

# **INDIA SPEAKS**

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## **BILATERAL ISSUES**

### **a. EGYPT**

#### **1. Scholarships offered by the Indian Government, Cairo, 2 January 2014.**

The Government of India, through its Embassy in Cairo, is offering 27 scholarships for different courses of study in India to promote cooperation between India and Egypt in the field of education and culture. The scholarships are offered under two categories.

In the first category, 13 Scholarships (three for undergraduates and ten for Doctoral Studies), are given every year under the Indo-Egyptian Cultural Exchange Programme 2012-2015 to deserving Egyptian Students for Pursuing Higher Education in reputed institutes of excellence in India. The courses are in any branch or discipline, including science and technology, social sciences or humanities, except for medicine or related fields. The Indian Embassy coordinates with the Ministry of Higher Education in Egypt to process the applications of the candidates for these scholarships. Suitable candidates from the nominations received from the Ministry are then selected by the Indian Embassy after testing their English Proficiency before forwarding their names to concerned Indian Universities for acceptance. Candidates desirous to pursue courses in India can avail the Scholarship for the year 2014-2015 by writing to Ministry of Education, Government of Egypt or by submitting their applications to the Maulana Azad Centre for Indian Culture (MACIC). The scholarship will cover return airfare, tuition fees, a substantial living allowance and health cover.

A second category of 14 scholarships are offered under the Africa Scheme which covers undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral courses of study. These scholarships are directly administered by the Embassy and are in any branch or discipline, excluding medicine or related fields. Candidates desirous to pursue courses in India can avail these scholarships by submitting their applications to the Maulana Azad Centre for Indian Culture (MACIC). The scholarship will cover return airfare, tuition fees, a living allowance and health cover.

The application forms as well as detailed guidelines, including the list of participating Universities are available at ICCR's website:

<http://www.iccrindia.net/applicationprocedure.html>. The application form can be downloaded from the Home Page at [www.indembcairo.com](http://www.indembcairo.com). The deadline for receiving the nominations at MACIC, Embassy of India at 23 Talaat Harb Street, Down Town Cairo, has been fixed as 31 January 2014. For any clarifications and guidance, candidates are welcome to contact Maulana Azad Cultural Centre for Indian Culture (MACIC).

*Source: Embassy of India, Cairo, [http://www.indembcairo.com/en-us/presscentre/pressreleases.aspx?udt\\_656\\_param\\_detail=2779](http://www.indembcairo.com/en-us/presscentre/pressreleases.aspx?udt_656_param_detail=2779)*

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## **2. Republic Day of India, Cairo, 15 January 2014.**

On the occasion of the 65th Republic Day of India, a Flag Hoisting Ceremony will be held at 9:00 a.m. at India House, 19, Mohamed Mazhar Street, Zamalek, on Sunday, 26 January 2014. Mr. Navdeep Suri, Ambassador of India to Egypt will hoist the Indian tricolour.

All members of the Indian community and friends of India are invited to attend the function.

*Source: Embassy of India, Cairo, [http://www.indembcairo.com/en-us/presscentre/pressreleases.aspx?udt\\_656\\_param\\_detail=2794](http://www.indembcairo.com/en-us/presscentre/pressreleases.aspx?udt_656_param_detail=2794)*

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## **3. The Embassy of India in Cairo condemns the series of terrorist bomb attacks..., Cairo, 24 January 2014.**

The Embassy of India in Cairo condemns the series of terrorist bomb attacks in Cairo. The Embassy offers its condolences to the victims and their families and wishes speedy recovery of those who were injured. The Embassy condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and states that there can be no justification for these heinous acts.

*Source: Embassy of India, Cairo, [http://www.indembcairo.com/presscentre/whatsnew.aspx?udt\\_506\\_param\\_detail=3798](http://www.indembcairo.com/presscentre/whatsnew.aspx?udt_506_param_detail=3798)*

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## **4. 65th Republic Day of India celebrated in Cairo, Cairo, 29 January 2014.**

The Embassy of India, Cairo celebrated the 65th Republic Day of India with a grand reception at 'India House' on 28 January 2013. The event was attended by a large number of dignitaries, including the Deputy Prime Minister, Dr. Ziad Bahaa El Din, Mouneer Fakhry Abdel Nour, Ministry of Industry and Foreign Trade, Eng. Abdel Aziz Fadel, Minister of Civil Aviation, Dr. Yehiah Al Gamal, former Deputy Prime Ministers, Dr. Ahmed Derwish, Former Minister for Administrative Development, Dr. Ali Dessouki, Former Youth Minister, Amb. Ahmed Ismail, Assistant Foreign Minister, Dr. Camelia Sobhi, First Undersecretary, Ministry of Culture, along with a large number of prominent people from arts, culture, and the media.

Welcoming the august gathering Ambassador Navdeep Suri spoke about the adoption of the Indian Constitution in 1950 which established India as a sovereign democratic Republic after it had gained independence in 1947. He mentioned that the day was an occasion to pay homage to the sagacity and wisdom of members of the Constituent Assembly who had overcome numerous

challenges and produced an enduring document that has preserved the institutions of democracy. Through it, India has successfully demonstrated that despite tremendous diversity across ethnic, linguistic and religious lines, it is possible to build a genuinely democratic and pluralistic society. This year, he said, India is to have its 16th General Elections, where an estimated 800 million voters will go to the booths. He added that Egypt is currently experiencing a period of political transition and that India will continue to respect the wishes of the Egyptian people and work with the government chosen by them.

*Source: Embassy of India, Cairo, [http://www.indembcairo.com/en-us/presscentre/pressreleases.aspx?udt\\_656\\_param\\_detail=3809](http://www.indembcairo.com/en-us/presscentre/pressreleases.aspx?udt_656_param_detail=3809)*

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## **b. ISRAEL**

### **5. PM condoles the passing away of former Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, New Delhi, 12 January 2014.**

The Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh, has condoled the passing away of the former Prime Minister of Israel, Ariel Sharon.

In a letter to the Prime Minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu, Dr. Singh said Sharon made extremely important contributions to the State of Israel, and took bold steps for peace in the region.

Following is the text of the Prime Minister's letter:

"I was deeply saddened to learn of the demise of Ariel Sharon.

During his long career in public service, Sharon made extremely important contributions to the State of Israel. As Prime Minister, he took bold steps for peace in the region. We in India recall that he was the first-ever Prime Minister of Israel to visit India in September 2003. His lasting contribution to the promotion of our bilateral ties will be long remembered.

In this hour of bereavement, please accept our heartfelt condolences and sympathies.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration."

*Source: Prime Minister of India, New Delhi, <http://pmindia.gov.in/press-details.php?nodeid=1764>*

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## **c. JORDAN**

### **6. India looks to strengthen ties with Jordan — ambassador, Amman, 25 January 2014.**

AMMAN — India is keen on strengthening its cooperation with Jordan in economic, industrial and trade spheres as well as in the areas of defence, consultation and expertise exchange, India's Ambassador to Jordan Radha Ranjan Dash said.

In an interview with The Jordan Times on Friday on the occasion of the 65th anniversary of his country's republic day, the ambassador highlighted current cooperation and prospects for further joint projects.

"There is a lot of scope," he said, describing Jordan as a model in the Middle East. "It remains an oasis of peace and stability," Dash noted, underlining the importance that India attaches to ties with the Kingdom.

India's republic day commemorates the day when the constitution of India came into force on 26 January 1950. The day officially marks the birth of an independent India and the swearing-in of its first president, Rajendra Prasad, after 100 years of British rule.

An annual parade will take place near India Gate in the capital, New Delhi, featuring members of the navy, air force and army to mark the occasion.

The country's 28 states bring their cultural troupes who perform throughout the parade for visitors from different parts of India and abroad, the ambassador said.

Well ahead of the republic day, festivities were under way in several parts of India, with participants hoisting the Indian tricolour and chanting the words "Vande Matharam," which means "Salute our Mother Land."

Today, with a population of more than 1.21 billion, India has become the world's third largest economy in purchasing power parity terms.

Its relations with Jordan are steadily progressing in various fields, according to Dash.

"We are very hopeful that there will be more business between the two countries," the ambassador said, noting that the "fairly balanced" bilateral trade volume totalled \$1.23 billion between January and October 2013.

"We are importing phosphate, potash and phosphoric acid to make fertilizers. India is a big market. We need fertilizers for our agriculture," he said, underscoring the huge opportunities that Jordan can tap.

Jordan's imports from India include frozen meat, basmati rice, machinery, pharmaceuticals and spare parts, the envoy indicated.

As part of ongoing cooperation, an US\$850 million joint venture between the Jordan Phosphate Mines Company (JPMC) and the Indian Farmers Fertilizers Cooperative will become operational in March 2014, he noted.

Moreover, the JPMC, Gujarat Narmada Fertilizer Company and United Phosphorous Limited signed a trilateral memorandum of understanding in March 2013 to set up a new phosphoric acid plant in Jordan, according to the ambassador.

"I am confident this project will be implemented," Dash said.

An Indian business delegation is due to visit Jordan to explore prospects for more cooperation and "we are trying to schedule the meeting in 2014," he elaborated.

Now, "we are waiting for two delegations to visit India," he noted. The first comprises pharmaceutical representatives, and the second small- and medium-sized enterprises, Dash added, underscoring the potential for expertise exchange and setting up joint ventures.

With India's vast experience in IT, Jordan has embarked on cooperation in this domain.

In February 2013, India's Amity University Online and the Talal Abu-Ghazaleh University signed an agreement paving the way for access to online higher education in a range of streams, the ambassador said.

Dash also highlighted tourism cooperation and ongoing consultations between the foreign ministries of Jordan and India.

There are direct flights between the two countries and Jordan is just five-and-a-half hours away, he said, adding that "people to people contact is very important."

Around 80,000 Indians visited Jordan in 2013; they come to see Petra, Wadi Rum, Aqaba and the Dead Sea, the lowest point on Earth, Dash said.

Moreover, Bollywood has also been showing an interest in exploring Jordan as a location for shooting films, according to the ambassador.

A song in "Krrish 3", a 2013 science fiction film, was shot in Jordan and "shows Petra's Treasury", the ambassador noted.

At present, the Indian community in Jordan is estimated at around 10,000, most of them employed in the garment and health sectors.

