

# **INDIA SPEAKS**

(Monthly Digest of Official Indian Statements on Middle East)

No. 50

September 2013

## **BILATERAL ISSUES**

### **a. EGYPT**

#### **1. 67th Independence Day of India, Cairo, 7 August 2013.**

A Flag Hoisting ceremony on the occasion of the 67th Independence Day will be held at India House, 19 Mohamed Mazhar Street, Zamalek on Thursday, 15 August 2013 at 0830 hours. H. E. Navdeep Suri, Ambassador of India to Egypt will hoist the Indian tricolour. Members of the Indian community and friends of India in Egypt are cordially invited to attend the ceremony. They are requested to reach India House by 0815 hours.

*Source: Embassy of India, Cairo,*

<http://www.indembcairo.com/portals/0/gallery/2013/ID2013.pdf>

#### **2. Postponement of Independence Day Reception, Cairo, 14 August 2013.**

In view of the prevailing circumstances, we have decided to postpone our Independence Day Reception which was scheduled to be held tomorrow i.e. Thursday, 15 August at 1900 hours at India House, Zamalek.

We will revert as and when a new date is fixed.

*Source: Embassy of India, Cairo, <http://www.indembcairo.com/portals/0/urgent.png>*

#### **3. Response to a question on recent developments in Egypt, New Delhi, 16 August 2013.**

In response to a query on recent developments in Egypt, the Official Spokesperson said:

"We have been following the recent developments in Egypt with concern, particularly the tragic loss of large number of lives in Cairo and other cities. We urge all sides to abjure violence, exercise maximum restraint and engage in an earnest dialogue that will promote national reconciliation and permit an early transition towards a stable and peaceful democratic set-up.

Our Mission in Cairo is in close contact with all sections of the Indian community and with the Indian companies that have a presence in Egypt. We are maintaining active liaison with the concerned authorities to ensure their continued safety."

*Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, <http://www.mea.gov.in/media-briefings.htm?dtl/22076/Response+to+a+question+on+recent+developments+in+Egypt>*

## **b. IRAN**

### **4. Visit of Vice President of India to Iran, New Delhi, 2 August 2013.**

M. Hamid Ansari, the Vice President of India, will be visiting Tehran on 4 August 2013 to attend the swearing in ceremony of newly elected President of the Islamic Republic of Iran H.E. Hassan Rouhani.

*Source: Ministry of External Affairs, <http://www.mea.gov.in/outgoing-visit-detail.htm?21991/Visit+of+Vice+President+of+India+to+Iran>*

### **5. Oil import from Iran, New Delhi, 6 August 2013.**

#### **Question:**

- (a) Whether it is a fact that the Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) has imported crude oil in the country from Iran during the last one year;
- (b) If so, whether the country has been benefited by paying around seven billion dollars as a result of import of this crude oil; and
- (c) If so, the details thereof?

#### **Answer**

Minister of Petroleum & Natural Gas (Dr. M. Veerappa Moily)

(a) to (c): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) to (c) OF THE RAJYA SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 24 BY SHRI RAM JETHMALANI TO BE ANSWERED ON 6 August 2013 REGARDING OIL IMPORT FROM IRAN

(a) to (c): Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) is having an annual Term Contract with National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) for supply of crude oil.

Details of crude oil imports from Iran by IOC for its own and associate refineries during 2012-13 and April to June 2013 are given below:-

Year	Crude Import from Iran (Volume in MMT)	Value of Crude Oil Import (in Million US\$)	Payment Made (equivalent to Million US\$)	Balance to be paid (equivalent to Million US\$)
2012-2013	1.566	1,262.425	653.015	415.140

April- June 2013	0.577	429.089	193.090	-
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IOC has entered into a Term Contract for import of 1.2 MMT crude oil from Iran during 2013-14.

**Source: Rajya Sabha (Council of States), Starred Question No. 24 asked by Ram Jethmalani, <http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/QResult.aspx>**

### **6. Indo-Iran Cooperation in Hydrocarbon Sector, New Delhi, 30 August 2013.**

#### **Question:**

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

- Whether the Government has held meeting and reviewed on-going cooperation with Iran in the hydrocarbon sector;
- If so, the details thereof;
- Whether various issues like marine insurance, the development of Farzad B gas field, trade balance between the two countries, etc. have been taken up by the leaders of both the countries;
- If so, the details thereof along with the issues on which leaders of both the countries have agreed for cooperation;
- Whether the Government of Iran has proposed a new formula on production sharing contracts to public Sector Oil Companies to attract investment in oil and gas fields including Farzad B gas field; and
- If so, the details thereof and the response of the Union Government thereto?

#### **Answer**

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

(a) to (d). Several rounds of discussions at the Government to Government level have taken place with Iran to enhance overall bilateral co-operation including balance of trade. On 27 May 2013 discussions were held between the Oil Minister of Iran and the Minister for Petroleum & Natural Gas, Government of India at New Delhi. It was agreed to enhance overall cooperation in the hydrocarbon sector and encourage Indian companies to maintain their engagement in terms of crude oil purchase taking into account their requirements based on commercial consideration and the international situation.

(e) & (f). During visit of an Indian delegation to Tehran in January 2013 the Iranian side expressed willingness to consider different models for E&P activities by Indian companies in Iran.

**Source: Lok Sabha (House of the People), Unstarred Question No. 3290 asked by Saugata Ray, Kishanbhai Vestabhai Patel, Pradeep Kumar Majhi and S. Semmalai, <http://164.100.47.132/LssNew/psearch/QResult15.aspx?qref=144325>**

## **7. Indo-Iran Pipeline Project, New Delhi, 30 August 2013.**

### **Question:**

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

- a. The present status of India-Iran Gas Pipe-line Project;
- b. The estimated cost of project; and
- c. The time by which the project is likely to be completed?

### **Answer**

(a) to (c): The details of the projects undertaken/pursued for importing gas from Iran are as under:

(i) Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline project – The pipeline was planned to have a capacity to transport 60 mmscmd of natural gas. The total length of the pipeline up to Indian border would be approximately 2135 kilometres. After initial round of discussions there has been no concrete forward movement on the project.

(ii) Deep Water Indo-Iran gas pipeline project – Indo-Iran Joint Committee entrusted GAIL & NIOC International with the responsibility to jointly commission Deep Water gas pipeline feasibility study on equal cost sharing basis. The contract for engineering and consultancy services was awarded to M/s Snamprogetti- Saipem on 29 May 2001 at an estimated cost of 1.9 million US\$. The feasibility study report was received in June 2006. However, no progress has been made on the project due to lack of interest from both the sides.

(iii) Middle East to India Deep Sea pipeline – M/s South Asia Gas Enterprise (SAGE) is pursuing the Deep Sea gas pipeline from Middle East to India and has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with National Iranian Gas Export Company (NIGEC) for transportation of gas to India through deep water route. A Principles of Cooperation has also been signed between GAIL (India) Ltd. and SAGE which is valid up to July 2014.

*Source: Lok Sabha (House of the People), Unstarred Question No. 3314 asked by Sameer Bhujbal and S. Pakkappa,*

<http://164.100.47.132/LssNew/psearch/QResult15.aspx?qref=144328>

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## **c. IRAQ**

## **8. Oil fields in Iraq, New Delhi, 16 August 2013.**

### **Question:**

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

- (a). Whether Iraq has offered three oil fields to India on nomination basis;
- (b). If so, the details thereof;
- (c). Whether Iraq has offered to renegotiate the oil that has been pending since 2000; and
- (d). If so, the details thereof?

### **Answer**

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

(a) and (b): In the 17<sup>th</sup> Joint Commission Meeting(JCM) held at Baghdad during 7-8 July 2013, the Iraqi Government offered discovered – undeveloped oil fields namely Middle Furat Group of Fields (Kifil, West Kifil and Merjan). The Indian side requested for details to be shared for further due diligence.

(c) and (d): Iraq has offered to renegotiate exploration of Block-8, which is pending since 2000. Block - 8 extends over an area of 10.700 Sq.km and is located in the Western Desert of Iraq. ONGC Videsh Limited (OVL) signed the Exploration & Development Contract with Oil Exploration Company (OEC), Ministry of Oil, Iraq in November 2000 and the Government of Iraq has ratified the contract. The block was under Force Majeure since 2003.

Government of Iraq has now decided that the Block - 8 Contract is required to be re-negotiated in line with the provisions of New Oil & Gas Law and Model contract for 4th Licensing Round of Iraq.

During the 17th JCM held at Baghdad on 7-8 July 2013, Ministry of Oil agreed to invite OVL for discussion. OVL has scheduled a meeting accordingly.

*Source: Lok Sabha (House of the People), Unstarred Question No. 1811 asked by K. Sugumar, <http://164.100.47.132/LssNew/psearch/OREsult15.aspx?qref=144230>*

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**9. State visit of Prime Minister of Iraq, Nouri al-Maliki to India (22-25 August 2013), New Delhi, 21 August 2013.**

At the invitation of Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh, Nouri al-Maliki, Prime Minister of the Republic of Iraq will pay a State Visit to India from 22-25 August 2013. He would be accompanied by a high-level delegation, including ministers, senior officials and Captains of Industry.

This is the first Head of Government-level visit between the two countries since 1975 when the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi visited Iraq.

During the visit, Prime Minister Maliki will call on President Pranab Mukherjee and Vice-President Hamid Ansari. He will hold bilateral talks with Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh, who will also host an official banquet in honour of the visiting Iraqi leader on 23 August. His other engagements would include meetings with the Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha and Minister of External Affairs. Prime Minister Maliki will attend a business luncheon meeting jointly organized by the three business chambers, FICCI, CII and ASSOCHAM. In addition to New Delhi, Prime Minister Maliki and his delegation would also be visiting Agra and Mumbai.

India and Iraq enjoy time-tested, warm and friendly ties, growing cooperation in different fields, including hydrocarbons, agriculture and food security, water resource management, education, infrastructure development, pharmaceuticals and medi-care, and information technology.

Iraq has emerged as India's second largest crude oil supplier with bilateral trade in excess of US\$ 21 billion in 2012-13. Both countries are committed to enhance their cooperation in energy sector from the buyer-seller to a more broad-based one through mutually beneficial participation in oil exploration, refineries, petrochemical complexes and fertilizer plants.

*Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, <http://www.mea.gov.in/incoming-visit-detail.htm?22088/State+visit+of+Prime+Minister+of+Iraq+Mr+Nouri+alMaliki+to+India+22+25+August+2013>*

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**10. State Visit of His Excellency Nouri al-Maliki, Prime Minister of Iraq to India (22-25 August 2013), New Delhi, 21 August 2013.**

Ministry of External Affairs

(XP Division)

MOST IMMEDIATE/MEDIA ADVISORY

As on 21 August 2013 at 2000 hours

State Visit of His Excellency Nouri al-Maliki, Prime Minister of Iraq to India from August 22-25, 2013.

