this project, said that besides relevant information about Indian businesses in Kuwait, the Directory would have information on prominent Indians in Kuwait, Indian executives, doctors, schools etc. In addition it would have important and useful information about India and Kuwait that would contribute to enhancing trade and economic cooperation between the two countries. Mahar, General Manager, Prisma Media Advertising, outlined the contents of the directory and the methodology to collect and collate information.

Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait,

<http://www.indembkwt.org/ShowNews.aspx?ID=214&SECTION=1>

28. Visit of Minister of Amiri Dewan Affairs of Kuwait to India, New Delhi, 10 March 2013.

Most Immediate/Media Advisory

10 March 2013, 1230 hours

Visit of His Excellency Shaikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah Minister of Amiri Dewan Affairs of the State of Kuwait (10-13 March 2013)

Sunday, 10 March 2013

1600 hours

Arrival IGIA, TR-III, Ceremonial Lounge

Monday, 11 March 2013

0930 hours

Meeting with P. Chidambaram

Finance Minister

Venue: North Block

(Contact Organizer)

1100 hours

Meeting with M. Veerappa Moily

Minister of Petroleum & Natural Gas

Venue: Shastri Bhavan

(Contact Organizer)

1200 hours

Meeting with Salman Khurshid

Minister of External Affairs

Venue: Hyderabad House

(Photo-op/All Media)

1630 hours

Call on Vice President

Venue: 6, Maulana Azad Road

(Agencies Only)

1800 hours

Meeting with Anand Sharma

Minister of Commerce & Industry, Textiles

Venue: Udyog Bhavan

(Contact Organizer)

Tuesday, 12 March 2013

1100 hours

Meeting with Montek Singh Ahluwalia

Deputy Chairman Planning Commission

Venue: Yogna Bhavan

(Contact Organizer)

1800 hours

Call on the Prime Minister

Venue: 7, Race Course Road

(Agencies Only)

Wednesday, 13 March 2013

1230 hours

Depart for Cochin

Note:

Media is requested to arrive 1 hour before each event

Access strictly restricted to holders of PIB Media accreditation cards and MEA Beat Media.

Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, <http://www.mea.gov.in/incoming-visit-detail.htm?21331/Visit+of+Minister+of+Amiri+Dewan+Affairs+of+Kuwait+to+India>

29. India and Kuwait to endeavour finalizing Joint Venture Projects in oil & Gas Sector, New Delhi, 11 March 2013.

India and Kuwait today resolved to expedite discussions for promoting joint venture projects in various areas of oil & gas sector including those in the upstream & downstream activities. Speaking at a meeting with Sheikh Nasser Sabah AL-Ahmed AK-Jaber AL-Sabah, Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs, Kuwait, here today, Dr. M. Veerappa Moily, Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas said that the two sides should give new momentum to the warm & friendly long-standing relations. He said we should move fast beyond discussions and finalize the projects for cooperation in the oil and gas sector.

Dr. Moily invited Kuwaiti companies to invest in the opportunities in a number Petro-Chemical projects, refinery projects, and upstream-exploration & production ventures in India. The Minister cited examples of up-coming Petro-Chemical Projects at Dahej, Mangalore and Paradeep which offer possibilities for Kuwaiti companies to pick up stakes for mutually beneficial cooperation. Similarly our companies would be keen to participate and invest in various projects in Kuwait's E&P, refinery or Petro-Chemical sectors. The Minister also proposed participation of EIL in the development of Kuwait's oil industry projects.

Sheikh Nasser Sabah AL-Ahmed AK-Jaber AL-Sabah welcomed the proposal deeper cooperation between the oil sector companies of India and Kuwait. He suggested that the experts of the two sides should sit together to deliberate on specific projects. He invited representatives Indian Oil PSUs to visit-Kuwait for taking forward the initiative. The Kuwait Minister assured his full support to the on-going and future cooperation in the sector.

Sheikh Al-Sabah was accompanied during the meeting among others by Farook AL-Zanki, CEO, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation. Dr. Moily on the other hand was accompanied by Indian Ambassador to Kuwait Satish C Mehta, Chairman Indian Oil R. S. Butola, CMD EIL A. K. Purwaha, MD ONGC Videsh Ltd (OVL) D. K. Sarraf and Director (HR) ONGC K S Jamestin.

Source: Press Information Bureau, New Delhi,

<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx?relid=93424>

30. Visit of H.E. Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al Ahmed Al Jaber Al Sabah Minister of Al-Diwan Al-Amiri Affairs of the State of Kuwait to India, New Delhi, 13 March 2013.

H.E. Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al Ahmed Al Jaber Al Sabah, Minister of Al-Diwan Al-Amiri Affairs of the State of Kuwait paid an official visit to India from 11-13 March 2013 at the invitation of External Affairs Minister, Salman Khurshid.

Sheikh Nasser was accompanied by senior officials including from Kuwaiti hydrocarbon sector and Investment Authority. During the visit, he called on the Vice President and the Prime Minister. Sheikh Nasser met with External Affairs Minister Salman Khurshid to whom he handed over a letter from the Amir of Kuwait addressed to the Hon'ble President. He also met Ministers of Finance, Petroleum & Natural Gas, Commerce, Industry & Textiles and Deputy Chairman of Planning Commission. In these meetings, the importance of bilateral cooperation in the key areas, including energy, trade and investment were reaffirmed.

The visit has given a fresh impetus to our friendly ties and opened new avenues of mutually beneficial cooperation.

Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, <http://www.mea.gov.in/incoming-visit-detail.htm?21373/Visit+of+HE+Sheikh+Nasser+Sabah+Al+Ahmed+Al+Jaber+Al+Sabah+Minster+of+AlDiwan+AlAmiri+Affairs+of+the+State+of+Kuwait+to+India>

31. Representation for tracing missing women in Kuwait, New Delhi, 14 March 2013.

Question:

- (a) Whether Government has received a representation from the Forum on Social and Human Rights to trace a missing woman from Andhra Pradesh in Kuwait;
- (b) The details of this representation;
- (c) The steps taken to trace the person;
- d) Whether any additional information has been sought from the Forum on Social and Human Rights; and
- e) If so, the details thereof?

Answer

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

- (a) Yes.
- (b) The representation seeks whereabouts of Penke Tanukulamma in Kuwait.
- (c) The sponsor of Tanukulamma had lodged a complaint in a local police station claiming that Penke Tanukulamma has absconded. She is not detained at any Police station/detention centre/jail. Our embassy in Kuwait has taken up the matter with the Kuwaiti Foreign Ministry for locating Tanukulamma and to confirm her welfare in Kuwait. We continue to pursue the matter.
- (d) & (e) Forum on Social & Human Rights was also contacted to provide contact details of any friends/relatives of Tanukulamma in Kuwait. The Forum has provided contact number of one Kumari. She was contacted by our Embassy in Kuwait; however, she could not provide any information on the whereabouts of Penke Tanukulamma in Kuwait.

Source: Rajya Sabha (Council of States), Unstarred Question No. 1901 asked by V. Hanumantha Rao, <http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/QResult.aspx>

32. Representation for tracing missing women in Kuwait, New Delhi, 14 March 2013.

Question:

- (a) whether it is a fact that the Polisario have not been accorded permission to reopen the Western Sahara Embassy in Delhi which was closed in or around 1998; and
- (b) If so, the reasons for not according the approval to reopen the Mission?

Answer

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

- (a) & (b) It was conveyed to the Mission of SADR at New Delhi in June 2000, that they could continue as a Polisario Office if they so desired without diplomatic status and amenities. The then SADR Charge d' Affaires completely closed down his office, after receiving instructions from his concerned authorities.