Some 25 garment factories in Qualifying Industrial Zones are owned by Indians with an investment of over US\$60 million, providing jobs to more than 9,000 employees.

New Delhi and Amman signed the first cooperation agreement in 1947, when India gained its independence, and diplomatic ties were formalized in 1950, according to the Indian embassy.

*Source: Jordan Times, Amman, <http://jordantimes.com/india-looks-to-strengthen-ties-with-jordan----ambassador>*

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## **d. KUWAIT**

### **7. Visit of E. Ahamed, Minister of State for External Affairs, Kuwait, 17 January 2014.**

(a) Hon'ble Minister of State for External Affairs, E. Ahamed visited Kuwait on 15 January 2014 to participate in the Second International Humanitarian Pledging Conference on Syria. India pledged an additional US\$2 million to assist Syria at this Conference.

Hon'ble Minister of State (External Affairs) also interacted with a wide cross-section of Indian community at a function held in the auditorium of the Embassy.

*Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait, <http://www.indembkwt.org/DispNews.aspx?ID=331>*

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### **8. Indian Embassy conducts Open house on all Wednesdays, Kuwait, 8 January 2014.**

For the benefit of Indian Community, the Open House for the Indian citizen by the Ambassador is being held in the Embassy every Wednesday between 1500 hrs and 1600 hrs. In case Wednesday is an Embassy holiday, the meeting is held on the next working day.

It may be mentioned that Embassy of India's Consular Wing is providing daily service of Open House to Indian citizens on all working days from 1000 hrs to 1100 hrs and from 1430 hrs to 1530 hrs by the Consular Officer in the Meeting Room of the Consular Hall. For any unsolved issue, S.K. Dudeja, Second Secretary (Consular) could be contacted on Telephone No. 22533315, Fax No.22573910 (E-mail: [sscons@indembkwt.org](mailto:sscons@indembkwt.org)). Furthermore, Balram Kumar Upadhyay, Counsellor (Consular and Chief Welfare Officer) for Indian Community is also available to redress grievances at Telephone No. 22533125, Fax No.22573910 (E-mail: [counsellor@indembkwt.org](mailto:counsellor@indembkwt.org)).

Similarly, a Labour Wing Help Desk functions from 0830 hrs to 1300 hrs and 1400 hrs to 1630 hrs in the Labour welfare Hall to address the labour related issues. There is also a 24X7 Help Line (Tel No. 25674163) to assist labourers in distress. For any unsolved issues Shubashis Goldar, Deputy Chief of Mission could be contacted on Telephone No. 22510891, Fax No.22573902 (E-mail: [dcm@indembkwt.org](mailto:dcm@indembkwt.org)).

Ambassador of India welcomes your suggestions, comments, opinions as well as criticism to improve the functioning of the Embassy at Telephone No. 22561276, Fax No. 22546958 (E-mail: [amb.kuwait@mea.gov.in](mailto:amb.kuwait@mea.gov.in) / [ambss@indembkwt.org](mailto:ambss@indembkwt.org) ).

*Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait, <http://www.indembkwt.org/DispNews.aspx?ID=324>*

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### **9. Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF), Kuwait, 9 January 2014.**

For the welfare of Indian Community residing in Kuwait, the Indian Embassy is providing assistance to distressed Indian Workers under the Indian Community Welfare Fund. During the year 2013 the Embassy has incurred expenditure of KD 44,169 for providing assistance to Indian nationals.

2. The Embassy has been providing the following services in most demanding cases:
  - i. Boarding and lodging for distressed Indian Workers in domestic sectors (Article 20 visa);
  - ii. Extending emergency medical care to the Overseas Indians;
  - iii. Providing air passage to stranded and distressed Overseas Indians; and
  - iv. Expenditure on incidentals and for airlifting the mortal remains to India of the deceased Overseas Indians in cases where the sponsor is unable or unwilling to do so as per the contract and the family is also unable to meet the cost.

3. Number of cases during the year 2013 in which Embassy provided air ticket, medical care and contingency travel expenses to the distressed Indian Workers are as under:-

Description	No. of Air tickets	No. of Indian nationals provided contingency/ travel expenses
Destitute workers accommodated in Embassy shelters(male/female)	217	588
Destitute Indians (staying outside with relatives/friends/own arrangement)		222
Assistance provided for repatriation of hospitalized overseas Indian nationals to India.	10 (6 patients and 4 escorts)	
Airlifting of mortal remains to India	24	

**Source:** Embassy of India, Kuwait, Embassy of India, Kuwait, <http://www.indembkwt.org/DispNews.aspx?ID=326>

#### **10. Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF), Kuwait, 14 January 2014.**

Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) has been established by the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (MOIA), Government of India, with an aim to provide following welfare services to the members of Indian Community in distress:

- (i) Boarding and lodging for distressed overseas Indian workers in household / domestic sectors and unskilled labourers;
- (ii) Extending emergency medical care to the overseas Indians in need;
- (iii) Providing air passage to India to stranded overseas Indians in need;
- (iv) Providing initial legal assistance to the overseas Indians in deserving cases,
- (v) Expenditure on incidentals and for airlifting the mortal remains to India or local cremation/burial of the deceased overseas Indian in such cases where a sponsor is unable or unwilling to do so as per the contract and the family is unable to meet the cost.

2. Indian workers in need of emergency assistance or any other overseas Indian citizens who are in distress would be the main beneficiaries of the Fund.

4. The ICWF is self sustained by the Embassy through funds raised by levying a nominal service charge on consular services and through voluntary contributions from the Indian community. So, the expenditure on the activities mentioned above would be met by levying a nominal charge as per GOI guidelines. The amount fixed by the MOIA is Rs 100/- per document for all consular

services, which comes out to be 0.500 KD (rounded figure) in local currency. The consular services include passport related services, attestation of documents, relation certificates, and other miscellaneous services.

The link pertaining to the details of the ICWF funds is

<http://moia.gov.in/services.aspx?id1=345&idp=345&mainid=73>

*Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait, <http://www.indembkwt.org/DispNews.aspx?ID=328>*

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### **11. Indian Community Welfare Fund fee for Passport related services, Kuwait, 15 January 2014.**

In accordance with the existing guidelines of the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs, Government of India, a nominal fee of 0.500 KD would be charged w.e.f. 16th January 2014 on passport related services only towards Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF).

*Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait, <http://www.indembkwt.org/DispNews.aspx?ID=332>*

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### **12. Republic Day of India – Flag Hoisting Ceremony, Kuwait, 16 January 2014.**

On the occasion of the Republic Day of India, a Flag Hoisting Ceremony will be held at the Embassy of India premises at 9.00 A.M. on Sunday, 26 January 2014. This will be followed by reading of the message of Hon'ble President of India by the Ambassador, singing of patriotic songs and an Open House Reception.

All Indian nationals in Kuwait are cordially invited to attend the Ceremony.

*Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait, <http://www.indembkwt.org/DispNews.aspx?ID=329>*

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### **13. Indian Community of Welfare Fund fee on attestation of Labour Contracts for Private Sector revised, Kuwait, 17 January 2014.**

It has been decided to revise the Indian Community of Welfare Fund (ICWF) fee on attestation of Labour Contracts for Private Sector (i.e. for Article No. 18). The revised fee will be KD 0.500 (Half a Kuwaiti Dinar) with effect from 19 January 2014 as per the existing Government of India (GOI) guidelines. The fee schedule is as follows:

1. Individual contract: KD 0.500 for the first worker and KD 0.500 for each additional worker of the same company.
2. Bulk recruitment: KD 0.500 for the first worker and KD 0.500 for each additional worker of the same company.

*Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait, <http://www.indembkwt.org/DispNews.aspx?ID=330>*

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### **14. Visa structure for Kuwaiti nationals updated, Kuwait, 19 January 2014.**

India and Kuwait have enjoyed historically close, warm and friendly ties. The visit of His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Prime Minister of Kuwait to India in November 2013 has imparted a new thrust to the strengthening further of the bilateral ties. To facilitate travel of Kuwaiti nationals to India for business, tourism, medical and study purposes,

the Embassy has adopted the following visa structure for Kuwaiti nationals with immediate effect:

S.No.	Type of visa	Duration	No. of entries	Revised Indian Visa fee in KD(*) w.e.f 01.01.2014
(i)	Business	5 Years	Multiple	63.500
(ii)	Business	1 Year	Multiple	38.500
(iii)	Tourism	6 months	Multiple	13.500
(iv)	Medical	1 year	Multiple	38.500
(v)	Student	Period of study	As required	24.500

(\*) In addition, a service charge of KD 3 will also apply for each visa service provided w.e.f 17.12.2013.

Please apply Indian visa online at [www.bls-international.com](http://www.bls-international.com) and deposit visa application, with applicable visa fee and service charge, at either M/s. BLS International Services, Emad Commercial Centre, Basement floor Ahmed Al Jaber Street, Sharq, Kuwait city (Telephone: 22986607 – Fax: 22470006) or M/s. BLS International Services, Mujamma Unood, 4th floor, Office No.25-26 Makka Street, Entrance 5, Fahaheel, Kuwait (Telephone: 22986607 – Fax: 22470006). For additional information, please contact Second Secretary (Consular) in the Embassy at [sscons@indembkwt.org](mailto:sscons@indembkwt.org)

**Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait, <http://www.indembkwt.org/DispNews.aspx?ID=334>**

### **15. CWF fee for domestic worker agreement, Kuwait, 19 January 2014.**

It has been decided that as per Government of India (GOI) Guidelines, a revised fee of KD 0.500 (Half Kuwaiti Dinar Only) w.e.f. 19 January 2014 would be charged per domestic worker agreement towards ICWF, instead of earlier charge of KD 6/-.

It has also been decided that KD 5.500 is to be reduced for each agreement w.e.f. 19 January 2014. The total relief would be KD 11 (KD Eleven only) per agreement.

**Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait, <http://www.indembkwt.org/DispNews.aspx?ID=333>**

### **16. Message of H.E. Sunil Jain, Ambassador of India to Kuwait, on the Republic Day of India, Kuwait, 25 January 2014.**

Dear Friends,

On the joyous occasion of 65th Republic Day of India, I extend my warm greetings to all members of the Indian community in Kuwait and thank our Kuwaiti friends and well-wishers for their warm greetings.