Thursday, 22 August 2013

1500 hours Arrive Delhi

Venue: IGI Terminal III Airport (Ceremonial Lounge)

Photo Op: AV Media

Friday, 23 August 2013

0900 hours Reception by the Prime Minister

Venue: Rashtrapati Bhavan

Photo Op: AV Media

0935 hours Wreath Laying at the Samadhi of Mahatma Gandhi

Venue: Rajghat

Photo Op: AV Media

1200 hours Call on President

Venue: Rashtrapati Bhavan

Photo Op: Agencies only

1300 hours Business Luncheon Meeting by FICCI, CII, ASSOCHAM

Venue: Kamal Mahal, ITC Maurya

Photo Op: Contact Organizer

1615 hours Call on Vice President

Venue: 6, Maulana Azad Road

Photo Op: Agencies only

1715 hours

Call by Sushma Swaraj, Leader of Opposition, Lok Sabha

Venue: Hotel ITC Maurya

Photo Op: Agencies only

1815 hours Meeting with Prime Minister

Venue: Hyderabad House

Photo Op: AV Media

1930 hours Signing of Agreements and Press Statements

Venue: Hyderabad House

Photo Op: All Media

Saturday, 24 August 2013

0930 hours Visit to Agra

1200 hours

Depart for Mumbai

1600 hours Meeting with Indian CEOs

Venue: Hotel Oberoi, Mumbai

Photo Op: Contact Organizer

1930 hours Meeting with the Governor of Maharashtra

Venue: Raj Bhavan

Photo Op: Contact Organizer

Sunday, 25 August 2013

1130 hours Departure

Please note:

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

Access restricted to holders of PIB card only

**Source:** *Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi*, <http://www.mea.gov.in/incoming-visit-detail.htm?22089/State+Visit+of+His+Excellency+Mr+Nouri+Kamil+AlMaliki+Prime+Minister+of+Iraq+to+India+August+2225+2013>

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**11. Joint Statement during the State Visit of H.E. Nouri al- Maliki, Prime Minister of Iraq to India (22-25 August 2013), New Delhi, 23 August 2013.**

At the invitation of H.E. Dr. Manmohan Singh, Prime Minister of the Republic of India, H.E. Nouri al-Maliki, Prime Minister of the Republic of Iraq paid his first State visit to India from 22-25 August 2013. Prime Minister Maliki was accompanied by a high-level delegation comprising ministers, senior officials and business leaders. Prime Minister Maliki was accorded a ceremonial welcome in the forecourt of the Rashtrapati Bhavan on 23 August. During his official



engagements in New Delhi, Prime Minister Maliki held detailed bilateral consultations with Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh. He also called on the President of the Republic of India, Honourable Pranab Mukherjee and the Vice President of India, Honourable Hamid Ansari. Prime Minister Maliki also met Minister of External Affairs Salman Khurshid. He attended a business luncheon meeting jointly organized by the three business chambers, FICCI, CII and ASSOCHAM. In addition to New Delhi, Prime Minister Maliki and his delegation will also be visiting Agra and Mumbai.

The two Prime Ministers held wide-ranging discussions in a sincere, cordial and friendly atmosphere. They exchanged views on bilateral, regional and multilateral issues of mutual interest and reached a broad consensus. The discussions enabled better understanding and appreciation of each other's concerns and perspectives and helped in forging closer understanding at the highest political level.

Areas of cooperation: The two sides expressed satisfaction at the recent high-level political exchanges and agreed to further strengthen the bilateral relations through regular exchanges at political, business and people-to-people levels. In this context, both leaders welcomed the constructive outcome of the 17th Joint Commission Meeting recently held on 7-8 July 2013 in Baghdad, which has been an effective institutional mechanism to discuss the entire gamut of the bilateral ties.

The two leaders reiterated the necessity to build a forward-looking relationship by deepening the bilateral engagement and better leveraging existing complementarities between the two countries in key areas of mutual interest, earlier identified in the JCM, including among others energy security; agriculture and food security; water resource management; education; infrastructure development; pharmaceuticals and medi-care; information technology and low-cost housing. The two sides reached a common understanding to further diversify the trade basket.

Energy sector: Expressing satisfaction at the rapidly growing bilateral trade in the oil and energy sector, with Iraq becoming India's second largest supplier of crude oil, the two sides agreed to focus on enhancing cooperation in energy security, in particular, through joint efforts to develop capacities to maximize the utilization of energy resources, through joint ventures in oil exploration, petrochemical complexes and fertilizer plants. The two sides expressed happiness at the signing of an important MoU in the energy sector to further deepen the existing cooperation.

Revalidation of the contract for Block-8: Both sides noted with satisfaction that OVL and Petroleum Contracts and Licensing Directorate (PCLD) have initiated negotiations and expected that they conclude negotiations for Block-8 contract.

Middle Furat group of fields: The Indian side welcomed the Iraqi side's offer, made during the latest Joint Commission meeting, of three new oil blocks in the undeveloped Middle Furat Oil Field viz. Kifil, West Kifil, and Merjan on nomination basis to Indian public sector oil



companies. The Indian side agreed to study and submit a proposal to PCLD for discussions/negotiations.

**Nasiriya Integrated Project:** The Indian side thanked the Iraqi side for prequalifying the Indian companies such as ONGC Videsh Limited, MRPL and Reliance for participation in the Nasiriya Project Bid Round and for favourable consideration of Indian companies. At the request of the Indian side, the Iraqi side agreed to consider the pre-qualification of Indian Oil Corporation Ltd for downstream project.

**Iraqi Investment in Indian Refinery:** The Indian side welcomed the Iraqi side's expression of interest in investing in the upcoming 15mmt oil refinery at Paradip in India as indicated during the 17th Joint Commission meeting. The two sides decided to work together to arrive at a mutually beneficial model for such investment.

**Fertilizer Plants:** In the field of fertilizers, the two sides agreed to actively explore the possibilities of establishing a urea plant and phosphate fertilizer units by utilizing natural gas resources from Iraq as joint ventures in Iraq.

**Long-term crude supply agreement and better credit term for supply:** The Indian side proposed long-term agreement (10 years) to meet the increased crude oil demand in the new refineries. The Iraqi side assured to meet the Indian demands. The Indian side requested better terms, including abolition of LC and increase in interest free credit period from 30 days to 60 days. The Iraqi side will consider after consulting authorities.

**Steel sector:** The two sides agreed to enhance cooperation in steel sector, including through joint ventures to set up steel plant in Iraq or in India for production of steel pipes with the purpose of transporting oil in Iraq. The Indian side invited Iraq to invest in an upcoming steel project of Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Limited.

**Power sector:** Recognizing the existing capabilities of BHEL in manufacturing gas turbine units, the Iraqi side agreed to include BHEL as a qualified Equipment Manufacturer for its power sector.

**Railway sector:** The Iraqi side welcomed the expression of interest by IRCON in turnkey execution of railway projects in Iraq including civil and track works, electrification, signalling, setting up of workshops/production units for rolling stock and its supply.

**Low-cost housing sector:** Keeping in view the demand for low-cost housing in Iraq, both sides agreed to explore the possibilities of involvement of reputed Indian public and private sector companies in the low-cost housing sector in Iraq.

**Agriculture sector:** Both sides agreed to cooperate in agricultural education and research activities through signing of an appropriate institutional framework MoU for mutual benefit.

Water resource management sector: The two sides expressed satisfaction at the successful conclusion of an MoU on water resource management to enhance the bilateral cooperation in this critical area for Iraq. The MoU provides for collaboration and sharing of experience and expertise between the two sides.

Medi-care and health sector: Keeping in view the increasing number of Iraqi nationals visiting India for medi-care, the two sides agreed to enhance cooperation in the health sector, including exchange of health personnel, medical personnel, nursing personnel, training, participation in conferences in both countries and cooperation in pharmaceuticals.

Education sector: Recognizing that the number of Iraqi students studying in India has grown considerably over the past few years, with over 10,000 currently studying in India, the two sides identified education as a key area of mutual interest and further collaboration. The authorities concerned will work out necessary modalities in this regard.

Reconstruction activities in Iraq: Extending support to the Government of Iraq in its ongoing rebuilding and reconstruction efforts, Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh renewed India's commitment to participate constructively in this process through the involvement of Indian companies in infrastructure projects.

Terrorism: The two leaders condemned the phenomenon of terrorism and extremism, affirming that it threatened all societies and was not linked to any race, colour or belief. The international community must, therefore, resolutely combat terrorism. The two sides further agreed to cooperate on counter-terrorism.

Recognizing that the two countries face similar challenges being pluralistic societies, the two leaders noted that tolerance, religious harmony and brotherhood, irrespective of faith or ethnic background, were part of the principles, ethos and values of the two countries. India reiterated its commitment to supporting the emergence of a stable, peaceful, united and democratic Iraq.

Regional and International issues: The two sides discussed several regional and international issues, including the security situation in West Asia, Middle East and South Asia. There was convergence of views on the subject.

Afghanistan: The two sides agreed that the Afghanistan issue concerned regional security and stability. They reiterated their support for an "Afghan-led, Afghan-owned" reconciliation process and their commitment to working with regional countries and the international community to help Afghanistan achieve its objective of peace, stability, independence and development at an early date.

Syria: The two leaders called upon all sides in Syria to abjure violence and resolve all issues peacefully through dialogue taking into account the aspirations of the people of Syria. Both

leaders agreed that any external military intervention in Syria's internal affairs should be excluded.

UN Reforms: Both leaders emphasized the importance of an effective multilateral system, centred on a United Nations reflective of contemporary realities, as a key factor in tackling global challenges. In this context, they stressed upon the urgent need to pursue reforms of the United Nations, including of the Security Council through an expansion in both categories of its membership, to make it more representative, credible and effective. Prime Minister Maliki reiterated his country's support for India's candidature for the permanent membership of the United Nations Security Council.

Expressing his happiness to visit India, Prime Minister Maliki thanked Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh for the warm and gracious hospitality extended to him and the members of his delegation during their stay. He invited Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh to visit Iraq at a mutually convenient time. Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh gladly accepted the invitation. The dates of the visit will be worked out through diplomatic channels.

*Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, <http://www.mea.gov.in/incoming-visit-detail.htm?22115/Joint+Statement+during+the+State+Visit+of+HE+Mr+Nouri+Al+Maliki+Prime+Minister+of+Iraq+to+India++August+2225+2013>*

## **12. Statement by the Prime Minister to the Media during the visit of Nouri al- Maliki, Prime Minister of Iraq to India (22-25 August 2013), 23 August 2013.**

Your Excellency, Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki,

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Media,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki on his first State visit to India. We are honoured that Prime Minister Maliki has undertaken this visit despite his pressing domestic commitments and continuing turbulence and conflict in Iraq's neighbourhood. We deeply appreciate the importance that Prime Minister Maliki attaches to the relationship between our two countries.

I conveyed to Prime Minister Maliki our admiration for the resilience and resolve of the people of Iraq, and for his own leadership, as Iraq seeks to recover from war and strife, establish democracy, restore order, improve security and revive its economy.

Relations between India and Iraq rest on a strong foundation. Our historically close links of commerce, culture and spiritualism are complemented by a fund of goodwill between our two people. This alone ensures that ours will always remain a close bond. Iraq has long been one of our most important partners in West Asia. As it recovers from recent conflict, it is also emerging as our second largest source of oil, accounting for over 12 per cent of our imports last year. The

present visit of Prime Minister Maliki is aimed at imparting new dynamism to our relations and their broad-based development.