Source: Rajya Sabha (Council of States), Unstarred Question No. 1902 asked by Mani Shankar Aiyar, <http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/QResult.aspx>

33. Speech by Ambassador Satish C. Mehta on the occasion of 10th Anniversary of Indian Business Council 24 March 2013 at 1900 hours – Regency Hotel, Kuwait, 25 March 2013.

His Excellency Sheikh Salman Sabah Al-Salem Al-Hamoud Al-Sabah, Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs

S. K. Wadhawan, Chairman, Indian Business Council and

Distinguished guests,

Good evening and Namaste,

Celebration of ten years is special. So let me start by congratulating Wadhawan as well as the other members of Indian Business Council on this important milestone for your organization.

Hundreds of years back, trade linked India and Kuwait. Since then relations have flourished and blossomed. Now, there is hardly an area not covered by our relationship – shared culture, food, familial ties, people-to-people contact are just some visible examples.

Kuwait's spectacular growth after oil was discovered attracted Indians, many of whom have made Kuwait their home for three generations now. Indians have benefitted from Kuwait's spectacular growth as much as they have contributed to it. As Kuwait embarks on its economic development plan with new vigour and energy to make itself a regional economic and financial centre, I have no doubt that the Indian community and Indian companies would contribute wholeheartedly to it.

India's economic transformation in the last two decades has been remarkable. We have been amongst the fastest growing major economies; amongst the most attractive foreign investment destinations; as also amongst the most competitive economies. Often this picture gets blurred as our expectations from ourselves out pace our achievements. Nothing wrong in it; we have to constantly challenge ourselves to do more and better. It is not the time to rest on our laurels, but neither is there a cause for despair.

Historically we were Kuwait's pre-eminent economic partner. Time has now come to take back our economic relationship to where it was in the past – right at the very top. This creates both enormous opportunities as well as huge responsibility for members of Indian Business Council whose membership comprises prominent businessmen and senior executives.

Since its inception IBC has forged good institutional linkage with leading Chambers in India such as ASSOCHAM, FICCI and CII, as well as Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The time has come to leverage these for enhancing trade and investments between the two countries.

India's trade with Kuwait has been increasing. During 2011-12, it was US\$ 17.56 billion, increasing by about 44 per cent over the US\$12.16 billion trade during 2010-11. Much more is possible.

Earlier this month we had an official visit by H.E. Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al Ahmed Al-Sabah, Minister of Amiri Diwan to India. The visit was very successful. An important focus area for the visit was strengthening economic relationship. Both sides are working together closely to build on the momentum created by this visit.

I believe that IBC could be a significant bridge to connect the business communities of India and Kuwait. This would be beneficial to your members as well as serve the interests of Kuwait and India. It is your opportunity and your challenge. In achieving this I wish you all the luck and assure you of the Embassy's support.

Good luck, thank you and Namaste.

Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait,

<http://www.indembkwt.org/ShowNews.aspx?ID=229&SECTION=1>

f. LIBYA

34. Courtesy call by H.E. Anil Trigunayat, Ambassador of India on H.E. Mustafa Mohammed Abofanas, Hon'ble Minister of Economy of State of Libya, Tripoli, 13 March 2013.

On 13 March 2013 His Excellency Anil Trigunayat, Ambassador of India called on His Excellency Mustafa Mohammed Abofanas, Hon'ble Minister of Economy of State of Libya to discuss means and ways for enhancing trade & economic cooperation and business relations between the two countries.

Ambassador offered to conduct Executive Development Programme on International Business in the State of Libya especially focused on small & medium enterprises development. Both appreciated that bilateral trade had seen a significant growth even though it is still below potential. They welcomed the visits of business delegations & interactions by both sides which are on the rise. Minister appreciated India's offer of assistance in the area of capacity building through provision of Vocational Training Centre and scholarships under the ITEC.

Source: Embassy of India, Tripoli,

<http://indianembassy.ly/index.php?mact=News,cntnt01,detail,0&cntnt01articleid=40&cntnt01returnid=37>

g. OMAN

35. Indian Currency Handling, Muscat, 2 March 2013.

In the recent past developments related to certain incidents of handling of fake Indian currency by visitors to India from Oman has been the matter of concern for the Government of India and

the Government of Oman. A need has thus arisen to clarify the Indian rule position with regard to handling of Indian currency by passengers travelling to, and from India.

As per the Government of India regulations, only those persons, who are residents of India, are allowed to take out Indian currency up to a ceiling of Rs.7, 500 per passenger when travelling abroad. Similarly, only those persons who are residents of India can bring back Indian currency up to the ceiling of Rs.7, 500 when returning to India. In all other cases of foreigners, and those Indian nationals who are not residents of India/Non-Resident Indians (NRIs), it is prohibited under the Indian law to either take out any amount of Indian currency from India or to bring it into India.

Visitors to India are allowed to carry with them any amount of Omani Rials or other convertible foreign currencies, which can be exchanged at the authorized exchange centres in India, including at international airports, hotels, etc. However, in case the quantum of foreign currency exceeds the amount equivalent to US\$ 5,000 in cash or an overall of US\$ 10,000 when combined with other financial instruments like cheques, travellers' cheques, drafts etc., a declaration to the Customs Officers at international airports at the time of arrival or departure, as the case may be, is required to be made.

Source: Embassy of India, Muscat, http://www.indemb-oman.org/What's_New.asp

36. India Business Seminar, Muscat, 25 March 2013.

Embassy of India organized an 'India Business Seminar' on 24 March 2013 at Hotel Crowne Plaza in Muscat. H.E. Ahmed Hasan Al-Dheeb, Undersecretary in Ministry of Commerce & Industry was the chief guest on the occasion. The Seminar aimed at highlighting the opportunities of doing business with India, promoting bilateral economic-commercial relations and showcasing attractive investment sectors/options in India along with practical modalities for businessmen. The Seminar was attended by around 130 participants comprising senior officials from the Omani Government, members of Oman Chamber of Commerce & Industry (OCCI), CEOs of companies, representatives from business houses, senior management from banks and financial institutions, business professionals from Muscat and other parts of the country.

In his welcome address, J.S. Mukul, Ambassador of India, highlighted the strong Indo-Oman economic-commercial relations and provided an overview of the Indian economy. He referred to the Government's reform agenda showing that the India growth story remained intact and resilient. He recalled the Embassy's continuing endeavour to strengthen bilateral business links between the two countries. He noted the Embassy's facilitation and promotional efforts for increasing trade and investments flows between the two countries. He pointed out that during the first ten months of 2012; India had become the largest destination of non-oil exports from Oman.

The India Business Seminar provided a platform for exchange of information and ideas about opportunities available for India-Oman business including investment joint ventures. Speakers from the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and ICICI-Securities presented different aspects

of doing business in India. Naveen Narayanan, Joint Managing Director, SSA Business in India from CII spoke about investment opportunities available in India covering FII and FDI in real estate, pharmaceuticals, infrastructure, hospitals, etc. Piyush Garg, Executive Vice President & Chief Investment Officer in ICICI Securities gave an overview of the Indian economy including the recent Indian budget. Sandipan Roy, Head-Investment & Family Offices Advisory, ICICI, presented Indian business opportunities and procedural modalities. The presentations were followed by an interesting and lively Question and Answer session.

Source: Embassy of India, Muscat, <http://www.indemb-oman.org/What's-new-Seminar%20on%2024-03-2013.asp>

h. QATAR

37. Government of India regulations regarding handling of Indian currency by passengers travelling to & from India, Doha, 6 March 2013.

