

INDIA SPEAKS

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BILATERAL ISSUES

a. EGYPT

1. Minister of IT and Communications and the Indian Ambassador review India's Pan Africa e-Network Project, Cairo, 2 September 2013.

Engineer Atef Helmy, Minister of Communications and Information Technology, conducted a visit on 2 September 2013 to the Faculty of Commerce, Alexandria University and the Faculty of Medicine as well as its affiliated hospital to celebrate the preparation of regional university and super specialty hospital of the Pan African e - network project.

The visit, attended by the President of the University of Alexandria and the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine at the University, was honoured by the presence of the Indian Ambassador in Cairo Navdeep Suri. The project comes within the framework of the grant presented by the Indian Government to the African Union to use Information and Communication Technology in the provision of medical services and education for African countries for a period of five years. The project will enable the creation of a site for distance education and distance medical services for all African countries. The Arab Republic of Egypt had signed the agreement in 2007 along with 46 other countries. There are 12 super specialty Indian Hospitals involved in the project providing consultations and free medical lectures in addition to seven leading Indian universities offering degrees.

The first phase has witnessed a number of achievements that assumes relevance in the context of project targets. The first step was to operationalize the site for distance education, where 25 students have so far been granted an MBA degree from the largest Open University in the world, IGNOU, 48 students a Master's degree in IT from the University of Madras, 28 students a Diploma in Business Administration and 15 students a Diploma in IT from Amity University. The site for telemedicine has also become operational, where medical lectures have been broadcast since November 2009. This has achieved the highest percentage for attendees in the

African countries in 2010. 873 lectures have been held and 19,130 Egyptian attendees have been participating according to the statistics until July 2013.

The Minister, the Ambassador of India and other participants will take a tour in the Faculty of Medicine and its affiliated Teaching hospital in Alexandria University to review the project and to explore opportunities for future cooperation. The hospital has been selected to be the super-specialty regional hospital for the North Africa region providing medical consultations and medical lectures for all participating African countries. Moreover the University of Alexandria has been selected to be the regional University for Northern Africa and will provide scholarships to other participating African countries as well.

The coming period will witness further coordination, in which the Faculty of Commerce of Alexandria University and the its hospital will provide educational and medical services to all the countries participating in the project by using Electronic tools qualified to provide these services to beneficiaries in other countries. Accordingly, this collaboration with India will enhance the Egyptian role in the continent and strengthen its role through the provision of such services which will support the development of the African countries.

This project comes in the context of the strategy of the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology to promote Egypt's role in Africa through strengthening cooperation with various African organizations. This strategy is based on the use of various mechanisms in which they can share the Egyptian experience in the telecom sector and information technology with other African countries helping in the development of this important sector in these countries, and also boosting the overall economic and social development through the direct impact of these tools. The Ministry of Communications and Information Technology welcomes such trilateral cooperation frameworks, which enhances joint cooperation with India and the African Union. Through the agreement, it will benefit from the experience of India, one of the developed countries in the field of communications and information technology, and also allow Egypt to share its experience in the field in order to advance the process of development of the larger sector in the African continent.

Source: Embassy of India, Cairo, http://www.indembcairo.com/en-us/presscentre/pressreleases.aspx?udt_656_param_detail=684

2. Indian Films return to Egypt, Cairo, 15 September 2013.

After a gap of 25 years, Indian cinema will return to Egyptian theatres in October 2013. United Motion Pictures, facilitated by Gaurang Films and the Indian Embassy in Cairo, will bring to Egyptian audiences the much loved Indian actors and actresses on the big screen. The blockbuster Indian movie Chennai Express, starring Shah Rukh Khan and Deepika Padukone will hit Egyptian theatres in Cairo and Alexandria starting 2 October. In the initial run, the movie will run in eight theatres in Cairo and two in Alexandria, including at all major theatres and multiplexes. Chennai Express, which has become the most successful Hindi movie of all time,

will be followed by other equally big releases such as *Krissh 3*, starring Hrithik Roshan, and *Dhoom 3*, starring Aamir Khan. All films will carry Arabic subtitles.

Welcoming the development, the Indian Ambassador in Cairo, Navdeep Suri, remarked that no conversation about India in Egypt is complete without a mention of Indian cinema. "The return of Indian films marks an important step in strengthening people to people ties between the two countries. It is an affirmation of the love and affection that Egyptians, across all walks of life, continue to hold for India. Even when Bollywood did not play at theatres, Egyptians followed the fortunes of their favourite actors and actresses. "I am constantly amazed by the passion with which so many Egyptians follow Indian films – even in places like a small village near Komombo which I visited recently. While the older generation recalls classics like *Sangam* and *Suraj*, the younger generation seems to be much more in tune with Amitabh Bacchhan and Shah Rukh Khan.'

The return of Indian films to Egyptian theatres also takes place as India celebrates 100 years of cinema. On 3 May 1913, the first full length Indian feature film, Dadasaheb Phalke's *Raja Harishchandra*, a 40 minute silent film on a righteous king, was unveiled in Bombay. Since then, Indian cinema has travelled a long way. India makes more than a 1000 films every year, in many different languages, but the Hindi film industry, known by the popular term Bollywood, remains foremost among them. Business analysts predict that by 2014, the Indian film industry will be worth US\$ 5 billion. More than 3.3 billion tickets are estimated to be sold every year. In technical proficiency, and global reach, Bollywood has begun to challenge the traditional frontiers of cinema. From Dushanbe to Durban, from Birmingham to Berlin, the colour, music, dance, passion and drama of Indian cinema has found a resonance across cultures and languages.

Source: Embassy of India, Cairo, http://www.indembcairo.com/en-us/presscentre/pressreleases.aspx?udt_656_param_detail=686

3. Inauguration of an Exhibition "Spirit of Gandhi in Egypt" at the Maulana Azad Centre for Indian Culture, Cairo, 24 September 2013.

To mark the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi on 2 October, which was announced as the International Day of Non-violence by the UN General Assembly in 2007, the Maulana Azad Centre for Indian Culture (MACIC) will organize an exhibition entitled "Spirit of Gandhi in Egypt." The exhibition will contain prize winning entries for the poster competition which was conducted by the Indian Embassy in 2012 under the title "Did you sense the Spirit of Gandhi in Tahrir?" as well as caricatures on Mahatma Gandhi by prominent artists of the Egyptian Caricature Society. Ambassador Suri will talk about the relevance of Gandhi's philosophy and ideas in today's world.

The exhibition of posters consists of a symbolic number of colourful designs from India, Egypt and other African countries received by the Embassy for the poster design contest which was launched on 2 October, 2012. The contest was open for youth from Egypt, India and other African countries. The jury, which included Head of Fine Arts Sector Dr. Salah El Meleigy, artist Mohamed Ablah and Director of a leading design firm 'the Ideaworks', Sudhir Horo, received 84 entries for the adult section and 37 entries for the children's section. About 20 of these posters will be exhibited. The Egyptian winner, Amr Shalaan, who visited the National Institute of Design in India as part of his prize, will give a short presentation on his experiences.

The exhibition will also see a selection of caricatures on Mahatma Gandhi, including various facets of his life, by prominent artists of the Egyptian Caricature Society. The Caricature Society is actively collaborating with the Embassy in creating a collection of portraits of prominent Indian personalities, including politicians, film stars, and other leading figures.

The Exhibition will be inaugurated by Ambassador Navdeep Suri, at 1800 hours on 2 October at the Maulana Azad Centre for Indian Culture (MACIC), 23, Talaat Harb, Downtown Cairo. The exhibition will remain open till 10 October, except for Fridays and Saturdays.

Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, http://www.indembcairo.com/en-us/presscentre/pressreleases.aspx?udt_656_param_detail=694

4. Indian films return to Egypt, Cairo, 26 September 2013.

Ambassador Navdeep Suri hosted a reception for the media on 25 September to celebrate the return of Indian films to Egypt after a gap of 25 years which is coinciding with the 100th year of Indian cinema. The President of the Cairo International Film Festival, Samir Farid, Egyptian director and actress, Aida al-Kashef, Egyptian actress Lubna Abdel Aziz were among the dignitaries at the event.