Prime Minister Maliki and I have agreed that our energy trading relationship should be turned into a strategic partnership, including through joint ventures in oil exploration, petrochemical complexes and fertilizer plants. The Inter-Governmental Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the field of Energy will provide a very strong framework to further diversify our cooperation in this sector and we look forward to concrete progress in the near future.

We also agreed to expand and diversify our economic cooperation, which, as our Joint Commission recently identified, would cover areas such as agriculture, water resource management, pharmaceuticals, health care, information technology, infrastructure, low cost housing and trade.

Iraq was the largest project export destination for Indian companies before the Gulf War. I underlined to Prime Minister Maliki the strong interest of Indian companies to participate in Iraq's reconstruction efforts and its ambitious plans to expand and upgrade its infrastructure.

India has also been active in the area of capacity building in Iraq, including in higher education and health care. I have reiterated our offer of support for rebuilding and upgrading institutions in Iraq.

Today, we have decided to add a new dimension to this relationship by agreeing to share our expertise and knowledge in the field of agriculture and water management.

Prime Minister Maliki and I also had a productive exchange of views on international developments, especially in West Asia and North Africa. Peace, security and stability in this region are vital to both our countries. As democratic and pluralistic societies, India and Iraq face similar threats from radicalism and terrorism. India believes that a strong, stable, peaceful, united and democratic Iraq is in the interest of regional and global peace and security. We have agreed to hold regular dialogue on these developments through Foreign Office Consultations. We also agreed to further strengthen our counter-terrorism and intelligence cooperation.

I look forward to working with Prime Minister Maliki to further expand and deepen our very special bilateral relations.

Thank you.

*Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, <http://www.mea.gov.in/incoming-visit-detail.htm?22116/Statement+by+the+Prime+Minister+to+the+Media+during+the+visit+of+Mr+Nouri+Al+Maliki+Prime+Minister+of+Iraq+to+India++August+2225+2013>*

**13. List of Documents signed during the State Visit of Nouri al-Maliki, Prime Minister of Republic of Iraq to India (22-25 August 2013), New Delhi, 23 August 2013.**

S.No	Name of MoU	Signatory from India	Signatory from Iraq	Remarks
1.	Memorandum of Understanding in the field of Energy between the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas of the Republic of India and the Ministry of Oil of the Republic of Iraq	Dr. Veerappa Moily, Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas.	Mr. Abdul Kareem Luaibi Bahedh, Minister of Oil	<p>The MOU envisages cooperation in the areas of upstream and downstream oil &amp; gas activities and related infrastructure; more specifically in the following areas:</p> <p>Conclusion of contract of Exploration Block-8 awarded to ONGC Videsh Limited</p> <p>Offer of data of Middle Furat group of Fields for due diligence</p> <p>Natural Gas</p> <p>Petroleum Refineries</p> <p>Training.</p>
2.	Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of External Affairs of the Republic of India and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Iraq on Foreign Office Consultations	Shri Ashok K. Kantha, Secretary (East), MEA.	Mr. Nazar Al-Khairullah, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs	It enables high ranking officials from Foreign Ministries of both countries to discuss periodically bilateral and international relations of mutual interest.
3.	MoU between the Foreign Service Institutes of MEA and Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Iraq	Smt. Nengcha Lhouvum, Dean, Foreign Service Institute	Mr. Nazar Al-Khairullah, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs	It enables exchange of information regarding structure and content of training programmes for diplomats.
4.	MOU between the Ministry of Water Resources of the Republic of India and the Ministry of Water Resources of the Republic of Iraq on	Shri Alok Rawat, Secretary, Ministry of Water Resource Development	Mr. Ahmad Tahsin Ahmad Berwari, Ambassador of Iraq to India	<p>The MoU envisages cooperation at the national, regional and international levels in the field of water resources management and development by collaboration and sharing of expertise in the following areas:</p> <p>Project Hydrology, Practicing Hydrology and</p>

S.No	Name of MoU	Signatory from India	Signatory from Iraq	Remarks
	Bilateral Cooperation in Water Resources Development and management			Hydrological modelling, Applications of Remote Sensing & GIS in Hydrology and Water Resources, Integrated Water Resources Development and Management, Flood and Drought Management, Irrigation and Drainage Surface and Groundwater management and development Minor irrigation, Modernization/renovation of old irrigation schemes, Hydrometeorology, Watershed, Lakes and Wetlands Development Dam Safety and Surveillance, Reservoir Regulation, Training and capacity building ,Micro Irrigation, Any other field related to water resources management and irrigation as may be agreed upon between the Parties.

*Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, <http://www.mea.gov.in/incoming-visit-detail.htm?22114/List+of+Documents+signed+during+the+State+Visit+of+Mr+Nouri+alMaliki+Prime+Minister+of+Republic+of+Iraq+to+India+August+2225+2013>*

#### **14. Prime Minister of Iraq calls on President, New Delhi, 23 August 2013.**

Nouri al-Maliki, Prime Minister of Iraq called on the President of India, Pranab Mukherjee at Rashtrapati Bhavan on 23 August 2013.

The President said India cherishes its cordial and friendly relations with Iraq. The two countries have historical ties starting from the great Mesopotamian civilization and thousands of Indians undertake annual pilgrimage to the Holy Shrines of Najaf and Karbala. With the emergence of democracy in Iraq, relations between the two countries are entering a new phase.

The President said Iraq has become India's second largest crude oil supplier. This is a mutually beneficial partnership. India desires to elevate the relationship from a buyer-seller into a broad-based one with equity partnership in oil production, joint ventures in oil exploration, petrochemical complexes, fertilizer plants etc. He said the different MoUs to be signed during Iraqi PM's visit would establish the institutional framework to enhance co-operation between the two countries.

The President said India has been a committed partner in Iraq's progress and development and will remain so as Iraq undertakes its reconstruction and rebuilding efforts. India remains

committed to assist Iraq in the process of rebuilding its infrastructure and institutions. Indian entrepreneurs and Indian industries are eager to engage with Iraq.

The Iraqi Prime Minister warmly reciprocated the President's words and said India and Iraq were two friendly countries seeking to strengthen their relations and maintain a high level of contacts. He said India and Iraq complement each other. India needs energy while Iraq needs investment to generate employment. He said India's experience in democracy has been applauded throughout the world and there is much that Iraq can learn from the Indian experience.

*Source: Press Information Bureau, New Delhi,*

<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx?relid=98558>

### **15. Transcript of media statement by the Prime Minister of Iraq, New Delhi, 23 August 2013.**

Prime Minister of Iraq Nouri al-Maliki: In the name of the gracious God! His Excellency Manmohan Singh, Prime Minister of India; members of the delegation, the audience:

I would like to greet you and thank you for this opportunity to meet between the two friendly Republics, Iraq and India, on the basis of seeking horizons for mutual cooperation in various fields. We are happy for this visit and we are witnessing welcoming and we hear talks and feel determination by the Government and the companies of the public and private sectors as a confirmed desire to work in Iraq in various fields that we have agreed to be undetermined, unlimited because Iraq, who has missed a lot of what must be done to build a state and serve population because of the recurrent wars, is seeking the best opportunities and the most wanted one for the rebuilding the democratic modernized state that is established on Constitution.

All that has been said by His Excellency about the areas that we are working together and the signature of the agreements as we witnessed about and what will be signed later like the agreement of cooperation in agriculture, higher education, health, pharmaceuticals, trade, housing and security cooperation to combat terrorism which is a concern for both countries that must have the interest of all the world community. When these agreements are accomplished and executed by the two sides, we will witness a process of signature soon.

Excellency, the new Iraq and its policy is distinguished over all Iraq in the internal policy that democracy, liberties and defend the unity of society, this is strengthen the national unity and strengthen the infrastructure of the state.

On the external policy level we adopt an open-door policy and the search policy about mutual interest and friends. We reject the process of interference in the internal affairs of others who are seeking cooperation. We feel that the friendly governments must cooperate together as long as they have potential to submit to the other country as the case with Iraq and India. Iraq as potentials, capacities in energy and India has capacity in many areas that can contribute to the development of economy in Iraq. We have felt that the leadership has a desire and the political



officials in front of them His Excellency the President. There is a serious desire to go forward in the bilateral relations and to develop them, deepen them, as we felt through the conference of businessmen and the private and public sector, Iraqi and Indian businessmen that the Indian companies are seriously willing to work and expand their activities in the various fields among which those who have been mentioned and also the desire in the transport sector.

The new environment of Iraq is encouraging environment for the horizon of cooperation and investment by the public sector and private sector. It is protected, maintained by new laws that were not in existence before. So, we have assured the businessmen and companies that all the assistance and support and protection and guarantees they will get when they start working with Iraq.

We have agreed that what has been signed and what has been coordinated to sign will move forward in the old relations already existed but during some period it has paused for some circumstances but we are seeking to revalidate these relationships. This would not be accomplished without what we have agreed upon to make a mechanism of follow up which will be done by His Excellency Prime Minister and by myself directly, then by the Joint Commission between the two countries, and also by the competent Ministers in the two countries, and by the Embassies of both countries in India and Iraq.

This follow up will come to meet the desire and in response to the necessity that we have talked about, and we are confident and convinced that we should go forward to shorten the time. Also we have talked about the horizon of cooperation to develop today's capacities for the human resources in various fields, in the institutes and universities of India.

Also, we welcome what has been expressed by His Excellency to cooperate in the Parliamentary fields and the cultural fields. Also, I have referred to cooperate in counterterrorism cooperation. Iraq now has gained a vast experience in this field for what it has suffered from. It has efforts to control many of the activities of the extremists.

No doubt on the basis of desire to activate the relations, the two capitals will witness mutual visits and meetings and follow up continuously in order to see actively the Indian companies reconstruct and work in Iraq and we shall witness that the plans are being established and the cooperation will be in a process under this title.

I extend my thanks and appreciation for the invitation of His Excellency Prime Minister. Also I thank you for the reception and the hospitality, and the seriousness and desire and will to strengthen and develop the relationship between the two countries.

(Concluded)

***Source: Embassy of India, Riyadh,***

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

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## **d. ISRAEL**

### **16. Ties with Israel, New Delhi, 7 August 2013.**

#### **Question:**

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

- (a) Whether Israel has asked India to overcome its cautious approach in establishing bilateral, diplomatic and other relations with that country on account of the large Muslim population in India;
- (b) If so, the details thereof; and
- (c) The stand of the Government in this regard?

#### **Answer**

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

- (a) The Government of Israel, in its interactions with the Government of India, has not urged it to overcome its cautious approach in establishing bilateral, diplomatic and other relations with her on account of large Muslim population in India. India's relations with Israel stand on their own and do not affect our strong, time-tested and historic ties with the Arab world.
- (b) & (c) Does not arise.

*Source: Lok Sabha (House of the People), Unstarred Question No. 679 asked by Abdulrahman, <http://164.100.47.132/LssNew/psearch/QResult15.aspx?qref=143222>*

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### **17. Israel's suggestion on bilateral relations, New Delhi, 8 August 2013.**

#### **Question:**

- (a) Whether it is a fact that Israel has asked India to ignore the Indian Muslims' concern while establishing bilateral diplomatic and other relations with that country, if so, the details in this regard;
- (b) The stand of Government in the matter; and
- (c) The action taken/being taken by Government on the suggestion of Israel?

