

# **INDIA SPEAKS**

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## **BILATERAL ISSUES**

### **a. IRAN**

#### **1. Official Spokesperson's response to the P5 plus 1 agreement with Iran on the Iran Nuclear Issue, New Delhi, 24 November 2013.**

In response to a media query on the P5 plus 1 agreement on the Iran Nuclear Issue, the official spokesperson said:

"As the agreement between Iran and the P5 plus 1 has been agreed to just a few hours ago we are in the process of obtaining details from our key interlocutors, however, based on initial information available at this stage I can say that India welcomes the prospect of resolving questions related to Iran's nuclear programme, through dialogue and diplomacy.

We also welcome the earlier agreement reached on 11 November between Iran and the IAEA, which is the only competent technical agency to verify the exclusively peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear activities, on practical measures for enhanced IAEA verification activity at Iranian nuclear sites".

*Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, <http://www.mea.gov.in/media-briefings.htm?dtl/22522/Official+Spokespersons+response+to+the+P5+plus+1+agreement+with+Iran+on+the+Iran+Nuclear+Issue>*

#### **2. Foreign Secretary's Meeting with Deputy Foreign Minister of Iran, New Delhi, 25 November 2013.**

Foreign Secretary Sujatha Singh held talks with Deputy Foreign Minister of Iran Ebrahim Rahimpour on 25 November 2013 in New Delhi. The talks were part of the high level Foreign Office consultations that took place between India and Iran.

The Foreign Secretary expressed satisfaction to the Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister on the agreement between the E3+3 and Iran finalized in Geneva the previous day, and conveyed

India's expectation that the agreement would renew the prospect for resolving the Iranian nuclear question through dialogue and diplomacy.

The full gamut of bilateral relations was reviewed during the meeting. Both sides agreed that there is considerable untapped potential to develop economic cooperation between the two countries particularly in the area of energy and transit. In this context both sides agreed on the need to accelerate efforts to finalize joint cooperation activities for the development of the Iranian Port of Chahbahar as a trade and energy hub for the region.

The two sides also discussed regional development including the developments in Afghanistan and the Middle East.

Deputy Foreign Minister Rahimpour called on Honourable Vice President, External Affairs Minister and National Security Adviser.

*Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, <http://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/22525/Foreign+Secretariys+Meeting+with+Deputy+Foreign+Minister+of+Iran>*

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## **b. KUWAIT**

### **3. Transcript of media briefing on the visit of Prime Minister of Kuwait, New Delhi, 6 November 2013.**

The Official Spokesperson (Syed Akbaruddin): Good afternoon friends and thank you very much for being here this afternoon. I have an announcement to make, and then I have here with me Joint Secretary (Gulf) Mridul Kumar who will speak on the forthcoming visit of the Prime Minister of Kuwait. Subsequent to that he will be willing to answer any questions that you may like to ask on the forthcoming visit. And then the floor will be open for questions that you may want to ask on anything else.

You know the ground rules very clearly, but let me repeat them. Each of you can choose your question very carefully because one question will be allowed per person as I see a large number of you and I would not be able to answer all the questions, and so the question of giving a second chance to anyone does not arise. With those opening remarks, let me make the announcement that I have.

The Twelfth Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of Russia, India and China will be held in New Delhi on the 10th of this month. This is the third time that it is being held in India. Previously it was held in Delhi and Bengaluru, and this time it is back in Delhi. The External Affairs Minister will host his counterparts from both these countries.

As the meeting is taking place in the backdrop of the evolving scenario in the Middle East and North Africa as well as the upcoming 9th WTO Ministerial Conference in Bali, issues relating to these will figure in the discussion.

In addition, of course they will also address concerns relating to terrorism, to drug trafficking, to discussions on cooperation in different multilateral fora in which all the three countries are participants, and will also cover other global and regional issues of interest to these three countries. The External Affairs Minister will separately meet each of the Russian and the Chinese Foreign Ministers bilaterally also for areas relating to bilateral interests of India and each of those countries.

Just for your information, in addition to these meetings on the 10th, the External Affairs Minister will also have ten bilateral meetings with various countries whose Foreign Ministers are coming for the ASEM Foreign Ministers meeting.

We will have a separate briefing on the ASEM Foreign Ministers meeting as well as other activities on Saturday. So, I will confine myself now to the RIC. If any of you would like to know which the bilateral meetings are, I am willing to share that information with you. That is the only announcement that I have for now in terms of visits and meeting proposed.

I will now request Joint Secretary (Gulf) Mridul Kumar to make his opening remarks in terms of the forthcoming visit of the Prime Minister of Kuwait, and then we will take it from there.

Joint Secretary (Gulf) (Mridul Kumar): Thank you. Let me thank you all for coming here before I take up the subject of the visit of the Prime Minister of Kuwait.

The last visit that we had from my region was the visit of the Prime Minister of Iraq. At that point in time I engaged with our friends in media and I mentioned to them about the excellent relationship and the stakes that our country has with these special friends that we have in the Gulf countries.

While we talk a lot about foreign policy and while we write a lot about foreign policy, I thought before I speak about this visit let me put in perspective the relationship that India has with the Gulf countries and the kind of stakes that we have with these countries. I am going to put across to you for your kind information and consideration, and possibly some writing tomorrow, some hard facts. Please look at these hard facts and see for yourself where should we take our relationship to in terms of working closely with the Gulf countries.

The first and the most important aspect of our relationship with Gulf countries is the presence of over seven million Indians in the Gulf. These people are the great human resources that we have provided to the resource deficit countries there. They are our ambassadors there and also they provide us huge remittances. Out of the World Bank's report of US\$ 70 billion remittances annually that we received last year, over US\$ 30 billion came from the six rich GCC countries.

I would like to present to you another fact. We are not only talking about human resources that we have provided to these countries but a very simple fact. For example, in Dubai we have got 12 Indian billionaires sitting now. So, you can imagine the kind of riches we have earned out of working with Gulf countries.

The second very important aspect of our relationship is the extraordinary bilateral trade that we have with them. Many of you might not even know that out of the last five years, four years EOE has been our largest trading partner. This year our figures reached, and I am talking about trade in goods, US\$ 74.7 billion. I am very happy to say that this is a most beautifully balanced trade – US\$ 38 billion to US\$ 36 billion. You tell me a single relationship India has with any country in the world where we have got such beautiful balance of trade relations.

The third very important aspect, this is another huge pillar for our relationship with Gulf countries and I think you must be always aware of it when you speak about this relationship, is that from the Gulf countries we source actually over 60 per cent of our oil needs. Out of the first five largest exporters of oil to India, we have got four in Gulf countries. The largest LNG supplier is in Gulf countries for us. And I am not talking about purchase of diamonds, I am talking about purchase of a commodity without which we have no escape, your machinery will stop. So, again this aspect of our relationship is extremely, extremely important.

The fourth important pillar we have to be bearing in mind always when we look at our relationship with GCC countries is that if you look at across the world, this is practically the only region left which has got huge investible surplus. What it means for a country like me? For me, I at the current state of affairs require huge investments in my infrastructure for the benefit of our people. And obviously the money will come from people who have got investible surpluses.

I will give you an example. UAE has one of the largest sovereign wealth funds - over US\$ 750 billion. This is the Abu Dhabi Investment Authority. The Dubai Investment Authority also has similar kind of fund almost US\$ 500 billion. You look at Saudi Arabia. Figures are not there officially with us but we are given to understand that almost US\$ 500 billion are sitting there waiting to be invested in countries like us where there are huge returns to those investments.

If you look at again Kuwait, US\$ 350 billion of sovereign wealth fund which is increasing by US\$ 25 million every year. That is because the Kuwaitis are very clever people; they have decided that for future generations five per cent of the oil revenue will be put into a special fund which is called Fund for Future Generations, which is roughly translating into US\$ 25 million dollars.

Why am I giving you all these figures? I am giving you all these figures because we from the Ministry are very conscious that we have to not only increased our engagement with the Gulf countries but we have to take it to a level where it does not remain a buyer-seller engagement. It

is a much more comprehensive engagement and I think it is in our mutual benefit that we look at this relationship in that perspective.

Let me come back to the main point of agenda that is the visit of Kuwaiti Prime Minister. Obviously with Kuwait we have got excellent relations. It is millennia old relationship Indian rupees ... (Inaudible)... 1961 in Kuwait. You can imagine the kind of relationship with Kuwait. The Kuwaitis have been very keen to establish and continue with the excellent relationship that is there for a long time.

We had in 2006 the historic visit of the Emir of Kuwait. I was the Deputy Chief of Protocol at that point in time. This was after a long period that the Emir came. In fact as soon as he became Emir in 2006 he decided that I should go to India. And for the first time ever I travelled with him to Bombay. I generally never travelled outside Delhi for those visits but for the first time I travelled because we realized that for India a country like Kuwait will have a huge benefit in terms of not only our energy security but also the well being of our people there. After that visit, we had in 2009 our Vice President going there and again this was a path-breaking visit. These two visits in fact charted the roadmap of our relationship in the current century.

Now this particular visit is a very special visit for us because we realized to our surprise that the last visit of a Kuwaiti Prime Minister was long back, forty-nine years ago. The reason was simple. At that point in time there were two posts handled by one person. The Crown Prince was also the Prime Minister for Kuwait. In 2003 they decided that they will bifurcate this post, and since then we never had a visit of the Prime Minister.