On 26 January 1950, the Constitution of India came into force. It reflects the vision and wisdom of our founding fathers, as well as our ideals and values. On this day an independent India became a sovereign, secular, and democratic Republic. Over the last six decades of our existence

as a Republic, India has secured a place for itself in the comity of nations as a country committed to universal harmony, justice and equality. We are proud citizens of the largest, most diverse, and vibrant democracy in the world, which is underpinned by the rule of law, a free media and an independent judiciary.

The last two decades have witnessed transformational changes in the Indian economy. We have been among the fastest growing major democratic economy in the world. We are already the third largest economy in purchasing power parity terms. Although India's economic growth somewhat declined to the decade low of 5 per cent in 2012-13, it grew by over nine per cent before it was hit by the global crisis of 2008. The World Bank in its recent report has emphasized that Growth in India will be led by recovery in global demand and an increase in domestic investment and expects the Indian economy to expand 6.2 per cent in 2014-15. The Government has undertaken a series of reforms since late 2012 to improve the business environment, growth and create jobs.

We are globally among the top 20 exporters of goods and the top 10 services exporters. We are also a leading food producer in the world – the largest producer of milk and the second largest of fruits and vegetables. Owing to its excellent Information Technology and Information Technology-enabled services sectors, India is a software giant and an outsourcing hub, especially for business and knowledge process. Some cutting edge products and services are being developed in India both by multinational companies as well as Indian companies. The government's policies aim at achieving rapid growth with social justice and equity.

India has made remarkable progress in Space Technology and Planetary Exploration in the last decade and took major strides in utilizing the operational space systems in various fronts of national development – commercial, strategic, societal and economic. India successfully launched a spacecraft to Mars on 5 November 2013 setting the country on course to become the first in Asia to reach the Red Planet. The successful flight testing of indigenous cryogenic stage onboard GSLV-D5 Flight on 5 January 2014 was a major landmark technological milestone in achieving self-reliance in India's cryogenic Launch Vehicle Technology.

Infrastructure is critical for India's economic development. In the last 5-year plan that ended on 31 March 2012 we spent about US\$500 billion on infrastructure. In the current five-year plan, we aim to invest US\$1 trillion. To encourage foreign investment in the country, the Government last year announced a slew of policy measures. Even as India is attracting foreign investment, Indian companies have been reaching out to the world with the purpose of investing in various sectors. Our companies have appreciably invested overseas in the last few years through mergers and acquisitions or via direct investments, which has helped them access high-growth markets, acquire knowledge and technology, attain economies of size and scale, and leverage international brand names. Besides physical connectivity we are also creating electronic connectivity. We are one of the fastest growing telecom markets in the world. Energy is the prime mover of economic

growth. Last year we added new capacity of over 20,000 MWs. However, mindful of protecting the environment, India is moving towards alternative sources of energy like nuclear, wind and solar.

India continues to be a preferred destination for foreign investors. India has attracted Foreign Direct Investment worth US\$16.85 billion during January-September 2013. Since opening of the economy, Indian Capital Markets have undergone a paradigm shift in the last two decades, offering unprecedented prospects for global investors and business. The recent scheme of allowing Qualified Foreign Investors (QFIs) to invest in Indian equity, mutual funds and corporate bonds have evoked interest in the Gulf region as well.

Sustained high rates of growth have enabled us to pursue our agenda of inclusive and equitable growth and devote more resources to the societal sector such as eradicating poverty, malnutrition, diseases and illiteracy as well as eliminating rural-urban divide, social inequalities, and regional disparities. The government has initiated a number of social development programmes aimed at inclusive growth like the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojna etc. In 2013, the Government enacted the Food Security Law, which will benefit 75 per cent of our rural population and half of our urban population. This is the largest effort of its kind in the whole world. India has implemented many schemes of scholarships on a large scale to enable poor children and those belonging to the weaker sections to access opportunities for education. About 110 million children are being provided afternoon meals everyday in schools under the Mid-day Meal Scheme and this Programme is of immense benefit for both education and nutrition of children. Our strength in IT is being leveraged in transforming governance and implementing welfare schemes.

As a responsible nation, the conduct of our foreign relations since Independence in 1947 has been to promote peace and development. India seeks mutually beneficial relations with all countries in the world and towards this end, is working with them on issues of common concern like terrorism, climate change, global economic crisis, and energy & food security. Our experience of tackling developmental challenges within a democratic framework and our emphasis on building convergences and consensus have helped us play a key role in addressing international challenges as well as promoting peace, progress and prosperity globally.

The Gulf region, a part of our extended neighbourhood, is an important area of our foreign policy. India has vital stakes in the security and stability of the entire Gulf and the Middle East region which hosts around 7 million Indians. The region is the source of roughly two-third of India's crude oil requirements and is the largest trading region for us accounting for over 26% of our global trade.

India's relations with Kuwait are longstanding, close and growing. We have been an integral part of each other's life and consciousness for generations. Our engagement has been multifaceted and continues to grow. Our relationship extends beyond historical and cultural linkages to

encompass political, trade and economic interests. Total bilateral trade with Kuwait during 2012-13 was US\$ 17.649 billion. India has consistently been among Kuwait's top trading partners and recent years have witnessed new opportunities opening up in sectors like human resource, medical tourism, hospitality and IT. Kuwaiti investment to India is around \$ 3 billion and is growing continuously. Kuwait Investment Authority is considering to make more investments into India, in addition to recent equity investment of US\$5.37 million in the Power Grid Corporation of India Ltd.

High-level visits and other exchanges between our two countries have provided the platform to further strengthen bilateral relations and explore new avenues of cooperation. His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Prime Minister of Kuwait made a State visit to India from 7-10 November 2013. During the visit, Agreement on Transfer of Sentenced Persons, MOU between Foreign Service Institute (FSI) and the Saud N. Al-Sabah Kuwait Diplomatic Institute, MOU on Cooperation in the field of Sports & Youth Affairs, Executive Programme for Cultural and Information Exchanges (2013-16) and Educational Exchange Program on Cooperation in Education and Learning (2013-16) were signed. Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs H.E. Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah visited India in March 2013.

Hon'ble E. Ahamed, Minister of State for External Affairs (MOS-EA) visited Kuwait on 15 January 2014 to represent India at the 2nd International Pledging Conference for Syria. Last year's visits included those by MOS-EA twice and Dr. Montek Singh Ahluwalia, Deputy Chairman Planning Commission visited Kuwait in July 2013 to encourage greater investments from Kuwait to India. Institutional mechanisms like Joint Working Groups on Labour, Employment and Manpower as well as Medical Cooperation were convened last year. Both sides have been working closely to further intensify engagements at all levels.

Indian community in Kuwait plays an important role in strengthening bilateral ties. It is present in practically every segment of Kuwaiti society. It has a reputation for being industrious, talented, disciplined and law abiding. Our community's contribution to the development and prosperity of Kuwait is recognized. I would like to take this opportunity to express my deep gratitude for the benevolence bestowed on the Indian community by His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmed Al Jaber Al Sabah, the Amir of Kuwait, and for the goodwill of the friendly people of Kuwait.

The Embassy has been consistently trying to improve the quality of its services. To facilitate travel of Kuwaiti nationals to India for business, tourism, medical and study purposes, the Embassy has liberalized its visa policy. The Embassy has taken several measures for the welfare of the Indian community in Kuwait. Our community can now reach us on 24x7, in cases of emergency. The Embassy is also working to open early an outsource centre at Abbasiya, where a significant number of Indian community resides. We are trying to strengthen our Community

Welfare Fund so that anyone who is in distress can be provided air ticket, medical treatment etc from this Fund.

The Embassy has the “Consular Open House” facility where any Indian citizen can meet a senior consular official without appointment for any unresolved matter. In addition, the Embassy’s “Indian Workers Welfare Center” set up in September 2009 has been providing the much needed support system to our workers with its help desk, labour complaints desk, toll-free 24x7 telephonic helpline, free accommodation, free legal advice clinic and employment contract attestation system. I would like to take this opportunity to assure that the Embassy will spare no efforts in looking after the issues of concern to our community with maximum sensitivity and care.

On this joyous occasion of our Republic Day, as we commit ourselves again to serving our people, our motherland, and the larger cause of humanity, I wish every Indian in Kuwait good health, happiness and prosperity. I also take this opportunity to convey best wishes from the Indian leaders for the continued good health and well-being of HH the Amir, HH the Crown Prince, HH the Prime Minister, and the highly friendly people of the State of Kuwait.

Jai Hind!

*Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait, <http://www.indembkwt.org/DispNews.aspx?ID=336>*

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### **17. Republic Day celebrations, Kuwait, 26 January 2014.**

The 65th Republic Day of India was celebrated on 26 January 2014 in Kuwait at the Embassy premises by unfurling of the National Flag by Ambassador Sunil Jain. This was followed by singing of the National Anthem and reading out of the address to the Nation of the Hon’ble President of India by the Ambassador. Several patriotic songs were sung on this happy occasion. The highlights of the cultural function were an all-girls brass band from the Indian Community School in Kuwait, which gave a scintillating performance. The Embassy was colourfully decorated on this occasion with tri-colour balloons. An open house reception followed by serving all those present with parathas/chhole, gulab jamuns, tea, juice and mineral water.

About 2,500 of Indian nationals from all walks of life in Kuwait, representing various Indian associations, businesspersons, doctors, engineers, chartered accountants and domestic workers, as well as all the members of Embassy along with their family members, participated in the Republic Day function with great joy and enthusiasm.

The Ambassador extended his warm greetings to all members of the Indian community present in Kuwait. He also thanked His Highness The Emir, His Highness The Crown Prince and His Highness The Prime Minister of Kuwait for their benevolence showered on the strong Indian community in the friendly State of Kuwait.

*Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait, <http://www.indembkwt.org/DispNews.aspx?ID=337>*

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### **18. Indian Community Welfare Fund fee for Attestation Service, Kuwait, 27 January 2014.**

In accordance with the existing guidelines of the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (MOIA), a nominal fee of KD 0.500 would be charged separately w.e.f. 27 January 2014 on each item of Attestation Service (except death registration) towards Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF).

All attestation seekers are also advised to prepare & submit each item separately at the counters along with the respective usual documents i.e. copy of passport pages containing particulars and a copy of Civil ID to facilitate timely services.

*Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait, <http://www.indembkwt.org/DispNews.aspx?ID=338>*

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### **19. Holidays for the month of February, Kuwait, 28 January 2014.**

The Embassy of India will remain closed on the following dates during the month of February 2014.

NATIONAL DAY OF KUWAIT – FEBRUARY 25, 2014 - TUESDAY

LIBERATION DAY OF KUWAIT – FEBRUARY 26, 2014 – WEDNESDAY

*Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait, <http://www.indembkwt.org/DispNews.aspx?ID=339>*

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### **20. Indian Ambassador HE Sunil Jain presented credentials to Amir, Kuwait, 30 January 2014.**

His Highness the Emir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah accepted the credentials of the Ambassador of India to Kuwait Mr. Sunil Jain.

The ceremony was attended by the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Deputy Amiri Diwan Affairs Minister Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah, Amiri Diwan Undersecretary Ibrahim Mohammad Al-Shatti, Head of His Highness the Amir Office Director Ahmed Fahad Al-Fahad, Advisor at Amiri Diwan Mohammad Abdullah Abolhassan, Chief of Amiri Protocols Sheikh Khalid Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah Al-Nasser Al-Sabah, Director of Protocols at the Foreign Ministry Ambassador Dhari Ajran Al-Ajran, and Amiri Guard Commander Colonel Abdullah Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

*Source: Embassy of India, <http://www.indembkwt.org/DispNews.aspx?ID=340>*

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## **e. OMAN**

### **21. The Embassy of India celebrates 65th Republic Day of India, Muscat, 26 January 2014.**

On the occasion of the 65th Republic Day of India- the anniversary celebrations to mark the adoption of the Constitution of India on 26 January 1950- His Excellency J.S. Mukul, Ambassador of India to the Sultanate of Oman, unfurled the Indian National Flag and read out the Address of Hon'ble President of India, Pranab Mukherjee at a ceremony organized at the Embassy of India premises. The Embassy function was attended by around 250 members of the

Indian Community from all walks of life. Children of Indian School Muscat sang the National Anthem and patriotic songs.

Earlier in the morning, Ambassador unfurled the Indian National Flag, and witnessed a march-past at Indian School Muscat and read out Hon'ble President of India's Address to the Nation. Around 500 members of the Indian Community, including parents, teachers and students were present at Indian School Al Wadi Al Kabir. Children of the School sang the national anthem and patriotic songs and presented a colourful cultural program showcasing glimpses of India on the occasion.

*Source: Embassy of India, Muscat, <http://www.indemb-oman.org/inner.aspx?type=AllPressRelease&id=0>*

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## **f. QATAR**

### **22. Important Notice, Doha, 9 January 2014.**

The Urban Planning Development Authority, Qatar, has strictly enforced the mandatory requirement of registration in the Professional Engineering Committee for all engineers working in construction and all those who are working in engineering professions in the private sector.

Under the procedure for registration and for the purpose of the verification of educational documents the following information needs to be furnished to the Supreme Education Council, Qatar:

1. The authenticity of the student's certificate (to be attached) and the correctness of its details,
2. The mode of study followed by this student (full time – part time – on line – distance),
3. Venue (place) of study,
4. The prescribed length of the academic programme,
5. Duration of the student's study (starting date and finishing date),
6. The requirements of study at the time this student joined the university,
7. If the college is a government (public) or a private one,
8. If private, is it accredited by the academic authorities in India? Please provide with some details about the accreditation body, act and number.
9. The official email of the university should be used for correspondence with SEC. Emails from (Hotmail, Gmail or yahoo) are not normally accepted.
10. The reply from the concerned institute/college/university should be sent under the signature and seal of the authorized officer.

Engineers planning to take up employment in Qatar are advised to verify their educational documents in advance to avoid any procedural delay while applying for registration with local authorities.

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

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### **23. Republic Day Greetings, Muscat, 22 January 2014.**

India is celebrating its 65th Republic Day on 26 January, 2014. It was on this historic day 64 years ago that a newly independent India adopted its Constitution enshrining the same ideals and aspirations that guided India's peaceful freedom movement in which millions of Indians participated under the most inspirational leadership of the Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi.

The people of India resolved to constitute India into a Sovereign Socialist Secular Democratic Republic and to secure to all its citizens: Justice - social, economic and political; Liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship; and Equality of status and of opportunity; and to promote among them all Fraternity, assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the Nation.

My family and colleagues join me in conveying our warmest greetings and best wishes to all fellow Indians in the State of Qatar on India's 65th Republic Day. On this highly significant occasion, let us also celebrate the historically close relations and time-tested friendship between India and Qatar, and renew our sincere thanks to His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, the Emir of Qatar; His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, the Father Emir; His Excellency Sheikh Abdullah Bin Nasser bin Khalifa Al Thani, Prime Minister and Minister of Interior; and the Government and people of Qatar for all that they do to nurture the strong bonds of friendship and cooperation between our two great countries, and for their hospitality to the large, diverse, accomplished and highly regarded Indian community in Qatar.

The multi-faceted cooperation between India and Qatar is flourishing within an excellent framework provided by historic ties and regular and substantive engagement, including at the highest levels of the two Governments. The Government and people of India greatly admire the strides being made by Qatar in education, research and innovation; infrastructure; business, finance and investments; sports; arts and culture; and other spheres, and are keen to expand collaborations to the mutual benefit of both sides. Besides official interactions, people-to-people contacts and initiatives by private sector are galvanizing dialogue and cooperation in various sectors.

India, a country of over 1.2 billion people and the world's third largest economy on purchasing power parity terms, with its huge and growing energy needs, greatly values Qatar's vital partnership in the energy sector. Qatar is the largest supplier of LNG to India. There is a large and expanding market for Qatar's LNG, oil and petrochemical sectors in India.

Bilateral trade between the two countries has been steadily growing, exceeding US\$16.30 billion in 2012-13. Indian companies are taking increasing interest in developing and expanding collaborations in infrastructure, communications and information technology, energy and other areas in Qatar. The extensive infrastructural development in Qatar as it prepares to host the

prestigious FIFA World Cup in 2022, and the world class competences and competitiveness of India's corporate sector, provide an attractive opportunity to both sides. The vast potential for substantially augmenting Qatar's investment in India is also a win-win situation for both countries.

The last year has witnessed several important developments in our bilateral cooperation with Qatar, including the visit of Finance Minister of India to Doha; renewal of Defence Cooperation Agreement; meeting of Joint Working Groups on Defence and Human Resources; visits of ships of Indian Navy and Coast Guard; operationalization of a new terminal for LNG supplies at Kochi; participation of Qatari companies and officials at PETROTECH 2014 and 8th Asia Gas Partnership Summit in New Delhi; visits of business delegations from India's apex trade and industry bodies and other organizations; approval for setting up of Qatar National Bank office and full scale branch of Doha Bank in Mumbai; participation of many Indian delegates at WISE, WISH and other major conferences in Doha; and 'A Passage to India' Festival organized by the Indian community at the Museum of Islamic Art Park. This is an illustrative and not an exhaustive list. Both sides are actively engaged to finalize major visits and accelerate progress on collaborative proposals in the coming months.

Ensuring the welfare of Indian nationals in Qatar is among the foremost priorities of Embassy of India, Doha. We have a regular, active and broad-based outreach to the Indian community, and are grateful for the cooperation and support of the authorities concerned in Qatar. As we celebrate our Republic Day, I heartily congratulate the Indian community in Qatar for their significant contribution in further strengthening the strong ties between the two countries.

*Source: Embassy of India, Doha,*

<http://www.indianembassyqatar.org/pages/importantannouncements.php>

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#### **24. Open House, Doha, 22 January 2014.**

Embassy of India will hold an Open House on Friday, 31 January, 2014, to address any urgent consular and labour problems of Indian nationals in the State of Qatar.

The Open House will be held from 5.30 pm to 6.30 pm. Written information on issues/cases proposed to be discussed with the Embassy may please be given from 5.30 pm to 6 pm. This will be followed by meeting with Embassy officials from 6 pm to 6.30 pm.

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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#### **25. Remarks of Sanjiv Arora, Ambassador at the Reception to celebrate India's 65th Republic Day, Doha, 25 January 2014.**

His Excellency Dr. Hamad bin Abdulaziz Al-Kuwari, Minister of Culture, Arts and Heritage of the State of Qatar,

His Excellency Dr. Abdulla Al Thani, President, Hamad bin Khalifa University and Chairman, World Innovation Summit on Education (WISE),

His Excellency Ibrahim Fakhroo, Director of Protocol in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs,

Other distinguished dignitaries from the State of Qatar,

His Excellency Ambassador Ali Ibrahim Ahmed, Dean and other esteemed colleagues from the Diplomatic Corps,

Tarun Basu, President, Indian Cultural Centre,

Excellencies,

Ladies & Gentlemen,

It is a great honour & a pleasure for me to warmly welcome all of you, also on behalf of my wife Chhaya and all my colleagues, to this celebration of India's 65th Republic Day.

We are grateful to our Chief Guest, His Excellency the Minister of Culture, Arts & Heritage of the Government of Qatar, for kindly gracing this occasion. Excellency, we sincerely thank you for honouring this celebration and for your wholehearted guidance and support for all initiatives and activities aimed at further strengthening the historically close and friendly ties between India and Qatar.

I would also like to convey our thanks to His Excellency Dr. Abdulla Al Thani for honouring us with his participation in these celebrations. We, in India, have deep admiration for all that Qatar Foundation, under the visionary leadership of Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nassser, Hamad Bin Khalifa University and Your Excellency personally do to foster global partnerships in education, science and community development. Your presence amidst us augurs well for the efforts of India and Qatar to develop and expand collaborations in these critical areas, as demonstrated by the participation of a large number of delegates from India at the annual WISE Summit in Doha chaired by Your Excellency.

I would also like to express our thanks and deep appreciation to the Indian Cultural Centre, the apex organization of socio-cultural associations of the Indian community in Qatar, functioning under the aegis of Embassy of India, Doha, and all affiliated organizations of the ICC for their cooperation in organizing this evening's programme. I would also like to greet and thank the other two community organizations functioning under the auspices of the Indian Embassy, namely, the Indian Community Benevolent Forum (ICBF) led by Kareem Abdullah and the Indian Business and Professionals Network (IBPN) led by Azim Abbas. Among the Embassy's foremost priorities are reaching out the Indian community in Qatar in a regular, active and inclusive manner, and ensuring their welfare. We are grateful to the Government of Qatar for their cooperation and support in this regard. We greatly appreciate the dedicated efforts of ICBF in working closely with the Embassy and the authorities concerned in Qatar to ensure the welfare of Indian workers. We also appreciate the role of IBPN in complementing our active efforts to promote business between India and Qatar.