#### **Answer**

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

- (a) The Government of Israel, in its interactions with the Government of India, has not urged it to ignore the concerns of Indian Muslims while establishing diplomatic and other relations with Israel. India's relations with Israel stand on their own and do not affect our strong, time-tested and historic ties with the Arab world.
- (b) & (c) Does not arise.

*Source: Rajya Sabha (Council of States), Unstarred Question No. 506 asked by Mohammed Adeb, <http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/QResult.aspx>*

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### **18. Import of Natural Gas from Israel, New Delhi, 30 August 2013.**

#### **Question:**

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

- (a) The existing external sources for the country to acquire natural gas;

- (b) Whether the Government proposes to import natural gas from Israel; and  
(c) If so, the details thereof?

**Answer**

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

(a): Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) is being imported into the country under term contracts and on spot/short term basis from time to time from Qatar, Nigeria, Algeria, Spain, Egypt, France, Yemen, Brunei, Abu Dhabi, Oman, Equatorial Guinea, Norway, Trinidad & Tobago, USA, Australia, Malaysia. Further, based on the contract/agreement secured by GAIL and GSPC, LNG will also be acquired from UK, Russia and Turkmenistan.

(b): No Madam.

(c): Do not arise in view of (b) above.

*Source: Lok Sabha (House of the People), Unstarred Question No. 3229 asked by S. Pakkhirappa, <http://164.100.47.132/LssNew/psearch/QResult15.aspx?qref=144313>*

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**e. JORDAN**

**19. Independence Day notification to Indians residing in Jordan, Amman, 15 August 2013.**

The Embassy of India in Amman is pleased to invite all Indian citizens and their dependants to attend the Flag hoisting ceremony to be held at the following address on the occasion of the 67th Independence Day of India:

Venue: No.33, Tawfiq Abu Al Huda St., Malfouf Shamali,

Between 3rd & 4th Circle, Jabal Amman, Amman

Day/Time: Thursday, 15 August, 2013 at 1000 hours

*Source: Embassy of India, Amman,*

*[http://indembassy-amman.org/independence\\_day\\_notification.html](http://indembassy-amman.org/independence_day_notification.html)*

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**20. Embassy of India Independence Day Report, Amman, 15 August 2013.**

The 67th Independence Day of India was celebrated with traditional fervour at the Embassy Residence in Amman. R.R. Dash, Ambassador, hoisted the national flag followed by singing of the National Anthem.

The Honourable President of India, Pranab Mukherjee's address to the nation on the eve of 67th Independence Day of India was readout by the Ambassador. More than 100 people including some guests and officials of the Embassy and their families attended the function.

*Source: Embassy of India, [http://indembassy-amman.org/report\\_indep.html](http://indembassy-amman.org/report_indep.html)*

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**f. KUWAIT**

**21. India's Independence Day – Flag Hoisting Ceremony, Kuwait, 4 August 2013.**

On the occasion of the Independence Day of India, a Flag Hoisting Ceremony will take place at the Embassy of India premises on Arabian Gulf Street on Thursday, 15 August 2013, at 0700 hours. The flag hoisting will be followed by the reading of the message of the Honourable

President of India by the Ambassador of India and singing of patriotic songs. There will be an Open House Reception after the programme concludes.

All Indian nationals are cordially invited to attend the function

*Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait,*

<http://www.indembkwt.org/DispNews.aspx?ID=262>

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## **22. Message of Satish C. Mehta, Ambassador of India to Kuwait, on the Independence Day of India, Kuwait, 15 August 2013.**

Dear Fellow Citizens,

On the joyous occasion of India's 67th anniversary of the Independence Day on 15 August, I extend my warm greetings to all members of the Indian community in Kuwait and thank our Kuwaiti and other friends for their sincere good wishes. This is a sacred day for us to remember our freedom fighters; rejoice at our achievements since our independence on this historic day in 1947; and rededicate ourselves to build an India in which every citizen will be free of want and full of happiness.

Achievements of the past 66 years are many and significant. From an agrarian economy we are now a knowledge economy, with services playing a major role in the economy as well as its growth. Not just are we the third largest economy in the world in purchasing power parity terms, we have been amongst the fastest growing economy in the last two decades with an average growth rate of seven per cent. India has become synonymous with Information Technology. The world turns to India for doing research and development whether it is in engineering or medicine or biotechnology. We have mastered the full range of technologies in nuclear and space sciences. To ensure the benefits of our growth reach all citizens, equal emphasis is being given to equity through a variety of programmes.

Infrastructure is the backbone of economic development and in last five-year plan which ended in 31 March 2012; India invested about US\$ 500 billion in infrastructure. In the current five-year plan (2012-17) we aim to invest US\$ 1 trillion in infrastructure alone. New roads, railway lines, ports, airports, metros and power plants are springing up all over the country to support a renaissance in manufacturing.

On the foreign policy front, India continues to promote mutually beneficial relations with all countries and towards this end, is working with them on issues of common concern like terrorism, global economic crisis and, energy, environment and food security through active bilateral, regional and international engagement.

Our historically close and friendly relations with Kuwait encompass political, economic and trade, cultural, and people-to-people linkages. Bilateral trade last year exceeded US\$ 17.63 billion, setting a new record. Kuwaiti investments in India are in excess of US\$ 2.5 billion. Both countries believe that more is possible in every dimension of our relationship. To realize this and

explore new avenues of cooperation, Minister of Emiri Diwan Affairs of Kuwait, HE Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah visited India in March 2013, followed by visits to Kuwait by Dr. Montek Singh Ahluwalia, Deputy Chairman Planning Commission and Minister of State for External Affairs E. Ahamed in July 2013.

The large Indian community in Kuwait has contributed to Kuwait's development and to India-Kuwait relations. They are present in practically every segment of society. I would like to express gratitude for the benevolence bestowed on the Indian community by His Holiness Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmed Al Jaber Al Sabah, Emir of Kuwait, and for the goodwill of the friendly people of Kuwait. The community came under some stress due to security checking's by Kuwaiti authorities. We have engaged closely with Kuwaiti authorities and the community to resolve the concerns and would continue to do so.

The Embassy has been consistently trying to improve the quality of its services to the Indian community in Kuwait. The outsourced service for passport and visa services have been functioning satisfactorily. In addition to the daily "Consular Open House" at Embassy during which a senior consular official could be met without appointment, I too conduct 'Open House' every Wednesday where any Indian citizen can meet me without appointment for any unresolved matter. In addition, the Embassy's "Indian Workers Welfare Centre" set up in September 2009 has been providing the much needed support system to our workers with its help desk, labour complaints desk, toll-free 24 x 7 telephonic helpline, free accommodation, free legal advice clinic and employment contract attestation system. It will be our endeavour to continuously upgrade our services to the Indian community and respond to their expectations.

On this happy occasion, as we commit ourselves anew to serving our motherland, I wish all Indians in Kuwait good health, happiness and prosperity. I also take this opportunity to convey best wishes for the continued good health and well-being to His Highness the Emir, His Highness the Crown Prince, His Highness the Prime Minister, and the friendly people of the State of Kuwait.

Jai Hind!

*Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait,*

<http://www.indembkwt.org/DispNews.aspx?ID=264>

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### **23. Indians in Kuwait celebrate Independence Day, Kuwait, 15 August 2013.**

The 67th Independence Day of India was celebrated on 15 August 2013 in Kuwait at the Embassy premises by unfurling of the National Flag by the Ambassador of India, Satish C. Mehta, singing of the National Anthem and reading of the Address to the Nation of the Honourable President of India. The bugle band of the Bohra Community played a variety of marching tunes to the delight of the assembled gathering. This was followed by singing of patriotic songs by members of the Indian community.

Members of the Indian community in Kuwait from all walks of life including representatives of Indian associations, businessmen, doctors, engineers, other professionals, domestic workers and Embassy staff with their families participated with joy and enthusiasm in the open air celebrations reflecting India's rich ethnic, linguistic, religious, and cultural diversity.

In his message on the occasion, the Ambassador stated that India-Kuwait relations are historic, close and characterized by mutual respect and understanding. He lauded the contribution of the Indian community in Kuwait's development and to India-Kuwait relations. He extended his warmest greetings to all members of the Indian community in Kuwait and highlighted the efforts made by the Embassy to effectively address the concerns of the community.

The Ambassador also extended his best wishes for the continued good-health and prosperity of His Highness the Emir, His Highness the Crown Prince, His Highness the Prime Minister and the people of the friendly State of Kuwait.

*Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait,*

<http://www.indembkwt.org/DispNews.aspx?ID=265>

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**24. Ambassador Satish C. Mehta paid a courtesy call on H.E. Marzouq Ali Alghanim, Kuwait, 27 August 2013.**

The Ambassador of India Satish C. Mehta paid a courtesy call on His Excellency Marzouq Ali Alghanim, Speaker of Kuwait National Assembly, on 27 August 2013 and discussed matters of mutual interest.

*Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait, <http://www.indembkwt.org/DispNews.aspx?ID=266>*

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## **g. LIBYA**

**25. Message from the Ambassador of India to Libya H.E. Anil Trigunayat on the occasion of India's 67th Independence Day, Tripoli, 14 August 2013.**

On 15 August 1947 following a non-violent struggle under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, India achieved her independence from the mighty British Empire. I take this opportunity to greet my Indian compatriots presently living in Libya and exhort them to give their best to the progress, prosperity and development of 'New Libya'.

India and Libya enjoy a strong and enriched bilateral relationship whose genesis goes back to centuries as it is deeply embedded in both our cultures and civilizational heritage. In recent times, India was one of the first countries to establish diplomatic relations with Libya and has taken these forward and from strength to strength over the years.

Being the largest democracy in the world, India welcomed the onset of the 'New Libya' as the youngest democracy in the world. India has consistently followed the principles of 'Panchsheel' and a policy of non-interference in the internal affairs of the nations and respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence. However, during the revolution in Libya, India got engaged with the National Transitional Council (NTC) from the very beginning through the



London, Istanbul, Paris and New York Conferences and rendered all possible support to the NTC. Government of India provided humanitarian assistance through the UN office of Humanitarian Aid and life saving drugs and medical equipment worth US\$ 1 million directly to the NTC as per their requirement. Libyans had suffered heavy casualties during the revolution. In order to provide them better medical care, several hundred injured Libyans were also treated in India. Indian Embassy continued to function and liaise through the revolution in Libya. Cooperation in healthcare and capacity building remains a priority

Since Institution and capacity building are well known strengths of India, our expertise is liberally shared with our friends in the spirit of South-South Cooperation through thousands of fully-funded scholarships, Lines of Credit and deputation of experts. To provide succour and self-confidence to scores of amputees ‘Jaipur Foot’ was invented in India and has been shared with large number of our brothers and sisters in Africa and elsewhere. Government of India has also offered to provide assistance in the area of artificial limbs and prosthetics to the injured Libyans in Libya itself. For this some suitable hospitals in Libya are being identified where initial camps with about 1,000 artificial limbs would be conducted and the visiting Indian medical team will also provide training to the Libyan medical professionals at the same time.