We said that Emir has been visiting us and I think it is very important that as a democracy and also looking at Kuwait which is the region is the only functioning constitutional monarchy with a Parliament, that we should have the visit of their Prime Minister also. So, this visit is an extremely important visit for us obviously in terms of the outlined parameters that I have given you earlier. Kuwait for us is a major supplier of our energy needs. Almost ten per cent of our petrol imports are sourced from Kuwait.

Our bilateral trade has been booming. In the last three years we have seen bilateral trade doubling. We had almost US\$ 17 billion of bilateral trade with Kuwait. India has been one of the most important trading partners of Kuwait, definitely among the first ten. If you look at other aspects of our relationship, these are all on the upswing. The reason that we have this visit is to ensure that these aspects of our relationship are taken into account, we solidify them further.

As we charted out in our last visit when we brought in the Prime Minister of Iraq, we thought as a Ministry that we will move our relationship from a buyer-seller relationship to a more strategic relationship. Now what we are doing is we are telling our Kuwaiti friends that let us not only buy oil - which is very good in any case we require it and you are obliged to sell it to us because we are the largest market for you - at the same time why do not we do some more for us in terms

mutual benefit. And that more is the joint ventures in petrochemical complexes. We are looking at possibly working together in third countries also.

We are also looking at ventures in fertilizers sector also. So, there is a huge opportunity that we are looking at. Long-term strategic supply of oil is another aspect of our relationship that we are discussing very seriously with Kuwaitis. So, all these aspects make sure that we have a very well-rounded and a very important relationship.

I would not like to keep talking, I will stay quiet now, and I will leave the floor open to you. There are lot many areas I have not covered deliberately but I expect that you will ask me questions on those and I will be more than happy to answer your questions.

Question: Which are the areas other than oil and petrochemicals that we are looking at?

Joint Secretary (Gulf): As I mentioned to you, obviously trade is a very important aspect of our relationship. Our trade relationship is growing very fast. We export a lot of products to them which include food stuff, bovine meat, and marine products. We are looking at textiles, we are looking at electrical equipment, and we are looking at trucks, machinery. We are looking very seriously about this aspect of our relationship.

When I spoke about oil sector, you must take into account that when we are talking about taking it to a step next from buyer-seller, to a strategic level, we are talking about investment in our oil sector as well as in their oil sector. For example, in the current scenario the Kuwaitis are investing over a US\$ 100 billion in terms of refurbishing their oil sector, clean fuel projects. They are building new refineries and there are huge opportunities for our companies especially for EPC projects to go there and work and ensure that our stamp is put strongly on these fields.

The other aspect of our relationship is investments into India, and we are seeking that aspect also both in terms of oil sector as well as in our infrastructure projects.

The other aspect of our relationship is the security aspect. We have started a dialogue with them. Obviously the countries in that region are located in a very volatile region and it is extremely important for us to engage with them in terms of security dialogue also. So, this is another aspect of our relationship we are looking at very seriously with the Kuwaitis.

Question: Is Kuwait giving us oil at the OPEC price or at a lower price?

Joint Secretary (Gulf): The prices, as you know, are determined by market forces. Obviously it is important for us to keep engaging with our suppliers in the Gulf countries so as to ensure first of all that there is uninterrupted supply of oil. You are aware that because of certain reasons beyond our control we were not able to source enough oil from Iran. That is the reason why countries like Iraq and Kuwait have been able to fill in that gap. I think I will leave it at that. For us the



most important aspect is to ensure that our oil supplies are uninterrupted and as much oil as we require from them is available to us. That I think is the most important aspect.

Question: Like in Saudi Arabia, there is a problem of Kuwaitization in Kuwait also. There are lots of deportations taking place. I work in Kuwait, I keep travelling there. A lot of people are being picked up from the street ... (Inaudible)... A lot of Indians have been deported.

Joint Secretary (Gulf): You are talking about Kuwait. I can answer about Saudi Arabia also.

Official Spokesperson: Only Kuwait. We will answer the other part separately.

Joint Secretary (Gulf): To give you facts and figures about the deportation, in the beginning of the year we had about 6, 90,000 Indians living in Kuwait. Today the figure is almost 7, 40,000. So, you call it deportation, I call it opportunity. My people are going there in big numbers. Obviously there is a huge human resource gap with the Gulf countries, and India is considered a very important and extremely attractive source for those requirements.

You are talking about deportation. I am talking not only about Indians; I am talking about expatriates in general. When you have got a huge expatriate population within your country, it is the sovereign right of a sovereign nation to decide what kind of treatment they would like to mete out to the people who are in violation of their laws. I presume the same thing is applicable to us also. When we have got foreigners coming to India and when they are in violation of our local laws, I think there are certain rules, procedures and our national laws that have to be abided by. When you are talking about deportation and when I give you the figure that our numbers are rising, then obviously people who are deported are the people who are in violation of the local laws.

Another aspect I would like to present to you is that the deportation figures in this year, when you say there is a special drive in Kuwait ongoing, is less than what happened in the last year. Obviously it is an ongoing process. Every country in the Gulf region will have the same thing. People who are in violation will be sent back. I think it is for the good of our people that they are sent back rather than being put into the jails.

Question: What is the number of the deported?

Joint Secretary (Gulf): This year we had roughly about 4,500 to 5,000 people who have been deported back. But this is again an ongoing process. Every year this happens. I do not feel a need for any worry on that.

Question: I think Kuwait hosts the largest expatriate Indian community. I think 7, 50,000 Indians are there in Kuwait as per the figure given to us earlier.

My question relates to the maritime security in the region where there is tension around. Is this going to be one of the major topics on the agenda of the two leaders?

Joint Secretary (Gulf): Indian expatriates are the largest expatriate community within Kuwait. The 7, 50,000 you are talking about is the expatriate community within Kuwait itself. That is one thing. In terms of security of people, obviously the numbers will not increase from 698,000 to 750,000 in a span of ten months without our people feeling reassured.

Official Spokesperson: He is talking about security in the Gulf region in general.

Joint Secretary (Gulf): Obviously the security within the Gulf region is of paramount importance to us and we are watching it very closely. We have been in touch with the Kuwaiti authorities on that. As I mentioned to you, the security dialogue is one aspect of our relationship that has been on the upswing. Obviously there will be discussions between the two Prime Ministers on this aspect.

Official Spokesperson: If there are no more questions on Kuwait, we will move on to other issues.

Question: We want an update on what is happening in Saudi Arabia over the Nitaqat.

Official Spokesperson: Let me try and tell you and the JS (Gulf) will add to that.

Since the programme began, our view has been that this is a programme which is internal to Saudi Arabia, and therefore it is the view of the sovereign Government of Saudi Arabia to reorganize the labour market as it deems fit. However, our view has always been that there will be adverse effects in terms of humans involved. And we have always been in touch with the Saudi Government to try and ameliorate the human dimensions of this programme. And it is in response to us and several other countries previously that the Saudi Government had extended the deadline twice.

Now that the deadline has ended on November 3, we had used the time available for us from the first announcement of this programme till the end of the deadline, very effectively. Our Mission in Riyadh as well as our Consulate in Jeddah had launched a major campaign to sensitize Indian nationals of the need to regularize their stay in Saudi Arabia.

It has been one of the untold success stories of our efforts there that a very large proportion of Indians who had to change either their status or to change their sponsors, have done so. This is in excess of a million. Approximately 1.4 million Indians had used the opportunity to adjust their status in Saudi Arabia. In addition, approximately about a 1, 30,000 decided to return to India.

With this, most of the issues impacting on the Indian community in Saudi Arabia are in hand. This is because there was a very major campaign launched with community organizations, with



Indian schools. There are ten Indian schools there with 50,000 Indian children studying in those schools. The parents of those children were involved in this campaign. Social media was used. Linguistic support was provided by several Indian organizations there from various parts of the country. There were volunteers, 600 of them, who worked for over five to six months. And with the help of the Indian community, the Indian Embassy and the Consulate had largely been able to tackle this issue.

When the deadline ended, there were several countries which asked for a further extension. You will notice that we were not amongst those because we had made adequate preparations. That is where we stand on this matter right now. I will ask JS (Gulf) to provide any additional information that he has on this so that you can go with as much value that we can provide on this issue.

Joint Secretary (Gulf): There is one important aspect I thought I should share with you. When this issue came about, it is not a new issue. There has been ongoing Saudi policy in terms of Nitaqat where they were looking at, in the aftermath of Arab Spring, providing job opportunities in the private sector to their educated qualified youth. So, obviously they had put some quota on that and there were some reasons why some of our expatriate community were getting affected out of it.

When we realized that this was one important internal debate that Saudi Arabia was having within its own system of reforming, then we said to ourselves after realization that this is an extraordinary opportunity for us to make sure that for our people have been for some reason or the other staying there illegally it is a beautiful opportunity for them to regularize their status. I think it is in that spirit and with extraordinary preparations that our Mission did, we could manage to make it a huge success in terms of orderly return of our people from Saudi Arabia.

When he talked about 1, 30,000 people, we must look at these numbers in relation to other past experiences that we had. From Libya we evacuated 20,000 people. Here we have got orderly return of over 1, 00,000 people without anybody knowing about it in the media as well as in our system. So, I think this we should give enough kudos to our people, our Embassy there, our Ambassador there who worked day in and day out to ensure that our peoples' interest which is one of the highest priorities that we have in our relationship with the Gulf countries is looked after well.

Official Spokesperson: Just to add a little bit more, the number of Indians there now is about 2.8 million. This is a larger number than was at the beginning of the period that was given for regularization of stay. So, in effect as Joint Secretary (Gulf) has said, we have utilized this opportunity to not only regularize, but the flow of Indians continues there.