As per Government of India regulations, only those persons, who are residents of India, are allowed to take out Indian currency up to a ceiling of Rs. 7,500 per passenger when travelling abroad. Similarly, only those persons who are residents of India can bring back Indian currency up to the ceiling of Rs. 7,500 when returning to India. In all other cases of foreigners, and those Indian nationals who are not residents of India/Non-Resident Indians (NRIs), it is prohibited under the Indian law to either take out any amount of Indian currency from India or to bring it into India.

Visitors to India are allowed to carry with them any amount of Qatari Riyals or other convertible foreign currencies, which can be exchanged at the authorized exchange centres in India, including at international airports, hotels, etc. However, in case the quantum of foreign currency exceeds the amount equivalent to US\$ 5,000 in cash or an overall of US\$ 10,000 when combined with other financial instruments like cheques, travellers' cheques, drafts etc., a declaration to the Customs Officers at international airports at the time of arrival or departure, as the case may be, is required to be made.

Source: Embassy of India, Doha, http://www.indianembassyqatar.org/press_release.php

38. Tender Notice, Doha, 21 March 2013.

Tender Notice

The Embassy of India, Doha (Qatar) invites sealed tenders for the following services at the Embassy premises.

CLEANING

SCOPE OF WORK:

Daily cleaning of the Embassy premises comprising of Main Block (ground and first floor) and Annex Block including areas within the Embassy premises located at Villa No.-19, Area No.42, St.No.-828, Wadi Al Neel, Hilal Area, P.O. Box 2788, Doha, Qatar.

GENERAL SPECIFICATION OF WORK:

DAILY CLEANING

Hard floor surfaces to be mopped to remove impregnated soil using a suitable detergent solution paying particular attention to corners and edges.

All waste bins to be emptied and garbage bags shall be replaced.

Door handles to be cleaned inside and outside.

Stairways to be cleaned.

Stairway banisters to be wiped and cleaned.

Entrance doors to be wiped and cleaned.

Desks and chairs to be cleaned.

Excess waste to be removed and placed in designated area.

Carpeted floor surfaces to be vacuumed efficiently using an industrial vacuum cleaner.

Table tops to be cleaned daily using a furniture polish or glass cleaner as required.

Clean and disinfect kitchens thoroughly.

ONCE-IN- TWO MONTHS- ON ROTA BASIS

Window blinds to be dusted.

Waste receptacles to be cleaned, washed, dried and replaced in proper places.

Furniture, Fixtures and fittings to be cleaned thoroughly.

Windows sills to be cleaned.

TOILET CLEANING

Daily

Thoroughly clean and sanitize all porcelain fittings (i.e. Urinals, W/C's, bidets, hand basins, sinks, showers).

Clean and polish mirrors to leave a bright sparkling finish.

Damp mop floors using a detergent/disinfectant solution.

Deodorize all areas using an environmentally safe freshener.

Thoroughly clean all fixtures and fittings.

Weekly

Thoroughly clean all cubicle walls, floors and doors using a sanitizing agent.

Wet mop all floor using a detergent/Disinfectant solution.

Thoroughly clean all hand areas (i.e. doors, switches, taps, dispensers etc.) to leave a dry bright finish.

Twice a Month on Rota Basis

Wash all walls thoroughly using a detergent/bactericidal agent leaving a dry clean bright smear free finish.

Carry out high-level dusting.

Clean light pendant fittings.

MANPOWER

5 cleaning people required for Sunday to Thursday except Friday from 16 hours. to 1730 hours. daily.

2 cleaning people required for Sunday to Saturday except Friday from 0700 hours. to 1900 hours.

The premises located at Villa No.-19, Area No.42, St.No.-828, Wadi Al Neel, Hilal Area, P.O. Box 2788, Doha, can be inspected by your persons in the next few days. Last date for submission of offers is 04.04.2013. Contact person Rajesh Kumar Sud, Admn section; contact no- 44255713, email: admn.doha@mea.gov.in

Conditions:

- i) The Company should have valid CR Number for Qatar.
- ii) The Company should have an established Office with adequate number of staffs and necessary infrastructure related to the concerned job profile in Doha, Qatar.

Source: Embassy of India, Doha,

http://www.indianembassyqatar.org/press_release.php

i. SAUDI ARABIA

39. Open House for the Indian Community Members, Riyadh, 5 March 2013.

The Embassy of India, Riyadh will hold the next session of 'Open House' for Indian citizens to address their problems/grievances on Thursday, 14 March 2013, in the Embassy premises from 1000 hours to 1200 hours.

During the Open House, members of the community can meet His Excellency 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>

40. Schedule of Screening of Films at Indian Embassy Auditorium, Riyadh, 5 March 2013.

S.No.	Schedule of Screening of Film	Name of Film
1.	Thursday – 7 March 2013 – 6.00 p.m.	"The Secret in their eyes" – Argentina
2.	Wednesday – 13 March 2013 – 6.00 p.m.	"El-Greco" – Greece
3.	Thursday – 14 March 2013 – 6.00 p.m.	"The Artist" – France

4.	Wednesday – 20 March 2013 – 6.00 p.m.	“Hvidstengruppen” – Denmark
5.	Thursday – 21 March 2013 – 6.00 p.m.	“Night Watch” – Russia
	Wednesday – 27 March 2013 Holiday on the occasion of HOLI	
6.	Wednesday – 3 April 2013 – 6.00 p.m.	“Bright flight (II Sole Dentro)” - Italy
7.	Thursday – 4 April 2013 – 6.00 p.m.	“Kon-tiki” – Norway
8.	Wednesday – 10 April 2013 – 6.00 p.m.	“The Iron Wall” – Palestine
9.	Thursday – 11 April 2013 – 6.00 p.m.	“Kagbeni” – Nepal
10.	Wednesday – 17 April 2013 – 6.00 p.m.	“Floquet De Neu” (Snow Flake) – Spain
11.	Thursday – 18 April 2013 – 6.00 p.m.	“25 Watts” – Uruguay
12.	Wednesday – 24 April 2013 – 6.00 p.m.	“Turkish Gambit” – Russia
13.	Thursday – 25 April 2013 – 6.00 p.m.	“Sea biscuit” – USA

1. To view synopsis of the scheduled Films click here:

<http://www.indianembassy.org.sa/WebFiles/Synopsis%20of%20Films.pdf>

2. Attendance by invitation only.

3. Those interested in attending any of the above screenings may obtain invitations from the Indian Embassy. Requests may be sent on e-mail:- amb-socialsec@indianembassy.org.sa (Rafeeq Ali). Invitation will be issued on a “First Come First Served” basis.

4. Children below 12 years should not be brought to the screenings.

5. The Embassy of India does not take responsibility for the content of the films proposed by other Embassies.

Source: Embassy of India, Riyadh,

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

41. Queries from the Indian Expatriate Community, Riyadh, 9 March 2013.

The Embassy of India in Riyadh has been receiving queries from the Indian expatriate community in Saudi Arabia regarding media reports of a likely ‘Amnesty’ to be announced by the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia allowing expatriates, who have overstayed beyond their visa period, to exit the Kingdom without penal action. The Embassy would like to

clarify that it has not received any communication in this regard from the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The Embassy would notify the expatriate community if any such notification is received.

The Embassy would like to further inform all Indian nationals in Saudi Arabia that the travel document (Emergency Certificate) issued during any Amnesty is meant for one way return journey to India only. Those Indian nationals who possess valid passports need not apply for Emergency Certificate during Amnesty.

