

INDIA WATCH

No. 40

MAY 2013

POLITICAL ISSUES

ALGERIA

1. India in talks with Algeria for signing term contracts for supply of oil and natural gas
Algiers, Thursday, 18 April 2013

India is in talks with resource-rich Algeria for supply of oil and natural gas and is looking at the possibility of joint ventures in manufacture of nitrogenous fertilizers for export to India.

Source: The Economic Times, New Delhi

http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2013-04-18/news/38647003_1_indian-food-festival-foreign-minister-mourad-medelci-algeria

See Also: Business Standard, New Delhi

http://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ians/ahamed-on-algeria-visit-discusses-oil-and-gas-import-contacts-113041900421_1.html

See also: Business Standard, New Delhi

http://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/india-algeria-talk-about-oil-and-fertilisers-113041801263_1.html

IRAN

2. India, Germany want Iran to stop nuclear proliferation
Berlin, Thursday, 11 April 2013

Foreign Ministers of India and Germany on declared a common interest in preventing Iran from going further on the path of nuclear proliferation. "For the sake of keeping Iran in the comity of nations, it is important to keep the dialogue going," Salman Khurshid said.

Source: The Hindu, Chennai

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/india-germany-want-iran-to-stop-nuclear-proliferation/article4604598.ece>

3. India would not cap oil imports from Iran: Government Officials
New Delhi, Thursday, 11 April 2013

Senior government officials said that India is unwilling to impose restrictions or cap its oil imports from Iran, and would continue its energy ties with Tehran as long it gets a "good deal" and logistic support, even as one national insurance companies has stepped in to provide re-insurance for oil imports from Iran staving a crisis for now.

Source: The Economic Times, New Delhi

http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2013-04-11/news/38435011_1_oil-imports-indian-oil-companies-turkmenistan-afghanistan

LIBYA

4. Ahamed on official trip to Libya, meets Libyan PM

Tripoli, Monday, 15 April 2013

Minister of State for External Affairs E Ahamed said that India appreciates the onset of democracy in Libya and looks forward to further enrich it through cooperation in vital sectors. The minister called on Libyan Prime Minister Ali Zeidan and Mohammad Yousef Al-Magarief, President of the General National Congress, and both leaders welcomed return of Indian companies and Indians to Libya to support the reconstruction and development of the country.

Source: Business Standard, New Delhi

http://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/ahamed-on-official-trip-to-libya-meets-libyan-pm-113041500593_1.html

5. Return of 18,000 Indians to top Ahamed's agenda in Libya

New Delhi, Saturday, 13 April 2013

During his visit to Tripoli Minister of State for External Affairs E. Ahamed would seek the return of 18,000 Indians who had fled after NATO began aerial bombing of the country while rebels fought against former dictator Muammar Gaddafi's forces on the ground.

Source: The Hindu, Chennai

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/return-of-18000-indians-to-top-ahameds-agenda-in-libya/article4612766.ece>

SAUDI ARABIA

6. Nitaqat: State to seek six months' amnesty

Thiruvananthapuram, Monday, 1 April 2013

The Kerala State government plans to seek six months' amnesty for expatriate workers who face the *Nitaqat* naturalization law which seeks 10 percent employment for the locals in Saudi Arabia. A meeting of officials convened by Minister for Non-Resident Keralites K.C. Joseph, discussed this as one of the options that Chief Minister Oommen Chandy should explore during his visit to New Delhi for discussions with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and External Affairs Minister Salman Khurshid.

Source: The Hindu, Chennai

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/Nitaqat-state-to-seek-six-months-amnesty/article4568201.ece>

7. Vayalar Ravi and team to visit Saudi Arabia for talks on Nitaqat law

Kochi, Tuesday, 2 April 2013

An Indian delegation led by Minister for Overseas Indian Affairs Vayalar Ravi would visit Saudi to discuss issues faced by Indians working there because of *Nitaqat* policy. The decision to send the delegation was taken after Ravi met Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

Source: The Economic Times, New Delhi

http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2013-04-02/news/38218060_1_new-policy-chief-minister-oommen-chandy-ravi

8. Riyadh urged to give time to Indian expatriates

New Delhi, Wednesday, 3 April 2013

Minister of State for External Affairs E. Ahamed has said Saudi Arabia has been asked to implement the *Nitaqat* with a "human face" by giving enough time to Indian expatriates.

Source: The Hindu, Chennai

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/riyadh-urged-to-give-time-to-indian-expatriates/article4575269.ece>

9. No reason for Indian workers in Saudi Arabia to be paranoid about *Nitaqat*: India

New Delhi, Wednesday, 3 April 2013

The government said that there was no reason for two million plus strong Indian workforce in Saudi Arabia to be "paranoid" on account of a new *Nitaqat* law and asserted there was "ongoing" discussion with the Saudi authorities in the matter.

Source: The Economic Times, New Delhi

http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2013-04-03/news/38248476_1_new-labour-law-Nitaqat-law-saudi-minister

10. Government allays fears on job cuts in Saudi Arabia

New Delhi, Thursday, 4 April 2013

The government has allayed apprehensions of Saudi Arabia sending back Indians on a large scale because of its *Nitaqat* law. There is no urgency for Indian Ministers to dash off to Riyadh for, the Saudi Labour Minister is out of the country and is expected to return only mid-April, said senior officials of the Ministry of External Affairs.