Pursuant to the decisions of the India-Africa Forum Summit I & II, setting up of Centres for Agricultural Seed Production-cum-Demonstration; Material testing Laboratories; Farm Science; and Soil, Water and Tissue Testing Laboratories, in Libya are under process. Establishment of a Vocation Training Centre in Libya by the Government of India is also under process. Under the Government of India’s Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Programme, 25 fully-funded slots were allocated for Libya which has been further increased to 30 this year. Apart from ITEC courses, there are various other training programmes also for which nominations are called for from time to time. Under the IAFS-II Scheme 5 Libyans attended various training courses in 2012-13. ICCR also allocated eight slots for Libya for higher studies under the Africa Scholarship Scheme- 2013-14. Following the launching of the Pan-African e-governance initiative by the visionary President Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, a Centre in Libya pertaining to tele-medicine, tele-education, e-governance, etc. was set up. Under this initiative, all nations in African Continent are being connected to India and among themselves through satellite network. After revolution re-activation of this centre is already under process. Similarly cooperation in the area of education and interaction between academic institutions is being encouraged.

I am happy to note that India and Libya enjoy close economic ties which are regularly assessed by the Indo Libyan Joint Commission which is expected to hold its 11th session in the near future. The economic cooperation between the two countries spans the entire spectrum of commercial activities. There are several Indian companies, including major Public Sector Undertakings like Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited, ONGC Videsh, Indian Oil Corporation, Oil India, and private companies like Punj Lloyd Limited, Unitech Limited, KEC International,



Dastur Engineering, Shapoorji Pallonji International, Global Steel Limited (Ispat Group Company), NIIT, Sun Pharma, Simplex Projects and Simplex Infrastructure Limited, which have executed a number of projects in Libya. These include construction of hospitals, houses, schools, roads, power plants, airports, dams, transmission lines, etc.

Indian companies especially in Hydrocarbon, Power, Construction and IT sectors, have several on-going projects in Libya. Indian Oil majors - Indian Oil, Oil India and ONGC Videsh (OVL) – are engaged in the Libyan Hydrocarbon sector, both in Upstream as well as downstream. Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) has successfully completed execution of prestigious Western Mountain Gas Turbine Power Project. I-flex Solutions and JMR had implemented a project on core banking solutions with Central Bank of Libya and other five banks. M/s DSS System & Software Technologies Ltd has undertaken several IT projects in oil and gas sector.

In order to partake in New Libya's reconstruction and development efforts, almost all the Indian companies have committed to restart their unfinished projects and business for the mutual benefit of the two countries. In fact several new Indian conglomerates have been looking for mutually beneficial opportunities since the revolution. Trade between the two countries has seen a healthy growth though it largely remains in favour of Libya. In 2012-13, Libya exported US\$ 1.7 billion and imported US\$ 215 million worth of goods from India. This volume of trade is far higher than in the pre-revolution era. Embassy on its part has been facilitating visits of Libyan businessmen to India and the visas are issued on priority to Libyans.

Culture is an integral part of our dialogue and commonality between our two people and hence cultural exchanges assume a great importance in our bilateral discourse. While we look forward to the visit of Libyan cultural troupe and 'Days of Libya' in India, the Embassy in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture and Tripoli City Council plans to hold performances by an Indian dance troupe, film festival and a photographic exhibition of Islamic Calligraphy in October this year.

I am confident that given the complementarities and synergy between the two democracies, polity, economy and culture, the Indo Libyan kaleidoscope of cooperation will see new heights and achievements.

*Source: Embassy of India, Tripoli,*

<http://indianembassy.ly/index.php?mact=News,cntnt01,detail,0&cntnt01articleid=54&cntnt01pagelimit=5&cntnt01returnid=15>

## **26. Meeting of Ambassador of India with Libyan Minister of Road & Transport on 21 August 2013, Tripoli, 22 August 2013.**

Ambassador of India Anil Trigunayat met the Libyan Minister for Road & Transport Pilot Abdul Qader Mohammed Ahmed on 21 August 2013 to discuss possible areas of cooperation between the two countries particularly in the field of capacity building through training and knowledge sharing. The Minister expressed his keen desire for cooperation with India given India's huge

experience in infrastructure development, management and regulation particularly in the private sector. The Ambassador conveyed the willingness of Indian companies to begin operation in Libya to build its Infrastructure related to roads & transport that is considered vital for National building. The meeting was also attended by the Deputy Minister for Road & Transport, Chairman, Libyan Road & Land Transport Authority and other high ranking officials.

*Source: Embassy of India, Tripoli,*

<http://indianembassy.ly/index.php?mact=News,cntnt01,detail,0&cntnt01articleid=57&cntnt01pagelimit=5&cntnt01returnid=15>

## **27. Meeting of the Ambassador with Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation and Minister of Housing and Utilities, State of Libya, Tripoli, 27 August 2013.**

On 27 August 2013 Anil Trigunayat , Ambassador of India called on H.E. Mohamed Emhemed Abdul Aziz, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, State of Libya, Tripoli to discuss regional, multilateral and bilateral issues of mutual concern. Both sides expressed satisfaction at the further deepening of ties and engagements. Foreign Minister appreciated India's assistance to Libya in its reconstruction and development efforts. There is a broad congruence of views on majority of the issues.

During the meeting with H.E. Ali Hussein Al- Sharif, Minister of Housing and Utilities, Ambassador reiterated the commitment and readiness of Indian Companies to restart the stalled projects as well as participating in new opportunities in the infrastructure sector. Minister highly appreciated this and offered all assistance for creating suitable conditions for Indian companies to undertake completion of various projects as early as possible. Ambassador also raised the issue of some security incidents that were faced by the companies currently operating in Libya. Minister promised to address these issues and stated that Libya was committed to provide requisite security and enabling conditions for foreign companies operating in Libya.

*Source: Embassy of India, Tripoli,*

<http://indianembassy.ly/index.php?mact=News,cntnt01,detail,0&cntnt01articleid=60&cntnt01pagelimit=5&cntnt01returnid=15>

## **28. Meeting of the Ambassador with the Deputy Prime Minister for Technical Affairs, Tripoli, 28 August 2013.**

On 25 August 2013 the Ambassador of India Anil Trigunayat met the Deputy Prime Minister for Technical Affairs H.E. Abosalam Al-Qadi and impressed on him the need for resumption of stalled Indian projects in Libya. In that regard, the problems being faced by some Indian companies currently operating in Libya was brought to his notice seeking his assistance for its early resolution. The Deputy Prime Minister promised to render all possible help in the matter, reiterating the importance of such projects for Libya. He also expressed his desire that Indian companies actively seek newer opportunities for business in 'New Libya'.

*Source: Embassy of India, Tripoli,*

<http://indianembassy.ly/index.php?mact=News,cntnt01,detail,0&cntnt01articleid=58&cntnt01pagelimit=5&cntnt01returnid=15>

### **29. Ambassador's call on the Libyan Minister of Agriculture, Animal and Marine Wealth, Tripoli, 29 August 2013.**

Ambassador of India Anil Trigunayat met the Libyan Minister of Agriculture, Animal and Marine Wealth H.E. Dr. Saleh Hamed Mahjoub on 29 August 2013 and discussed the issues of mutual interest in the field of agriculture particularly the setting up of a Centre for Soil, Water and Tissue testing in Libya. The Minister showed special interest in the Centre saying that it is very important for the agricultural field. The Ambassador explained in detail the progress made by India in the field of agriculture as well as the opportunities available for Libyans in this sector. The Minister expressed the desire to benefit from the Indian experience in this area particularly at this stage of Libya's reconstruction and development. He appreciated the offer of scholarships, joint research and education in the area of agriculture, food processing and agronomy.

*Source: Embassy of India, Tripoli,*

<http://indianembassy.ly/index.php?mact=News,cntnt01,detail,0&cntnt01articleid=61&cntnt01pagelimit=5&cntnt01returnid=15>

### **30. Ambassador of India meets Minister of Electricity, State of Libya, Tripoli, 29 August 2013.**

On 29 August 2013 Anil Trigunayat, Ambassador of India called on His Excellency Dr. Mohammed Muhairiq, Minister of Electricity, State of Libya, to discuss participation of Indian companies in the power sector of Libya in both the renewable and non-renewable sectors. The Honourable Minister appreciated India's presence in the power sector through its joint venture between BHEL, the premier power company of India, and GECOL, the Libyan electricity company. BHEL have successfully commissioned various power projects in Libya.

During the meeting H.E. the Ambassador informed the Honourable Minister about the training programmes being offered by the Indian government under ITEC, the technical assistance programmes of the Indian government. The Honourable Minister informed that Libya's focus would be on solar energy in the next 2-3 years.

H.E. the Ambassador conveyed the invitation of the Minister of Power of India to the Honourable Minister to visit India, which he accepted

*Source: Embassy of India, Tripoli,*

<http://indianembassy.ly/index.php?mact=News,cntnt01,detail,0&cntnt01articleid=59&cntnt01pagelimit=5&cntnt01returnid=15>

## **h. MOROCCO**

### **31. India signs Protocol with Morocco for effective Exchange of Information with respect to taxes, Rabat, 8 August 2013.**

India signed a Protocol amending the India-Morocco Double Taxation Avoidance Convention (DTAC) in New Delhi on 8 August, 2013. The Protocol is based on international standards of transparency and exchange of information. It provides for effective exchange of information including banking information between tax authorities of the two countries. It also provides that each treaty partner shall use its information gathering measures to obtain the requested information even though it may not need such information for its own domestic tax purposes.

The Agreement will enhance mutual co-operation between the two countries by having effective exchange of information in tax matters.

*Source: Embassy of India, Rabat, [http://www.indianembassy rabat.com/press\\_releases.html](http://www.indianembassy rabat.com/press_releases.html)*

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### **32. Flag Hoisting Ceremony in the Embassy of India, Rabat, 14 August 2013.**

On the happy occasion of the 67th Independence Day of India, a Flag Hoisting Ceremony will be held in the premises of the Embassy of India, Rabat (No. 88, Rue Ouled Tidrarine, Souissi, Rabat) on Thursday, 15 August 2013 at 1000 hours at which all Indian nationals along with families are cordially invited.

*Source: Embassy of India, Rabat, <http://www.indianembassy rabat.com/announcements.html>*

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## **i. OMAN**

### **33. Press Release, Muscat, 15 August 2013.**

67th Independence Day of India was celebrated on Thursday, 15 August 2013 in the premises of the Chancery of the Indian Embassy in Muscat where a large number of members of the Indian Community gathered in the morning, with patriotic fervour.

His Excellency J.S. Mukul, Ambassador of India to the Sultanate of Oman, unfurled the Indian National Flag and read out the Address of the Honourable President of India to the Nation. Students from the Indian School Muscat led the gathering in singing of the National Anthem, followed by other patriotic songs befitting the occasion.