Welcoming the return of Indian films, Samir Farid, said that Indian cinema has a long tradition, and that power of Asia was reflected in the global influence of Indian cinema. He further said that it was the right of Egyptian audiences to have the opportunity to see Indian films in theatres. Egyptian actress Aida al-Kashef, who was the lead actress in the critically acclaimed Indian movie 'Ship of Theseus', expressed her delight at the development, adding that working with an Indian director for her movie was a great experience. She hoped that a strong return by Indian movies would encourage further collaboration between Indian and Egyptian film industries.

Ambassador Suri, speaking on the occasion, said that he was amazed to witness the love and affection Egyptians had for Indian Cinema, even when they did not play in theatres. "It was an odd situation. India is the world's biggest producer of feature films; Indian films are screened in over 90 countries; Egyptians clearly love Indian films... And yet, they couldn't find their favourite Indian films on the big screen! That's where we intervened to connect Egyptian distribution channels with Indian film producers. I am delighted that they have come together to meet the demand of Egyptian audiences."

A number of young Egyptians, including the coordinator of the Discover India in Egypt group, Maiosh Khafagi, also spoke on the occasion as to how they had been attracted to Indian culture and cinema. Khafagi said that Bollywood would prove to be a strong challenger to Hollywood in Egypt, due to the love of Indian cinema amongst the youth. The evening's programme also included a Bollywood dance performance by Egyptian artist Sameera and a short film tracing 100 years of Indian cinema and highlighting some of the cinematic links between India and Egypt.

United Motion Pictures, facilitated by Gaurang Films and the Indian Embassy in Cairo, will release the blockbuster Indian movie Chennai Express, starring Shah Rukh Khan and Deepika Padukone will hit Egyptian theatres in Cairo and Alexandria starting 2 October. In the initial run, the movie will run in eight theatres in Cairo and two in Alexandria, including at all major theatres and multiplexes. The film will carry Arabic subtitles.

For more information, please visit our Facebook page Indian Embassy Cairo or contact Abu Mathen George, Head of Press and Information, at info.cairo@mea.gov.in

Source: Embassy of India, Cairo, http://www.indembcairo.com/en-us/presscentre/pressreleases.aspx?udt_656_param_detail=698

b. KUWAIT

5. Sunil Jain appointed as the next Ambassador of India to the State of Kuwait, New Delhi, 2 September 2013.

Sunil Jain (IFS: 1981) currently Ambassador of India, Ashgabat has been appointed as the next Ambassador of India to the State of Kuwait.

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/22145/Sh+Sunil+Jain+appointed+as+the+next+Ambassador+of+India+to+the+State+of+Kuwait>

6. Indian Naval Ships visit to Kuwait, Kuwait, 9 September 2013.

Two Indian Naval ships INS Mysore and INS Tarkash will be on a goodwill visit to Kuwait from 10 to 13 September 2013. The visit is aimed at further strengthening bilateral ties and cooperation between India and Kuwait.

The visiting ships form part of the Indian Navy's Western Fleet under the Western Naval Command and are based at Mumbai. This group is headed by Rear Admiral Anil Kumar Chawla, NM, VSM, the Flag Officer Commanding Western Fleet, who is flying his flag INS Mysore. The Flag Officer Commanding in Chief of the Western Naval Command Vice Admiral Shekhar Sinha, PVSM, AVSM, NM & BAR, ADC will also be in Kuwait from 11 to 13 September. During the visit, the senior Indian officers will be calling on the senior dignitaries and officials of Kuwait's Ministry of Defence.

Indian Navy has close and friendly ties with all navies in the Gulf and has been regularly exercising with many of them. Indian Navy is also privileged to provide training and hydro-graphic support to several navies in the region. The involvement of Indian Naval ships in combating piracy off the coast of Somalia since October 2008 has further strengthened bilateral ties and interaction with navies in the region.

India and Kuwait have traditionally enjoyed close and friendly relations. Cooperation between the two countries covers a broad spectrum including trade, investment, human resources, culture and arts, science & technology and defence. Defence cooperation between the two countries covers high level military visits, training and port visits by naval ships. India and Kuwait are also members of Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS), a voluntary and co-operative initiative between 35 countries of the Indian Ocean Region, which has served as an ideal forum for sharing of information and cooperation on maritime issues.

INS MYSORE

INS Mysore is an indigenously designed destroyer class of ship built by the Mazagaon Dock Limited, Mumbai and embodies the very cutting edge of technology. She was commissioned on 1 June 1999 and has since been at the forefront of all operations undertaken by the Indian Navy. INS Mysore is capable of operating in a multi-threat environment.

INS Mysore is powered by four gas turbines, providing her with 64,000 HP and a top speed of over 32 knots. It has a state-of-the-art sensor package comprising radars, sonar and electronic warfare equipment. The ship carries two versatile Seaking Helicopters on board. The ship is commanded by Captain Sameer Saxena, a Navigation & Direction specialist.

INS TARKASH

INS Tarkash, the second of the Teg class frigates, is among the very latest in the inventory of the Indian Navy. The ship has been built by Yantar Shipyard, Kaliningrad, Russia and was commissioned on 9 November 2012. With a judicious mix of state-of-the-art Russian and Indian systems, Tarkash is equipped to dominate all three dimensions of the maritime domain. The ship operates both the Air Early Warning helicopter Kamov 31 and the Anti Submarine Warfare helicopter Kamov 28.

Powered by four gas turbines that produce 56,000 HP, the ship is capable of doing speeds in excess of 30 knots. Electric power is supplied by four diesel alternators, which together produce 3.2 MW of power.

The ship is commanded by Captain Antony George NM VSM, an Anti-Submarine Warfare specialist.

Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait,

<http://www.indembkwt.org/DispNews.aspx?ID=267>

7. Hindi Diwas celebrated at Embassy of India, Kuwait, 17 September 2013.

Fourteenth September is observed every year as “Hindi Diwas” across India. A function to celebrate the Hindi Diwas was organized at the Embassy of India, Kuwait to promote the use of Hindi. Embassy officials as well as their family members, including children actively participated in the function. The function was inaugurated by Ambassador of India Satish C. Mehta by lighting the traditional lamp. In his address he spoke on the relevance of Hindi and the need to promote its use. This was followed by competitions in Hindi including composition by adults and recitation of poem by children.

The topics for composition/speech this year were:

- Bharthiya Sanskruti ke dhwaja ko vishwa ke konne konne thak faharaane wale - “Swami Vivekananda” ka vyakthithva.
- Sann 2025 AD mein bharat ka vishwamunch par pramukh shakthi ke roop mein sthaan.

The event witnessed impressive performance by participants who creatively expressed themselves in Hindi. The competition was followed by prize distribution by the Ambassador. M P Bharatiya received the first prize in the adults category followed by Priya Mandal, Shakeel Ahmed and C. Dhanya. In the children category the first prize was bagged by Prachi followed by Shreya Prasad and Shivani Sagar. The programme was ably compeered by Manoj Kumar Mandal.

Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait,

<http://www.indembkwt.org/DispNews.aspx?ID=270>

8. Indian Naval ships INS Mysore and INS Tarkash paid a goodwill visit to Kuwait, Kuwait, 18 September 2013.

Two Indian Naval ships INS Mysore commanded by Capt. Sameer Saxena and INS Tarkash commanded by Capt. Antony George paid a goodwill visit to Kuwait from 10 -13 September 2013. The group of ships was headed by Flag Officer Commanding Western Fleet Rear Admiral. Anil Kumar Chawla, NM, VSM. The Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief Western Naval Command, Mumbai V.Adm. Shekhar Sinha, PVSM, AVSM, NM & BAR, ADC also visited Kuwait from 11-13 September 2013. The senior naval officers called on senior dignitaries of the Kuwait Ministry of Defence. They also called on the Ambassador of India Satish C. Mehta.

The Embassy of India organized visit of members of the Indian community as well as the students of Indian schools to the ships from 10 -12 September. The Embassy also organized visit of ships' crew and officers to various places of interest in Kuwait. A press conference was held on board INS Mysore on 11 September. The visiting ships hosted a reception for the officials of the Kuwait government, Ministry of Defence, Chief of the Naval Staff of Kuwait, Sr. Kuwait Naval officers, Ambassadors, Kuwaiti dignitaries, Military Advisors of various countries and members of the Indian community in Kuwait.