Excellencies, Ladies & Gentlemen, this morning, I had the honour of unfurling our National Flag and reading the Address of Hon'ble President of India, Pranab Mukherjee at the Flag Hoisting ceremony at the Embassy, that was attended by a large number of Indian nationals.

It was on this historic day 64 years ago that a newly independent India adopted her Constitution enshrining the same ideals and aspirations that guided India's peaceful freedom movement in which millions of Indians participated under the exemplary leadership of the Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi.

As Hon'ble President has said and I quote: The Republic Day commands the respect of every Indian. On this day, sixty four years ago, in a remarkable display of idealism and courage, we the people of India gave to ourselves a sovereign democratic republic to secure all its citizens justice, liberty and equality. We undertook to promote among all citizens fraternity, the dignity of the individual and the unity of the nation. These ideals became the lodestar of the modern Indian State. India's true strength lies in the Republic; in the courage of her commitment, the sagacity of her Constitution, and the patriotism of her people. Unquote

Distinguished Guests, as we celebrate India's Republic Day in the State of Qatar, we also celebrate the historically close relations and time-tested friendship between India and Qatar, and renew our sincere thanks to His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, the Emir; His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, the Father Emir; His Excellency Sheikh Abdullah Bin Nasser bin Khalifa Al Thani, Prime Minister and Minister of Interior; and the Government and people of Qatar for all that they do to nurture the strong bonds of friendship and cooperation between our two great countries, and for their hospitality to the Indian community in Qatar.

The multi-faceted cooperation between India and Qatar is flourishing within an excellent framework provided by historic ties and regular and substantive engagement, including at the highest levels of the two Governments. The Government and people of India greatly admire the strides being made by Qatar in education, research and innovation; infrastructure; business, finance and investments; sports; arts and culture; and other spheres, and are keen to expand collaborations to the mutual benefit of both sides. Besides official interactions, people-to-people contacts and initiatives by private sector are galvanizing dialogue and cooperation in various sectors.

The last year has witnessed several important developments in our bilateral cooperation with Qatar, including the visit of Finance Minister of India to Doha; renewal of Defence Cooperation Agreement; meeting of Joint Working Groups on Defence and Human Resources; visits of ships of Indian Navy and Coast Guard; appointment of a resident Defence Attaché; operationalization of a new terminal for LNG supplies at Kochi; participation of Qatari companies and officials at PETROTECH 2014 and 8th Asia Gas Partnership Summit in New Delhi; visits of business delegations from India's apex trade and industry bodies and other organizations; approval for setting up of Qatar National Bank office and full scale branch of Doha Bank in Mumbai;

participation of many Indian delegates at WISE, WISH and other major conferences in Doha; and 'A Passage to India' Festival organized by the Indian community at the Museum of Islamic Art Park that was kindly inaugurated by our Chief Guest this evening, HE the Minister of Arts, Culture & Heritage. This is an illustrative and not an exhaustive list. Both sides are actively engaged to finalize major visits and accelerate progress on collaborative proposals in the coming months.

As we celebrate our Republic Day, we are delighted to host the visit of a high level governmental-cum-business delegation to the annual 'Partnership Summit', a global business and investment event, currently taking place in Bengaluru, a historic city, a renowned centre of India's excellence in areas of education, research, innovation and information technology, and an attractive touristic and business destination.

Excellencies, Ladies & Gentlemen, on this wonderful occasion, I renew my heartiest congratulations to the large, diverse, accomplished, and highly regarded Indian community in Qatar that serves as a strong bridge between the two sides and makes a vital contribution to further strengthening friendship and cooperation between our two great countries.

As Hon'ble President has underlined in his Address and I quote: India is not just geography: it is also a history of ideas, philosophy, intellect, industrial genius, craft, innovation, and experience. Unquote

To give all our esteemed guests a flavour of the Indian experience, we would have a short cultural programme arranged by the Indian Cultural Centre immediately after the ceremonial cake cutting. I also request you all to enjoy a composite audio-visual presentation on India prepared by the President of the Indian Business and Professionals Network along with an expert IT team from DPS-MIS School in Doha. And I am sure all of you would enjoy dinner comprising a diversity of Indian cuisine.

Finally, I must thank General Manager Christopher Franzen and his wonderful team at Hotel Grand Hyatt Doha for arranging this function with admirable enthusiasm and passion.

I wish you all an enjoyable evening.

Jai Hind

Jai Qatar

*Source: Embassy of India, Doha,*

<http://www.indianembassyqatar.org/pages/importantannouncements.php>

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## **g. SAUDI ARABIA**

**26. Agreement on Labour Cooperation for Domestic Service Workers Recruitment between India and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Riyadh, 2 January 2014.**

Hon'ble Minister of Labour of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, His Excellency Adel bin Mohammed Fakeih and Hon'ble Minister for Overseas Indian Affairs, Vayalar Ravi signed the Agreement on Labour Cooperation on Domestic Service Workers Recruitment between India and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The Honourable Minister of Labour called on the Honourable Vice President of India in the morning today. He is scheduled to meet the Minister of External Affairs tomorrow.

The Labour Cooperation on Domestic Service Workers Recruitment Agreement was conceptualized during the visit of Vayalar Ravi to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in April 2013, where both the ministers had agreed to hold discussions and finalize it at an early date. Some of the salient features of the agreement are protecting the rights of both the employers and domestic service workers and regulate the contractual relation between them, ensure authenticity and implementation of employment contract, taking measures against recruitment agencies who violate laws and establish mechanism to provide 24 hours assistance to the domestic sector workers. A Standard Employment Contract would be finalized that would provide minimum wage, working hours, paid holidays and dispute settlement mechanism.

Although India has signed labour MOUs with various countries in the Gulf, this is the first time that India has entered into an Agreement on Labour Cooperation with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. This is also the first step towards a Comprehensive Agreement on Labour Cooperation covering the entire spectrum of Indian workers in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

There are about 28 lakh Indians in Saudi Arabia and they constitute the biggest group of migrant communities. Indians are the most preferred community in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia due to their hard work and discipline. The Minister Vayalar Ravi thanked the Saudi authorities for hosting such significant number of Indians who have contributed to the economic development of Saudi Arabia. He also thanked for announcing grace period from April 2013 to November 2013 allowing overstaying expatriate workers to correct their status or to return to their country without penal action. More than 1.4 million Indians have availed the concessions during the grace period to correct their status. The number of Indians in Saudi Arabia has gone up during this period.

*Source: Embassy of India, Riyadh,*

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

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## **27. Press Release, Riyadh, 3 January 2014.**

Ministry Sub: Participation of Indian companies in 'Saudi PLAS/PETROCHEM/PRINT/PACK 2014' Exhibition at Riyadh International Convention & Exhibition Centre from 17-20 February, 2014

An Indian business delegation under the 'Plastics Export Promotion Council (PLEXCONCIL)', and Indian Printing, Packaging and Allied Machinery Manufacturers' Association (IPAMA)',

consisting of 33 Indian exporters is participating in the 11th edition of 'Saudi PLAS/PETROCHEM/PRINT/PACK 2014' Exhibition from 17 to 20 February 2014 at the Riyadh International Convention and Exhibition Centre. There are 3 separate blocks for Indian companies at 'Hall No. 3' in the Exhibition Centre, where the Indian companies are exhibiting their product ranges from plastic and packaging machineries and products (list of participating Indian companies is attached). These Indian companies export a variety of high quality plastic and packaging machineries and materials such as:

Plastic extrusion plants and injection moulding machines, arm roto-moulding machine, fixed turret machine, shuttle machine, rock n roll machine, rope making machine / cord twisting machine, bobbin winding machine, rewinding machine, inflow twister, coiling machine, extrusion coating machine, printing machine, bag conversion machine, pouch maker machine, bag make machine, wicketer machine, pulverizer, extruder, scrap grinder & rotomoulds, plastic water tanks making machinery & moulds, rotational moulding machines for making plastic water storage tanks, heating elements, plastic household products, moulds, fittings, paints & oil containers, electrical conducts, drip irrigation fittings, packaging products, engineering products and automotive parts, bathroom mate multi utility home ware, master batches & additive, woven sacks, calcium carbonate (FMB), blown film lines, blown film plants, complete solution for PP woven fabrics, PP yarn spinning, plastic mats and plastic mats making machines, UPVC window doors, cabins, wpc doors and allied products, bathroom fittings and accessories made of engineering polymers.

Interested Saudi and Indian companies and businessmen are cordially invited to visit the Indian Pavilion at Saudi PPPP 2014, at Hall No. 3 in the Riyadh Exhibition and Convention Centre on the above mentioned dates.

*Source: Embassy of India, Riyadh,*

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

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## **28. Ambassador thanks the Border Guard of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Riyadh, 13 January 2014.**

The Ambassador of India His Excellency Hamid Ali Rao today met with His Excellency Maj. Gen. Zamean Al-Sawat, the Chief of Border Guard and formally conveyed his personal gratitude to the Border Guard of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for saving the lives of six Indian citizens by rescuing them from the sea near Jubail on 5 November 2013. Ambassador appreciated the Border Guards for their prompt and timely action in rescuing the Indians. The Ambassador conveyed his appreciation for the professionalism displayed by the Saudi Border Guards in this regard. He also appreciated the assistance rendered by the Saudi Border Guards in similar other rescue operations. During the meeting, both sides also discussed issues of bilateral interest.

On 5 November 2013, six Indian nationals travelling from the UAE to Iraq were rescued by Saudi Border Guard authorities when their boat caught fire and capsized.

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

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### **29. Patron's Medal- Quiz Indian Contest, Riyadh, 14 January 2014.**

As part of the efforts to instil a spirit of patriotism and to spread awareness about various aspects of the excellent bilateral relations between India-Saudi Arabia, the ten International Indian Schools across the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia have been conducting quiz competitions to prepare for the Patron's Medal – Quiz India Contest to be held at the Embassy of India premises in Riyadh on 17 January 2014. The Quarter and Semi Finals of the First "Patron's Medal – Quiz India Contest" were held on 18th December 2013 at International Indian School, Dammam where 16-teams participated from all the 10 Indian Community Schools in Saudi Arabia. The topics for the contest covered the entire gamut of India-Saudi Arabia relations and also India's economic and scientific progress.