In his remarks on the occasion, Ambassador congratulated the Indian Community in Oman whose diligence, sincerity and professionalism is well recognized by all, and complimented them for their outstanding contributions in strengthening our friendly relations with Oman and in its march of progress, and also being valued partners in the economic development of their land of adoption. Ambassador said that the historic friendly relations between India and Oman have since grown to a strategic partnership and thanked the Government and people of Oman for their warmth and the continued support for the Indian community in the Sultanate.

*Source: Embassy of India, Muscat, <http://www.indemb-oman.org/pdf/EmbassyOfIndiaPressReleaseforID13.pdf>*

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## **j. QATAR**

### **34. Independence Day Greetings from the Ambassador, Doha, 15 August 2013.**

India is celebrating its 66th Independence Day on 15 August 2013. It was on this historic day 66 years ago that India achieved freedom, keeping its 'tryst with destiny', as India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru had described the dawn of independence.

My family and colleagues join me in conveying our warmest greetings to all fellow Indians in the State of Qatar on India's 67<sup>th</sup> Independence Day. Let us gratefully remember all those who sacrificed their present for a better future for their country, and cherish the ideals and aspirations that guided India's peaceful freedom movement in which millions of Indians participated under the exemplary leadership of the Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi.

On this highly significant day, let us also celebrate the historically close and friendly relations between India and Qatar, and renew our warm greetings and sincere thanks to the Emir His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al Thani, the Father Emir His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al Thani, and the Government and people of Qatar.

The multifaceted cooperation between India and Qatar is flourishing within an excellent framework provided by time-tested friendship and regular and substantive engagement, including at the highest levels of the two Governments.

Besides official interactions, people-to-people contacts and initiatives by private sector are galvanizing dialogue and collaborations in various spheres, including energy, trade and investments, education and research, healthcare, aviation, tourism, media, arts and culture. The highly regarded Indian community in Qatar serves as a strong bridge between the two sides.

The Government and people of India are confident that our strong ties of friendship and cooperation will blossom further under the leadership of His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al Thani, the Emir of Qatar.

*Source: Embassy of India, Doha,*

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

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## **k. SAUDI ARABIA**

### **35. Embassy urges Indians with knowledge in Shariah law, Saudi Labour Laws and Arabic language to assist during the grace period, Riyadh, 1 August 2013.**

As part of its efforts to fully utilize the extended grace period announced by the Custodian of Two Holy Mosques His Majesty King Abdullah bin Abdul-Aziz al Saud for overstaying expatriates to correct their status or to leave the Kingdom without facing penal action, the Embassy urges Indian nationals with knowledge in Shariah law, Saudi Labour Laws and Arabic language to register with the Embassy and to offer their services to assist those in Tarheels, Labour offices, Jails and Deportation centres. Those Indians having any experience in dealing with Saudi offices handling jail cases, labour cases, legal cases and also with law offices in Saudi Arabia are also invited to join.

Those Indians with knowledge in Shariah law, Saudi Labour Laws and Arabic language and registering with the Embassy would join the more than 600 Indian volunteers currently working closely with Embassy in its efforts to utilize the concessions announced by the Saudi authorities during the grace period. They would also help the Embassy to reach out to the Indians in small towns and far off places in Saudi Arabia to utilize the grace period which ends on 3 November 2013.

Those interested Indian nationals with knowledge in Shariah law, Saudi Labour Laws and Arabic language and experience with Saudi offices dealing with jail cases, labour cases, law offices etc. may contact Dr. Mohd. Aleem, Third Secretary at the Indian Embassy at [labour.riyadh@mea.gov.in](mailto:labour.riyadh@mea.gov.in) and [wel.riyadh@mea.gov.in](mailto:wel.riyadh@mea.gov.in) with a copy to [pol1.riyadh@mea.gov.in](mailto:pol1.riyadh@mea.gov.in) and [dcm.riyadh@mea.gov.in](mailto:dcm.riyadh@mea.gov.in).

*Source: Embassy of India, Riyadh,*

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

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### **36. Embassy of India Spokesperson Replies to Media Query on Indians in Saudi Jails, Embassy Rejects Irresponsible Statements against the Judicial System of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Riyadh, 1 August 2013.**

The Embassy of India has seen a report in Arab News of 28 July 2013, attributing a statement to an illegal organization in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia called “FOKASA” alleging that majority of Indian citizens in Saudi Arabian jails are convicted without a fair trial. The Embassy rejects such irresponsible statements casting aspersions on the judicial system of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The Embassy would like to reiterate its full faith in the judicial system of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The Embassy reiterates its gratitude to the Custodian of Two Holy Mosques His Majesty King Abdullah bin Abdul-Aziz al Saud for his humanitarian approach in announcing concessions and extension of grace period for overstaying expatriates to correct their status or to leave the Kingdom without facing penal action and without any ban on their return to the Kingdom. The Embassy also expresses its gratitude to the Saudi authorities who are rendering their services to the overstaying Indians during the holy month of Ramadan, including late night hours. The Embassy urges all Indians in Saudi Arabia to fully utilize the concessions and grace period announced by His Majesty.

There are over 2.5 million Indians living in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in complete peace and harmony; abiding by the Saudi laws and regulations; and enjoying the protection of Saudi judicial system. Indians are the “most preferred” expatriate community in Saudi Arabia due to their law-abiding and peace loving nature.

The Embassy of India rejects irresponsible statements by some illegal associations or some self-styled social workers criticizing the judicial system of Saudi Arabia. The Embassy is currently conducting inquiries into complaints of alleged involvement of some illegal associations and



individuals in Saudi Arabia on cases related to housemaids and also based on complaints of collection of money for getting information and offering legal assistance to Indians in distress and also those in the jails in Saudi Arabia. As part of the inquiry the Embassy has sought information from FOKASA on the details of housemaid cases which FOKASA or any of its members handled during the last three years; information available with FOKASA on cases of Indians involved in organ removal or organ donation; and details of Indians in Saudi Arabia whom FOKASA or its members offered any legal assistance.

The Embassy would like to reiterate that India has excellent bilateral relations with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The Embassy is grateful for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for hosting more than 2.5 million Indians. The Embassy is fully aware of its responsibilities towards Indian nationals and it will continue to address all issues of concern to the Indian community within the framework of Saudi rules and regulations keeping in view our strategic partnership with the Kingdom and the welfare of more than 2.5 million Indian residents in Saudi Arabia. The Embassy officials regularly visit jails and deportation centres to render assistance to the Indians in jails all across Saudi Arabia. The Embassy remains in constant touch with the Saudi authorities at appropriate levels to address issues related to the welfare of the Indian community including those serving prison terms or are under trial.

*Source: Embassy of India, Riyadh,*

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

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### **37. Press Release, Riyadh, 1 August 2013.**

Ministry of Corporate Affairs, Government of India intends to amend the Chartered Accountants Regulation 1988 to allow the overseas Indians membership of ICAI as per the announcement made by the Honourable Prime Minister of India at the Pravasi Bhartiya Divas in January 2008. A draft notification giving all the details in this regard can be viewed at [http://mca.gov.in/Ministry/pdf/oci\\_scheme\\_10\\_august\\_2012.pdf](http://mca.gov.in/Ministry/pdf/oci_scheme_10_august_2012.pdf)

Professional individuals among Indian expatriate community are requested to offer their comments / observations on the proposed changes and mail them to [vinodkumar1@mca.gov.in](mailto:vinodkumar1@mca.gov.in); or [rita.dogra@mca.gov.in](mailto:rita.dogra@mca.gov.in)

*Source: Embassy of India, Riyadh,*

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

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### **38. Press Release, Riyadh, 6 August 2013.**

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Government of India, has recently launched smart phone Mobile Application called 'MEAIndia.' It is one more step of integrating MEA's public platforms. All public services rendered by MEA could now be accessed through this one simple means. Whether it be information on passport status applied anywhere in India or location of centres which attest documents in India, or pilgrims travelling to Saudi Arabia for Hajj, this "One stop solution" will provide all one needs to know. The details are available at the Ministry of



External Affairs website [[www.mea.gov.in](http://www.mea.gov.in)] and at the Embassy of India, Riyadh website [[www.indianembassy.org.sa](http://www.indianembassy.org.sa)]

The Embassy of India, Riyadh is pleased to inform that its website has crossed one million hits since its re-launch in end 2011. The Embassy website has been quite beneficial for those seeking information and has been proved useful particularly during the recent months for disseminating information to the members of Indian community. The website enhanced the outreach of the Embassy and people residing in far off places in the Kingdom accessed it for information gathering and also for getting the latest updates from the Embassy.

It has been the endeavour of the Embassy to utilize the social media tools for serving the community in the best possible manner. We wish to improvise the means of service delivery to the Indian community and in this regard, are open to any suggestions/comments from the Indians residing in the Kingdom to enhance the efficacy and effectiveness of the website. The Embassy also has a Facebook page, the link of which is also given at the Homepage of the Embassy website itself. Members of the Indian community are also requested to view it and offer their comments/suggestions about it.

*Source: Embassy of India, Riyadh,*

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

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### **39. Press Release, Riyadh, 11 August 2013.**

On the occasion of 67th Independence Day of India, His Excellency Hamid Ali Rao, Ambassador of India, will hoist the National Flag on Thursday, 15 August 2013, at 0830 hours, at the Embassy of India, B-1, Diplomatic Quarter, Riyadh.

All members of Indian community in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and friends of India are cordially invited.

*Source: Embassy of India, Riyadh,*

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

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### **40. Launching of Electronic Postal Order, Riyadh, 12 August 2013.**

The Department of Personnel and Training and Department of Posts have launched a service called e-IPO (Electronic Indian Postal Order) to enable Indian Citizens abroad to purchase an Indian Postal Order electronically by paying fee on-line through e-Post Office Portal i.e. <http://www.epostoffice.gov.in>. This facility has been provided for Indian Citizens abroad to enable them to purchase a Postal Order electronically to seek information under the RTI Act, 2005.

The User needs to get himself registered at the website. He has to select the Ministry/Department from whom he desires to seek the information under the RTI Act and the e-IPO so generated can be used to seek information from that Ministry/Department only. A printout of the e-IPO is required to be attached with the RTI application. If the RTI application is being filed electronically, e-IPO is required to be attached as an attachment.

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

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#### **41. Ambassador's Message, Riyadh, 15 August 2013.**

On this auspicious occasion of 67th Independence Day of India, I, on behalf of the people and the Government of India, extend greetings and best wishes to all Indian expatriates residing in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. I thank the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques His Majesty King Abdullah bin Abdul-Aziz al Saud for adopting a humanitarian approach towards the issues pertaining to the welfare of the Indian expatriates in the Kingdom and also for extending the grace period for overstaying expatriates to correct their legal status.

The Embassy has been working with an unwavering resolve to ensure that not even a single Indian expatriate in the Kingdom is illegal, according to the Saudi laws and regulations. To accomplish this task effectively, the Embassy has established a robust partnership with the Indian community, and mobilized and activated a network of over 600 non-remunerative volunteers, who worked silently to reach out to Indians residing in far off places in the Kingdom. The Managing Committees, Principals, teaching and non-teaching staff of the Indian Community schools have also contributed in our efforts. The media both vernacular and local have been instrumental in our reaching out to the thousands of Indians in remote corners of this large country.