The visit was aimed at furthering bilateral cooperation between India and Kuwait and promoting maritime interaction between the two navies".

Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait,

<http://www.indembkwt.org/DispNews.aspx?ID=271>

9. Indian U-16 football team in Kuwait, Kuwait, 23 September 2013.

The U-16 National Football team of India is in Kuwait to participate in the Under 16 Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Championship Qualifiers. The schedule of Indian matches is as follows:

1. India v/s Lebanon at 2000 hours on 25 September
2. India v/s Bhutan at 1650 hours on 27 September
3. India v/s Kuwait at 2000 hours on 29 September

The matches are being played at Ali Sabha Al - Salem, Stadium at Al Nasser club, Ardiya (near Farwaniya Hospital).

Members of the Indian community in Kuwait are kindly requested to witness the matches at the venue in large numbers and encourage the Indian football team.

Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait,

<http://www.indembkwt.org/DispNews.aspx?ID=272>

10. The Embassy of India will remain closed on the following dates during the month of October 2013, Kuwait, 29 September 2013.

2 October 2013, Wednesday – Mahatma Gandhi's birthday

13 October 2013, Sunday – Dussehra (Vijaya Dashami)

Holiday for Eid ul Zuha will be intimated after declaration of the same.

Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait,

<http://www.indembkwt.org/DispNews.aspx?ID=279>

c. LEBANON

11. Anita Nayar appointed as the next Ambassador of India to the Republic of Lebanon, New Delhi, 18 September 2013.

Anita Nayar (IFS: 1983) has been appointed as the next Ambassador of India to the Republic of Lebanon.

She is expected to take up her assignment shortly.

Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, <http://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/22216/Ms+Anita+Nayar+appointed+as+the+next+Ambassador+of+India+to+the+Republic+of+Lebanon>

d. LIBYA

12. Ambassador of India meets Minister of Health, State of Libya, Tripoli, 2 September 2013.

On 2 September 2013 His Excellency Anil Trigunayat, Ambassador of India called on H. E. Dr. Nurideen Abdulhamid Dagman, Minister of Health, State of Libya, to discuss cooperation in healthcare and pharmaceutical sector. They also discussed the modalities of implementation of the artificial limbs camp & centre as a good will gesture from the Government of India which will include gift of 1,000 artificial limbs called 'Jaipur Foot' for the injured Libyans.

Honourable Minister also reflected the requirement of Doctors and Para-Medical staff for Libyans hospitals as well as treatment of injured revolutionaries in Indian hospitals. Ambassador offered to facilitate and extend all cooperation this regard. He informed the Minister about the participation of several Indian companies in the forthcoming 10th Libya Healthcare Exhibition from September 10-12.

Ambassador also extended the invitation to H. E. Dr. Nurideen Abdulhamid Dagman to visit India on mutually convenient dates.

Source: Embassy of India, Tripoli,

<http://indianembassy.ly/index.php?mact=News,cntnt01,detail,0&cntnt01articleid=62&cntnt01pagelimit=5&cntnt01returnid=15>

13. Indian Community School in Tripoli reopens, Tripoli, 25 September 2013.

On 22 September 2013 the Indian Ambassador Anil Trigunayat inaugurated the reopening of the Indian Community School at Tripoli. Several Indian parents, teachers and other members of the Indian community based in Tripoli attended the function.

On this occasion Ambassador highly appreciated the School Managing Committee for their efforts to reopen the School and appealed the Indian Community to come forward and help it in running the School successfully as it is the self financing Indian community school.

Initially, the School will be up to the 5th grade. However, more classes would be added in near future depending upon the strength of students. Along with the Indians the Libyan children as well as the children from other nationalities are also welcome to the School.

Ambassador described this initiative as very important in New Libya as the School would not only provide the education to the Indian and Libyan children but it would also be a good platform for people to people contacts of the two countries which would also promote the culture of each other.

It is worth mentioning that the above School which was functioning for decades would be on the pattern of CBSE, Delhi.

The contact details of School are as follows:

Sidi Abu Gharara, Souq Al-Sbaa locality, Zone 7, near Ghazwai Badr Mosque, Tripoli.

P N Somarajan, Chairman, School Managing Committee

Mob: 091-2120341, Email: icstripoli@yahoo.com

George Thomas, Member, School Managing Committee, Mob: 092-5074148

Source: Embassy of India, Tripoli,

<http://indianembassy.ly/index.php?mact=News,cntnt01,detail,0&cntnt01articleid=63&cntnt01pagelimit=5&cntnt01returnid=15>

14. Ambassador calls on H.E. Mustafa Mohammed Abofanas, Minister of Economy, State of Libya, 25 September 2013.

On 23 September 2013 Anil Trigunayat, Ambassador of India, called on H.E. Mustafa Mohammed Abofanas, Minister of Economy, State of Libya to discuss cooperation in the field of trade and commerce. Ambassador informed the Minister about growing bilateral trade that has crossed US\$ 2 billion last year, rising by almost 100 percent.

Ambassador also informed the Minister about important trade fairs and exhibitions, being held in India and extended invitation to him and Libyan companies to visit India. Ambassador informed that under the India Africa Forum Summit programme, the Indian Institute of Foreign Trade would be happy to conduct a two-week seminar for business professionals and government officials involved in trade promotion and SME development that would go a long way in capacity building in New Libya. Ambassador also requested Minister to depute a delegation for the upcoming India-Africa Trade Ministers meeting in South Africa on 30 September-1 October 2013. Minister informed that a delegation led by his Deputy Minister will attend the India-Africa Trade Minister meeting.

H.E. Abofanas thanked Ambassador and said that Libya is keen to develop relations with a friendly country like India and would work together for the mutual benefit of both the countries.

Source: Embassy of India, Tripoli,

<http://indianembassy.ly/index.php?mact=News,cntnt01,detail,0&cntnt01articleid=64&cntnt01pagelimit=5&cntnt01returnid=15>

e. OMAN

15. A delegation from the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) visited Oman from 10-14 September 2013, Muscat, 14 September 2013.

A delegation from the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) visited Oman from 10-14 September 2013. The delegation called on the Chairman of the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) and later had business-to-business meetings at the premises of the OCCI and the Embassy of India. The delegation also visited the port cities of Sohar and Salalah.

Source: Embassy of India, Muscat,

<http://www.indemb-oman.org/inner.aspx?type=AllEvents&id=0>

16. 'Hindi Diwas' at Embassy of India, Muscat, 18 September 2013.

Like the previous years, 'Hindi Diwas' was celebrated in the Mission with enthusiasm. A large number of officers and India-based as well as local staff members participated in various

categories of competitions organized for promoting the use of Hindi in official work. Those who excelled were rewarded with prizes and certificates.

Source: Embassy of India, Muscat,

<http://www.indemb-oman.org/inner.aspx?type=AllEvents&id=0>

17. Twenty Years of Indian Navy- Royal Omani Navy Partnership Ninth 'Naseem Al Bahr' Biennial Naval Exercise, New Delhi, 22 September 2013.

The ninth edition of the bilateral Indian Navy-Royal Omani Navy biennial exercise begins off Oman, in the North Arabian Sea. In this, the ninth edition of the bilateral exercise, Indian Naval Ships Mysore (guided missile destroyer), Tarkash and Tabar (stealth frigates) and Aditya (fleet tanker) are participating under the Command of the Flag Officer Commanding Western Fleet, Rear Admiral Anil Kumar Chawla. The Royal Omani Navy is being represented by Royal Navy of Oman Vessels (RNOV) missile and gun vessels, Al Muazzar, Al Mussandam, Al Naja and a Landing ship RNOV Temsah, along with Royal Air Force of Oman aircraft F-16, Hawks and Jaguars amongst others.

With the first Indian Navy-Royal Navy of Oman exercise having been conducted in 1993, this year marks 20 years of IN-RNO bilateral exercises. "Naseem Al Bahr" 2013, will be the ninth edition of the biennial bilateral exercise between the two navies. The exercise is aimed at deriving mutual benefit from the experiences of both the navies. A good measure of interoperability has been achieved over the years as result of such exercises. The scope and content of exercise have also increased progressively. The focus of the exercise this year would be on Surface Warfare, Visit Board Search and Seizure (VBSS), Anti Air Warfare, Air Operation, Advanced Helo Operations and Maritime Interdiction Operations (MIO).