Question: My question relates to the RIC. It is a good thing that the RIC has on its agenda the discussion on the Bali WTO Ministerial. We know that the Ninth Ministerial of WTO at Bali

will have on its agenda the trade facilitation, and one more point of India's interest is the food security which has come under attack from the European Union and the US. The European Union and the US give massive subsidies to their agricultural sector and food sector amounting to billions of Euros and dollars. Compared to this, the Indian food security implication is only Rs.90,000 crore annually. So, it is peanuts. The struggle in the WTO between the rich countries and the poor countries is on phasing out of the various subsidies given by the rich countries. That has been the cause of stalling of the process of negotiation in WTO. And there is olive branch being extended to India to buy the peace clause, to bring back the peace clause. Is there any agenda to aggressively take up these issues, the phasing out of the trade-distorting subsidies by European Union and US and defending our food security?

... You wanted the programme of the Kuwaiti Prime Minister. We will put this up on the website and send you a message...

*Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, <http://www.mea.gov.in/media-briefings.htm?dtl/22450>*

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#### **4. Prime Minister's statement to media after delegation level talks with the Prime Minister of Kuwait, New Delhi, 8 November 2013.**

Following is the text of the Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh's media statement after delegation level talks with the Prime Minister of Kuwait:

"It gives me great pleasure to extend a warm welcome to His Highness Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber on his first State Visit to India.

India's relations with Kuwait are rooted in historical links and enriched by the great warmth and goodwill between our peoples. We deeply appreciate the personal interest that His Highness the Emir of Kuwait and His Highness Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber have shown in the development of our bilateral relations.

Today, Kuwait is one of our most valued partners and a close friend in an important region of the world, which is critical for India's energy security, is among the biggest destinations for our exports and where more than seven million Indians work and earn their livelihoods.

I have just finished very productive discussions with His Highness Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber. We reaffirmed our shared belief that close relations between India and Kuwait are important to both countries and acknowledged the vast untapped potential for our cooperation. We agreed to work purposefully to expand our relations in key areas, including energy and investments.

Kuwait is the fourth largest supplier of crude oil to India. His Highness Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber and I discussed the development of a more strategic partnership in the energy sector between our two countries. This can be done through long-term supply contracts on mutually beneficial terms and the establishment of upstream and downstream joint ventures in the

petroleum and petrochemical sectors. India has proposed several specific projects for investments by the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation. I am encouraged by His Highness Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber's response and I am hopeful that we can translate some of these proposals into concrete symbols of cooperation very soon.

I also conveyed to His Highness the Prime Minister that India offers attractive investment opportunities for Kuwait in the infrastructure sector. Our two sides will undertake discussions on specific proposals and appropriate investment vehicles for channelling Kuwaiti investments in India. A delegation of the Kuwait Investment Authority is expected to make a nearly visit to India in this context.

I shared with His Highness Sheikh Jaber the strong interest of Indian companies to participate in infrastructure projects under Kuwait's Development Plan. Indian companies have considerable experience of working in Kuwait. His Highness has assured me that Indian companies are welcome in Kuwait and that they will continue to enjoy fair and equal opportunities there.

I expressed our gratitude to the Kuwaiti leadership for hosting 7, 00,000 Indians nationals in Kuwait. They are part of Kuwaiti society and are making valuable contributions to Kuwait's development. Given that many of them are unskilled or semi-skilled workers, I requested His Highness the Prime Minister for the continued support of the Kuwaiti leadership to ensure that the full protection of Kuwaiti laws and labour welfare measures is available to them.

We also shared views on developments in West Asia and the Gulf, where both our countries have a common interest in peace and stability. We recognize the importance of a peaceful resolution of the Syrian conflict, and hope that the Geneva-II conference will contribute towards this objective. I expressed our appreciation for Kuwait's contribution to promoting peace and stability in the region.

Security cooperation has added a new dimension to our relationship and I expressed appreciation for Kuwait's cooperation in this area. We agreed that countering radicalism and extremism is a common challenge. We also agreed to strengthen our cooperation in the area of counter-terrorism through institutionalized dialogue and training.

Ladies and Gentlemen, this visit of His Highness Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber has imparted a fresh impetus to our efforts to further carry forward our multifaceted bilateral relations with Kuwait.

I once again extend a warm welcome to His Highness Sheikh Jaber and wish him a pleasant and fruitful stay in India."

**Source: Press Information Bureau, New Delhi,**  
**<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx?relid=100487>**

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## **5. Media Statement by Prime Minister of Kuwait during his visit to India, New Delhi, 9 November 2013.**

Esteemed guests

I was delighted to make the official visit to the friendly Republic of India upon the kind invitation of my dear friend His Excellency Dr. Manmohan Singh. Heading a high level official delegation that reflects our keenness to pursue all that would cement with our distinguished historical relations which link the state of Kuwait to the Republic of India and raise them to the levels of our hopes and aspirations. This visit has provided the opportunity to meet with senior officials and exchange points of view, opening new prospects in our special relations with your friendly country. In the effect of an instrumental role it plays in our contemporary world. My friend His Excellency Dr. Manmohan Singh and I have held official talks during which we touched on the course of bilateral relations between our two friendly countries. There was satisfaction at the outstanding level our bilateral relations have reached and the consensus to exert more efforts to boost and enhance them in all fields. Several agreements were signed during the visit reflecting our interest in facilitating and strengthening relations between both countries. We also reviewed the numerous visits by officials from both countries and emphasized on the importance of continuing them in light of their positive impact on our bilateral relations. Regional and international developments were discussed and we exchanged points of views on these issues as well as our joint endeavours to exert all efforts towards enhancing international peace and security. This, through the distinguished historical relations between our two countries and our keenness to boost them in order to achieve strategic partnership, we seek.

Thank you.

*Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, <http://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/22463/Media+Statement+by+Prime+Minister+of+Kuwait+during+his+visit+to+India>*

## **6. PM's banquet speech during the State Visit of Prime Minister of Kuwait to India (8 November 2013), New Delhi, 9 November 2013.**

"It gives me great pleasure tonight to welcome amongst us His Highness Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber and the distinguished members of the Kuwaiti delegation.

Your Highness, let me again extend to you our felicitations on your reappointment as Prime Minister of Kuwait. This is a reflection of the trust and confidence that you inspire in the leadership and the people of Kuwait at a challenging time for West Asia and the Gulf region.

Your Highness, from time immemorial, Kuwait has been an integral part of West Asia's linkages of commerce, culture and religion with India. Today, our engagement is marked by a deep sense of comfort and enduring goodwill between our people, which is the source of great vitality and resilience in our relationship. Equally, the warmth and affection for India that I have seen in the leadership of Kuwait adds to our confidence in the relationship. The seven hundred thousand

Indians in your country are a living bridge between Kuwait and India. They are building their lives, supporting families at home and contributing to Kuwait's pluralism and progress.

Friends, India and Kuwait are joined together not just by the vitality of human contact. We have also built a multifaceted partnership that serves our vital interests. Indeed, by deepening our partnership, India and Kuwait can address more effectively many of the challenges that they face in the shared neighbourhood.

Today, we have discussed the possibilities of turning our energy trade into a strategic partnership. This can be done through long-term supply arrangements on mutually beneficial terms and collaboration in establishing upstream and downstream petroleum and petrochemical projects in India. We have also set for ourselves a high level of ambition for enhancing Kuwaiti investments in India's infrastructure sector. In addition, as Kuwait undertakes its own ambitious new development plan, we see great prospects for project exports from India to Kuwait.

Security cooperation has added a new dimension to our relationship. This reflects our shared vision that our cooperation is necessary for countering extremism and terrorism that affect both of us.

Your Highness, during the landmark visit of His Highness, Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Emir of Kuwait, to India in June 2006, we embarked on a new course for our relationship in the 21st century. Your present visit has added fresh winds to our sails. We value your contribution to the cause of peace in the region, and we look forward to Kuwait's leadership in seeking solutions to the region's many challenges.

Ladies and Gentlemen, with those words, may I invite you to join me in raising a toast to:

- the good health and well being of His Highness Sheikh Jaber,
- the prosperity and happiness of the friendly people of Kuwait, and
- the everlasting bonds of friendship between India and Kuwait."

*Source: Press Information Bureau, New Delhi,*

*<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx?relid=100488>*

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### **7. The Travelling Lens - Photographic Exhibition, Kuwait, 18 November 2013.**

A Photographic Exhibition, "The Travelling Lens" by Mr. Shreekant Somany was inaugurated by His Excellency Eng. Ali Hussein Al-Youha, Secretary General, National Council of Culture, Arts & Literature at 0600 hrs on 17 November 2013 at Al-Edwani Hall, Dahiyat Abdullah Al-Salem. The exhibition has been organized by the Embassy of India, Kuwait in association with National Council of Arts, Culture & Letters and will remain open up to 21 November 2013 from 0900 hrs to 1230 hrs and 1700 hrs to 2100 hrs.

The inauguration was attended by Kuwaiti dignitaries, Ambassadors from a number of countries, art lovers & members of the Indian community in Kuwait.

*Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait, <http://www.indembkwt.org/DispNews.aspx?ID=308>*

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### **8. Holiday Notice, Kuwait, 28 November 2013**

The Embassy of India will remain close on the following date during the month of December 2013.