Source: The Hindu, Chennai

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/government-allays-fears-on-job-cuts-in-saudi-arabia/article4579007.ece>

11. Saudi Arabia defers *Nitaqat* enforcement by three months

New Delhi, Sunday, 7 April 2013

Expatriates, particularly from India, who are worried about losing their jobs when Saudi Arabia strictly enforces the *Nitaqat* law, have got a temporary relief. Riyadh has informed New Delhi that the enforcement has been deferred by three months.

Source: The Hindu, Chennai

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/saudi-arabia-defers-Nitaqat-enforcement-by-three-months/article4590057.ece>

12. New Saudi labour law not to affect genuine workers: Salman Khurshid

Berlin, Sunday, 14 April 2013

Minister of External Affairs Salman Khurshid, who accompanied Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to Germany earlier this week, said that genuine workers need not worry as the new Saudi law would impact only those who do not have proper work permit.

Source: The Economic Times, New Delhi

http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2013-04-14/news/38529203_1_Nitaqat-law-new-labour-law-indian-workers

13. Saudi may let expats' wives work

Kochi, Saturday, 27 April 2013

The Saudi Gazetteer reported that the Labour Ministry of Saudi Arabia was considering a move to allow the wives of expats to work.

Source: The Hindu, Chennai

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/saudi-may-let-expats-wives-work/article4659665.ece>

14. India, Saudi Arabia to address *Nitaqat* fallout

Dubai, Monday, 29 April 2013

High-level delegation led by Minister for Overseas Indian Affairs Vayalar Ravi met Saudi authorities to discuss ways of maximizing the availability of alternative jobs to Indians hit by the *Nitaqat* scheme and to smoothen the exit of those who may have to leave the country.

Source: The Hindu, Chennai

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/india-saudi-arabia-to-address-Nitaqat-fallout/article4665233.ece>

SYRIA

15. India should step-up support for direct aid to Syrians: HRW

Dubai, Saturday, 20 April 2013

India should be more explicit in supporting humanitarian relief efforts in Syria, *Human Rights Watch* has said and asked other BRICS nations China and Russia to do the same.

Source: Business Standard, New Delhi

http://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/india-should-step-up-support-for-direct-aid-to-syrians-hrw-113042000236_1.html

UAE

16. Kerala CM meets UAE PM, discusses bilateral cooperation

Dubai, Friday, 12 April 2013

Kerala Chief Minister Oommen Chandy has met Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE Shaikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum and discussed ways of boosting bilateral trade and economic cooperation.

Source: Business Standard, New Delhi

http://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/kerala-cm-meets-uae-pm-discusses-bilateral-cooperation-113041200327_1.html

YEMEN

17. New law to regulate foreign labour in Gulf

Dubai, Friday, 19 April 2013

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) would soon pass a law regulating foreign labour in its member countries, amid concerns in India over a similar law passed by Saudi Arabia that seeks to reserve jobs for locals.

Source: The Hindu, Chennai

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/new-law-to-regulate-foreign-labour-in-gulf/article4632082.ece>

ECONOMIC RELATIONS

IRAQ

18. Crompton Greaves wins \$60 million contract in Iraq

Mumbai, Tuesday, 16 April 2013

Crompton Greaves has won a major contract for US\$60 million for the turnkey construction of four high voltage GIS substations of the ministry of electricity in Iraq. The company would design, manufacture, deliver and install the substations, thus helping upgrade and reinforce the existing 132 kV electricity transmission grid.

Source: Business Standard, New Delhi

http://www.business-standard.com/article/companies/crompton-greaves-wins-60-mn-contract-in-iraq-113041600308_1.html

ISRAEL

19. 'Indo-Israel FTA likely to raise trade volume to \$15 billion'

Bhubaneswar, Thursday, 18 April 2013

Optimistic about the signing of an Indo-Israel Free Trade Agreement (FTA) soon, an Israeli diplomat said it would raise annual trade volume between the two countries three-fold up to US\$ 15 billion.

Source: The Economic Times, New Delhi

http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2013-04-18/news/38647057_1_top-israeli-diplomat-annual-trade-volume-haryana

See Also: Business Standard, New Delhi

http://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/indo-israel-fta-likely-to-raise-trade-volume-to-15-bn-113041800174_1.html

MISCELLANEOUS ISSUES

EGYPT

20. India launches month-long cultural festival in Egypt

Cairo, Sunday, 14 April 2013

India has launched a month-long festival in Cairo, showcasing diversity of its culture, entertainment, arts, music and cuisine to build enduring partnerships between the two civilizations.

Source: Business Standard, New Delhi

http://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/india-launches-month-long-cultural-festival-in-egypt-113041400120_1.html

SAUDI ARABIA

21. Vast potential for Indian universities in Saudi Arabia

Dubai, Tuesday, 16 April 2013

Indian universities can attract a large number of NRI students from Saudi Arabia who are seeking better educational opportunities for graduate studies, an official of the Indian consulate has said.

Source: Business Standard, New Delhi

http://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/vast-potential-for-indian-universities-in-saudi-arabia-113041600209_1.html

UAE

22. Indian consulate official in Dubai is accused of protecting sex racket kingpin

Kochi, Friday, 5 April 2013

A Malayali home-maker in Dubai was in for a shock when she went out of her way to help a Kerala woman escape from a brothel in the Gulf state. In a letter to Kerala Home Minister Thiruvanchoor Radhakrishnan, she has accused an employee of the Indian consulate of being part of a prostitution racket in the UAE.

Source: The Hindu, Chennai

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/indian-consulate-official-in-dubai-is-accused-of-protecting-sex-racket-kingpin/article4583552.ece>

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