This partnership proves very useful in rendering assistance to all the overstaying Indians in the Kingdom and in the correction of their visa status. The volunteers transcended the barriers of language, region and religion and worked as a team. A subterranean unity in diversity has been at work. So far we have got it right and I'm confident that we will achieve our target well within the extended grace period announced by the Saudi authorities. We still have a long way to go. I urge all my fellow citizens to join hands with me in our efforts to protect and promote the welfare of the people.

Our relations with Saudi Arabia date back to several millennia. The two countries maintained steady contacts at the highest political level. In 2006, Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques His Majesty King Abdullah bin Abdul-Aziz al Saud visited India as the Chief Guest of India's Republic Day Parade and the two sides signed 'Delhi Declaration'. With the signing of 'Riyadh Declaration' during the visit of H.E. Dr. Manmohan Singh, Prime Minister of India to Saudi Arabia in February 2010, relationship between the two countries were elevated to the level of 'Strategic Partnership' in the realm of political, economy, defence and security. We have since made steady progress in all these areas.

In the field of economy, our relationship is witnessing a robust growth. The two way trade between the two countries is over US\$ 43 billion in 2012-13, while the Indian exports to the Kingdom have witnessed a growth of over 72 per cent during the same period. India meets around 17 per cent of its crude oil requirements by importing it from Saudi Arabia. The two

countries are committed to transcend their relationship beyond traditional buyer-seller relationship into a mutually beneficial energy partnership. The complementarities in our economies brought about convergence of interests among the business communities of the two countries. The investment opportunities between the two countries are abundant and remain to be tapped to its fullest. As part of our efforts to further strengthen our business relations we are taking the initiative of setting up a 'Saudi-India Business Network' in Riyadh and Dammam. I urge all Indian businessmen and entrepreneurs in Saudi Arabia to join in this initiative.

I would like to commend the members of Indian community in the Kingdom for their constructive and pro-active role in strengthening our bilateral relations. Indian expatriates in the Kingdom contribute immensely towards the growth and development of Saudi Arabia, a fact well appreciated by the Saudi leadership. I am hopeful that the Indian community would continue to be the 'most preferred expatriate community' in the Kingdom for its diligence, law-abiding and hard working nature.

I thank the leadership of Saudi Arabia for hosting a large Indian community and taking interest in the issues concerning their welfare.

I conclude by expressing my strong confidence that the India-Saudi relations will continue to grow and contribute to peace, stability and prosperity in the region and beyond.

*Source: Embassy of India, Riyadh,*

<http://www.indianembassy.org.sa/Content.aspx?ID=879&PID=691>

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#### **42. Composite Consular-cum-Community Welfare Tour to Medina on 24 August, 2013 by Indian Consulate, Jeddah, 19 August 2013.**

A Team from the Consulate General of India, Jeddah would be rendering consular services (limited to attestation and passport services not being provided by the outsourced agencies) to the Indian nationals in Medina on 24 August 2013 from 0900 to 1300 hours and 1700 to 2000 hours at Hotel Al-Bayda (Telephone: 04-8401333). Above said services will also be provided on 25 August 2013 from 0900 hours to 1200 hours at Indian Hajj Mission Medina (Tel. No. 04-8380025). The Indian nationals residing in and around Medina may avail of the opportunity to apply for the consular service, to meet the visiting officials and also to convey their grievances/suggestions, if any, relating to labour and welfare issues. They should bring along with them written statement narrating their problems for redressing of their grievances, including consular related service

The Consular team will also be taking Emergency Certificate application forms from those who intend to leave the Kingdom on final exit

*Source: Consulate General of India, Jeddah,*

<http://cgijeddah.mkcl.org/Content.aspx?ID=26490&PID=685>

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#### **43. Press Release, Riyadh, 27 August 2013**

The Embassy of India, Riyadh will remain closed on Wednesday, 28 August 2013 on account of Janmashtmi. No applications for Emergency Certificate will be accepted on 28 August 2013.

***Source: Embassy of India, Riyadh,***

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

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#### **44. Indian Companies to Participate at Saudi Agro Food 2013, Riyadh, 27 August 2013**

Thirty-nine Indian companies are participating in the forthcoming Saudi Agro Food 2013 exhibition in Riyadh which is being organized at Riyadh International Convention & Exhibition Centre from 15-18 September 2013. List of participating Indian companies is attached. See: <http://www.indianembassy.org.sa/WebFiles/List%20of%20Participants%20Saudi%20Agro%20Food%20Fair%20-%202013.pdf>

Saudi Arabia is the 4th largest trading partner of India. The bilateral trade has crossed US\$ 43 billion in 2012-13. India's huge agro resource base and a host of natural advantages make it a chosen destination for sourcing a variety of agricultural products. The total Indian agro exports were US\$ 22,138 million during 2012-13, out of which, Saudi Arabia accounted for US\$ 1,203 million during this period. Major products being exported to Saudi Arabia are rice, buffalo, sheep and goat meat, fresh and preserved fruits and vegetables, confectionery and other processed foods, etc.

The Saudi Agro Food 2013 will have a dedicated India Pavilion in Hall No. 4 to showcase Indian products like Rice, Basmati Rice, Snacks, Indian Frozen Boneless Buffalo Meat, Frozen Meat, Coffee, Cashew Kernels, Spices, Edible oils, Medicinal Herbs, Packing Material, Jute and Cotton Bags, Saffron, Papad, Cardamom, Pepper, Chilli, Masalas, Coir Fibre, Coir Pith, Black pepper, Cardamom, Cocoa Products, Food Ingredients, Sweet Corn, Animal Feed, Bird feed, Papad Biscuits, Sugar, Oilseed, Beans Pulses, Oil's, Organic Margo, Natural Honey, Beeswax, Propolis, Groundnut Kernels & Sesame Seed, Pickles, Jams, Tomato Ketchup, Corn Flakes, Bakery Products, Instant Mixes, Custard Powder, Jellies, Culinary Sauces, Vinegar, Noodles, Vermicelli and Juices, Mango Pulp, Guava Pulp, Jam, Pickles, Chutney, Peanut Butter, Frozen vegetables and fruits, Conventional and Organic, Green Millets, Maize, Sorghum, Wheat Flour, Jowar, Maize, Barley, Processed Foods- Ready To Eat, Ready To Cook, Ready To Serve, etc. The display of Indian products would be spread over in an area approximately 400 sq. meters.

Visitors to Saudi Agro-Food 2012 from 15-18 September 2013, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia are invited to visit the India Pavilion in Hall No. 4 at Riyadh International Convention and Exhibition Centre to savour the incomparable Indian cuisine 'Biryani' of Basmati rice and Processed Foods from India.

The visitors to the India Pavilion will benefit from the personal presence of selected and leading exporters of agro- products including rice, chutneys and pickles, ready-to-eat snacks, processed foods and other Indian delicacies. The senior officials from India Trade Promotion Organization, Agricultural & Processed Food Products Export Development Authority, Ministry of Food

Processing Industry, Ministry of Commerce and Industry and the Indian exhibitors would also be available to explain the unique characteristics of Indian food in detail and hold extended discussions on matters related to the subject including investment in Agro-food sector in India.

*Source: Embassy of India, Riyadh,*

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

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## **I. SYRIA**

### **45. Independence Day Celebration 2013, Damascus, 15 August 2013.**

The Embassy of India, Damascus will be celebrating India's Independence Day on Thursday, 15 August 2013 at the Embassy premises. All are cordially invited to attend the Flag Hoisting ceremony as per the following programme

0845 hours. Assembly at rear courtyard of the Embassy

0900 hours. Flag Hoisting by S.D. Sharma, Charge d'Affaires; Recital of National Anthem

0915 hours. Reading out of President's Address to the Nation by Charge d'Affaires

0930 hours. Light refreshment

*Source: Embassy of India, Damascus, <http://www.indianembassysyria.com/english/whats-new/363.html>*

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### **46. Response to a query on Indians in Syria, New Delhi, 31 August 2013.**

In response to query on Indians in Syria, the Official Spokesperson said:

"We are in touch with our Mission in Damascus who are also in contact with the approximately 25-30 Indian citizens in Syria. All Indian citizens are safe. Previously, we had advised all Indian citizens in Syria to return to India. They have once again been advised to leave Syria. The earlier advisory for Indian nationals not to travel to Syria also remains in effect."

*Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, <http://www.mea.gov.in/media-briefings.htm?dtl/22139/Response+to+a+query+on+Indians+in+Syria>*

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## **m. TURKEY**

### **47. Notice, Ankara, 15 August 2013.**

On the occasion of the Independence Day Celebrations H.E, the Ambassador requests your kind presence at the Flag Hoisting Ceremony to be held in the premises of the Indian Embassy, Ankara at 0900 hours on 15 August 2013, which will be followed by light refreshments.

RSVP Tel No.4382195-98

*Source: Embassy of India, Ankara,*

<http://www.indembassy.org.tr/EN,371/independence-day-celebrations-2013.html>

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## **n. YEMEN**

### **48. Amrit Lugun appointed as the next Ambassador of India to Republic of Yemen, New Delhi, 12 August 2013.**

Amrit Lugun (IFS: 1989) has been appointed as the next Ambassador of India to Republic of Yemen.

He is expected to take up his assignment shortly.

*Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, <http://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/22055/Shri+Amrit+Lugun+appointed+as+the+next+Ambassador+of+India+to+Republic+of+Yemen>*

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## **SPECIFIC ISSUES**

### **o. HAJJ**

#### **49. Hajj Committee in Chandigarh, New Delhi, 7 August 2013.**

##### **Question:**

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

- (a) The criteria for creation of Hajj Committee at different levels;
- (b) The data regarding Muslim population in Union Territory (UT) of Chandigarh;
- (c) The reasons for not creating a separate Hajj Committee in the said UT; and
- (d) The time by which it is likely to be constituted?

##### **Answer**

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

(a) State/Union Territory (UT) Hajj Committees are constituted as per section 17(1) of Hajj Committee Act-2002, which states “With effect from such date as the Central Government may, by notification in the official Gazette appoint in this behalf, the Government of a State shall constitute a Committee by the name of the ...(name of the State) Hajj Committee.

Provided that in case it appears to the Central Government for any reasons that it is not necessary for a State or Union Territory to establish a Hajj Committee, it may authorize the State Hajj Committee of a Contiguous State to deal with those pilgrims and suggest suitable representation of those States and Union Territories.

- (b) The Muslim population in UT of Chandigarh as per the census of 2001 is 35,548.
- (c) & (d) Proposal for the creation of a separate Hajj Committee for the said UT has not been received from the Chandigarh Administration.

*Source: Lok Sabha (House of the People), Unstarred Question No. 506 asked by Pawan Kumar Bansal,*

*<http://164.100.47.132/LssNew/psearch/QResult15.aspx?qref=143211>*

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#### **50. Hajj Quota, New Delhi, 7 August 2013.**

The Embassy of Saudi Arabia, New Delhi informed the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on 5 June 2013 that the Saudi authorities had imposed a 50 per cent reduction in the Hajj 2013 quota on local (Saudi) applicants and 20 per cent reduction on all foreign Hajj pilgrims to facilitate the



infra-structure work being carried out around the “Haram Sharif” and to keep the area safe and secure for the pilgrims.