Four teams qualified for the Finals to be held at Embassy of India, Riyadh on 17 January 2014. Top Four (04) finalists are International Indian School, Riyadh (Boys); International Indian Public School, Riyadh (Boys); International Indian School, Dammam (Girls); and International Indian School, Buraidah (Girls).

Prizes for the winners of the contest will be distributed by Ambassador His Excellency Mr. Hamid Ali Rao who is the Patron of Indian International Schools at a function to be held at the Indian Embassy, Riyadh on 17 January 2014. The "Patron's Medal-Quiz India Contest" will be organized every year.

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

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### **30. Press Release, Riyadh, 19 January 2014.**

The 65th Republic Day of India would be celebrated on Sunday, 26th January 2014 at the Embassy of India, B-1, Diplomatic Quarter, Riyadh, as per the following programme:

0830 hrs	Arrival of guests
0900 hrs	Flag hoisting by Ambassador His Excellency Hamid Ali Rao followed by singing of National Anthem
0915 hrs	Reading of President's Address
0930 hrs	Refreshments

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

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

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### **31. Ambassador visits Naif Arab University for Security Science (NAUSS), Riyadh, 21 January 2014.**

The Ambassador of India His Excellency Hamid Ali Rao visited Naif Arab University for Security Science (NAUSS) and met with Dr. Jamaan Ben Ragosh, President of NAUSS. Ambassador took a tour of the University and also met with the faculty members. During the meeting, prospects of bilateral cooperation between NAUSS and Indian institutes dealing with security sciences, strategic studies and defence studies were taken up. Ambassador was accompanied by Sibi George, Minister/ Deputy Chief of Mission.

*Source: Embassy of India, Riyadh,*

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

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### **32. Visit of Hon'ble Finance Minister of India to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Riyadh, 26 January 2014.**

The Finance Minister of India His Excellency P. Chidambaram will be visiting the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to Co-Chair the 10th session of the Saudi-India Joint Commission Meeting (JCM) scheduled for 27-28 January 2014. He will be accompanied by Arvind Mayaram, Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Government of India, and other senior officials representing different Ministries of the Government of India.

The Indian Finance Minister will meet the Saudi Minister of Commerce and Industry His Excellency Dr. Tawfiq Al Rabiah, Co-Chair of the 10th JCM from the Saudi side. The two sides are expected to discuss various issues of economic and commercial interest to the both sides during the JCM including increase in exchange of business delegations, trade facilitation, cooperation between educational institutes, sharing expertise in Science and Technology, etc. In the previous session of the JCM, the two sides have identified 42 areas of joint cooperation and made significant progress in each of those areas.

The bilateral trade and commercial relations between India and Saudi Arabia is growing at a steady rate. Saudi Arabia is the 4th largest trading partner for India. The value of the two way trade between the two countries in 2012-13 exceeded US\$ 43 billion and has reached US\$ 32.7 billion during April-November 2013, registering an increase of 14 per cent over the corresponding period in the previous year. Saudi Arabia is the largest supplier of crude oil to India and provides 19 per cent of India's crude imports. The 'Riyadh Declaration' signed by the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques His Majesty King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and Prime Minister of India Dr. Manmohan Singh in 2010 emphasized the importance of developing a broad-based economic partnership that reflects the ongoing transformation of their economies, and also to strengthen the strategic energy partnership based on complementarity and interdependence.

*Source: Embassy of India, Riyadh,*

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

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### **33. Ambassador's Message on Republic Day 2014, Riyadh, 26 January 2014.**

I convey my greetings to all my fellow countrymen here in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on occasion of the 65th Republic Day of India. On this day, 64 years ago, India became a Republic

and adopted a forward looking and resilient constitution which since its inception has been serving as the guiding light and source of inspiration for India's legislators and law makers. It enshrined the values and principles for which the founding fathers of India stood for, and acted as a protector of rights of all Indians. In the 21st century, the tenets of our constitution are more relevant and pertinent than before. It is due to the implementation of this document in letter and spirit that India today occupies a place of pride in the comity of nations.

India's relations with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia predate its independence. The peoples of Indian sub-continent and Arabian Peninsula have been interacting with each other through trade and commerce dating back to several millennia, fulfilling each others' necessities and requirements. The commonalities in our culture, tradition and language bear testimony to this historic relationship. After India's independence in 1947, the diplomatic relations between the two countries were established in 1948.

The two countries have been engaged at the highest levels since then. In recent years, the visit of the Custodian of The Two Holy Mosques His Majesty King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al Saud to India in 2006 was a landmark visit in the bilateral relations of the two countries. The 'Delhi Declaration' signed in 2006 provided a vision and roadmap for bilateral cooperation. The visit of Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh to Riyadh in 2010 and the signing of 'Riyadh Declaration' elevated the relationship to an "era of strategic partnership" covering political, economic, security and defence areas. Since then the two countries have made significant progress in each of these areas.

As I reflect on India-Saudi Arabia relations in the year 2013, I deem it as a landmark year for all Indian expatriates here in Kingdom. I feel proud as I recall that 1.4 million Indian expatriates availed the concessions announced by the Saudi authorities during the grace period announced by the Custodian of Two Holy Mosques His Majesty King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al Saud allowing overstaying expatriates to correct their status. Over 1,40,000 Indians left the Kingdom in an orderly manner without facing any penalties or ban on their return. I express my gratitude to the Custodian of The Two Holy Mosques His Majesty King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al Saud for humanitarian approach the Kingdom adopted while implementing the Nitaqat programme. I thank Saudi Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Interior and Labour for their extraordinary support and cooperation to the Indian community.

I would like to mention about the enduring partnership that the Embassy forged with the members of Indian community who along with the staff of Indian community schools and media partners rendered valuable services to assist their fellow countrymen. It was with the support of these volunteers that the Mission has been able to help the community to fully utilize the grace period within the stipulated time frame. This exercise also brought to the fore the cherished Indian value of "unity in diversity" when all barriers of caste region, religion, and language were

transcended to achieve the objective. It also prove as to why Indians remain the most preferred community in Saudi Arabia.

India and Saudi Arabia have signed an 'Agreement on Labour Cooperation for Domestic Service Workers Recruitment' early this month to streamline the process of recruitment, to protect the rights of both the employer and domestic service workers and to regulate the contractual relations between them. We are expecting to have in place a Standard Employment Contract shortly that would inter alia specify minimum wage, working hours, paid holidays and dispute settlement mechanism. It is in fact, the first step towards a Comprehensive Agreement on Labour Cooperation covering the entire spectrum of Indian workers in the Kingdom.

Saudi Arabia is India's 4th largest trading partner with US\$43.7 billion of trade in 2012-13. The figures in the current financial year are no less impressive so far with bilateral trade so far having crossed US\$25 billion from April-October 2013. The two sides have been exchanging business delegations to promote trade. Indian companies have been awarded major projects in the Kingdom in 2013. Saudi petrochemical giant Saudi Basic Industries Corporation (SABIC) recently established R&D centre in Bengaluru with an investment of over US\$100 million. In coming months we will witness further efforts and exchanges to strengthen our economic and commercial relationship which forms intrinsic part of strategic partnership.

The two countries have also established institutionalized mechanism of cooperation including Joint Commission Meeting, Saudi India Business Council, India-GCC Industrial Conference, etc. The Embassy has launched Saudi India Business Network (SIBN) to facilitate trade and investment. It is also organizing sector specific events to highlight various investment opportunities in India and also act as a forum to share ideas and experiences.

I conclude by expressing my confidence that India and Saudi Arabia, under their wise leadership are on a progressive and forward looking path which not only reflects the collective will of the peoples of the two countries and benefits them but also augurs well for the peace, prosperity and development of the entire region and beyond.

*Source: Embassy of India, Riyadh,*

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

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### **34. Visit of Hon'ble Finance Minister of India, Riyadh, 29 January 2014.**

The Union Finance Minister of India P. Chidambaram visited Kingdom of Saudi Arabia from 27 January to 28 January 2014 to co-chair the 10th India-Saudi Arabia Joint Commission Meeting (JCM).

During the meeting of JCM, Finance Minister P. Chidambaram and Commerce & Industry Minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia called for strengthening of cooperation in accordance with the Delhi Declaration and Riyadh Declaration. They called upon the public and private sectors to further enhance cooperation and build real partnerships in a manner that serves the

interests of the two countries in different fields. They also reviewed the progress in various sectors including Trade and Investment; Oil and Gas; Pharmaceuticals, Higher Education; Civil Aviation; Tourism and Media and Culture; Security Affairs; Information and Communication Technology, Vocational and Technical Training; Textiles, Engineering Affairs, Health & Family Welfare; Agriculture Research and SMEs.

Finance Minister P. Chidambaram discussed the importance of Saudi investment in India and presented specific 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; and Kochi Petrochemical Project of BPCL.

The JCM inter alia agreed on (i) Promoting cooperation in the field of oil, gas and minerals through the Joint Technical Team (India Saudi Energy Consultations); (ii) Encourage Saudi private sector companies to invest in oil and gas sector in India; (iii) Participation of Indian pharmaceutical entities in Saudi Arabia; (iv) Discussions on the mandatory requirement to get 'classification' for Indian companies to make them eligible to participate in Saudi projects; (v) Finalization and signing of framework agreement between "SAGIA" and "Invest India"; (vi) Discussions on the modalities in a time bound manner for setting up of India Saudi Investment Fund and identifying nodal points; (vii) More efforts in technical cooperation and exchange of expertise including through early convening of the Joint Working Group on Higher Education; (viii) Organize cultural days in both countries; and (ix) Strengthening cooperation in all security fields and exchange of information, especially in organized crimes, money laundering and drug smuggling.

During the Joint Commission Meeting, the Indian side proposed cooperation in (i) Development of IT Parks; (ii) Development of Telemedicine network, similar to the Pan-African project, in knowledge sharing, consulting in super specialty Medicare from premium Indian hospitals; and (iii) Promotion of Indian ICT products and services. Both sides also decided to explore the possibility of setting up of a Business SME Task Force to come up with concrete suggestions to promote SME cooperation. Both sides also discussed the proposal of Saudi Council of Engineers exchange information and experience with the Indian side on (i) Accreditation System for engineers; (ii) Training and development of engineers; (iii) Licensing of engineering and consultation offices; and (iv) Engineering Arbitration and disputes solving.