Source: Embassy of India, Riyadh,

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

42. Know India Programme (KIP), Riyadh, 24 March 2013.

“Know India” Programme (KIP) is being conducted by Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (Diaspora Service Division) Govt. of India as per following schedule for “Persons of India Origin” (PIOs) only:-

KIP Edition	Tentative Period	Partner State	Last Date of Receipt of Application in the Embassy
24 th KIP	25 April to 15 May 2013	Uttar Pradesh	
25 th KIP	29 August to 18 September 2013	Punjab	10 June 2013
26 th KIP	23 December 2013 to 12 January 2014	Orissa	30 September 2013

Guidelines and application form for Know India Programme can be downloaded (Guidelines - <http://www.indianembassy.org.sa/WebFiles/Annexure-II.doc>)

Eligible candidate among Persons of India Origin (PIOs) residing in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia may submit their application to Embassy of India, Riyadh by 10 June 2013 for 25th KIP (29 August to 18 September 2013) and by 30 September 2013 for 26th KIP (23 December 2013 to 12 January 2014).

NRIs are not eligible to apply for this programme.

Source: Embassy of India, Riyadh,

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

43. Indian Ambassador met the Governor of Riyadh, Riyadh, 24 March 2013.

Hamid Ali Rao, Ambassador of India met with the Governor of Riyadh region Prince Khalid bin Bandar bin Abdul Aziz on 23 March 2013. During the meeting, a number of issues of common interest between India and Saudi Arabia were discussed.

Source: Embassy of India, Riyadh,

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

44. Queries from the Indian Expatriate Community, Riyadh, 29 March 2013.

The Embassy of India in Riyadh has been receiving queries from the Indian expatriate community in Saudi Arabia regarding media reports on Nitaqat related action by the Saudi Arabian authorities.

The Embassy would like to inform that it is in regular touch with the concerned authorities in Saudi Arabia to request that no Indian national legally employed in Saudi Arabia faces difficulties. The Embassy would notify the Indian expatriate community on further developments in this regard through media release.

Those Indian nationals who have completed the formalities with the Saudi authorities for their final exit, but do not have a valid passport, would be issued a travel document (Emergency Certificate) for their return to India. The Embassy would like to further inform all Indian nationals that Emergency Certificate issued is meant for one way return journey to India only. The validity of the Emergency Certificate is only three months. Those Indian nationals who possess valid passports do not require Emergency Certificate.

There is no need for any panic in this evolving situation. The Embassy can be contacted for additional information, if required.

Source: Embassy of India, Riyadh,

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

45. Indian Ambassador met with the Governor of Eastern Province, Riyadh, 31 March 2013.

Indian Ambassador H.E. Hamid Ali Rao met with Governor, Eastern Province HRH Prince Saud bin Naif bin Abdulaziz in Dammam on 30 March 2013. During the meeting, Ambassador discussed bilateral issues and welfare of Indian community in Saudi Arabia with the Governor of Eastern Province.

Source: Embassy of India, Riyadh,

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

46. Meeting with the Indian Community, Riyadh, 31 March 2013.

Ambassador Hamid Ali Rao today held a meeting with the members of Indian community in Embassy premises this morning to discuss various issues pertaining to the welfare of the Indian community in Saudi Arabia. Minister/Deputy Chief of Mission Sibi George along with other officials of the Embassy was also present during the meeting.

Text of the briefing by DCM is reproduced below:

“The Embassy has observed inaccurate reports in some sections of Indian media which created panic among the Indian expatriate community in Saudi Arabia and their families in different States of India. The Saudization programme also called Nitaqat programme currently being undertaken in Saudi Arabia is not targeting any particular expatriate community. This is part of

an ongoing Saudi policy of generating employment for Saudi nationals and for streamlining the job market in the country.

There are more than two million Indians currently working in Saudi Arabia in peace and harmony. The Indian community is the most preferred expatriate community in Saudi Arabia. The Embassy in Riyadh and the Consulate in Jeddah proactively take up with the Saudi authorities the issue of the welfare of the Indians in distress irrespective of their visa status. This includes Huroob (run away) cases and free-visa cases which is an illegal category in Saudi Arabia. The Embassy follows an open house policy where all Indians are free to visit the Embassy and seek assistance in their cases. The Embassy holds regular 'Open House' where Ambassador directly meets Indian workers in distress and seeks solutions for their cases within the Saudi law.

Both the Embassy in Riyadh and its Consulate in Jeddah maintain excellent relations with Saudi authorities at all levels. There have been regular meetings at high level with Saudi authorities and Provincial authorities to discuss the welfare of the Indian community. The Embassy assures the Indian community that there is no need for panic and overreaction on the Nitaqat programme. The Embassy will notify the community through media release on any further developments. The Embassy and Consulate officials have also been regularly visiting the deportation centres in Riyadh, Dammam and Jeddah. It has also been working very closely with Indian social workers to ensure that the concerns of the Indian nationals in distress are addressed.

The Embassy has recently taken additional steps to address the concerns of the Indians in distress in Saudi Arabia. The Embassy has started registration of legally employed Indians who face difficulties, if any, due to the Nitaqat programme, particularly due to their companies moving into red category. They could e-mail their details at: labour.riyadh@mea.gov.in or courier their contact details and passport copies to Embassy of India. The Embassy would take up their cases with the Saudi authorities for favourable consideration.

The Embassy would also receive applications for Emergency Certificates - ECs (travel documents) from Indian nationals for taking up their case of final exit with the Saudi authorities for favourable consideration. Please note that no amnesty has been declared by Saudi authorities. Embassy will notify the community if it receives any such information from the Saudi authorities. ECs will be issued only after the Saudi authorities agree to grant permission for the final exit of the applicants. The Embassy will announce the updates on these in its website. A 24-hour Embassy helpline would also provide information on these steps.

The Embassy urges the Indian expatriate community not to panic based on inaccurate reporting by some sections of the media. The Embassy is fully aware of its responsibilities towards the Indian nationals. The Embassy will continue to address issues of concern for the Indian community in Saudi Arabia keeping in view its excellent bilateral relations with this country and the welfare of more than two million Indians resident in Saudi Arabia.”

Source: Embassy of India, Riyadh,
<http://www.indianembassy.org.sa/Content.aspx?ID=790&PID=691>

j. SYRIA

47. Visit of Special Envoy of the Syrian President to India, New Delhi, 6 March 2013.

Visit of Special Envoy of the Syrian President to India, New Delhi, 6 March 2013.

Bouthaina Shaaban, Political and Media Advisor of Syrian President Bashar Al Assad, is on official visit to India as Special Envoy of the Syrian President to brief the Indian leadership on the situation in Syria. Shaaban met External Affairs Minister Salman Khurshid, Minister of State for External Affairs E. Ahamed and National Security Advisor Shivshankar Menon on 6 March 2013. She also handed over a letter from the Syrian President addressed to PM on developments in Syria.

India reiterated deep concern on the security situation in Syria and the continued escalation in violence. We also expressed our concern about the plight of the people of Syria arising out of intense fighting and conflict.

India urged the need for peaceful resolution of the crisis with participation of all parties taking into account the legitimate aspirations of all Syrians for which the Geneva Communiqué which includes the 6-Point Plan of Kofi Annan provides a good basis.

Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, <http://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/21291/Visit+of+Special+Envoy+of+the+Syrian+President+to+India>

48. Diplomatic ties with Syria, New Delhi, 21 March 2013.

Question:

- (a) Whether Government is engaged in diplomatic ties with Syria;
- (b) If so, details of Government's stand on the situation in Syria; and
- (c) The details of India's engagement with other nations for a resolution of the problems in Syria?