Bilateral relation between Indian and Oman were formally established with the 1953 Indo-Oman Treaty of friendship, Navigation and Commerce, a first between Indian and any Arab country. Naval exercises have contributed to strengthening of bilateral ties between India and Sultanate of Oman. The signing of a MoU on Defence Cooperation in December 2005 and subsequent establishment of the Joint Military Cooperation in March 2006 has set the foundation for increased defence cooperation. Since then, naval cooperation between the countries has progressed steadily with increased port visits by naval ships and training of RNO personnel by the Indian Navy in hydrography, diving, training management, logistics management and dockyard management.

The visit to Oman is the last leg of the Western Fleet's Overseas Development to the Persian Gulf as the IN Ships have visited UAE and Kuwait earlier during their month long deployment to enhance bilateral ties and engage in naval exercise with friendly regional navies.

Source: Press Information Bureau, New Delhi,

<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx?relid=99552>

18. FIEO delegation visited Oman from 23-25 September 2013, Muscat, 25 September 2013.

A 22-member delegation from the Federation of Indian Export Organizations (FIEO) visited Oman from 23-25 September 2013 to participate in the Med-Health & Wellness Exhibition 2013. The Embassy of India, Muscat organized business interaction meet at Embassy Auditorium on 24 September 2013.

Source: Embassy of India, Muscat,

<http://www.indemb-oman.org/inner.aspx?type=AllEvents&id=0>

f. PALESTINE

19. Intervention made by Navtej Sarna, AS (IO) at the Ministerial Meeting of the NAM Committee on Palestine, New York, 26 September 2013.

Chairman, Distinguished members of the Committee,

Allow me at the outset, Chairman, to thank you for organizing this meeting.

NAM has a long history of solidarity with the Palestinian people. India as the founding member of the Movement has always supported the cause of the Palestinian people. Our support for their just cause is time tested and a cornerstone of India's foreign policy. India continues to remain steadfast and unwavering in its commitment to the cause for a sovereign, independent, viable and united State of Palestine living within secure and recognized borders with East Jerusalem as its Capital, side by side and at peace with Israel as endorsed in the Quartet Roadmap, various UN resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative.

As a member of the Security Council during 2011-12, India not only supported Palestine's bid for full membership of the United Nations, it co-sponsored the General Assembly resolution in November 2012 that upgraded the status of Palestine to a non-member Observer State. India will continue its full support for Palestine to become a Member-State of the United Nations.

Chairman,

The biggest obstacle to the realization of an independent, sovereign Palestinian state is Israeli settlement activity. This activity is mortally undermining the premise of a two-state solution. India, therefore, opposes Israeli settlement policy, voted in favour of the draft resolution in the Security Council in February 2011 and continues to call for total cessation of all settlement activities.

The blockade of Gaza has had serious consequences for the lives of Palestinians. It has adversely affected essential services, economic activities and infrastructure development. We continue to hold that it is necessary for Israel to lift the blockade on Gaza and allow normal and unrestricted movement of persons and goods within Palestine.

We are also alarmed at the continuing violence and disproportionate and excessive use of force by the Israeli authorities. We deplore these measures and the loss of lives and property that they cause in the occupied Palestinian territories.

Chairman,

Given the evolving situation in the region and its inherent fragility and unpredictability, it is necessary that there is no more delay in the resolution of the Palestinian question. We are encouraged by the resumption of direct talks between Israel and Palestine (facilitated by US efforts). We hope that the direct talks after perhaps one of the longest period of stalemate since the signing of the Oslo Accords will lead to concrete results.

India stands ready to support all measures that the Palestinian leadership will take towards political resolution of the Final Status issues so that an independent, sovereign Palestinian State comes into being.

Meanwhile, we will continue to provide developmental support and assistance to the Palestinian Authority through direct budgetary support, contributions to UNRWA and bilateral capacity building and infrastructure projects as well as through IBSA fund.

In conclusion, Chairman, we think NAM has an important role to play in supporting the Palestinian leadership in their efforts towards realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian People. As our Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh said during the last NAM Summit in Tehran, “we should renew our pledge to support an early resolution of the Palestinian question, so that the long suffering people of Palestine can live in peace and dignity in a state of their own.”

We are hopeful that today’s meeting will send a strong signal to all concerned of our collective support for the Palestinian people and their leadership in their endeavours to resolve this long-standing question.

I thank you.

Source: Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations, New York, <http://www.un.int/india/2013/pmi72.pdf>

20. Indian Visas for Palestinian Nationals, Ramallah, 29 September 2013.

On Palestinian Nationals can apply for Indian Visas from the Representative Office of India, Ramallah and can receive Visas in three working days. For further clarification, kindly contact Asma Shaheen at 02-2903033/4/6 or email her at info@roiramallah.org

Source: Representative Office of India, Ramallah, <http://www.roiramallah.org/>

g. QATAR

21. Visit of Indian Navy’s Western Fleet Ships INS Tabar and INS Aditya to Qatar, Doha, 4 September 2013.

Visit of Indian Navy's Western Fleet Ships INS Tabar and INS Aditya to Qatar (10-13 September 2013) and convening of India-Qatar Joint Committee on Defence Cooperation (15-16 September 2013)

In the framework of the excellent relations and multi-faceted cooperation between India and the State of Qatar, two ships of Indian Navy's Western Fleet, INS Tabar and INS Aditya will be making a goodwill visit to Qatar from 10 - 13 September 2013.

The Embassy deeply appreciates the active support of the Government of Qatar and Qatar Emiri Navy in arranging the visit of Indian Naval ships.

INS Tabar is a part of the state-of-the-art Talwar class ships (Talwar, Trishul and Tabar) of the Indian Navy. The Talwar class ships reinforce the growing strength of the Indian Navy and considerably extend its Blue Water capability. The ship is commanded by Captain Venkat Raman.

INS Aditya is one of Indian Navy's indigenously built Fleet Replenishment Tankers. The ship is commonly referred to as the lifeline of Indian Navy's Western Fleet. The ship is capable of carrying and transferring all types of liquid cargo whilst underway. The ship can also operate a variety of helicopters. The ship is commanded by Captain Roopam Bembey.

Following the goodwill visit of Indian Navy ships, Government of Qatar will be hosting the third meeting of the Joint Committee on Defence Cooperation (JCDC) between India and Qatar on 15-16 September 2013. JCDC was set up to implement the bilateral agreement on defence cooperation signed in Doha on 9 November 2008 during the visit of Dr. Manmohan Singh, Hon'ble Prime Minister of India to the State of Qatar. The two Governments have agreed to renew this agreement for a further period of five years.

Source: Embassy of India, Doha,

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

22. Visit of a delegation of Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) to Doha from 8 – 10 September 2013, Doha, 5 September 2013.

Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) is sending a 14-member high level business delegation to Doha from 8-10 September 2013. The delegation is led by K.K.M. Kutty, Chairman of CII's Gulf Committee and CEO and MD of South West Group of Companies, and includes CEOs and other senior representatives of companies engaged in a wide range of sectors including infrastructure; energy; heavy engineering; manufacturing; engineering and other consultancy; communications and information technology; financial services; international trading; pharmaceuticals and health care.

The visit of CII's business mission is taking place in the context of the vast potential and enhanced interest on both sides to further expand business partnerships. Embassy of India deeply

appreciates the active support of the Government of Qatar, Qatar Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and a number of business, financial/banking and professional organizations in preparing a substantive programme for the visiting mission.

CII, founded over 118 years ago, is a premier business association of India with over 7,100 members, including MNCs and SMEs, and an indirect membership of over 90,000 enterprises from around 257 national and regional sectoral industry bodies.

With 63 offices, including 10 Centres of Excellence in India, and 7 overseas offices in Australia, China, Egypt, France, Singapore, UK and USA, as well as institutional partnerships with 224 counterpart organizations in 90 countries, CII serves as a reference point for Indian industry and the international business community.