MEA took up the matter with the authorities in Saudi Arabia and conveyed its concern on the 20 per cent reduction in our quota and sought reconsideration of the decision. On 21 June 2013, Government of Saudi Arabia affirmed the revised quota of 136,020 fixed for the Indian Hajj pilgrims for Hajj-2013.

The Minister of State in the Ministry of External Affairs Shrimati Preneet Kaur gave this information in reply to a question in Lok Sabha.

*Source: Press Information Bureau, New Delhi,*  
<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx?relid=97872>

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### **51. Restoring of VIP quota for Hajj, New Delhi, 8 August 2013.**

#### **Question:**

- (a) Whether Government is considering restoring VIP quota for Hajj;
- (b) If so, by when and if not, the reasons therefore; and
- (c) The number of seats fixed under VIP quota for the year 2013?

#### **Answer**

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

- (a) No.
- (b) & (c) In pursuance of the Supreme Court order dated 23 July 2012, the number of seats to be allotted to the nominees recommended by dignitaries is to be limited to the following:

President of India 100 seats

Vice-President 75 seats

Prime Minister 75 seats

External Affairs Minister 50 seats

Hajj Committee of India 200 seats

The Supreme Court vide its order dated 16 April 2013 has reiterated, confirmed and directed the Government to strictly follow the directions given earlier vide its order dated 23 July 2012. Government has been implementing the said directions.

*Source: Rajya Sabha (Council of States), Unstarred Question No. 507 asked by Rasheed Masood, <http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/QResult.aspx>*

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### **52. Hajj Committees, New Delhi, 14 August 2013.**

#### **Question:**

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

- (a) The States and Union Territories where State Hajj Committees exists and the States where these Committees are yet to be constituted;
- (b) The reasons for the delay in formation of such committees;
- (c) Whether it is a fact that in some States, these committees exist only on papers; and



(d) If so, the action being taken by the Government to make them effective?

**Answer**

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

(a) States and Union Territories where State Hajj Committees (SHCs) exist:

Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Daman & Diu, Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Lakshadweep, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand & West Bengal.

States and Union Territories where SHCs are yet to be reconstituted:

Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Maharashtra, Chandigarh, Dadar and Nagar Haveli and Puducherry.

(b) State/Union Territory (UT) SHCs are constituted as per the provisions of Section 17(1) of Hajj Committee Act, 2002. Instructions have been issued from time to time by Government of India to the respective State Governments to constitute their SHCs.

(c) As per records, there is no such SHC.

(d) Does not arise.

*Source: Lok Sabha (House of the People), Unstarred Question No. 1543 asked by Kamla Devi Patle and Abdulrahman,*

<http://164.100.47.132/LssNew/psearch/QResult15.aspx?qref=143205>

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**53. Formation of Hajj Committees, New Delhi, 22 August 2013.**

**Question:**

(a) The States and Union Territories where State Hajj Committees have been formed and those where these Committees have not been formed;

(b) The reasons for non-formation of such Committees;

(c) The names of Chairman and Secretaries of State Hajj Committees along with the address and contact numbers;

(d) Whether it is a fact that in some States, these committees are on papers only; and

(e) If so, the action being taken to make them real and effective entities?

**Answer**

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

(a) States and Union Territories (UTs) where State/UT Hajj Committees (SHCs) have been formed are as under:

Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Daman & Diu, Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Lakshadweep, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand & West Bengal.

States and UTs where SHCs are yet to be reconstituted are as under:

Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Maharashtra, Chandigarh, Dadar & Nagar Haveli & Puducherry.

(b) State/UT SHCs are constituted as per the provisions of Section 17(1) of the Hajj Committee Act, 2002. Instructions have been issued from time to time by Government of India to the respective State/UT Governments to constitute their SHCs.

(c) The names of Chairman and Secretaries of State/UT Hajj Committees along with address and contact numbers are at Annexure I.

(d) As per our records, there is no such SHC.

(e) Does not arise.

For the annexure, see: <http://164.100.24.219/annex/229/Au1443.docx>

*Source: Rajya Sabha (Council of States), Unstarred Question No. 1443 asked by Mohammed Adeep, <http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/OResult.aspx>*

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#### **54. Reduction in quota for Hajj pilgrimage, New Delhi, 29 August 2013.**

##### **Question:**

(a) whether it is a fact that the Saudi Government has reduced his intake quota of Hajj pilgrims by 20 per cent for International Hajj pilgrims, with the result, 34,000 Indian Hajj pilgrims would have to cancel their journey, and if so, the details thereof and reasons therefore;

(b) since Indian Hajj pilgrims have already initiated and are fully prepared to go for Hajj after being successful in Hajj draw, whether at this stage this matter would create great problems for Hajj pilgrims; and

(c) The steps being taken by Government in this regard?

##### **Answer**

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

(a) Yes. The Embassy of Saudi Arabia, New Delhi informed the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on 5 June 2013 that the Saudi authorities had imposed a 50 per cent reduction in the Hajj 2013 quota on local (Saudi) applicants and 20 per cent on all foreign Hajj pilgrims to facilitate the infra-structure work being carried out around the “Haram Sharif” and to keep the area safe and secure for the pilgrims.

(b) & (c) MEA took up the matter with the authorities in Saudi Arabia and conveyed its concern on the 20 per cent reduction in our quota and sought reconsideration of the decision. On 21 June 2013, Government of Saudi Arabia affirmed the reduction of 20 per cent quota leaving a quota of 1, 36,020 seats for Indian Hajj pilgrims for Hajj-2013.

Since the Hajj 2013 pilgrims of Hajj Committee of India (HCOI) had already been selected and partial payments received from them by then, it was decided to effect the 20 per cent reduction (34,005 seats) for Hajj-2013 from the allocation (45,000) of Private Tour Operators (PTOs). Cancellations anticipated by HCOI pilgrims (3,605 seats) were transferred to the eligible Hajj-2013 PTOs.

*Source: Rajya Sabha (Council of States), Unstarred Question No. 2057 asked by Naznin Faruque and Natuji Halaji Thakor, <http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/OResult.aspx>*

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#### **55. Basis of quota for Hajj pilgrimage, New Delhi, 29 August 2013.**

##### **Question:**

- (a) The basis on which quota of Hajj pilgrims for the States are fixed, the details thereof;
- (b) The quantum of financial assistance provided by the Central Government during the last four years, Hajj pilgrim-wise; and
- (c) Whether requests have been received from the States and the public representatives from there for increasing the quota of Hajj pilgrims, and if so, the details of action taken by the Ministry?

**Answer**

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

- a) Allocation of Hajj seats to each State/Union Territory is done by the Hajj Committee of India (HCOI) in proportion to the population of Muslims in the State/U.T. vis-à-vis the national population of Muslims as per 2001 Census.
- (b) Government of India (GOI) does not provide any financial assistance directly to the Hajj pilgrims. However, GOI assists the Hajj pilgrims in close coordination with (HCOI) 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 our pilgrims 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 pilgrims before they proceed to Saudi Arabia.
- (c) Yes. At present, Census 2001 figures are used for allocation of Hajj seats to each State/U.T. as Census 2011 figures are yet to be released by the Census Commissioner.

*Source: Rajya Sabha (Council of States), Unstarred Question No. 2060 asked by Mahendra Singh Mahra, <http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/QResult.aspx>*

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## **p. WELFARE OF OVERSEAS INDIAN WORKERS**

### **56. Protection of Interest and Welfare of Overseas Indian Workers, New Delhi, 22 August 2013.**

The Government of India has taken several initiatives to protect the interest and welfare of overseas Indian workers. India has signed Labour agreements with Jordan and Qatar and bilateral Memoranda of understanding (MoU) with the major worker receiving Countries for ensuring protection and welfare of Indian emigrants. MoUs were signed with United Arab of Emigrates, Kuwait, Oman, Malaysia and Bahrain.

The Government has also taken measures for protecting the safety and welfare of women workers of the Emigration Check Required (ECR) category to emigrate to 17 notified countries such as restriction of 30 years for women emigrating on ECR passports to ECR countries, minimum referral wage for emigrants being fixed by Mission , security deposit of US\$ 2,500 to be paid by foreign employer, compulsory pre-attestation of employment documents by the Indian

Mission concerned for all women emigrants, pre-paid mobile phone facility for housemaids to be provided by foreign employer and operating shelters for distressed emigrants by Indian Missions.

Moreover, a 24x7 toll-free helpline that is Overseas Workers Resource Centre (OWRC) has been set up in Delhi to enable emigrants and prospective emigrants to seek information and file complaints against recruiting agents and foreign employers. Migration Resource Centres (MRCs) have been set up at Cochin, Hyderabad and Panchkula in (Haryana). A Nation-wide Awareness-cum-Publicity Campaign through Media has been taken up to educate potential emigrants including benefits or hazards of legal and illegal migration. Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) has been established in all the Indian Missions for on-site welfare of emigrants. Around 28,000 emigrants have benefitted from the Scheme during the last three years and INR 37 crores has been utilized for the purpose. For redressal of grievances at Dubai at the Indian Workers Resource Centre (IWRC) there is a 24x7 toll free multilingual helpline. Apart from this; computerized emigration clearance system exists in all Protector of Emigration offices.

This information was given by Minister of Overseas Indian Affairs Vayalar Ravi in Parliament in a written reply.

*Source: Press Information Bureau, New Delhi,*

<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx?relid=98542>

## **MULTILATERAL ISSUES/REGIONAL ISSUES**

### **q. IBSA AND THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS**

#### **57. IBSA Statement on the Middle East Peace Process, New Delhi, 23 August 2013.**

Taking into consideration the previous declarations of the India, Brazil and South Africa Dialogue Forum (IBSA) on the Middle East Peace Process, the Foreign Minister of India Salman Khurshid; Foreign Minister of Brazil, Antonio Patriota; and Foreign Minister of South Africa Maite Nkoana-Mashabane, after consultations, agreed on the following statement:

We reaffirm that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict remains an urgent and key issue for the international community, the resolution of which is a prerequisite for building a sustainable and lasting peace in the Middle East region.

We support the mediation efforts undertaken by the U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry and welcome the announcement of the resumption of direct final status negotiations between Palestinians and Israelis. This is an encouraging development, one that has the potential for reverting the deadlock and paralysis that have plagued the peace process in recent years. We hope this renewed effort will lead to the full and overdue realization of a two-state solution based on 1967 borders.

We have noted with satisfaction the decision of Israel to release 104 Palestinian prisoners, which is a gesture that contributes to the spirit of cooperation surrounding the negotiations. We are also pleased with the announcement made on 30 July by Kerry indicating that the Palestinian and

Israeli negotiators are committed to reaching a comprehensive peace agreement within nine months. Such an agreement should culminate in the full realization of an independent Palestinian State. We call on the parties to adhere strictly to this timetable.

As we reiterate our call for the Security Council to fully exercise its functions under the UN Charter, with regard to the Palestinian Question, we express our firm belief that the Council should provide sustained support to the peace process and work towards its full and satisfactory completion.

*Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, <http://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/22112/IBSA+Statement+on+the+Middle+East+Peace+Process>*

**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.

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