The Finance Minister Chidambaram also addressed the Council of Saudi Chambers of Commerce and Industry and had an interactive session with the Saudi businessmen at the Council of Saudi Chambers of Commerce and Industry. The meeting attended by a large number of Saudi and Indian businessmen discussed a series of measures to promote trade and investment relations. Hon'ble Minister recalled the increase in bilateral trade which stands at US\$43 billion in 2013 and announced his vision to double the trade within the next five years. He also urged

Saudi business to invest in infrastructure and petrochemical projects in India. It was conveyed that a major business delegation from the Council of Saudi Chambers would accompany Crown Prince His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud during his visit to India in February 2014.

Earlier, the Finance Minister Shri. Chidambaram called on His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Crown Prince, Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister and His Royal Highness Prince Muqrin bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Second Deputy Prime Minister. During the calls, both sides recalled the Delhi Declaration signed in 2006 during the visit of the Custodian of Two Holy Mosques His Majesty King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al Saud to India and the Riyadh Declaration of 2010 signed during the visit of Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh to the Kingdom. Both sides also reviewed progress made in the India – Saudi Strategic Partnership which called for deeper engagement in political, economic, security and defence areas. The forthcoming visit of Crown Prince His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud to India was also discussed.

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

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## **h. SYRIA**

### **35. External Affairs Minister's Statement at the International Conference on Syria (Geneva-II), Geneva, 22 January 2014.**

His Excellency UN Secretary-General:

His Excellency UN-Arab League Joint Special Representative:

Distinguished Foreign Ministers:

Distinguished Invitees:

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am deeply honoured to be part of this historic political process towards the resolution of the ongoing Syrian conflict. All parties and stakeholders, external and internal, deserve credit for taking this important decision to support the peace initiative for Syria, which will impact not only on Syria but the region as a whole. I compliment the efforts of the UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon, the UN-Arab League Joint Special Representative to Syria Lakhdar Brahimi, as well as my counterparts, the Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and the US Secretary of State John Kerry, for their sustained efforts for convening this International Conference on Syria. I share the sentiments of the UN Secretary General that this Conference is a mission of hope and vehicle for a peaceful political transition that will fulfil the aspirations of the Syrian people for freedom and dignity as well as provide guarantees for the safety and protection of all communities.

The conflict in Syria has raged for far too long. It would be unacceptable not to seize this opportunity to bring an end to the tragic suffering and destruction it has caused. The conflict has

resulted in the death of more than 120,000 people. Estimates by the United Nations Refugee Agency show that about 9.3 million people, nearly half the Syrian population, are now in need of humanitarian assistance. This includes an estimated 6.5 million internally displaced people and about 2.3 million registered Syrian refugees, mostly in regional countries of Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, Iraq and Egypt. The severe strain of infrastructure resources that this has caused for the host countries is very well appreciated.

It is well recognized that the lethal conflict within Syria, which occupies an important place in West Asia as a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural country, is not only the tragedy for the people of Syria but also threatens the stability and security of the region, with potentially long term impact on the geo-strategic dynamics. The conflict has sharply intensified the sectarian fault-lines across the region, with very serious consequences. In particular, the infiltration of all shades of religious extremism in Syria from all parts of the world has rendered the situation extremely dangerous and complicated. Today's Conference, aimed at peaceful settlement of the conflict, is a positive and timely step to prevent further destabilization of the region.

Excellencies, India has important stakes in the Syrian conflict. It shares deep historical and civilizational bonds with the wider West Asia and Gulf region. We have substantial interests in the fields of trade and investment, diaspora, remittances, energy and security. Any spill-over from the Syrian conflict has the potential of impacting negatively on our larger interests.

We are encouraged that this Conference is a convergence of the positions of global and regional powers with India's own consistently stated position of supporting a comprehensive political settlement of the crisis. We have supported full implementation of Geneva Communiqué of 30 June 2012, which focuses on ceasefire and negotiations between all parties, leading to the formation of a transitional governing body and to be followed by democratically held elections. India believes that societies cannot be re-ordered from outside and that people in all countries have the right to choose their own destiny and decide their own future. In line with this, India supports an all-inclusive Syrian led process to chart out the future of Syria, its political structures and leadership. There can be NO military solution to the crisis. India's stand on various resolutions in the Security Council and General Assembly has been in support of efforts to bring about an end to violence by all parties.

India has responded positively to the international appeal for humanitarian assistance for Syria, being deeply conscious of the humanitarian dimension of the conflict. We supplied essential food items to Syria last year, delivered through the World Food Programme. At the 2nd International Pledging Conference for Syria held in Kuwait on 15 January 2014, India pledged US\$2 million to the United Nations Syrian Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan (UN-SHARP) in support of its prioritized humanitarian activities for Syria.

India supported the Russia-US framework agreement on the time bound safeguarding and destruction of Syrian chemical weapons, in line with India's stance of supporting the complete

elimination of chemical weapons worldwide. India is encouraged by the steps taken by Syria to accede to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and cooperation being offered by it in the destruction of its stockpiles. As part of the international effort, India has offered technical expertise to the Organization for Protection of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) for destruction, verification and training activities. Additionally, India has offered a financial contribution of US\$1 million to the OPCW Trust Fund for activities relating to destruction of chemical stockpiles and related facilities in Syria.

Excellencies, I extend India's full backing to this importance peace initiative and wish all participants successful conclusion of the deliberations, resulting in meaningful resolution of the conflict. Sustained peace and stability in the region is in our common interest. It is expected that all regional and international partners will demonstrate their meaningful support for constructive negotiations, in alignment with the UNSC Resolution 2118 (2013). But ultimately, it is the Syrian parties themselves who have to chart out their own future and we will be watching this process very carefully as they begin their discussions two days later in Geneva. So far, they have shown great courage in coming to the negotiating table. As a next step, I would like to express my earnest hope that they will be able to show the required flexibility in resolving their differences in a spirit of reconciliation and come to pragmatic conclusions that can be implemented on the ground, in the best interest of the Syrian people who are undergoing tremendous suffering on account of the conflict.

India stands fully prepared to play its part in the peace process in any manner required of it, conscious of its larger regional and global responsibilities. It will also be willing to assist appropriately in the implementation of the Conclusions deriving from the deliberations of the Syrian parties in Geneva towards the establishment of long term peace and stability in the region and beyond.

Thank you.

*Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, <http://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/22765/External+Affairs+Ministers+Statement+at+the+International+Conference+on+Syria+GenevaII>*

## **i. TUNISIA**

### **36. 65th Republic Day of India celebrated in Tunis on 26th January, Tunis, 27 January 2014.**

Ambassador of India, Nagma M. Mallick unfurled the tri-colour, followed by National Anthem and thereafter read out the Address of Hon'ble President of India to the Nation on 26th January, 2014 at the Embassy of India in Tunis. All officials of the Mission with families and a large number of Indian citizens and friends of India assembled at the Chancery premises to celebrate the occasion. Light refreshment was served.

*Source: Embassy of India, Tunis, [http://www.embassyofindiatunis.com/whats\\_detail3.php](http://www.embassyofindiatunis.com/whats_detail3.php)*

### **37. Visit of Salman Khurshid, External Affairs Minister of the Republic of India to Tunisia, 2-3 February, Tunis, 31 January 2014.**

His Excellency Salman Khurshid, External Affairs Minister of the Republic of India will pay a 2-day visit to Republic of Tunisia from 2 to 3 February 2014. This visit will be the first official bilateral visit by a Minister of External Affairs of India to Tunisia since diplomatic relations between the two countries was established in 1958.

Minister Khurshid will convey the felicitations of the Government and people of India to the Government and people of Tunisia on their historic achievement of the adoption of the Constitution of Tunisia by a democratically- elected National Constituent Assembly. He will also hold discussions with his counterpart His Excellency Mongi Hamdi and other Tunisian leaders in order to further strengthen and deepen the bilateral relationship between India and Tunisia.

*Source: Embassy of India, Tunis,*

[http://www.embassyofindiatunis.com/pdf/Press+Release+\(English\).Pdf](http://www.embassyofindiatunis.com/pdf/Press+Release+(English).Pdf)

## **j. UNITED ARAB EMIRATES**

### **38. India and UAE Agree to Promote Cooperation in Renewable Energy, New Delhi, 19 January 2014.**

India and UAE have agreed to promote cooperation in renewable energy, especially in the areas of solar energy and wind power. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to this effect was signed in Abu Dhabi on Saturday, 18th of January. The MoU was signed by Dr. Farooq Abdullah, Minister of New and Renewable Energy of India and Dr Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber, Minister of State of UAE.

Both the countries also agreed to form a Joint Working Group for better coordination through joint research on subjects of mutual interest, exchange and training of scientific and technical personnel, exchange of available scientific and technologies information and data, organization of workshops, seminars and working groups, transfer of know-how, technology and equipment, on non-commercial basis etc.

Dr. Farooq Abdullah briefed the UAE Minister on the progress made by India in renewable energy with special reference to the National Solar Mission launched in 2010 under the National Action Plan on Climate Change. He also briefed the Minister on India's efforts in promoting energy for remote and un-electrified areas. He congratulated the UAE for warm hospitality extended during the 4th Assembly session of IRENA.

*Source: Press Information Bureau, New Delhi,*  
<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx?relid=102602>

### **39. UAE Investor's Legal Interests will be Protected: Sharma Assures UAE Minister of Economy, New Delhi, 28 January 2014.**

The Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Anand Sharma assured the United Arab Emirates that the Government of India is addressing legacy issues faced by Etisalat, TAQA, DP World, EMAAR etc. In a bilateral meeting with UAE Minister of Economy, Sultan bin Sayeed Al Mansouri on the sidelines of the Partnership Summit 2014 at Bengaluru today, he said “we will do the best under the circumstances to protect the legal interests of the UAE investors, without violating any judicial orders.”