CII charts change by working closely with Government on policy issues, interfacing with thought leaders, and enhancing efficiency, competitiveness and business opportunities for industry through a range of specialized services and strategic global linkages. It also provides a platform for consensus-building and networking on key issues. The CII Theme for 2013-14 is Accelerating Economic Growth through Innovation, Transformation, Inclusion and Governance.

Companies interested in individual meetings with CII mission members may contact the following officials:

- (i) Gurpal Singh, Principal Advisor and Head – Gulf, Middle East and North Africa, CII [Email : gurpal.singh@cii.in, Mob: +91 9810136887]
- (ii) Haridas Pantheeradi (Mission Manager), Deputy Director – Africa, Gulf & Middle East, CII [Email : p.haridas@cii.in, Mob: +91 9871691185]
- (iii) Dilshad Ahmed, Attaché, Embassy of India, Doha [Email: ambassadorindia@qatar.net.qa, Tel. 44255703].

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

23. Consular Section Timings from 16 September 2013, Doha, 10 September 2013.

With effect from 16 September 2013, the Consular Section will revert to the following timings:

0900 hours to 1215 hours : Submission of Applications

1600 hours to 1515 hours : Collection of documents after Consular Service has been rendered

Source: Embassy of India, Doha,

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

24. Remarks of Sanjiv Arora, Ambassador of India at the Official Reception on board Indian Naval Ship Tabar on 11 September 2013 during the Goodwill Visit of INS Tabar and INS Aditya to Qatar from 10-13 September 2013, Doha, 12 September 2013.

Your Excellency Dr. Abdulla S. Al-Khulaifi, Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, Government of the State of Qatar;

Your Excellency Sheikh Ahmed bin Mohammed bin Jabor Al Thani, Assistant Minister for International Cooperation Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs;

Your Excellency Ambassador Khalifa Al Suwaidi, Office of Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs;

Your Excellency Ibrahim Yousuf Fakhroo, Director of Protocol, Ministry of Foreign Affairs;

Acting Commander of Qatar Emiri Navy (QEN) and other officials of QEN and other defence forces of Qatar;

My esteemed colleagues from the Diplomatic Corps, Defence Advisers based in Doha;

Captain Venkat Raman, Commanding Officer of INS Tabar;

Captain Roopam Bembey, Commanding Officer of INS Aditya and their colleagues on board;

Members of the Indian community in Qatar;

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour and a pleasure for me to join the Commanding Officer of Indian Naval Ship INS Tabar Captain Venkat Raman and his team in extending a warm welcome to all of you on board INS Tabar during the goodwill visit of two state-of-the-art of Indian Navy's Western Fleet Ships, INS Tabar and INS Aditya to Qatar from 10-13 September.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

As we are gathered here to celebrate the visit of our ships amidst the uplifting music of INS Tabar's band wafting across the waters of this friendly country, let us solemnly remember the 18 brave officers and men of Indian Navy's submarine INS Sindhurakshak who made the supreme sacrifice in a tragic incident on 14 August 2013 at Mumbai in which the submarine was destroyed in fire. Comprehensive investigations into this incident are under way.

I would also like to recall amidst this distinguished gathering that today, 11 September, is the 12th anniversary of the dastardly 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States of America. Let us also not forget the repeated terrorist attacks against India – 26 November 2008 in Mumbai and several other acts of terrorism before and after.

Let us remember the victims of these and other terrorist attacks in various parts of the world. Let us never forget that there can be no justification whatsoever for perpetrating any act of terrorism, and for aiding and abetting such heinous crimes. An act of terrorism anywhere is a threat to peace, freedom and security everywhere.

Let us reassert our collective will and determination to continue intensifying domestic measures and international cooperation to fight this scourge of our times. Let us all be united in reflection, remembrance and resolve, in spirit and in action.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

The visit of Indian Naval Ships is a reaffirmation of India's strong ties with Qatar and other countries in the Gulf region, which are steeped in history. I should recall that India has an ancient maritime tradition and maritime interaction with the Gulf region dating back to over 4000 BC.

Simultaneously with the arrival of these two ships on the shores of Qatar, two other ships of our Western Fleet INS Mysore and INS Tarkash arrived in Kuwait yesterday morning. All the four ships will sail on 13 September, reaching Dubai on 15 September and thereafter Muscat on 19 September. These four Indian Naval Ships will participate in a joint exercise 'Naseem Al Bahr' (Breeze from the Sea) with the Royal Omani Navy from 23 to 26 September 2013.

The voyages of these ships reinforce the strong ties of friendship and increasing cooperation between India and our friends in Qatar and other GCC countries. INS Tabar is a part of the state-of-the-art Talwar class ships (Talwar, Trishul and Tabar) of the Indian Navy. INS Aditya is one of Indian Navy's indigenously built Fleet Replenishment Tankers and is aptly referred to as the lifeline of Indian Navy's Western Fleet.

The Indian Navy today is the largest resident Navy in the Indian Ocean region, with multi-dimensional capability comprising aircraft carriers, marine ships, submarines, aircraft and marine commandos.

The Indian Navy has close and friendly ties with all Navies in the Gulf and has been regularly exercising with many of them. During their visit to Qatar, the officers and crew of INS Tabar and INS Aditya are having highly cordial and productive interactions with their colleagues in Qatar Emiri Navy, in the best traditions of professional Navies. Both sides are confident that as these ships sail off from the shores of Qatar on 13 September, and have farewell PASSEX with ships of Qatar Emiri Navy, their goodwill visit would have brought our two great countries and our Navies even closer.

I thank you and wish you all an enjoyable evening.

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

25. Embassy Open House - 26 September 2013, Doha, 26 September 2013.

The monthly Open House to address urgent consular and labour issues/cases of Indian nationals in the State of Qatar was held at the Embassy premises on 26 September 2013. Ambassador Sanjiv Arora and other senior officials met all the complainants, discussed their problem and assured them that the Embassy would actively follow up their cases with the authorities concerned in Government of Qatar. Kareem Abdulla, President of Indian Community Benevolent Forum (ICBF), a community association working under the aegis of the Embassy, for the welfare of Indian workers and another ICBF member also attended the Open House.

An Embassy team visited the Central Prison and the Deportation Centre during this week to enquire about the welfare of detainees from India. The total number of Indian nationals in the Central Prison and the Deportation Centre is currently 44 and 212 respectively.

During the current year, the Labour and Community Welfare Section of the Embassy has received a total of 2,565 complaints so far. The number of complaints during the last three years is as follows:

Year	Number
2010	3034
2011	3186
2012	3385

The number of deaths registered in the Embassy in August and September 2013 was 27 and 14 respectively. The number of deaths registered in the month of August 2013 was the highest in any month so far during the current year. The total number of deaths registered in the Embassy during 2013 so far is 159. The number of deaths registered in the last three years is as follows:

Year	Number
2010	233
2011	239
2012	237

On the basis of requests received from the Qatari authorities for travel documents for inmates in the Deportation Centre, the Embassy has issued 07 Emergency Certificates (ECs) in August 2013 and 03 ECs in September 2013. The Embassy also issued five air tickets to Indian nationals for their return to India in the month of August, 2013.

ICBF is organizing a medical camp for low paid workers of all nationalities at KIMS Medical Centre at Al Wakra from 0730 hours – 1230 hours on 27 September 2013. The Medical Camp will be inaugurated by P.S. Sasi Kumar, Deputy Chief of Mission.

The assistance given by the ICBF to Indian nationals during September 2013 so far includes 11 air tickets for destitute workers, cargo charges for transportation of one dead body, renewal of 20 air tickets, Emergency Certificate fees of 9 people and food assistance for 16 Indian nationals.

Source: Embassy of India, Doha,

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

h. SAUDI ARABIA

26. Ambassador's address at the launching of Saudi-India Business Network, Riyadh, 2 September 2013.

Excellencies and distinguished guests.

I am delighted to see some of the senior Saudi and Indian businessmen present here amongst us today. Most of you are already engaged in business with India. Your presence here today shows the tremendous potential that exists in India – Saudi economic and commercial relations.

I welcome each one of you for your time and presence. I look forward to your suggestions on ways and means to strengthen the trade and investment relations. The Saudi India Business Network (SIBN) that we propose to set up is an attempt to assist the Indian and Saudi businessmen to come together to promote our economic and commerce relations.