Answer

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

(a) Yes.

(b) & (c) India is deeply concerned at the unabated violence in Syria and strongly condemns all violence in Syria and has called upon all sides in Syria to abjure violence and resolve all issues peacefully through discussions taking into account the legitimate aspirations of the people of Syria. India supports the Geneva Communiqué which includes the 6-Point Plan of Kofi Annan and welcomes the efforts of the Joint Special Envoy Lakhdar Brahimi for resolution of the Syrian crisis.

India, along with Brazil and South Africa (IBSA) and with Russia and China (BRICS), has made efforts for peaceful resolution of the Syrian crisis. India has made efforts in the United Nations Security Council during its non-permanent membership in the years 2011-12 towards this end.

Source: Rajya Sabha (Council of States), Unstarred Question No. 2659 asked by Piyush Goyal, <http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/QRresult.aspx>

49. Indians in Syria, New Delhi, 21 March 2013.

Question:

Will the Minister of Overseas Indian Affairs be pleased to state?

- (a) Whether there are any Indians currently staying in Syria;
- (b) If so, the details thereof;
- (c) Whether considering the troubled situation in Syria, their lives are in danger;
- (d) If so, the details thereof and the proposed plan of action to bring them relief; and
- (e) If not, the reasons therefore?

Answer

Minister of Overseas Indian Affairs (Vayalar Ravi)

- (a): Yes, Sir. There are about 30 Indians staying in Syria.
- (b): Presently, around 13 Indian are working in Modern Glass Factory at Homs and 05 Indians working in Himsho Steel Company, Hassiya. Another 10 to 12 Indian are living in Damascus.
- (c): The Indians still working in Syria are in relatively safe areas.
- (d) & (e): The Indian Mission had advised Indians in Syria to leave when the situation was deteriorating. Most Indians left since then. The Mission is in touch with the Indians still in Syria in case they wish to leave and provide assistance if so required. The Mission also continues to render consular assistance and other help to Indians still living in Syria.

Source: Rajya Sabha (Council of States), Unstarred Question No. 2683 asked by Kanwar Deep Singh, <http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/QRresult.aspx>

50. Alleged use of Chemical Weapons in Syria, New Delhi, 22 March 2013.

In response to a media query on the alleged use of Chemical Weapons in Syria the Official Spokesperson said:

"We have noted with concern reports regarding alleged use of chemical weapons near Aleppo in northern Syria. The UN, in cooperation with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) would be investigating these reports.

As an original signatory to the Chemical Weapons Convention, India attaches the utmost importance to the complete destruction and elimination of chemical weapons world-wide. We stress that the international legal norm against the use of chemical weapons anywhere must not

be breached. It is important to ensure the safe and secure custody of chemical weapons stockpiles and to prevent access to terrorists and non-state actors.”

Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, <http://www.mea.gov.in/media-briefings.htm?dtl/21463/Alleged+use+of+Chemical+Weapons+in+Syria>

K. TUNISIA

51. Ambassador visited Hannibal TV of Tunisia, Tunis, 5 March 2013.

Ambassador Nagma M. Mallick visited the studios and office of leading Tunisian news and entertainment channel, Hannibal TV, on Tuesday, 5 March 2013. She held discussions with Larbi Nasra, President Director General of Hannibal TV, Monia ben Mabrouk, Director of Programmes and Mohamed Habib Nasra, Vice - President, on the media in Tunisia and on enhancing cooperation with India in the media sector.

Source: Embassy of India, Tunis, <http://www.indianembassytunis.com/Hannibal-TV.html>

I. TURKEY

52. Press Bulletin, Ankara, 14 March 2013.

It has been agreed to celebrate United Nations International Women's Day between 2-15 March each year in order to emphasize on needs, demands, problems and concerns of the women's all over the world. Embassy of India, Ankara organizes a fundraiser fashion show in collaboration with World Wella Paris which contains Indian Sarees (traditional Indian dresses), accessorizes and Indian Western Dresses to contribute organizations supporting women's shelters.

World Wella Paris has created different and impressive designs by combination of modern trends and mystical trends of Far East by using Indian materials and accessorizes in its 2013 Summer Collection. World Wella Paris is a leading and respectable design firm which has put its signature under significant works and successes. I aim to make the women become the focus of interest in the events by both its fashion conscious designs and haute couture designs. This event underlines the potential of cooperation between two countries which is not limited with the textile sector but also in other development areas.

On the occasion of the 8th March International Women's Day, a cocktail reception at 1400 hours and fundraiser fashion show at 1600 hours will be held in the residence of the Ambassador of India, Susmita Gongulee Thomas on Friday, 15 March 2013. In the framework of the fashion show, 2013 Collection of World Wella Paris and traditional Indian Dresses will be displayed.

Source: Embassy of India, Ankara, <http://www.indembassy.org.tr/EN,324/press-bulletin.html>

53. Screening of the film "JODHAA AKBAR", Ankara, 22 March 2013.

The Embassy of India will be hosting a film night on Friday, April 12, 2013 from 1700 to 2000 hours. The film "Jodhaa Akbar" (a film, based on incidents from the life of Mughal Emperor Akbar and his Hindu wife Jodhaa bai) will be screened on this occasion. This will be followed by light refreshments.

Jodhaa Akbar

Ashutosh Gowariker's Jodhaa Akbar is the story of the greatest Mughal Emperor that ruled Hindustan, Jalaluddin Mohammad Akbar, and the fiery young Rajput Princess, Jodhaa.

Set in the sixteenth century, this epic romance begins as a marriage of alliance between two cultures and religions, for political gain, with King Bharmal of Amer giving his daughter's hand to Emperor Akbar. When Akbar, accepts the marriage proposal, little does he know that in his efforts to strengthen his relations with the Rajputs, he would in turn be embarking on a new journey – the journey of true love.

From the battlefield where the young Jalaluddin was crowned, through the conquests that won him the title of Akbar the Great, to winning the love of the beautiful Jodhaa, Jodhaa Akbar traces the impressive graph of the mighty emperor and his romance with the defiant princess.

The movie has one dance sequence of "Whirling Dervishes" called Khwaja mere Khwaja.

The film is in Hindi with English subtitles.

Entrance is Free

Those interested may reach the Embassy (77, Cinnah Caddesi, Cankaya, Ankara) by 1725 hours.

Source: Embassy of India, Ankara, <http://www.indembassy.org.tr/EN,325/jodhaa-akbar.html>

m. UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

54. BLS International, outsourcing agency for Indian passport and visa services new location, Abu Dhabi, 4 March 2013.

BLS International, outsourcing agency for Indian passport and visa services, will shift its main centre in Abu Dhabi to a new location at Office No: 202, 2nd Floor, Port City Java building, behind ADCB Bank building, Al Nahayan Camp, Murror Road, Abu Dhabi, on and from 9 March 2013 (Sunday). To facilitate shift, BLS Centre will remain closed on 7 March 2013 (Thursday). Please visit www.blsindiavisa-uae.com or contact centralized Call Centre number of BLS International at 04 2555530 for further details in this regard.

Source: Embassy of India, Abu Dhabi,

<http://www.indembassyuae.org/drupal/node/861>

55. Indian Currency Baggage Rules in India Airports, Abu Dhabi, 6 March 2013.

There have been some instances when NRIs have been found carrying large amount of cash in the form of Indian Currency while visiting India and faced problem at airport. In some cases the Currency being carried by NRIs has even been found to be counterfeit. There is misconception that NRIs are allowed to carry Indian currency back to India. According to the Baggage Rules, it is only Indian nationals normally residents in India who can carry up to Rs 7,500/- in Indian Currency back after their visit abroad. Therefore, NRIs staying in United Arab Emirates are advised to avoid carrying Indian Currency while visiting India.

