

INDIA WATCH

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POLITICAL ISSUES

IRAN

1. India could save US\$ 8.5 billion by buying extra Iranian oil – minister

New Delhi, Sunday, 1 September 2013

Indian Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas M. Veerappa Moily said that India could save US\$ 8.5 billion in foreign exchange spending on crude oil imports in 2013/14 if it relied more on supplies from Iran under the rupee payment arrangement.

Source: The Reuters, United Kingdom

<http://in.reuters.com/article/2013/08/31/india-iran-oil-idINDEE97U06D20130831>

2. Iran, India to enhance cooperation in energy sector: Iranian oil minister

New Delhi, Sunday, 1 September 2013

During a meeting with Indian Ambassador to Tehran D.P. Srivastava, Iranian Minister of Petroleum Bijan Zanganeh said that there are appropriate grounds for the development of relations between Iran and India in the oil and gas sector.

Source: Press TV

<http://www.presstv.com/detail/2013/09/02/321803/iran-india-to-boost-energy-cooperation/>

3. India cautious as Iran signals inclination to free oil tanker

New Delhi, Monday, 2 September 2013

Iran has signalled its inclination to bury the hatchet in its feud with India over the detention of an Indian oil tanker, and expressed its keenness to expand energy ties.

Source: The Hindu, Chennai

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/india-cautious-as-iran-signals-inclination-to-free-oil-tanker/article5083459.ece>

4. Fishermen jailed in Iran may walk free soon

Ramanathapuram, Friday, 13 September 2013

Iranian authorities have ordered the release of 19 Indian fishermen – 16 from Tamil Nadu and three from Kerala – from prison, according to Shamsudheen Chettippadi, a social activist with the Kerala Muslim Cultural Centre in Jubail in Saudi Arabia. The fishermen have been in jail in Iran since December 2012.

Source: The Hindu, Chennai

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/tamil-nadu/fishermen-jailed-in-iran-may-walk-free-soon/article5121015.ece>

5. No political motive behind tanker detention, Iran tells India

Tashkent, Sunday, 15 September 2013

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani has said that there is no political motive behind the detention of the Indian tanker by his security agencies. The issue was raised by Indian External Affairs Minister Salman Khurshid during India's first high-level contact with Tehran after the presidential elections.

Source: The Hindu, Chennai

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/world/no-political-motive-behind-tanker-detention-iran-tells-india/article5129705.ece>

6. Iran's new government scraps oil and gas connections to India

New Delhi, Tuesday, 17 September 2013

The new government in Iran has withdrawn all crucial oil and gas concessions that had been promised to India by its predecessor. Iranian Minister of Petroleum Bijan Zanganeh informed the Indian ambassador to Iran D P Srivastava on 1 September that Tehran would not accept the entire payment for crude oil imported by India in rupees as agreed in July 2013.

Source: The Indian Express, Mumbai

<http://www.indianexpress.com/news/irans-new-government-scraps-oil-and-gas-connections-to-india/1170489/>

ISRAEL

7. 'Next round of India-Israel FTA talks to be a game changer'

New Delhi, Monday, 16 September 2013

The next round of negotiations for the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between India and Israel will be held in November.

Source: Business Standard, New Delhi

http://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/next-round-of-india-israel-fta-talks-to-be-a-game-changer-113091600378_1.html

KUWAIT

8. Kuwait keen on boosting relations with India

Manama, Tuesday, 17 September 2013

Kuwaiti Ambassador to India Sami Al Sulaiman met Chief Minister of Maharashtra Prithviraj Chavan and said that Kuwait is keen on bolstering relations with India.

Source: Business Standard, New Delhi

http://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ani/kuwait-keen-on-boosting-relations-with-india-113091700355_1.html

9. Kuwait to scrap sponsorship system for foreign workers

Dubai, Tuesday, 24 September 2013

Kuwait is set to scrap the much-criticized sponsorship system for foreign workers and replace it with a new one. Kuwait's foreign worker sponsorship system mandates that expatriates must be sponsored by a local employer to get a work permit, thus keeping them at their mercy.

Source: The Hindu, Chennai

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/kuwait-to-scrap-sponsorship-system-for-foreign-workers/article5162492.ece>

OMAN

10. Indian Navy begins joint exercise with Oman

Muscat, Saturday, 21 September 2013

Four Indian Navy ships are on a month-long overseas deployment to the Gulf to reinforce bilateral ties and participate in friendly naval exercises with Oman. INS Mysore, INS Tarkash, INS Tabar and INS Aditya are part of the exercises.

Source: Business Standard, New Delhi

http://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ians/indian-navy-begins-joint-exercise-with-oman-113092100344_1.html

QATAR

11. 'India keen to strengthen defence ties with Gulf countries'

Dubai, Thursday, 12 September 2013

The Indian Ambassador to Qatar said that India is keen to further strengthen its existing military ties with Gulf Cooperation Council countries as four Indian naval ships arrived in the region for a goodwill visit.

Source: Business Standard, New Delhi

http://www.business-standard.com/article/specials/india-keen-to-strengthen-defence-ties-with-gulf-countries-113091200370_1.html

SYRIA

12. Syria situation 'very, very critical': India

New Delhi, Tuesday, 3 September 2013

On the sidelines of a Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) function, Minister of External Affairs Salman Khurshid said that the situation in Syria is “very, very critical” and India is keeping a “close watch.”