During the last few months, the Embassy of India Riyadh was occupied in fully utilizing the concessions announced by the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques His Majesty King Abdullah bin Abdul-Aziz Al Saud for the overstaying expatriates in the Kingdom to correct their legal status. Some of you have recruited more Indians. The Embassy continues its efforts in this regard to achieve the objective that no Indian remains illegal in Saudi Arabia at the end of the grace period. At the same time I am aware that trade and commerce forms an important part of the multifaceted India-Saudi Arabia relations. The role of the Embassy is to facilitate the efforts of the private sector. The overwhelming response today reinforced my strong belief that India-Saudi Arabia business ties have a tremendous growth potential, which we hope to harness.

Saudi Arabia is part of India's extended neighbourhood. India's geographical proximity, shared interest in the stability and security of our region and complementarities of interests in energy security makes India and Saudi Arabia natural partners. I am happy with the current state of our political relations and am highly optimistic about their future prospects. The Delhi Declaration issued during the visit of the Custodian of The Two Holy Mosques His Majesty King Abdullah bin Abdul-Aziz Al Saud to India in 2006 provided a roadmap for deepening our political and economic engagement. The Riyadh Declaration issued during the visit of Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh in 2010 elevated our relationship to a 'strategic partnership' focusing on political, security and economic relations.

During their interaction, His Majesty King Abdullah bin Abdul-Aziz Al Saud and Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh invited private sector in our countries to increase their efforts to take advantage of the investment opportunities provided by the two countries. The roadmap set by our high leadership is clear. They have identified sectors such as IT, space science, frontier technologies, life sciences including bio-technology and nano-technology, research and education and stressed on working towards meeting our vast requirements relating to infrastructure, energy, by augmenting the flow of investments into each other's countries.

Saudi Arabia has always been an economic power house of Asia and India, certainly, has emerged as a major economic player in the region. India has one of the largest and most diversified economies in the world with an integrated national market. The domestic economy has been growing at an average rate of over six per cent for over twenty years making it one of the fastest growing economies in the world. In the second half of last decade, this growth has risen to over eight per cent at a time when the global economy was experiencing slowdown. During the last two years, despite the crippling global slowdown, India registered a GDP growth of over five per cent.

Today, India is the third largest economy in terms of GDP on PPP terms. India benefits greatly from domestic demand from a growing young population and emerging middle class. By 2020, India's consumer spending is estimated to touch US\$ 3.6 trillion. India today is emerging as world's innovation, design and research hub. It is host to several global corporate giants; many high-tech global players have set up software development centres in India, and many Fortune 500 companies have established their regional headquarters in India. India continues to be one of the leading software service providers to the world. India has also become a source of foreign investment for rest of the world. A number of private players, along with government-owned entities, are increasingly investing abroad.

Recently India approved proposals relaxing FDI norms in various sectors making investment more attractive. This includes a number of key sectors, including petroleum and natural gas in which Saudi Arabia has expertise. In the key petroleum and natural gas refining sector, the existing FDI cap of 49 per cent through the Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB) has been changed to the automatic route, which means no FIPB approval will be required henceforth. I would urge Saudi companies to utilize these opportunities to invest in India.

In fact, in almost every sector of the Indian economy there are ample opportunities for Saudi businessmen and investors, and for Saudi consumers. For Saudi consumers and importers, India can provide a quality source of imports at reasonable prices, and can bring the benefits of competition and our technology to Saudi markets. Some of the sectors where evident complementarities exist between India and Saudi Arabia are agricultural products, minerals, iron and steel, chemicals and pharmaceuticals, automobiles and spare parts, new and renewable energy technology, and cooperation between small and medium enterprises. These areas need to be looked into.

At the bilateral level, we have been able to put in place a robust framework and an environment conducive for expanding trade and investment. We have already signed and ratified the Bilateral Investment Promotion and Protection Treaty (BIPPA) and the Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA). We have streamlined and eased our visa policy for Saudi businessmen to travel to India. More Saudi students are looking at India for higher education. More Saudi families are visiting India for medical tourism.

Saudi Arabia today is the 4th largest trading partner for India. In recent years our two-way trade has grown. During 2012-13 the two-way trade has exceeded US\$ 43 billion registering 18 per cent increase over the previous year. India imports almost 19 per cent of its crude oil from Saudi Arabia. Both countries are committed to elevate this buyer-seller relationship into strategic energy cooperation. Many Indian companies are operating in Saudi Arabia. Some of the leading Indian companies from service sectors like IT and manufacturing sectors like power, construction, infrastructure, etc. are already operating from the Kingdom. Some of them are present here today with us. I welcome them to this gathering.

We need to have a regular business-to-business engagement and a constant dialogue between the business communities of our two countries. SIBN is intended to provide a platform for such interactions. I hope that SIBN would contribute in a positive and meaningful way towards the development of economic and commercial relations between our two friendly countries.

Thank You!

Source: Embassy of India, Riyadh,

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

27. Meeting of Volunteers in the Indian Embassy on 13 September 2013, 5 September 2013.

A meeting of the registered volunteers and those involved in assisting the Indian community in the Kingdom during the grace period announced by the Custodian of Two Holy Mosques His Majesty King Abdullah bin Abdul-Aziz Al Saud will be held on Friday, 13 September 2013, at 05.00 pm at the Embassy premises at Diplomatic Quarters in Riyadh. The meeting would discuss the ways and means to effectively utilize the extended grace period which ends on 3 November 2013.

Indian volunteers registered with the Embassy are invited to attend the meeting and provide their suggestions to assist the Indian Community spread all over the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to fully avail the concessions during the extended grace period.

Source: Embassy of India, Riyadh,

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

28. Ambassador's Message, The Unity Thus Far is the Way Forward, Riyadh, 13 September 2013.

Dear fellow Indians,

The numbers so far available with us look very impressive. Since the beginning of grace period so far 359,997 Indians have transferred their services, 355,035 Indians have changed their job title and 466,689 Indians have renewed their licenses. These are official figures that I received from the authorities of this country. Till date we have been approached by 88,737 persons for Emergency Certificates, while 5,956 have collected their huroob passports from the Embassy and 2091 have renewed their old ECs. The number of those Indians who received final exit is also impressive, though there is still more work to be done on this.

Let me begin by thanking the Custodian of Two Holy Mosques His Majesty King Abdullah bin Abdul-Aziz Al Saud for announcing the grace period in April 2013 and then further extending it till 3 November 2013. For many over staying Indians in Saudi Arabia this was a dream come true. Many of our fellow Indians have been able to utilize the concessions announced by the Ministries of Labour and Interior. Let me thank the many officials of the government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia at all levels who helped our people to correct their status. They always had time to meet us, listen to us and initiate action on our several suggestions and requests. We deeply appreciate their work and their support.

In this endeavour, Embassy always had the partnership of our fellow Indians here in the Kingdom. You served the community well as non-remunerative volunteers. Your role as volunteers, as media personnel, as members of the managing committees of our schools, as principals and teachers, as non teaching staff of our schools, as parents, as students, as interpreters in various government offices has helped us to meet the challenges. I thank our lady volunteers and also the spouses of our volunteers for their contributions, including for the several telephone calls they made on behalf of the Embassy to thousands of Indians who applied for Emergency Certificates. I recall the efforts of our volunteers when all our press releases were translated to multiple languages in no time. So many multiple language booklets were prepared and distributed throughout the Kingdom. We used the Internet and social media effectively. Our Indian community schools all across Saudi Arabia were focal points of our efforts. I thank our media both the Saudi media and Indian media who spread our message all across the Kingdom and beyond. During the initial days of grace period, when we understood the magnitude of the problem and began addressing the issues, we found you as our willing partners. Today you are the eyes and ears of the Embassy in our efforts to reach out to our brothers and sisters in distress. Together we help those in distress and together we expose those who try to mislead and exploit them. I am confident that this is a partnership that we both cherished and will continue in years to come. In a large community with a working population of over two million it is only natural that we face several challenges on a day to day basis. We will address these challenges together with the support of our friends in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

All that we have been able to achieve during the grace period, we did it by fully adhering to the rules and regulations of this country. We Indians have a reputation of being a peace loving, law abiding and hard working community. We will maintain that reputation at any cost. We are in a foreign land. We will do nothing that violates the rules and regulations of this country. Every action that we take here, every event that we organize here, every suggestion that we make here should be within the rules and regulations of this country. We need to maintain the goodwill that exists in this country for India and Indians. We will continue to behave responsibly and take up our concerns with the leadership of this country.