25 December 2013, Wednesday – Christmas Day

*Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait, <http://www.indembkwt.org/DispNews.aspx?ID=315>*

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## **c. LIBYA**

### **9. Ambassador of India along with other G-4 Ambassadors discusses the issue of UNSC reforms with the Libyan Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Tripoli, 4 November 2013.**

His Excellency Anil Kumar Trigunayat, Ambassador of India, along with the Ambassadors of Brazil, Germany and Japan, accredited to Libya, met the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation His Excellency Dr Abdul Razak Al-Grady on 29 October 2013 to discuss the issue of UNSC reforms in the backdrop of the forthcoming debate on the issue in the UN in November 2013.

His Excellency Dr. Abdul Razak Al-Grady acknowledged the need for UNSC reforms to reflect contemporary realities and expressed Libya's willingness to discuss the issue at the UN and other fora. He also highlighted the broad congruence of the Libyan position with that of G-4 on the UNSC issue adding that Libya, as an Arab and African country deals with the issue of UNSC reforms through the African Union and Arab League.

*Source: Embassy of India, Tripoli,*

*<http://indianembassy.ly/index.php?mact=News,cntnt01,detail,0&cntnt01articleid=71&cntnt01pagelimit=4&cntnt01returnid=15>*

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## **d. PALESTINE**

### **10. Statement by Ambassador Asoke Kumar Mukerji, Permanent Representative, on Agenda Item 36 - 'Question of Palestine' at the United Nations General Assembly, New York, 25 November 2013.**

Thank you, President,

At the outset, I would like to express our appreciation to you for convening this important discussion on the Question of Palestine at the General Assembly.

President, we are marking the International day of solidarity with the Palestinian People. Let me begin by quoting from my Prime Minister H.E. Dr. Manmohan Singh's message to the friendly people of Palestine on this occasion:

“On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, I reaffirm India's strong and steadfast support for the Palestinian cause. We welcome the recent efforts of Palestine and Israel mediated by the US, for resumption of direct peace talks and remains hopeful that the negotiations would lead to a comprehensive peace process for final resolution of



the conflict within an agreed time line. India supports a negotiated resolution, resulting in 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, as endorsed in the Arab Peace Initiative, the Quartet road map and relevant United Nations Security Council Resolutions.

I also take this opportunity to extend heartiest congratulations to the people of Palestine and their leadership on obtaining ‘Non-Member Observer State’ status in the UN General Assembly last year. India has always played a proactive role in supporting Palestinian cause in the multilateral fora. We cosponsored the resolution enhancing Palestine’s status in the UN General Assembly and will continue to support Palestine’s bid for full and equal membership of the United Nations.

India has also supported the nation-building efforts of Palestine through technical and economic assistance, including budgetary support. We are supporting construction of schools and setting up an IT centre and Vocational Training Centre in Palestine. Additionally India contributes US\$ 1 million annually to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) for Palestinian refugees. We are also implementing developmental projects in Palestine jointly with Brazil and South Africa as partners in IBSA. India will continue to support these efforts.

On this important occasion, on behalf of the people of India, I convey our best wishes and greetings to the friendly people of Palestine.”

End of Quote.

President, It has been almost a year since this assembly voted on the up gradation of Palestine’s status in the United Nations to a non-member observer state along with other resolutions which are voted every year. While the up gradation was an important milestone, the aspirations of the Palestinian people and leadership for the full membership to the United Nations still remains to be achieved.

President, The Resolution of the Palestinian question is a prerequisite for building a sustainable and lasting peace in the Middle East region. Given the fragile and unpredictable situation in the Middle East with the ongoing conflict in Syria, there should be no more delay in addressing the Israeli-Palestinian issue.

The situation in the occupied Palestinian territories has been deteriorating due to settlement activities in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. These activities are creating new realities on the ground threatening the very premise of a two- state solution. The blockade of Gaza has also had serious consequences for the lives of Palestinians. It has adversely affected essential services, economic activities and infrastructure development. The Palestinian Authority is also facing a severe financial crisis that could erode the significant progress made by the Palestinian Authority



in building state institutions. All these issues have to be issued in a timely manner for just and durable peace in the region.

While there has been improvement in restrictions on the West Bank, and movement of humanitarian supplies and construction material into Gaza, 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 also join others in urging Israel to stop settlement activities.

President, India has a long history of solidarity with the Palestinian people. As demonstrated over the past six decades, including during its memberships in the UN Security Council, India also stands ready to support all measures that the Palestinian leadership may take towards political resolution of the Final Status issues.

In conclusion, President, I would like to reiterate India's continued support for the Palestinian cause.

I thank you.

*Source: Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations, New York, <http://www.un.int/india/2013/pmi134.pdf>*

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**11. Statement by E. Ahamed, Minister of State for External Affairs, at the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People held at Indian Council of World Affairs, New Delhi, 30 November 2013.**

Your Excellency, Adli Hassan Shaban Sadeq, Ambassador of Palestine to India;  
Your Excellency, Mazin Al-Masoudi, in-charge of League of Arab States Mission;  
Director General of the Indian Council of World Affairs Rajiv Bhatia;  
Dr. Peter E. Kenmore, FAO Representative, United Nations;  
Excellencies, distinguished invitees;  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honoured to be here today amidst this august gathering to commemorate the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

Indians have always placed Palestine close to their hearts. India was the first non-Arab State to recognize the Palestine Liberation Organization as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people in 1975 and was one of the first countries to recognize the State of Palestine in 1988. India opened its Representative Office in Palestine in 1996 following the establishment of the Palestinian National Authority.

Since the opening of the Representative Office in Palestine, India has been extending technical and economic assistance to the Palestinian National Authority. The assistance has been for humanitarian relief, development projects, establishment of educational institutions, budgetary

support, training of Palestinian officials etc. We pledged an amount of US\$ 10 million as budgetary support to Palestine during the visit of President Mahmoud Abbas to India in September last year. We are also in the process of construction of schools, setting up of an IT Centre and Vocational Training Centre in Palestine. Additionally, India contributes US\$ 1 million annually to United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). Jointly with Brazil and South Africa as partners in IBSA, India is implementing developmental projects in Palestine. India is committed to continue with its support for the development and nation-building efforts of Palestine.

At the multilateral fora, India has played a proactive role in garnering support for the Palestinian cause. We played an active role in securing full membership for Palestine in UNESCO. We co-sponsored the resolution on enhancing Palestine's status to "Non-Member Observer State" in the UNGA in November 2012. We also chaired and proactively participated in the discussions on the Palestinian issue in the UN Security Council under India's presidency last year. We will continue to support Palestine's bid for full and equal membership of the United Nations.

Excellencies,

There has been regular exchange of high-level visits between India and Palestine. I visited Ramallah in July this year and met with the whole gamut of Palestinian leadership. I also handed over a cheque for US\$ 1 million, as first tranche of our budgetary support, to the Palestinian Prime Minister. My minister met with his Palestinian counterpart in New York on the sidelines of UNGA in September this year. India's support to the Palestinian cause was reiterated during these meetings. Visit of Palestinian Foreign Minister to India is on the cards.

I am glad to announce on this occasion that the government of India has started visa issuance system directly from our Representative Office in Ramallah since September 2013. With this facility, Palestinian nationals will be issued visas within 2-3 working days. I am hopeful that this will further strengthen people to people contacts between our two countries.

Excellencies,

In line with our support for United Nations Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, India supports a negotiated solution resulting in 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 and relevant United Nations Security Council Resolutions.

India has supported the Arab Peace Plan, which calls for withdrawal of Israel to pre-1967 borders, along with recognition of Israel and the establishment of the State of Palestine with East Jerusalem as its capital. India has called for an end to Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories and for an early and significant easing of restrictions on the free movement of persons and goods within Palestine.

Excellencies,

We welcome the recent efforts of Palestine and Israel, mediated by the US, for resumption of direct peace talks and remain hopeful that the negotiations would lead to a comprehensive peace process for final resolution of the conflict within the agreed timeline.

Let me take this opportunity to reaffirm India's consistent and unwavering support to the friendly people of Palestine and reiterate India's conviction that a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the region can be achieved through negotiations and dialogue so that a sovereign, independent, viable State of Palestine living side by side within secured borders, with the State of Israel, becomes a reality.

I thank the Indian Council for World Affairs for organizing this event.

*Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, <http://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/22537/Statement+by+Mr+E+Ahamed+Minister+of+State+for+External+Affairs+at+the+International+Day+of+Solidarity+with+the+Palestinian+People+held+at+Indian+Council+of+World+Affairs+New+Delhi>*

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## **e. QATAR**

### **12. Procedure for Registration of Overseas Indian Nationals in the Electoral Roll, Doha, 5 November 2013.**

Under Section-20A of the Representation of the People Act, 1950, every overseas elector of India (after fulfilling certain criteria) is entitled to have his/her name registered in the electoral roll of his/her constituency w. e. f. 10 February 2011. The prescribed application i.e. Form-6A for registration in the Electoral Roll along with guidelines for the applications may be accessed on the website of Election Commission of India (ECI) at <http://eci.nic.in/eci/eci.html>

*Source: Embassy of India, Doha, <http://www.indianembassyqatar.org/pages/importantannouncements.php>*

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### **13. Open House, Doha, 22 November 2013.**

Embassy of India will hold an Open House on Thursday, 30 November 2013, to address any urgent consular and labour problems of Indian nationals in the State of Qatar.

The Open House will be held from 1730 hours to 1830 hour. For written information on issues/cases proposed to be discussed with the Embassy may please be given from 1730 hours to 1800 hours. This will be followed by meeting with Embassy officials from 1800 hours to 1830 hours.