Source: Business Standard, New Delhi

http://www.business-standard.com/article/politics/syria-situation-very-very-critical-india-113090300462_1.html

13. Indians waging Islamic war in Syria, says its ambassador

New Delhi, Thursday, 5 September 2013

Syrian Ambassador to India Riad Abbas alleged that ‘Indian fighters’ are waging an Islamic war against Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. He said there were people in India who supported the Muslim Brotherhood’s ideology and they are ‘very dangerous’ and added some Indian nationals were killed in the war, but some had been “caught alive”.

Source: The Indian Express, Mumbai

<http://www.indianexpress.com/news/indian-jihadis-are-fighting-in-syria-says-assads-envoy/1164853/>

14. India summons Syrian envoy on his jihadi remarks

New Delhi, Tuesday, 10 September 2013

The Syrian Ambassador to India Riad Abbas was summoned by Joint Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs Sandeep Kumar and was asked to clarify his remarks on Indian jihadis in Syria.

Source: The Hindu, Chennai

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/india-summons-syrian-envoy-on-his-jihadi-remarks/article5110494.ece>

15. India supports Russia’s Syria plan

New Delhi, Wednesday, 11 September 2013

India has supported the Russian proposal to keep Syrian stockpiles of chemical weapons in safe custody while pointing out that its two main postulates—no to military intervention and move toward a political settlement, possibly with a Geneva-II conference—remained unchanged.

Source: The Hindu, Chennai

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/india-supports-russias-syria-plan/article5112978.ece>

UAE

16. Indian naval ships arrive in UAE to enhance defence ties

Dubai, Monday, 16 September 2013

Four Indian naval ships arrived in UAE as part of a month-long overseas deployment to enhance bilateral ties and participate in naval exercises with navies in the Gulf region.

Source: Business Standard, New Delhi

http://www.business-standard.com/article/specials/indian-naval-ships-arrive-in-uae-to-enhance-defence-ties-113091600468_1.html

ECONOMIC ISSUES

QATAR

17. 'Qatar firms waiting for policy reforms to invest in India'

Dubai, Thursday, 12 September 2013

Gurpal Singh, Principal Advisor and Head of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) division at the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII), said that Qatar's firms are keen to invest in various sectors like power, port, road, agriculture, real estate and other infrastructure development projects pending policy changes in India.

Source: The New Indian Express, Chennai

<http://newindianexpress.com/business/news/Qatar-firms-waiting-for-policy-reforms-to-invest-in-India/2013/09/12/article1781187.ece>

SAUDI ARABIA

18. TCS, GE to set up all-women BPO centre in Saudi Arabia

Mumbai, Tuesday, 24 September 2013

Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) said it would set up an all-women business processes outsourcing centre in Saudi Arabia in partnership with energy company Saudi Aramco and US engineering conglomerate General Electrics (GE).

Source: The Times of India, New Delhi

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/tech/careers/job-trends/TCS-GE-to-set-up-all-women-BPO-centre-in-Saudi-Arabia/articleshow/23003773.cms>

UAE

19. India cabinet OKs increasing airline seats to UAE

New Delhi, Tuesday, 3 September 2013

The Indian cabinet approved an accord with the UAE to nearly quadruple airline seats between the two countries over three years.

Source: Reuters, United Kingdom

<http://in.reuters.com/article/2013/09/03/india-uae-airlines-idINL4N0GZ2VC20130903>

20. Dubai gold trade hurt by new Indian import tariffs

London, Monday, 23 September 2013

Indian measures to discourage gold imports are shutting the door on top exporter Dubai, where trade activity has fallen by as much as 60 percent over the past two months.

Source: Reuters, United Kingdom

<http://in.reuters.com/article/2013/09/23/dubai-gold-india-idINDEE98M0B420130923>

MISCELLANEOUS ISSUES

QATAR

21. Qatar World Cup construction 'will leave 4,000 migrant workers dead'

Vienna, Thursday, 26 September 2013

The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) has claimed that Qatar's construction frenzy ahead of the 2022 World Cup is on course to cost the lives of at least 4,000 migrant workers. The group has been scrutinizing builders' deaths in the Gulf emirate for the past two years and said that at least half a million extra workers from countries including India are expected to flood in to complete stadiums, hotels and infrastructure in time for the World Cup.

Source: The Guardian, United Kingdom

<http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2013/sep/26/qatar-world-cup-migrant-workers-dead>

SAUDI ARABIA

22. Despite Nitaqat, Saudi Arabia still a favourite for expatriates

Thiruvananthapuram, Wednesday, 25 September 2013

A study conducted by the Centre for Development Studies (CDS) shows that 90 per cent of the labour force in UAE and 89 per cent of the labour force in Saudi Arabia comprise expatriate population. It concluded that Saudi Arabia still was favourable to the expatriates.

Source: The Times of India, New Delhi

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/thiruvananthapuram/Despite-Nitaqat-Saudi-Arabia-still-a-favourite-for-expatriates/articleshow/23020057.cms>

23. First batch of Hajj pilgrims leaves today

Mumbai, Wednesday, 25 September 2013

The first batch of Hajj pilgrims left for Saudi Arabia to perform the holy prayers in the second week of October.

Source: The Times of India, New Delhi

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/First-batch-of-Haj-pilgrims-leaves-today/articleshow/23018524.cms>

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