The journey that we undertook together so far has helped us to transcend sectarian, religious, regional and language barriers and brought in a new and enduring unity within the community that we cherish. We have demonstrated how our unity in diversity works. This has yielded remarkable results. However, it is not the time just to congratulate each other or praise each other. We are not there yet. It is time to rededicate ourselves once again to our objective. This is a solemn pledge that we took in April 2013 at the beginning of the grace period. At the end of the grace period all Indians in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia will be legal in his or her status. There would be no Indian who would be illegal. It is time for a replay of our efforts. All officials of our Embassy are ready for it. We look forward to your continued support and participation in our efforts. I need to get your suggestions. We need to go to the small cities, towns and villages

of this large country to spread the message of grace period. We do not have much time left. The number of working days till the end of the grace period is not many. You have been everywhere, at the embassy, at tarheels, at airports, at labour offices, at schools, at labour camps, at small villages and even at remote deserts. We are still at the tarheels together every day. I urge you to continue to travel to the small cities, towns, villages and beyond to spread the message of grace period. Our officers are ready to travel with you. We will continue to take up with the concerned authorities each and every case that you bring to our notice. We will reactivate our helpdesks at airports, we will set up helpdesks in our community schools, we will set up EC centres at Dammam and at other places, we will work round the clock and we will follow up on each of the cases with the concerned authorities. We will do all this till that last overstaying Indian is helped. We have a major task at hand. Together we will meet the target.

Before I conclude, I urge those who have not availed the concessions offered by the Saudi authorities to come forward. This is our last chance to correct the legal status or to leave the country without facing penal action. We cannot expect another extension. We still have time, but very little time. We need to use every minute available to us. Please come forward and correct yourself. We are ready to help you. Please do not hide hoping for another extension of grace period. This is time to correct your status or to leave the country. Whatever be the complications of your problem, we will try our best to help you. I am confident that we will be able to find a solution.

Thank you.

Source: Embassy of India, Riyadh,

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

29. Press Release, Riyadh, 15 September 2013.

The Embassy of India, Riyadh will remain closed on Monday, 16 September 2013 on account of Onam. NO applications for Emergency Certificate will be accepted on 16 September 2013.

Source: Embassy of India, Riyadh,

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

30. Press Release, Riyadh, 17 September 2013.

An interactive session of Indian and Saudi businessmen focusing on Agriculture and Food processing industry was held at the Embassy of India under the aegis of Saudi India Business Network (SIBN). The representatives from 40 Indian Processed Food and Agro Industries, participating in the 'Saudi Agro Food Exhibition 2013', held discussions with Saudi businessmen and importers on the opportunities available for expansion of trade and investment in the field of agriculture and food processing. The meeting was also attended by representatives from Ministries of Commerce & Industry of India and Food Processing Industries; representatives of Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) and India Trade Promotion Organization (ITPO). This was first in a series of sector specific activities being organized under the patronage of SIBN, which was launched on 2 September 2013. Over 100 participants including businessmen and media personnel attended the meeting.

Earlier, the delegation from Indian Ministries of Commerce and Industry and Food Processing Industries called on Ambassador H.E. Hamid Ali Rao. At the interactive session that followed, Minister/Deputy Chief of Mission Sibi George in his opening remarks invited the Saudi and Indian businessmen to take advantage of the positive business environment prevailing in the two countries. A presentation titled "Indian Agriculture and Cooperation with KSA" was made by Surinder Bhagat, Second Secretary (Political, Information & Commerce). This was followed by an interactive session whereby the business communities from the two countries put forth their suggestions, recommendations and inputs pertaining to Agro and Processed Food Industries to further deepen the engagement in this field.

Saudi businessmen dealing with import of rice, frozen meat, frozen fruits and vegetables, hyper market representatives, etc. participated in the interactive session. The meeting was followed up by an informal networking between the interested parties from the two sides. The representatives of Indian companies are available during the Saudi Agro Food Exhibition 2013 at Riyadh Exhibition and Convention Centre, King Abdullah Road, Hall Number 4.

On 16 September 2013, the Indian Agro and Processed Food Industries' representatives and members of the official delegation visited Riyadh Chamber of Commerce and Industries and met with H.E. Mohammad H. Al-Kathiri, Secretary General. They also held a meeting at the Riyadh Lulu Hypermarket.

Source: Embassy of India, Riyadh,

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

31. Press Release, Riyadh, 19 September 2013.

The Embassy of India, Riyadh will remain closed on Monday, 23 September 2013 on account of National Day of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. NO applications for Emergency Certificate will be accepted on 23 September 2013.

Source: Embassy of India, Riyadh,

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

32. Press Release, Jeddah, 29 September 2013.

We have a well stocked library in our Consulate containing about 3326 books relating to various fields of Human Knowledge from History to Literature, Politics to Culture, Children books to Encyclopaedias. In addition to this, several weekly and monthly magazines including children magazines are also subscribed by the Library. The library also has a good stock of DVDs, CDs, Audio CDs on feature films and documentaries.

Timing: The library is open from Sunday to Thursday from 9 am to 4 pm and is open for all. All interested individuals including school children are welcome to visit the library and benefit from its collections during the specified time.

Membership: Those who are interested to become a Member of the library are required to deposit SR. 100/- which is refundable. Copies of Passport, Iqama and one photograph are also

required to be submitted. Once a person becomes a member, he or she can borrow one book and keep it for a maximum of two weeks for reading

(Dr. Irshad Ahmad)

Consul (Press, Information & Culture)

Consulate General of India, Jeddah, Telefax: 2841084

Source: Consulate General of India, Jeddah,

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

i. SYRIA

33. Response to a query on situation in Syria, New Delhi, 3 September 2013.

In response to a question from the media on the situation in Syria, the Official Spokesperson has responded as follows:

"India has consistently called upon all sides to abjure violence so that conditions can be created for an inclusive political dialogue leading to a comprehensive political solution, taking into account the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people. There can be no military solution to this conflict. We continue to support the proposed 'International Conference on Syria' (Geneva-II), being the best prospect for a political solution, for bringing the Syrian Government and the opposition to the negotiating table.

On use of chemical weapons in Syria, India has consistently supported the complete destruction and elimination of chemical weapons worldwide. The international legal norm against the use of chemical weapons anywhere and by anyone should not be breached. However, we will prefer to await the full results of the UN inspection."

Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, <http://www.mea.gov.in/media-briefings.htm?dtl/22150/Response+to+a+query+on+situation+in+Syria>

34. Official Spokesperson's response to a question on current developments related to Syria, New Delhi, 16 September 2013.

In response to a question from the media on the agreement reached between the Foreign Minister of Russia Sergei Lavrov and US Secretary of State John Kerry and on Syria's chemical weapons stockpiles, the Official Spokesperson said:

"India welcomes the framework agreement reached between Russia and the US on the time-bound safeguarding and destruction of Syria's chemical weapons stockpiles. As an important step in the process, India also welcomes the recent steps taken by Syria to accede to the Chemical Weapons Convention. This is in alignment with India's consistent stance of supporting the complete destruction and elimination of chemical weapons worldwide.

We also see these developments as the reinvigoration of the peace efforts towards a political solution to the Syrian conflict. We are hopeful that this will lead to the early convening of the

proposed 'International Conference on Syria' (Geneva-II), which will bring all parties to the conflict to the negotiating table.

India has consistently called upon all sides to the Syrian conflict to abjure violence so that conditions can be created for an inclusive political dialogue leading to a comprehensive political solution, taking into account the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people. Any external military intervention in Syria's affairs should be excluded."

Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, <http://www.mea.gov.in/media-briefings.htm?dtl/22208/Official+Spokespersons+response+to+a+question+on+current+developments+related+to+Syria>

j. TUNISIA

35. Executive Development Programme on International Business - India-Tunisia, Tunis, 24 September 2013.

Visiting experts from the Indian Institute of Foreign trade are currently conducting a week-long Executive Development Programme on International Business in Tunis (23-27 September 2013) in close cooperation with the Diplomatic Training Institute of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tunisia. The training programme was inaugurated jointly by HE Nagma M. Mallick, Ambassador of India in Tunisia and Madame Saloua Bahri, Director of the Diplomatic Training Institute on Monday, 23 September 2013.