Salient information would be sent to the media after the Open House.

*Source: Embassy of India, Doha, <http://www.indianembassyqatar.org/pages/importantannouncements.php>*

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## **f. SAUDI ARABIA**

#### **14. Press Release, Riyadh, 4 November 2013.**

Sub: Meeting of Core Group of Volunteers and Embassy Officials

A meeting of the Core Group of volunteers registered with Embassy of India and officials deployed at Tarheel and Labour Offices will be held at the Embassy premises on 5 November 2013 at 1600 hours to discuss post grace period developments.

Following that meeting a press meet will also be held at the Embassy premises on 5 November 2013 at 1700 hours.

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

#### **15. Remarks by Cd'A at the SIBN event on 'Infrastructure' at the Embassy of India Premises, Riyadh, 5 November 2013.**

Excellencies, Friends of India, our business friends from India, officials from the Confederation of Indian Industry, distinguished guests.

Three important events come to my mind today when I stand here to welcome you. We have just completed several months of efforts to fully utilize the grace period that the Custodian of Two Holy Mosques His Majesty King Abdullah bin Abdul-Aziz Al Saud announced in April 2013. We are proud today that more than 1.4 million Indians have benefitted from the grace period announced by His Majesty. I thank the businessmen who recruited many Indian workers using the concessions announced during the grace period. With many new infrastructure projects being launched in Saudi Arabia, we see the number of Indian workers in Saudi Arabia growing in coming months and years.

The second important event in my mind is the visit of major delegation from Saudi Arabia to India which is taking place today. A twenty member delegation led by Deputy Minister for Commerce and Industry of Saudi Arabia is today in India to hold second review meeting of the India – Saudi Joint Commission meeting.

The third event is the Indian mission to Mars. It makes every Indian and every friend of India proud that an emerging nation like India with its indigenous technology is capable of launching its mission to Mars.

Now let me turn to my main responsibility, to welcome each one of you. I welcome our business leaders from Saudi Arabia. I see many familiar faces. Many of them know more about India than many Indians themselves. I welcome our guests from India, the officials from CII and businessmen who are here to attend Saudi Build 2013.

This is the third event that SIBN is organizing since its establishment in September 2013. We are now focusing on infrastructure sector. The reputed consultants KPMG has agreed to do a presentation for us on how to do business in Saudi Arabia.

Saudi Arabia is part of India's extended neighbourhood. Our 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. Today, our two countries represent pillars of stability and security in the region.

The 'Delhi Declaration' signed during the visit of the Custodian of Two Holy Mosques His Majesty King Abdullah Bin Abdul-Aziz Al Saud to India in January 2006 followed by the 'Riyadh Declaration' signed during the course of the Indian Prime Minister's visit to Saudi Arabia in February 2010 have committed the two countries to a mutually beneficial path of progress and development. It elevated the level of bilateral interaction to a new era of "Strategic Partnership" focusing on political, economic, security and defence areas.

During their interaction His Majesty King Abdullah bin Abdul-Aziz Al Saud and Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh emphasized the importance of developing a broad-based economic partnership that reflects the ongoing transformation of our economies and the changes such transformation are bringing about in the global economic order.

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. India continues to be insulated from the external shocks due to strong domestic consumption and its savings culture. By 2020, India's consumer spending is estimated to touch US\$ 3.6 trillion.

India today is emerging as world's design and Research & Development hub. It is host to several global corporate giants including SABIC and Saudi ARAMCO; 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.

In almost every sector that one can think of there are clear opportunities for Saudi business 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 sectors where evident complementarities exist between India and Saudi Arabia: agricultural products, minerals, iron and steel, chemicals and pharmaceuticals, automobiles and spare parts, leather, new and renewable energy technology, and cooperation between small and medium enterprises. These areas need to be looked into.

We have streamlined and eased our visa policy for Saudi businessmen to travel to India. Our engagement at the people to people level is on the rise. More Saudi students are looking at India for higher education and we welcome this. More Saudi families are visiting India for health tourism. In terms of trade and economy, Saudi Arabia is the 4th largest trading partner for India. The trade volume in 2012-13 was US\$ 43.8 billion which is all set to increase further in the current financial year. Saudi Arabia is the largest supplier of crude oil to India. It provides 19 per

cent of India's crude imports. Many Indian companies are operating in Saudi Arabia. Some of them are present here today.

The next event of SIBN planned is a meeting on the 'education sector'. This is a sector which has huge potential for increased relationship. The meeting will be on December 13 at 1700 hours at the Embassy premises.

I hope these sector-wise interactions of the businessmen will help us further strengthen and deepen our economic engagement. Once again I welcome all our guests to the Embassy. I also welcome our media and thank them for their support.

Thank You.

*Source: Embassy of India, Riyadh,*

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

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### **16. Remarks by the Cd'A at the Core Group Meeting of Volunteers and Embassy Officials, Riyadh, 5 November 2013.**

My dear Volunteers,

This is the first meeting of the Core Group of Volunteers and Officials after the end of grace period on 3 November 2013. The main purpose of this joint meeting today of the core group of volunteers and officials deployed at Tarheels and Labour offices is to assess the situation and to finalize our programme for the coming days and weeks to continue our efforts to help the Indian community in Saudi Arabia. At the outset let me state that the Embassy is fully aware of its responsibility to ensure the welfare of more than 2.8 million Indians currently resident in this country. We will continue our efforts to help each and every Indian in Saudi Arabia, within the rules and regulations of this friendly country. We have taken a series of measures aimed at helping those who could not avail the concessions of the grace period. This include 24x7 helpline at the Embassy, deployment of Arabic speaking officials at tarheels and labour offices and deployment of Arabic knowing official at Dhammam tarheel and labour office. We will also continue our e-registration of all those who need assistance.

On behalf of our Ambassador, let me thank each one of you and through you our 600 registered volunteers for your dedication, sincerity and hard work. It was our joint efforts which helped several thousands of our brothers and sisters to utilize the grace period and to become legal. For over seven months now, we have been meeting regularly as part of our efforts to fully utilize the concessions that the Custodian of Two Holy Mosques His Majesty King Abdullah announced in April 2013. We also held regular meetings in Dhammam and other cities. The partnership of Embassy officials, over 600 registered volunteers and the managing committees, teachers and non-teaching staff our ten Indian community schools in different provinces of Saudi Arabia worked day in and day out to help our brothers and sisters in need in Saudi Arabia. We have been able to reach out to Indians even in remote corners of this large country. Our media friends both from Saudi media and vernacular Indian media helped generate awareness among the large



Indian community which is spread all over the 13 provinces of the Kingdom. We have been able to convert every school, every supermarket, every restaurant and every meeting place in Saudi Arabia as focal points to generate awareness among the Indians on the grace period and the concessions. Today when we look back each one of us can be proud that we did our best to help our brothers and sisters during the grace period.

On behalf of our Ambassador, I place on record our sincere gratitude to His Majesty King Abdullah bin Abdul-Aziz Al Saud and the leadership of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for announcing the grace period and for adopting a humanitarian approach while implementing the policy of Nitaqat. We are thankful to them that while implementing this sovereign national policy of the Kingdom, they adopted a humanitarian approach that benefited several lakhs of Indians. We have been successful in bringing to the attention of Saudi authorities at the highest level our views on all issues of welfare of the Indian community in Saudi Arabia. Our Ambassador held regular meetings with Honourable Ministers and Honourable Governors of this country taking up all issues of welfare of the community. Our officers here held regular meetings with senior officials of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Labour and Interior to follow up on each of the issues of the welfare of our community. Our officials along with our dedicated volunteers worked 24x7 at the Embassy to issue several thousands of Emergency Certificates to all applicants. Our officials and volunteers worked day in and day out at the Tarheels and labour offices all across Saudi Arabia in scorching heat to help our brothers.

In short, we can be proud that we utilized each day of the grace period to help our people. We did not waste a single day. Within the rules and regulations of a foreign country, we have been able to get a series of concessions including an extended grace period that helped several thousands of our brothers and sisters. Our large Indian community here has been able to transcend sectarian, religious, regional and linguistic barriers and work together to help their brothers and sisters in need. This is no small achievement for a community of the size and diversity as that of Indian community.

Today, the results are there for everyone to see. During the seven months of grace period, the strength of Indian community in the Kingdom has gone up. Today we are over 2.8 million Indians in Saudi Arabia. The fact that the number of Indians in Saudi Arabia has increased during the grace period shows that our community has benefitted from the grace period and Nitaqat. We have received data from the Saudi authorities that till end October 2013 more than 1.4 million (14 lakh) Indians have availed the concessions during the grace period. This includes 434,667 Indians who transferred their services to other firms, 481,233 Indians who changed their jobs/profession and over 470,000 Indians who renewed their licenses/job permits. The number of Indians who left on final exit during the grace period is, 34,281. This includes those who availed the concessions and also others who left the country on completion of their contractual period. For most of them who left for India availing the grace period concessions, their return was a dream come true. For several years, they were trying to return to their homeland. There were



several thousand Indians who thought that they could never return to their home land. There were thousands of Indians who tried for several years to return to their home land. During the grace period, they all could return without facing any penal action and with no ban on their return. They can now come back to Saudi Arabia on a new visa tomorrow if they so wish. This is no small achievement for the community. It is important to note that despite the return of these Indians, the total number of Indians in Saudi Arabia has gone up and it continues to grow. This shows that the suggestion of a mass exodus of Indians from Saudi Arabia was incorrect.