Both the leaders also discussed follow up action on decisions taken during the inaugural meeting of the India-UAE High Level Task Force on Investment. Sharma told his UAE counterpart that as a follow up action of the India-UAE High Level Task Force on Investment, a bilateral agreement was signed in December 2013. Working Groups on seven themes namely Infrastructure, Investment & Trade, Energy, Manufacturing & Technology, Aviation, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Legacy Issues has been constituted by Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion. All the Working Groups except the WG on ICT have met and submitted their recommendations.

Shri. Sharma mentioned that now is an opportune time for visit of Sheikh Hamed for the second meeting of HLTFI in Mumbai. He formally invited Sheikh Hamed for the meeting to be held by the end of February 2014.

The total trade between India and UAE crossed US\$75 billion in 2012-2013.

*Source: Press Information Bureau, New Delhi,*

<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx?relid=102793>

## SPECIFIC ISSUES

### **k. PRAVASI BHARATIYA DIVAS**

#### **40. PBD to Strengthen Diaspora's Engagement With India's Growth Story- Vayalar Ravi, New Delhi, 8 January 2014.**

... In this 12th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas we will have a session on issues of NRIs in the Gulf as in the past. This session will also deliberate on various options for rehabilitation of the returnees. We shall continue to serve our citizens abroad and deepen our engagement with our Diaspora...

*Source: Press Information Bureau, New Delhi,*

<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx?relid=102351>

#### **41. PM's address at Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas, New Delhi, 8 2014.**

... On this occasion, I would also like to record my appreciation for the work of the Ministry of External Affairs and the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs, as also the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, for successfully addressing the challenges that more than a million Indian workers faced following changes in Saudi Arabia's labour policies. As always, our objective is to support our emigrant communities and I hope this year's Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas will again provide an opportunity to discuss how we can forge a more productive partnership...

*Source: Prime Minister of India, New Delhi, <http://pmindia.gov.in/speech-details.php?nodeid=1411>*

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## **I. BOOK RELEASE**

### **42. Vice President Releases Book 'India's Political and Foreign Relations with the Gulf Region', New Delhi, 21 January 2014.**

The Vice President of India, M. Hamid Ansari released a book entitled "India's Political and Foreign Relations with the Gulf Region" edited by Prof A. K. Pasha at a function. The Vice President threw light on various aspects of the relations between India and the Gulf countries and congratulated the Editor Prof. Pasha for bringing out such an informative and useful book on India's relations with the Gulf Region.

The book is a compilation of the working/occasional papers, some research papers presented in the four seminars organized by Gulf Studies Programme (GSP), Centre for West Asian Studies, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University.

*Source: Press Information Bureau, New Delhi, <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx?relid=102656>*

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## **m. OPEN DEBATE ON MIDDLE EAST**

### **43. Statement by Ambassador Asoke Kumar Mukerji, Permanent Representative, Open Debate on Middle East, at the United Nations Security Council, New York, 20 January 2014.**

Thank you, Mr. President,

Let me begin by expressing our appreciation for convening this quarterly open debate, which will allow the Council to take stock of recent developments in the Middle East, including the State of Palestine. I would like to thank UNSG for his comprehensive briefing.

Mr. President, the situation in the Middle East region continues to remain fragile and unpredictable with the unprecedented changes in several countries in the region and the ongoing conflict in Syria.

Mr. President, we firmly support a negotiated solution to the Israeli Palestinian issue resulting in sovereign, independent, viable and united state of Palestine with East Jerusalem as its capital, living within secure and recognized borders, side by side and at peace with Israel. We will also continue to support Palestine's bid for full and equal membership of the United Nations. We look forward to a meaningful 2014 as the International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, launched on 16 January 2014 by the UNSG.

We welcome the continuation of the negotiation rounds between Israel and Palestine that began in late July with the aim of reaching a deal within nine months. It is unfortunate that so far there

has been little visible progress but we hope that both sides will seize the opportunity presented by the direct negotiations and will strike a peace deal in the critical months ahead.

Mr. President, the recent announcement by Israel on new settlement construction is regrettable. The settlement activities are not only illegal but also pose a threat to the two state solutions. We join others in urging Israel to stop settlement activities.

The humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip, meanwhile, remains a cause for serious concern. The blockade on Gaza is not only adversely affecting the population but also driving militant elements to vent their frustration through violence, thereby further complicating the situation on the ground and increasing Israel's vulnerability and security concerns.

Mr. President, India has always supported the nation-building efforts of Palestine through technical and economic assistance, including budgetary support. In 2012 India pledged an amount of US\$10 million as a budgetary support to Palestine and signed three Memoranda of Understanding for the development projects in the fields of Information and Communication Technology, vocational training and construction of schools. In September 2013 India contributed US\$1 million, as a part of India's annual contribution to UNRWA, primarily for provision of food and medicines to the displaced people in the refugee camps under UNRWA's various programmes. We are also implementing series of development projects under IBSA funds in Palestine. We have so far been able to assist in the rehabilitation of cultural and hospital centre in Gaza, construction and equipping a centre for person with physical disabilities in Nablus, and supporting recreational activities through infrastructure support for a football stadium in Ramallah.

Mr. President, India welcomes the efforts made by the Joint Mission of the Organization for Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the UN towards the removal and elimination of Syrian chemical weapons programmes and hope that the Joint Mission will be able to meet the final deadline of 30 June 2014 for the complete elimination of Syrian Chemical Weapons Programme.

In December 2013 India offered a financial contribution of US\$1 million to the Trust Fund set up at the OPCW at The Hague for use in the destruction of Syria's chemical weapons and related facilities. India has also offered the services of its experts to be used by the OPCW in the destruction verification activity as well as training slots for the personnel participating in the UN/OPCW mission for the destruction of Syria's chemical weapons.

In conclusion, Mr. President, let me express our full support to the Geneva II Conference on Syria. We hope it would commence a Syrian-led inclusive political dialogue that resolves the current crisis and meets the legitimate aspirations of all sections of Syrian society.

I thank you.

*Source: Permanent Mission of India to the UN, New York, <https://www.pminewyork.org/adminpart/uploadpdf/77041ind02.pdf>*

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## **n. MEETINGS OF MINISTERS**

### **44. Petroleum Minister Veerappa Moily holds bilateral Meetings with Visiting Ministers of Libya, UAE, Bahrain and Premier of Alberta, New Delhi, 13 January 2014.**

Areas for enhanced cooperation in hydrocarbon sector discussed.

The Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas Dr M Veerappa Moily held a series of bilateral meetings with visiting ministerial delegations from various countries on the sidelines of Petrotech 2014 at Greater Noida today. The meetings sought to further enhance mutual cooperation in the oil and gas sector.

In his meeting with Libyan Oil and Gas Minister Dr Abdulbari A. Arousi the two ministers felt the need for increasing cooperation in terms of greater crude oil supply to India and in the field of upstream projects. ONGC Videsh(OVL) proposed signing of an MoU to provide institutional framework for exploring specific projects for cooperation. Bharat Petroleum Corporation urged revival of the term contract for supply of crude oil to India. Libyan Minister assured to consider these and emphasized that Libya was keen to increase the cooperation with India.

Dr Moily had fruitful discussions with Suhail Mohhamed Al Mazrouei, Minister of Energy, United Arab Emirates(UAE), Indian Minister Dr Moily proposed partnership between OVL and Mubadala, an investment and development company of UAE, to jointly invest the upstream projects in third countries. The visiting minister showed keen interest in the proposal and asked that both the companies should soon meet to arrive at specific focus countries. He also said that Indian companies may participate in the future exploration and production opportunities and pointed out the UAE is looking for raising rate of recovery from existing fields. Dr Moily also felt the need for greater role Engineers India Ltd (EIL) in the development of UAE's oil sector. HPCL presented investment opportunities in its upcoming major refinery-cum petrochemical projects in Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh.

In the bilateral meeting between Indian Petroleum Minister and Shaikh Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Kahlifa, Minister of Finance and in-charge of National Oil and Gas Authority, the two leaders felt that the cooperation in the oil and gas sector should further enhanced. India showed keen desire to source more crude oil. Bahrain could also look for investment in India as also Indian oil companies in Bahrain along hydrocarbon value chain.

Dr Moily and visiting Ms Alison M Redford, Premier of Alberta, Canada, discussed various areas of cooperation between India and Alberta. Visiting dignitary said that Alberta was keen about investments by Indian oil companies. She offered India to utilize their expertise in the area of Shale Gas. Indian side pointed out that Indian Oil has recently purchased a cargo of Canadian crude oil and are looking for sourcing more from Alberta in particular and from Canada in

general. OVL expressed keen desire to learn from Canadian experience which could be useful in exploiting their Imperial Energy acreages.

*Source: Press Information Bureau, New Delhi,*  
<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx?relid=102470>

#### **45. Opening Remarks by Foreign Secretary at Senior Official's Meeting (SOM), Istanbul-Heart of Asia Process, New Delhi, 17 January 2014.**

Your Excellency Ershad Ahmadi,  
 Your Excellency Ambassador Luo Zhaohui (DG, Asia Department, China)  
 Excellency Ambassador Kubis, Distinguished Guests,  
 Gentlemen, Ladies

A very good morning to all of you here. I am sorry, we couldn't produce some sunshine. This fog is generally how it's like in Delhi in end December-January; it'll lift in a few days. We are very happy to host the Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM) of the Istanbul Process/the Heart of Asia Process in New Delhi.

... As the lead country of the Trade, Commerce and Investment opportunities CBMs under the Istanbul process, I am happy to report that India recently organized a "Doing Business with Afghanistan" conference and Trade Exhibition in New Delhi to interest businessmen to invest and do business in Afghanistan. We benefited greatly from the briefings provided to us by several senior Afghan Ministers and Afghan officials on opportunities, the regulatory environment and incentives being provided by the Afghan government to attract international business. A consistent and clear message we got from the business community is that while they all see the potential of Afghanistan as a major economic hub for energy, raw materials and trade, connectivity to major markets of the region remains a major impediment. The time has come to seriously discuss the issue of transit arrangements for Afghanistan that can be provided by Afghanistan's neighbours and that will help it link up to the major maritime ports and markets of the region. India, Iran and Afghanistan are already discussing the possibilities of cooperation centred on the future development of the Chahbahar Port in Iran, and we hope to see other such projects fructify in the near future...

*Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, <http://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/22757/Opening+Remarks+by+Foreign+Secretary+at+Senior+Officials+Meeting+SOM+IstanbulHeart+of+Asia+Process+in+New+Delhi>*

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