Young career diplomats and officials from Commerce; International Investment and other Ministries of the Government of Tunisia are participating in this training programme. Diverse sectors of interest to the participants such as economic diplomacy, international trade procedures & documents, international marketing of goods & services, global supply chain management and strategies for enhancing exports from Tunisia will be discussed in interactive sessions during the course of the training programme.

The Indian Institute of Foreign Trade is the most prestigious research institute on foreign trade and investment in India; the institute also offers masters degrees in Business Administration. The visiting professors have international expertise in the subjects under study.

This interactive training module is an important milestone in the enhanced bilateral relationship between the Republic of Tunisia and the Republic of India. This programme is within the overall cooperation framework between India and the countries of the African continent which was announced by Prime Minister of India Dr. Manmohan Singh at the India-Africa Forum Summit held in New Delhi in April 2008.

Source: Embassy of India, Tunis, http://www.embassyofindiatunis.com/press_detail.php?id=18

MULTILATERAL ISSUES/REGIONAL ISSUES

k. MEDIA BRIEFING

36. Transcript of Media Briefing by Foreign Secretary on Prime Minister's Forthcoming Visit to USA and UNGA, New Delhi, 20 September 2013.

Question: Madam, I just wanted to know whether you could shed some light on Prime Minister's visit to Washington, whether the issue of Indian purchases of Iranian crude would come up and specifically what level of Indian purchases would be compliant with US sanctions on Iran?

Foreign Secretary: It is very difficult to say what is going to come up and what is not going to come up. They are meeting for a limited period of time and if they are going to discuss every single issue that all of you have asked me whether they will come up or not... I think that on this entire question of purchases of Iranian crude that is something that we do with Iran. I am not sure that we would want to raise it from our side. If the United States wants to raise it, it is welcome to...

Question: Madam, recently there were news items that Iranian Oil Minister has asked Indian Ambassador that they would not be accepting entire payments in rupees, and also on the fact that they are not willing to sign the production-sharing contracts with the Indian companies, also on their stand on not selling cheap gas to India. Then we also had this tanker issue with Iran. Are we seeing a hardening stance from Iran? And what is happening on the imports side? Are we planning to maintain at the last year's level or cut them?

Foreign Secretary: We have a longstanding energy partnership with Iran which we greatly value, and it has proved to be very reliable as well. In recent months we have evolved a system of payment for crude oil imported from Iran that envisages payment of some parts of imports in Indian Rupees. That is the factual position as of date.

Question: India has started paying the entire amount in Rupees to save on the foreign exchange and the Oil Minister had also written to the Prime Minister saying that it will help in saving foreign exchange in their dialogue.

Foreign Secretary: As of now the situation is that we pay part of it in Rupees and the rest has to be decided on as to how it is to be paid because there are difficulties relating to the payment. So, let us leave it at that...

Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, <http://www.mea.gov.in/media-briefings.htm?dtl/22239/Transcript+of+Media+Briefing+by+Foreign+Secretary+on+Prime+Ministers+Forthcoming+Visit+to+USA+and+UNGA+September+20+2013>

I. NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT

37. Statement by the Minister for External Affairs H.E Salman Khurshid, Minister of External Affairs, at the High Level Meeting of the General Assembly on Nuclear Disarmament, New York, 26 September 2013.

... The recent use of chemical weapons in Syria point to an urgent need for the international community to strengthen restraints on use of weapons of mass destruction and in particular preventing their access to non state actors and terrorists...

Source: Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations, New York,
<http://www.un.int/india/2013/pmi68.pdf>

m. BRICS

38. Joint Press Statement on the meeting of BRICS Foreign Ministers on the margins of the 68th session of the United Nations General Assembly, New York, 26 September 2013.

... SYRIA

The Ministers expressed deep concern about the ongoing violence and the deterioration of the humanitarian situation in Syria. They called upon all parties to commit immediately to a complete cease-fire, to halt violence and to end all violations of human rights and humanitarian law.

Taking note of the Report of the United Nations Secretary-General, the Ministers strongly condemned the use of such weapons by anyone in any circumstances.

The Ministers expressed satisfaction with recent important developments that bring renewed hope for a peaceful resolution to the Syrian conflict. They welcomed the framework agreement for the elimination of Syrian chemical weapons reached by Russia and the United States. They further welcomed, in particular, the decision of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to accede to the Chemical Weapons Convention and the commitment of the Syrian authorities to provisionally apply the Convention prior to its entry into force and the delivery of the initial roster. They recognized the key responsibility of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in this regard and look forward to the decisions of the OPCW and the Security Council in support to the Framework Agreement.

The Ministers reiterated that there is no military solution to the conflict and that it is time for diplomacy.

They stressed that the elimination of chemical weapons and the political process aimed at resolving the Syrian conflict should be pursued in parallel. They also reiterated their support for the convening of an international conference on the Syrian situation as early as possible. They stressed that only an inclusive political process, led by the Syrians, as recommended in the

Action Group on Syria Communiqué issued in 2012 could lead to peace, to the effective protection of civilians and to the realization of the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian society for freedom and prosperity. They expressed their full support to the efforts of the UN-Arab League Representative Lakhdar Brahimi in helping finding a political solution to the crisis.

MIDDLE-EAST PEACE PROCESS

The Ministers welcomed the announcement of the resumption of negotiations between Palestinians and Israelis as an encouraging development. They reaffirmed that the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a prerequisite for building a sustainable and lasting peace in the Middle East region. They expressed their expectation that this renewed effort will lead to a two-state solution with a contiguous and economically viable Palestinian state, existing side by side in peace with Israel, within internationally recognized borders, based on those existing on 4 June 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital. In recalling the primary responsibility of the UNSC in maintaining international peace and security, they noted the importance that the Quartet reports regularly to the Council about its efforts, which should contribute to concrete progress. They expressed concern about the construction of Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, which constitutes a violation of international law and is harmful to the peace process.

Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, <http://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/22260/Joint+Press+Statement+on+the+meeting+of+BRICS+Foreign+Ministers+on+the+margins+of+the+68th+session+of+the+United+Nations+General+Assembly>

n. BILATERAL MEETING

39. Transcript of Statement to Media by PM after his Bilateral Meeting with President Obama, Washington DC, 27 September 2013.

... The President briefed me about his initiatives both with regard to Syria and with regard to Iran; and I complimented him for his vision, for his courage in giving diplomacy yet another chance. India fully supports these initiatives because six million Indians live in the West Asia and the Middle East. They earn their livelihood. Their ... (Inaudible)... an important role of sustaining our balance of payments. Therefore, anything that contributes to peace and stability in the Middle East, in Iran, in Syria, is something which is in the interest of the global economy. It is certainly in the interest of people in the region in which India is placed...

Source: Prime Minister of India, New Delhi, <http://pmindia.nic.in/speech-details.php?nodeid=1362>

O. UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

40. PM's statement in the General Debate of the 68th Session of the UN General Assembly, New York, 28 September 2013.

... We are deeply concerned about the future of West Asia, a region with which India shares deep bonds of history, and one that is critical for our energy security as well as the livelihoods of nearly seven million Indians who work and live in the region.

The increasingly lethal conflict in Syria is not only a tragedy for the people of Syria, but also threatens stability and security in the region and beyond. It has been made worse by the use of chemical weapons. The use of chemical weapons, whosoever may have deployed them, must be condemned in the strongest terms. India supports strongly the elimination of chemical weapons material and equipment in Syria.

There is no military solution to this conflict. We must intensify efforts to end the conflict and seek a political settlement. It is essential that the Geneva-2 conference be convened at the earliest.

We are encouraged that direct talks have resumed between Israel and Palestine. India supports an early realization of a sovereign, independent, viable and united State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, living within secure and recognized borders side-by-side and at peace with Israel. We also remain committed to the Palestinian quest for full membership of the UN...

Source: Prime Minister of India, New Delhi, <http://pmindia.nic.in/speech-details.php?nodeid=1364>

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