Source: Embassy of India, Abu Dhabi,

<http://www.indembassyuae.org/drupal/node/862>

56. Amnesty announced by UAE, New Delhi, 7 March 2013.

Question:

Will the Minister of Overseas Indian Affairs be pleased to state:

- (a) Whether nearly 45,000 Indians in United Arab Emirates (UAE) are expected to seek amnesty announced by the Gulf country;
- (b) If so, the number out of them that have sought amnesty in leaving the country without penalty and the number out of them that have sought for regularization of their visas which are valid till February 3, 2013;
- (c) The details of various steps taken by the Union Government with respective State's Chief Ministers for free air tickets for those poor and deserving workers from their States who have been held up in the UAE; and
- (d) The States of India from where these 45,000 Indians have moved to UAE?

Answer

Minister of Overseas India Affairs (Mr. Vayalar Ravi)

(a) & (b): No Sir. Indian Missions in UAE received only 3575 applications for issuing Emergency Certificates (ECs) from Indian nationals in UAE desirous of taking benefits of the Amnesty. Those who get their visas regularized do not need to approach the Indian Mission.

(c): State Governments from where most of the workers emigrate to Gulf countries were requested to make provision for free air-tickets to needy and deserving workers who are permitted to leave UAE under the amnesty scheme.

25 Indian nationals approached the Indian Missions for free air-ticket for their repatriation to India, which were provided.

(d): The States of origin of the 3575 applicants who have sought Emergency Certificates is been given in ANNEURE.

For the Annexure, see: <http://164.100.24.219/annex/228/Au1151.htm>

Source: Rajya Sabha (Council of States), Unstarred Question No. 1151 asked by Nandi Yellaiah, <http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/QResult.aspx>

57. Amnesty Scheme for UAE, New Delhi, 13 March 2013.

Question:

Will the Minister of Overseas Indian Affairs be pleased to state:-

- (a) The number of illegal Indian immigrants who have taken advantage of the amnesty scheme announced by UAE; and

(b) The steps taken by the Government to bring back those Indians and the financial assistance provided/proposed to be provided to them?

Answer

Minister of Overseas Indian Affairs (Vayalar Ravi)

(a): Indian Mission in UAE received 3575 applications from Indian nationals, for issuing Emergency Certificates (ECs) to come back to India, making use of the Amnesty Scheme.

(b): States from where larger numbers of workers emigrate to Gulf countries, were requested to make provision for free air-tickets to needy and deserving workers who are permitted to leave UAE under the amnesty scheme.

25 Indian national approached the Indian Missions for air-ticket for their repatriation to India, which were provided.

The Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs has sanctioned AED 40 per applicant towards the cost incurred by the Mission for those who avail Emergency Certificates, and waived the AED 10 per applicant service charge levy for the Indian Community Welfare Fund.

Source: Lok Sabha (House of the People), Unstarred Question No. 2548 asked by Suresh Chanabasappa Angadi, M. Krishnaswamy, R. Dhruvanarayana and Jayaram Pangi,

<http://164.100.47.132/LssNew/psearch/QResult15.aspx?qref=138376>

58. Exchange of prisoners with UAE, New Delhi, 14 March 2013.

Question:

- (a) Whether any bilateral arrangement for exchange of prisoners has been made with the Government of United Arab Emirates in the recent past;
- (b) If so, the details thereof;
- (c) When is the arrangement expected to come into effect; and
- (d) Estimate of the number of Indian prisoners to benefit from such an agreement?

Answer

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

- (a) Yes.
- (b) An agreement on transfer of sentenced persons was signed between India and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) on 23 November 2011 during the visit of Interior Minister of UAE to India.
- (c) Agreement was ratified by Indian side on 18 May 2012 and by UAE side on 9 December 2012. The agreement will be operationalized on the date of last notification when one side will inform the other side through diplomatic channels regarding completion of its internal procedure necessary for its entry into force.

(d) Not applicable.

Source: Rajya Sabha (Council of States), Unstarred Question No. 1900 asked by T.K. Rangarajan, <http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/QRresult.aspx>

n. YEMEN

59. Eight India-Yemen Joint Committee Meeting, New Delhi, 13 March 2013.

The Eighth Session of the India-Yemen Joint Committee for Economic, Scientific and Technical Cooperation (JCM) took place in New Delhi on 11-12 March 2013. The Indian delegation was led by Mr. Sanjay Singh, Secretary (East), Ministry of External Affairs, while the Yemeni side was led by the Deputy Minister of Planning & International Cooperation, H.E. Omer Abdulaziz Abdulghani.

The leader of the Yemeni delegation called on the Hon'ble Minister of External Affairs, Salman Khurshid and the Minister of State for External Affairs, E. Ahamed, who also hosted a dinner in honour of the visiting delegation. The two sides signed a Cultural Exchange Programme for the period 2013-15.

Both sides underlining the close and cordial relations between the two countries and people to people contacts going back to many centuries, agreed to further strengthen the mutually beneficial relations, through mutually cooperative ventures in the areas of Education & Training, Culture, Health, Hydrocarbons, Agriculture, Fertilizers, Trade, Investment and Security.

Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, <http://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/21355/Eight+IndiaYemen+Joint+Committee+Meeting>

SPECIFIC ISSUES

o. TRADE WITH GULF COUNTRIES

60. Trade with Gulf Countries, New Delhi, 6 March 2013.

The value-wise trade between India and GCC and other Arab countries for the last 3 years and current year is given below. The countries included in this group are GCC Countries (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates); West Asian Countries other than GCC (Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Yemen, Syria); and North African Countries (Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, Libya, Sudan, Tunisia).

The bilateral trade in the region, as may be seen from the table given below has increased by 75.91 per cent from US\$ 107360.14 million in 2009-10 to US\$ 188867.66 million in 2011-12.

Value: US \$ million

	Total Trade			
	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13 (Apr-Dec)

GCC Countries	83,977.4	117,391.8 6	145,502.6 3	117,337.9 6
West Asian Countries other than GCC	15357.96	19145.60	31232.97	23221.78
North African Countries	8024.78	9880.11	12132.06	9400.03
Total	107360.1 4	146417.57	188867.66	149959.77

Source: DGCIS

A statement showing the top 10 commodities of export and import in that region is at Annex I. It will be noted that India's export to this region primarily consists of Gems & Jewellery, Petroleum (Crude & Products), Transport Equipments, Rice- Basmati, Readymade Garments (Cotton), Sugar, Meat Preparations, Drugs Pharmaceuticals & Fine Chemicals, Electronic Goods etc.

Total trade of India has grown at the rate of around 28 per cent during the year 2011-12, while the total trade in the above mentioned countries has grown at the rate of nearly 28.9 per cent. Assuming a rate of growth of 28 per cent, the total trade in the region can be expected to be around US\$ 241 billion during the year 2012-13. However in view of the general slowdown observed in trade in India and rest of the World, it may be safe to assume that India's trade in this region would go up to US \$200 billion in 2012-13 which is nearly double of India's trade with this region in 2009-10.

The mandate for the negotiations for a Free Trade Agreement between India and GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council for Arab States) was given by the Trade Economic Relations Committee (TERC) in July 2005 after which two rounds of negotiations were held in 2006 and 2008. Negotiations with GCC have however been at a standstill since 2008. We have been informed that GCC is reviewing its negotiations with all countries and economic groups, and that a study has been commissioned by them to examine the issue of negotiations with India and China. Besides the above mentioned FTA with GCC, India is also negotiating an FTA with Israel in the region, six rounds of which have been held so far.