Saudi Arabia is a growing labour market given the major infrastructure and development programme currently being undertaken all across this country. Major infrastructure projects like the Riyadh metro would require the services of large number of high-end and skilled labourers. This provides an opportunity for Indians, who are law abiding and hardworking. The emphasis that Saudi Arabia today gives for projects in education, health, housing, infrastructure and transportation sectors would create more job opportunities for skilled labour from countries such as India. The Saudi authorities have made it clear that they would need expatriate workers to be partners in their economy, but they need to be present in this country legally and not as illegals. If we can provide value to Saudi economy, we will be welcomed in this country. It has been our assessment that a streamlined and legalized Saudi labour market would be in the interest of our workers, both skilled and unskilled, as it would also curtail the role of unscrupulous middlemen and agents both in India and Saudi Arabia.

In coming days and weeks ahead, the Embassy is determined to continue its efforts to help those who could not avail the grace period. There may still be some people who could not avail the concessions. We have a clear action plan in place to help them. We will work closely with our volunteers and our schools to help all those who need assistance. We will continue to take up their cases with the Saudi authorities regularly. We have already deployed Arabic knowing officials at Tarheels and labour offices. We have already activated our 24x7 help lines at the Embassy. We will continue our e-registration of those who need assistance. Such mails may be sent to the Embassy at email ids [wel.riyadh@mea.gov.in](mailto:wel.riyadh@mea.gov.in), [labour.riyadh@mea.gov.in](mailto:labour.riyadh@mea.gov.in) with a copy to [dcem.riyadh@mea.gov.in](mailto:dcem.riyadh@mea.gov.in). Our volunteers may continue to send their suggestions to us on these emails. We will continue our close interaction with the Saudi authorities including with the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Labour and Interior. They are our partners in our efforts to help the large Indian community in Saudi Arabia. The Agreement on Labour Cooperation that we propose to sign in coming weeks during the visit to India of the Saudi Minister of Labour will also help us to deepen our engagement with Saudi Arabia and further streamline the recruitment process which would help our workers.

The grace period has ended with a positive note for our community. We worked day in and day out, united and with a common objective. We have worked hard. Our efforts have yielded good results that make each one of us proud. Our efforts have been well appreciated including by Saudi authorities. We still have more work to do. Given the size of our community here, we will

always face some challenges. There would always be some issues that would need our collective efforts.

We would also need to expose those who try to create panic and to spoil our excellent bilateral relationship with this friendly country of Saudi Arabia. India today has a strategic partnership with Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia is one of our major sources of energy and an important trading partner with a bilateral trade of more than US \$ 43 billion in 2012-13. It is also a major source of remittances to our country. It is important that we work towards further strengthening our political, economic and security engagement with this country and also deepen our people to people exchanges. Today, when I am speaking to you, there is a major delegation led by Deputy Minister of Commerce and Industry in India to hold the second review meeting of India – Saudi Arabia Joint Commission Meeting. The delegation includes representatives from the Ministries of Labour and Interior. Today morning the Saudi India Business Network (SIBN) organized a major infrastructure event at the Embassy which was attended by many Saudi businessmen. Many of them are also major employers of Indian workers. We have a forward looking bilateral relationship with the Kingdom which is helping our large community here. We will continue our efforts to strengthen that relationship.

The Embassy is fully aware of its responsibility to the 2.8 million Indians resident in Saudi Arabia and to their families in India. We will continue to do all that we can do to help our brothers and sisters, within the rules and regulations that a diplomatic mission in a foreign country is required to follow. We need to always keep in mind that we live in a foreign land. We will not and should not violate any rules and regulations of our host country. It is important to remind us that there is no such thing as ‘free visa’. This message needs to be spread in India for all new employment seekers. Our community has always been a law abiding community and we will continue to be a law abiding community. This is one reason why we are considered to be one of the most preferred communities here. We will continue to maintain this reputation, at the same time continue our efforts to help our brothers and sisters in need.

Thank you.

*Source: Embassy of India, Riyadh,*

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

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### **17. Press Release, Riyadh, 6 November 2013.**

The Embassy of India has set up Help Cells at the Tarheel and Labour Office in Riyadh to assist those who could not avail the grace period concessions. Their cases need to be handled at the Labour Office during office hours. Special Help Lines are set up at the Labour Office, manned by the Embassy officials, to assist Indian nationals. Similar arrangements are in place in Tarheel, Riyadh, as well. The Embassy officials deployed at the Tarheel in Dammam will continue to function. In Dammam, Help Desk will be operating from 1700-1900 hours at VFS Centre.

The Help Line numbers in Riyadh from 6 November 2013 are as follows:

Officials on Tarheel Duty

- |    |                   |            |
|----|-------------------|------------|
| 1. | Raisul Azam       | 0546843866 |
| 2. | K. Yoosuf         | 0546843836 |
| 3. | Moosa Raza        | 0546843746 |
| 4. | Abdul Mubeen Khan | 0546843894 |

Officials on Labour Office Duty

- |    |                   |            |
|----|-------------------|------------|
| 1. | Naseem Khan       | 0546843922 |
| 2. | Mohd Anwar Hafeez | 0546843734 |
| 3. | Wasiullah         | 0546843750 |
| 4. | Tahir Shamo       | 0548981774 |

**Embassy Help Line Numbers**

00-966-11-4881982, & 4884697

E-Registration for those who could not avail the grace period will continue. Mails relating to this may be sent at [wel.riyadh@mea.gov.in](mailto:wel.riyadh@mea.gov.in), [labour.riyadh@mea.gov.in](mailto:labour.riyadh@mea.gov.in), with a copy to [dcm.riyadh@mea.gov.in](mailto:dcm.riyadh@mea.gov.in)

*Source: Embassy of India, Riyadh,*

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

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**18. Remarks by the Cd'A at Dhammam Volunteers Core Group Meeting at the Indian International School, Riyadh, 8 November 2013.**

Dear Chairman, Principal and My dear Volunteers,

This is our first meeting after the end of grace period that the Custodian of Two Holy Mosques His Majesty King Abdullah bin Abdul-Aziz Al Saud announced in April 2013. I, begin by thanking His Majesty for the grace period and for the humanitarian approach that the Saudi authorities adopted while implementing the Nitaqat. We had several such meetings with our volunteers here in this conference room during the last seven months in this vibrant city of Eastern Province of the Kingdom. On behalf of our Ambassador I thank each one of you for your support to the Embassy and for your efforts to assist our brothers and sisters in fully utilizing the concessions during the grace period. The meticulousness with which you handled some of the issues reflected a sense of perfection which always inspired us. I recall that each time I visited here, this core group of our volunteers made a Power Point presentation on the progress they made on each of the issues that we faced during the grace period.

We have got it right so far. We are the community that benefitted most from the concessions announced during the grace period. We can be proud that we used every day of the grace period for the benefit of our community here. The numbers that we have so far are very impressive. During the seven months of grace period, the strength of Indian community in the Kingdom has gone up. Today we are over 2.8 million Indians in Saudi Arabia. The fact that the number of Indians in Saudi Arabia has increased during the grace period shows that our community has benefitted from the grace period and Nitaqat. We have received data from the Saudi authorities that till end October 2013 more than 1.4 million (14 lakh) Indians have availed the concessions during the grace period. This includes 4,34,667 Indians who transferred their services to other

firms, 4,81,233 Indians who changed their jobs/profession and over 4,70,000 Indians who renewed their licenses/job permits. The number of Indians who left on final exit during the grace period is 1,34,281. This includes those who availed the concessions and also others who left the country on completion of their contractual period. For most of them who left for India availing the grace period concessions, their return was a dream come true. For several years, they were trying to return to their homeland. There were several thousand Indians who thought that they could never return to their home land. There were thousands of Indians who tried for several years to return to their home land. During the grace period, they all could return without facing any penal action and with no ban on their return. They can now come back to Saudi Arabia on a new visa tomorrow if they so wish. This is no small achievement for the community. It is important to note that despite the return of these Indians, the total number of Indians in Saudi Arabia has gone up and it continues to grow. This shows that the suggestion of a mass exodus of Indians from Saudi Arabia was incorrect.

Before we do a brainstorming session here today on the way forward to help our brothers and sisters who could not avail the concessions of the grace period, let me recall a few facts which would help strengthen our resolve and commitment to help our brothers and sisters. We have several partners in our endeavour: (i) the Saudi authorities who always adopted a humanitarian approach during the grace period and during the implementation of the policy of Nitaqat; (ii) the Indian community which wholeheartedly came forward to utilize the concessions offered during the grace period; (iii) our registered volunteers who worked day in and day out in small groups all across this vast country to help our people; (iv) the Indian community schools in Saudi Arabia which acted as the focal point of our operations, their managing committees, teachers, non-teaching staff and parents and students who helped us generate awareness; and (v) our media both the Saudi media and vernacular Indian media which helped us generate awareness and reported the facts. We also got tremendous support from our concerned Ministries in India and our state governments. Ambassador was in regular correspondence with the Chief Secretaries of almost all our State Governments to expedite verification procedures for several hundred undocumented EC applicants.

Well before the authorities of this country announced the grace period and a series of concessions, our Ambassador had taken several steps preparing all of us for the major task ahead. I recall my several visits to Dammam accompanying him as part of our interaction with the community. These interactions helped us to realize the magnitude of the issues involved which he took up with the Saudi authorities at the highest levels. Ambassador also encouraged our community, which is spread all across this vast country which is of 2/3rd the size of India, to transcend sectarian, religious, regional and linguistic barriers and work together to help their brothers and sisters in need. This was a unifying exercise for the Indians in Saudi Arabia, which yielded positive results.