Annex I

List of Top-10 Export Commodities to Gulf & Other Arab Countries during the year 2012-13
(As on April-December, 2013)

GCC Countries		Other West Asian Countries		North African Countries	
S.No.	Commodity	S.No.	Commodity	S.No.	Commodity
1.	Gems & Jewellery	1.	Petroleum (Crude & Products)	1.	Transport Equipments
2.	Petroleum (Crude & Products)	2.	Rice -Basmati	2.	Machinery And Instruments
3.	Machinery And Instruments	3.	Gems & Jewellery	3.	Manmade Yarn, Fabrics, Made-ups
4.	Manufactures Of Metals	4.	Machinery And Instruments	4.	Meat & Preparations
5.	Electronic Goods	5.	Drugs, Pharmaceuticals & Fine Chemicals	5.	Sugar
6.	Transport Equipments	6.	Manufactures Of Metals	6.	Petroleum (Crude & Products)
7.	Rice -Basmati	7.	Meat & Preparations	7.	Drugs, Pharmaceuticals & Fine Chemicals
8.	RMG Cotton including Accessories	8.	Sugar	8.	Cotton Yarn, Fabrics, Made-ups etc
9.	Primary & Semi-Finished Iron & Steel	9.	Electronic Goods	9.	Electronic Goods
10.	Man-made Yarn, Fabrics, Made-ups	10.	Transport Equipments	10.	Plastic & Linoleum Products

(A) List of Top-10 Import Commodities from Gulf & Other Arab Countries during the year 2012-13 (As on December, 2013)

GCC Countries	Other West Asian Countries	North African Countries
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S. No.	Commodity	S. No.	Commodity	S. No.	Commodity
1.	Petroleum, Crude & Products	1.	Petroleum, Crude & Products	1	Petroleum, Crude & Products
2.	Gold	2.	Fertilizers Manufactured	2	Inorganic Chemicals
3.	Pearls Precious Semi-precious Stones	3.	Pearls Precious Semiprecious Stones	3	Fertilizers, Crude
4.	Organic Chemicals	4.	Fertilizers, Crude	4	Fertilizers Manufactured
5.	Metalifers Ores & Metal Scrap	5.	Organic Chemicals	5	Metalifers Ores & Metal Scrap
6.	Artificial Resns, Plastic Materials, Etc.	6.	Inorganic Chemicals	6	Cotton Raw: Comb./Uncomb./Waste
7.	Fertilizers Manufactured	7.	Electronic Goods	7	Non-Ferrous Metals
8.	Inorganic Chemicals	8.	Artificial Resns, Plastic Materials, Etc.	8	Leather
9.	Non-Ferrous Metals	9.	Sulphur & Unrostd Iron Pyrts	9	Non-Metallic Minerals Mnfs Excluding Pearls
10.	Primary Steel, Pig Iron Based Items	10.	Machinery Except Electrical & Electronic	10.	Wood And Wood Products

Source DGCIS

This information was given by the Minister of State of Commerce & Industry, Dr. D. Purandeswari in a written reply in Rajya Sabha today.

Source: Press Information Bureau, New Delhi,
<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx?relid=93100>

p. HAJJ

61. Subsidy for Hajj quota, New Delhi, 7 March 2013.

Question:

(a) Whether Government has reduced the subsidy of Hajj quota; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and reasons therefore?

Answer

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

(a) & (b) No. The expenditure incurred by the Government by way of subsidy for air travel of Hajj pilgrims during Hajj 2010, 2011 and 2012 is provisionally estimated at `600 crores, `692 crores and `835 crores respectively.

Hon'ble Supreme Court vide its Interim Order dated 8 May 2012 has directed the Government to progressively reduce the amount of subsidy so as to completely eliminate it within a period of 10 years from 08 May 2012. Each pilgrim who travelled through the Hajj Committee of India for Hajj 2012 paid an amount of Rs. `20,000/- towards the air fare as compared to Rs.16,000/- during Hajj 2011.

Source: Rajya Sabha (Council of States), Unstarred Question No. 1140 asked by Mohd. Ali Khan and T. Ratna Bai, <http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/QResult.aspx>

62. Curtailing of facilities to Hajj pilgrims, New Delhi, 7 March 2013.

Question:

- (a) Whether it is a fact that various facilities to Hajj pilgrims are being curtailed in a phased manner;
- (b) If so, the details in this regard;
- (c) The reasons therefore; and
- (d) The planning of Government in this regard?

Answer

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

- (a) No.
- (b) & (c) Not applicable.
- (d) Government of India assists the Hajj pilgrims in close coordination with the Hajj Committee of India through (i) provision of accommodation and other logistical support at Mecca, Medina and Jeddah, (ii) Deputation of Doctors & Paramedics, Coordinators, Assistant Hajj Officers, Hajj Assistants and Khadim-ul-Hujjaj to assist Hajjis during their Hajj, (iii) setting up Hospitals & dispensaries, providing ambulances and arranging supply of medicines to Hajjis in the holy sites in Mecca, Mina, Arafat, Muzdalifa and Medina, (iv) Facilitating Air travel from 21 embarkation points in India to Jeddah and back, and (v) Training of trainers who in turn train the pilgrims before they proceed to Saudi Arabia. Notable additional arrangements during Hajj-2012 were - HCOI pilgrims availed of the Train service facility in the Mashaer region, were accommodated within the traditional boundaries at Mina and each pilgrim was provided with a preloaded SIM telephone card for use during the course of Hajj in Saudi Arabia.

Source: Rajya Sabha (Council of States), Unstarred Question No. 1132 asked by Mohammed Adeep, <http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/QResult.aspx>

63. Discontinuation of temporary passport for Hajj pilgrims, New Delhi, 14 March 2013.

Question:

- (a) whether the issuing of temporary passports for one year to the Hajj pilgrims has been discontinued for sometimes back, whereas this facility was there earlier, due to which Hajj pilgrims used to perform their Hajj duty conveniently;
- (b) whether many Hajj pilgrims are deprived for performing their Hajj duty due to the delay in carrying out police verification and observing other formalities as mandated by the International passport (permanent) system; and
- (c) If so, the details thereof?

Answer

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

(a) to (c) Yes. Saudi Authorities have made it mandatory that the pilgrims proceeding for Hajj should have valid International Passport for endorsement of Hajj visa since 2009. As per procedures, passports for full validity are issued after the completion of Police Verification and other required formalities. At the time of Hajj 2012, due to time constraints, Passport Offices were also authorized to issue short validity passports for one year, only for travel to Saudi Arabia, to those prospective Hajj Pilgrims whose Police Verification was not received by Passport Offices in time.

In the context of Hajj 2013, Hajj Committee of India and this Ministry (through Passport Offices) have run a campaign to create public awareness about the requirement of a valid passport by Hajj applicants. All Regional Passport Offices have also been directed to extend requisite assistance for expeditious issuance of Passports to prospective Hajj applicants.

Source: Rajya Sabha (Council of States), Unstarred Question No. 1904 asked by Chaudhary Munabbar Saleem, <http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/QResult.aspx>

64. Hajj Scam in UP, New Delhi, 20 March 2013.

Question:

Will the Minister of External Affairs be pleased to state:-

- (a) Whether the Government has received any reports from Uttar Pradesh regarding manipulation in the list of Hajj pilgrims and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) the total number of applications received, the number of applicants accepted and the number of people kept in waiting list from UP;
- (c) Whether the Hajj Committee has displayed the approved list on their website;
- (d) If so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefore; and
- (e) The action taken in this regard?