Now let us discuss our action plan for the coming weeks and months. Despite our best efforts, there may still be some Indians who could not avail the concessions during the grace period. There are some people who could not avail the concessions due to legal cases against them. It is only natural that when we have a population of 2.8 million, there will always be some people who face problems. The Embassy will continue its efforts to help them. They are our citizens and we will do all that we can do to help them within the rules and regulations applicable to a diplomatic mission in a foreign country. We will work closely with our volunteers and our schools to help all those who need assistance. We will continue to take up their cases with the Saudi authorities regularly. We have maintained our channels of communication with the Saudi Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Labour and Interior at all levels. They are our partners in our efforts to help the large Indian community in Saudi Arabia. We hold regular meetings with the Saudi authorities to discuss new issues pertaining to the community. We have already deployed Arabic knowing officials at Tarheels and labour offices. We have already activated our 24x7 help lines at the Embassy. We will continue our e-registration of those who need assistance. Such mails may be sent to the Embassy at email ids [wel.riyadh@mea.gov.in](mailto:wel.riyadh@mea.gov.in), [labour.riyadh@mea.gov.in](mailto:labour.riyadh@mea.gov.in) with a copy to [dc.m.riyadh@mea.gov.in](mailto:dc.m.riyadh@mea.gov.in). Our volunteers may continue to send their suggestions to us on these emails. Our help desk at the VFS Centre in Dammam will continue to be operational in coming weeks. I am happy to announce that our School in Dammam will continue to be our focal point in our efforts in the Eastern Province and beyond. I thank the Chairman, Managing Committee, Principal, teachers and non-teaching staff, parents and students for their support.

One most important thing that we need to do today is to generate awareness among our brothers in India on the Saudi rules and regulations on recruitment and employment. We need to ensure that our new comers do not violate Saudi rules and regulations and they do not become ‘illegals’ on arrival. We need to intensify our efforts to educate our job aspirants. I understand that many of the new arrivals have approached us seeking assistance for return to India or for assistance at the labour offices. You are helping them at the Tarheels and Labour offices here. Our concerned Ministries and State Governments are putting in efforts to educate the new job aspirants in India that there is no such thing as ‘free visas’ and that one should not work away from their legal employers. It is important to spread the message back home that it is illegal to work away from your legal employer. We have also alerted these job aspirants in India that they would ensure that the companies they would join are not in red or yellow category and are not in violation of Saudi rules on Nitaqat. This generation of awareness is a major task ahead for us. I am in constant touch with our Protector General of Immigrants on the issue. I urge you also to take steps to generate awareness among the new job aspirants. The Agreement on Labour Cooperation that we propose to sign in coming weeks during the visit to India of the Saudi Minister of Labour would help us streamline the recruitment process and protect our workers from middlemen.

Saudi Arabia is a growing labour market given the major infrastructure and development programme currently being undertaken all across this country. Major infrastructure projects like the Riyadh metro would require the services of large number of high-end and skilled labourers. This provides an opportunity for Indians, who are law abiding and hardworking. The emphasis that Saudi Arabia today gives for projects in education, health, housing, infrastructure and transportation sectors would create more job opportunities for skilled labour from countries such as India. The Saudi authorities have made it clear that they would need expatriate workers to be partners in their economy, but they need to be present in this country legally and not as illegals. If we can provide value to Saudi economy, we will be welcomed in this country. It has been our assessment that a streamlined and legalized Saudi labour market would be in the interest of our workers, both skilled and unskilled, as it would also curtail the role of unscrupulous middlemen and agents both in India and Saudi Arabia.

We will continue our regular engagement with the community to understand the issues and take up each of these issues with the Saudi authorities at high levels, as we did in the past. We will remain engaged with our partners. I urge you to be eyes and ears of the Embassy to bring to our attention any issues that need the attention of the Mission in Riyadh. Please be in constant touch with our officials deployed here and also in Riyadh. My colleague Dr. Md. Aleem is with me here today and will try to address the pending labour issues. Together we will be able to convert our challenges into opportunities.

Thank you.

*Source: Embassy of India, Riyadh,*

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

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### **19. Press Release, Riyadh, 19 November 2013.**

A Seminar on “Higher Education in India” is being organized at the premises of the Embassy of India, Riyadh, under the aegis of Saudi India Business Network (SIBN) on 13 December 2013 (Friday) at 1730 hours.

The seminar is part of sector specific activities being organized under the umbrella of the SIBN which aims at promoting bilateral trade and investment by acting as a nodal point to facilitate interaction between the business communities of India and Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Higher Education in India has witnessed a tremendous increase in its institutional and infrastructural capacity. The number of universities/academic institutions has increased manifolds precisely from 27 in 1950 to 504 in 2009. The number of colleges has also witnessed similar increase with just 578 in 1950 to more than 30,000 in 2011. Today, India has re-emerged as a centre of learning imparting quality education at affordable costs. Many Indian institutions like Indian Institute of Technology, Indian Institute of Management, All India Institute of Medical Sciences, etc. have earned a name for themselves globally.



For centuries India has been the global centre for education and learning. The quality of Indian Education is ensured by the government bodies like University Grants Commission (UGC), All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), Association of Indian Universities (AIU), National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC). Thousands of foreign students from across the globe are currently pursuing higher studies in India. The high quality education imparted by Indian Universities, and moderate fee-structure and right learning environment are the factors attracting thousands of students from different parts of the world.

The Seminar scheduled for 13 December 2013, will be interactive in nature and provide a forum to bring all relevant players on one platform for information sharing and discussions. Professors, scholars, academicians, representatives from Indian/Saudi Universities, Members of Higher Board/Managing Committees of International Indian Schools in KSA are expected to participate and share their thoughts on this matter.

*Source: Embassy of India, Riyadh,*

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

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## **20. Press Release, Riyadh, 21 November 2013.**

Ambassador of India His Excellency Hamid Ali Rao would meet the volunteers registered with the Embassy of India for an interactive session on Saturday, 30 November 2013 at 1700 hours at Embassy premises to discuss the evolving situation after the end of grace period on 3 November 2013. The Ambassador would also discuss about the Labour Agreement being signed between India and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Employment Contract.

All volunteers registered with the Embassy of India are invited to attend. Any suggestions could be forwarded to the Embassy at e-mail [wel.riyadh@mea.gov.in](mailto:wel.riyadh@mea.gov.in); [labour.riyadh@mea.gov.in](mailto:labour.riyadh@mea.gov.in) with a copy to [dcm.riyadh@mea.gov.in](mailto:dcm.riyadh@mea.gov.in).

*Source: Embassy of India, Riyadh,*

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

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## **21. Press Release, Riyadh, 25 November 2013.**

Ambassador Meets His Highness Prince Saud Bin Abdullah Bin Thenayan Al-Saud, Chairman SABIC

Ambassador of India H.E. Hamid Ali Rao today met with His Highness Prince Saud Bin Abdullah Bin Thenayan Al-Saud, Chairman of SABIC (Saudi Basic Industries Corporation). His Highness Prince Saud is also the Chairman of Royal Commission for Jubail and Yanbu. Both sides recalled the strong economic relationship that exists between India and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the role that SABIC plays in promoting this relationship. SABIC has a Research & Development centre in Bengaluru and has regional offices in New Delhi and Mumbai.

Ambassador briefed His Highness Prince Saud on the investment opportunities in India including in the petrochemical and infrastructure sector. A presentation focusing on the upcoming projects



in India including Delhi Mumbai Industrial Corridor (DMIC); OpaL Petrochemical Complex, Gujarat; Petrochemical Complex at Mangalore, Karnataka; IOCL's LNG Project at Ennore, Tamil Nadu; Paradip Refinery/ Petrochemical Project of IOCL at Paradip; Kochi Petrochemical Project BPCL and other upcoming mega projects in the field of roads, power generation, other surface transportation, Special Economic Zones (SEZs), ports and water was made during the meeting. Chairman His Highness Prince Saud would be visiting India shortly.

*Source: Embassy of India, Riyadh,*

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

## **22. Ambassador thanks the authorities of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for rescue operations that saved the lives of Indians, Riyadh, 25 November 2013.**

Ambassador of India Hamid Ali Rao today formally conveyed his gratitude to the authorities of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for saving the lives of six Indian citizens by rescuing them from the sea near Jubail. Ambassador in a formal Note to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia conveyed his personal appreciation and gratitude to the Coast Guards of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for their prompt action in rescuing the Indians affected.

On 5 November 2013 six Indian nationals Hussain Sali Mohammad, Mubeen Suleman, Noor Mohammed Qasim, Ayyub Jhons Nas, Haroon Rasheed and Uthman Ayyub were rescued by an Aramco plane. The boat they were travelling caught fire and capsized. The Saudi authorities rescued and gave them hospitality.

When the Embassy received information on the rescue, two officials from the Embassy in Riyadh visited Jubail to meet the Indian citizens and to provide them with all support including travel documents and air tickets. They travelled to India on 16 November 2013.

Ambassador also thanked the volunteers registered with the Indian Embassy who met the rescued Indians and provided them with assistance.