Answer

The Minister of State in the Ministry of External Affairs (Preneet Kaur)

- (a) Hajj Committee of India (HCOI) has received a letter dated 7 July 2012 from UP State Hajj Committee (SHC) about tampering of the data of the pilgrims of their State. After analysis, it was found that 28 covers from waiting list as well as 3 such covers from provisionally selected pilgrims were tampered.
- (b) The total number of applications received from UP SHC till the closing date was 3, 6732 during Haj-2012, out of which 32, 525 pilgrims proceeded for Hajj. 189 pilgrims were left in the waiting list for Haj-2012.
- (c) & (d) Yes. The approved list was displayed on the website of Hajj Committee of India immediately after Qurrah during Haj-2012.
- (e) HCOI restored the original back-up data of 16 May 2012 and wrote to UP SHC on 7 July 2012 to investigate the matter and to take stringent action to punish the culprits. UP SHC was also requested to take all possible preventive measures to prevent such tampering of data. An FIR was filed in the Hazratganj Police Station by the UP SHC on 9 July 2012 on this issue.

Source: Lok Sabha (House of the People), Unstarred Question No. 3856 asked by P. Viswanathan, <http://164.100.47.132/LssNew/psearch/QResult15.aspx?qref=137913>

65. Hajj Reforms, New Delhi, 20 March 2013.

Question:

Will the Minister of External Affairs be pleased to state:-

- (a) Whether Indian Hajj Committee has introduced an array of reforms in connection with Hajj;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefore; and
- (c) The schemes formulated by the Government to make Hajj Pilgrimage more transparent, smooth and flexible?

Answer

The Minister of State in the Ministry of External Affairs (Preneet Kaur)

- (a) Yes.
- (b) As per directions of the Hon'ble Supreme Court, an affidavit was filed in the Supreme Court on 12 April 2012 wherein it was stated that the number of pilgrimages to a Hajj applicant through the Hajj Committee of India (HCOI) be restricted to "once in a life time" as against the existing "once in five years". This will ensure that applicants who have never performed Hajj will get the benefit of performing Hajj through HCOI. This clause has been introduced from Haj-2013. Secondly, all applicants have been asked to enclose a copy of a cancelled cheque along with the Hajj Application Form to ensure faster issue of refunds, if any, to the designated bank account of the applicant during Haj-2013.
- (c) It is the constant endeavour of the Government to conduct the Hajj operations in an efficient and transparent manner. Improvements are incorporated on the basis of experience acquired in

successive Hajj operations with a view to provide the pilgrims with better services in each ensuing Hajj pilgrimage.

Source: Lok Sabha (House of the People), Unstarred Question No. 3787 asked by Shafiqur Rahman Barq and Sameer Bhujbal,

<http://164.100.47.132/LssNew/psearch/QResult15.aspx?qref=137903>

q. INDIA WOMEN OVERSEAS

66. Indian Women Migrants to Gulf Countries, New Delhi, 6 March 2013.

Question:

Will the Minister of Overseas Indian Affairs be pleased to state:-

- (a) The number of Indian women working in Gulf countries as of now and who went to Gulf during the last three years;
- (b) The nature of jobs being offered to these women and the reason for women going abroad, especially to Gulf countries in large numbers; and
- (c) The measures taken by the Government to ensure their protection in those countries?

Answer

Minister of Overseas Indian Affairs (Vayalar Ravi)

- (a): Statistics are maintained in this Ministry about Indian workers, including women, holding ECR passports, who seek emigration clearance for employment to any of the 17 ECR (Emigration Clearance Required) notified countries. Number of emigration clearances granted to Indian women for Gulf countries during the last three years is given at Annexure.
- (b): Indian women in Gulf countries are engaged in various jobs like doctors, nurses, teachers, housemaids, receptionists, etc.
- (c): Following steps to address the issue of Indian women emigrants have been taken:-
 - (i) Age restriction of minimum 30 years to all women for emigrating on ECR passports to ECR countries.
 - (ii) Defining a minimum referral wage for emigrants (fixed by Mission).
 - (iii) Stipulation of a security deposit per worker from the foreign employer directly hiring Indian worker (US \$2500).
 - (iv) Compulsory attestation by the Indian Mission concerned of employment documents for all women emigrants with ECR passports going to ECR countries.
 - (v) Pre-paid Mobile phone facility for housemaids to be provided by the employer.
 - (vi) Establishment of an Indian Workers Resource Centre (IWRC) at UAE, which provides information on matters relating to workers, processes for attestation of Work Contracts, grievance redressal. The IWRC also operates a shelter for food and accommodation for women workers in distress and extends legal, financial and medical counselling to them.

(vii) The Government has established Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) in all Indian Missions to provide onsite support to the emigrants in distress.

(viii) The Government has signed MOUs with seven major labour receiving countries, namely, Jordan, Qatar, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Kuwait, Oman, Malaysia and Bahrain to lay down the framework for bilateral cooperation for the protection and welfare of workers.

Under these MOUs, Joint Working Groups (JWGs) have been constituted that meet regularly in order to resolve bilateral labour issues.

(ix) The Government has established an Overseas Workers Resource Centre (OWRC) which is a 24 hour telephone helpline in eight languages to provide authentic information to emigrants as well as intending emigrants on various aspects of emigration.

(x) Awareness campaigns through the media to educate intending emigrants about legal emigration procedures, the risk of illegal migration, and precautions to be taken during emigration.

(xi) Pravasi Bhartiya Bima Yojana (PBBY) is a compulsory Insurance Scheme for the protection of emigrant workers against accidents, injuries, etc.

(xii) Indian Missions in the Gulf attend to complaints by emigrant workers including women, and provide guidance on matters of employment, as well as consular/legal assistance where necessary.

For the annexure, see: <http://164.100.47.132/Annexure/lsq15/13/au1455.htm>

Source: Lok Sabha (House of the People), Unstarred Question No. 1455 asked by Ajay Kumar, <http://164.100.47.132/LssNew/psearch/QResult15.aspx?qref=138374>

67. Measures for Safety of Overseas Indian Working Women, New Delhi, 6 March 2013.

The statistics are maintained in this Ministry about Indian workers, including women, holding ECR passports, who seek emigration clearance for employment to any of the 17 ECR (Emigration Clearance Required) notified countries. Indian women in Gulf countries are engaged in various jobs like doctors, nurses, teachers, housemaids, receptionists, etc. Following steps to address the issue of Indian women emigrants have been taken:

(i) Age restriction of minimum 30 years to all women for emigrating on ECR passports to ECR countries.

(ii) Defining a minimum referral wage for emigrants (fixed by Mission).

(iii) Stipulation of a security deposit per worker from the foreign employer directly hiring Indian worker (US \$2500).

(iv) Compulsory attestation by the Indian Mission concerned of employment documents for all women emigrants with ECR passports going to ECR countries.

(v) Pre-paid Mobile phone facility for housemaids to be provided by the employer.

(vi) Establishment of an Indian Workers Resource Centre (IWRC) at UAE, which provides information on matters relating to workers, processes for attestation of Work Contracts,

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(xii) Indian Missions in the Gulf attend to complaints by emigrant workers including women, and provide guidance on matters of employment, as well as consular/legal assistance where necessary.

Source: *Press Information Bureau, New Delhi,*

<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx?relid=93156>

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

One Crore= 10 Million

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