*Source: Embassy of India, Riyadh,*

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

## **23. Ambassador's Message 'Building on India – Saudi Arabia Strategic Partnership', Riyadh, 30 November 2013.**

My dear Volunteers,

It has been a long journey together. During the last eight months we faced several challenges together. There were thousands of our brothers who were dreaming of returning to India without facing penal action. There were hundreds of thousands who were hoping to change their profession, correct their status and renew their resident permits. In early April this year, when we met here we took a decision to face the challenges together. Our pledge was that we will work together to help our community to fully utilize the grace period announced by the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques His Majesty King Abdullah bin Abdul-Aziz Al Saud. I place on record my sincere gratitude to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques His Majesty King Abdullah for

announcing the grace period and further extending it, a decision which benefited several hundreds of the Indian community in Saudi Arabia. I am also thankful to all officials of the Government of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia who worked as our partners in helping everyone who approached them to correct their status or to leave the country.

Today when we meet a month after the end of the Grace Period, we all can be proud of what we have achieved together. We transcended religious, regional and linguistic barriers and worked together to help our brothers and sisters in need. I still remember the face of that Malayalam volunteer who in his broken Urdu helping a worker from West Bengal to fill in his application forms in English. I still remember the face of that little boy from one of our Community Schools in Eastern Province who wrote me a letter offering his pocket money to buy food for our workers who came here to apply for an EC. Today it may be difficult for us to believe that there were days when we had thousands lined up here in the Mission to apply for ECs. I do not think that any one went back from the Embassy disappointed. I am proud to say that everyone who approached us managed to get some help from us. When it is all over we have 1,41,301 Indians (as on 27 November 2013) who left this country, most of them, fulfilling their dream to return to India without facing penal action and with no ban on their return to Saudi Arabia. The number of those who corrected their status availing the grace period is much more; estimated to be over 1.4 million. I am also told that the number of Indians in Saudi Arabia has gone up during this period. I am sure that we can claim to have fully utilized the grace period. I am happy to state that the credit for this goes to each one of us.

I feel proud when I hear our brothers say ‘My Embassy’ made this a success. This feeling of ‘My Embassy in Riyadh’, a feeling of oneness and common consciousness, is a great solace for our brothers and sisters in distress. I have seen it for months when I saw several workers approaching the Embassy telling each other that they received telephone calls from ‘Our Embassy’. In fact I am so proud that these thousands of telephone calls were made not just by our Embassy staff but also by the volunteers and their spouses. I feel proud when our Saudi friends and diplomatic colleagues ask me, “How did you do it?” My answer to that question is that it is the Embassy’s partnership with the community which did it. It is you, dedicated, sincere volunteers who did it. It is the teachers and non-teaching staff of our ten Indian community schools who did it. It is the parents of the students in our Indian community schools who did it. It is our media friends who helped us generate awareness that did it. And of course, nothing would have been possible without the humanitarian approach and that whole hearted support that each one of us received from Saudi authorities at all levels. I repeat they were our partners in this major endeavour. And they continue to be our partners.

I am proud to repeat that it is our partnership, our unity, our feeling of oneness that did this wonder for us. And I am happy to announce that our partnership is there to stay.

Our all problems are not over yet. We still have people around us who need a helping hand. And we will extend that helping hand to them. We maintain our channels of communication with the Saudi authorities at all levels. They have been our partners in our efforts to help the large Indian community in Saudi Arabia. We hold regular meetings with Saudi authorities to discuss new issues pertaining to the community. We continue to deploy Arabic knowing officials at tarheels and labour offices. Our 24x7 help lines at the Embassy continue to operate. I am happy to announce my decision to set up two committees comprising of Embassy officials and our dedicated volunteers to further coordinate our efforts to help our community: a Welfare Consultative Committee and a Labour Support Committee. I will decide on the composition and mandate shortly. We will meet regularly here in Riyadh and even in other cities. I want to use the talent and expertise of our community members to help our community. I urge you to remain in close touch with my officers in our endeavour to help our brothers and sisters in need. I always followed an 'open house' policy at the Embassy. I will continue to follow that policy. This is the home for all Indians in Saudi Arabia. All are welcome here to come and meet us.

We also have a lot of work to do back home to streamline the recruitment process. We need to generate awareness among our job seekers in India. We need to ensure that no one lands here to become illegal on arrival. I once again remind you that we live in a foreign country and that we should obey all laws of this country. We have a reputation as the most law abiding and hard working community. We need to maintain that reputation. We are currently working on an Agreement on India – Saudi Arabia Labour Cooperation for Domestic Workers Recruitment. This would help both the workers and the employers and they would be governed by Saudi labour laws. This Agreement is the first step towards a Comprehensive Labour Agreement that we propose to enter into with Saudi Arabia in near future.

In all that we do here, we always need to keep a broader picture of our relations with Saudi Arabia in mind. We have excellent bilateral relationship with this friendly country. We have a strategic partnership focusing on political, economic, security and defence areas. The Embassy is working in close coordination with our Saudi partners to further strengthen this partnership in all these areas. Saudi Arabia is one of our major sources of energy and an important trading partner with a bilateral trade of more than US \$ 43 billion in 2012-13. In the first six months of 2013 -14 (April – Sept) our bilateral trade has already reached US \$ 25 billion. Saudi Arabia is also a major source of remittances to our country. It is important that we work towards further strengthening our political, economic and security engagement with this country and also deepen our people to people exchanges, every day. I want you to be partners not only in community welfare but also in promoting our strategic partnership with this friendly country.

Thank You.

*Source: Embassy of India, Riyadh,*

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

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## **g. TUNISIA**

**24. In Spite of All Odds, A Short Movie From Tunisia, New Delhi, 18 November 2013.**

In spite of odds and little support from the government, directors like Anis Lassoud from Tunisia has come up with an impressive short film 'Sabbat l Aid (My Shoes)' for screening at the Competition International shorts category here at the ongoing 18th International Children's Film Festival.

Speaking to the PIB, Anis said that after the recent revolution in Tunisia, most of theatres had been closed. People had little interest in coming to theatres for movies; they prefer to watch movie stuff only on television. There are very few film makers in our country, which concerned for children movies, he said.

Explaining on theme of his short movie, 'A nine year old nadir loves to run, as if he wants to defy gravity. While shopping for Eid clothes with his parents, he sets his heart on a pair of expensive shoes beyond what his father can afford', he said.

Huge turnout of audience at the festival is really amazing and I hope it is key element in the success of the ICFFI, he said. Mr. Anis suggested that an award could be given to a film based on the children's choice.

*Source: Press Information Bureau, New Delhi,*

<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx?relid=100688>

**h. UNITED ARAB EMIRATES****25. T.P. Seetharam appointed as the next Ambassador of India to the United Arab Emirates, New Delhi, 11 November 2013.**

T.P. Seetharam, (IFS: 1980) currently High Commissioner of India to Mauritius, has been appointed as the next Ambassador of India to the United Arab Emirates

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/22475/Shri+TP+Seetharam+appointed+as+the+next+Ambassador+of+India+to+the+United+Arab+Emirates>*

**MULTILATERAL ISSUES/REGIONAL ISSUES****i. ACD FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETING****26. Statement by H.E. E. Ahamed, Minister of State for External Affairs of India, At 12th ACD Foreign Ministers Meeting, Manama, 25 November 2013.**

His Excellency Shaikh Khalid Bin Ahmed Bin Mohamed Al Khalifa, Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Kingdom of Bahrain,

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am happy to be here once again today. The Kingdom of Bahrain has extended all facilities to around 3, 00,000 Indians who have made Bahrain temporary home. We share excellent relations in political, economic and cultural spheres and leaderships of the two countries have invested considerable energy and interest in developing these relations. The recent Bahrain-India Exhibition and Conference held on 22- 24 October strengthened our relations further.

I take this opportunity to express our sincere appreciation to Republic of Tajikistan for successfully hosting 11th ACD Ministerial meeting in Dushanbe on 29 March 2013 and also to Royal Kingdom of Thailand for initiating and coordinating ACD forum since inception.

We welcome Republic of Turkey as the 33rd member of ACD. We have deep historical, civilizational and cultural connections with Turkey. With the joining of Turkey, we believe the ACD will further the realization of Asian continent into Asian community and add dynamism to ACD process.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, I am happy to note that Kingdom of Bahrain has selected the theme 'Promoting Intra-Asian Tourism' for the 12th Ministerial meeting. We extend our support to the novel concept of the Asian Tourism City.

I wish to mention that India is keen to join this initiative and would wish to offer to host the Tourism Business Forum. We need to harness our strengths and potential in tourism for the benefit of Asian community.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, ACD has completed 10 years of cooperation with a historic Summit in Kuwait in 2012 and expanded its membership from 18 to 33. This shows ACD has provided a significant platform for dialogue and cooperation in Asia and has contributed to enhancing friendship, promoting peace and development. In the present global economic crisis, there is a need to strengthen cooperation in a few project areas identified by ACD members so as to enhance efficiency and effectiveness and visibility of ACD, to make 21st century truly as Asian Century.

Asia has a rich civilizational heritage and distinctive cultures. I am happy to inform that as a co-prime mover in cultural cooperation, India hosted the 2nd senior official meeting on 19-20 April 2012, which was successful with the participation and cooperation of member countries. This has been further taken forward by Islamic Republic of Iran by hosting the 1st Cultural Ministers meeting on 7-8 May 2013. We need to take forward the cooperation by implementing the activities agreed so that bonds of friendship will be further strengthened. India has taken the initiative to compile an anthology of poetry of eminent writers of the region which will enhance our understanding and cultural exchanges...

Thank you.

*Source: Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations, New York,  
<http://www.un.int/india/2013/pmi100.pdf>*

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**Compiled by Alvite N**

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