

# **INDIA SPEAKS**

(Monthly Digest of Official Indian Statements on Middle East)

No. 56

March 2014

## **BILATERAL ISSUES**

### **a. BAHRAIN**

#### **1. State Visit of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, the King of the Kingdom of Bahrain to India (18-20 February 2014), New Delhi, 14 February 2014.**

At the invitation of the Hon'ble President of India, Pranab Mukherjee, His Majesty the King of the Kingdom of Bahrain, King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa is paying a state visit to the Republic of India from 18-20 February 2014.

During his first visit to India, His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa will meet Hon'ble President and Hon'ble Vice President of India and will hold delegation-level discussions with Hon'ble Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh on bilateral, regional and global issues.

India and Bahrain have close and friendly relations, characterized by shared interests, mutual trust and unique people-to-people contacts. Bahrain is an important trading partner for India with our non-oil bilateral trade in 2012-13 exceeding US\$1.3 billion. Over 350,000 Indian nationals work and contribute to the development of Bahrain. Their positive and well-appreciated contribution in the development of Bahrain has been an important pillar of our excellent bilateral engagement. The visit is expected to provide fresh impetus to our bilateral ties.

India has vital stakes in the 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 percent of our global trade.

**Source:** Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, <http://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/22900/State+Visit+of+His+Majesty+King+Hamad+bin+Isa+Al+Khalifa+the+King+of+the+Kingdom+of+Bahrain+to+India+February+1820+2014>

#### **2. State Visit of King of the Kingdom of Bahrain to India (18-20 February 2014), New Delhi, 17 February 2014.**

Ministry of External Affairs

(XP Division)

**MOST IMMEDIATE/MEDIA ADVISORY**

As on 17 February 2014 at 1700 hrs

State Visit of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, King of Kingdom of Bahrain to India from 18-20 February 2014.

Tuesday, 18 February 2014

1715 hrs: Arrive Delhi

Venue: Air Force Station, Palam

Photo Op: AV Media

Wednesday, 19 February 2014

1000 hrs: Ceremonial Reception

Venue: Rashtrapati Bhavan

Photo Op: AV Media

1030 hrs: Wreath Laying at Rajghat

Venue: Rajghat

Photo Op: AV Media

1220 hrs: Meeting with the Prime Minister

Venue: Hyderabad House

Photo Op: AV Media

1320 hrs: Signing of Agreements

Venue: Hyderabad House

All Media

1415 hrs: Call by Vice President of India

Venue: Hotel ITC Maurya

Photo Op: Agencies Only

1445 hrs: Call by Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha

Venue: Hotel ITC Maurya

Photo Op: Agencies Only

1930 hrs: Call on the President

Venue: Rashtrapati Bhavan

Photo Op: Agencies Only

Thursday, 20 February 2014

1245 hrs: Departure for Agra

1510 hrs Departure

Please note:

Media is requested to arrive 1 hour before each event.

Access restricted to holders of PIB card only.

**Source:** *Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi*, <http://www.mea.gov.in/media-advisory.htm?dtl/22932/State+Visit+of+King+of+the+Kingdom+of+Bahrain+to+India+February+1820+2014>

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### **3. State Visit of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, The King of the Kingdom of Bahrain to India, New Delhi, 20 February 2014.**

At the invitation of Hon'ble President of India, Pranab Mukherjee, His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, the King of the Kingdom of Bahrain paid his first state visit to India from 18-20 February 2014. His Majesty the King was accompanied by a high-level delegation comprising Ministers, senior officials and business leaders. He was accorded a ceremonial welcome in the forecourt of the Rashtrapati Bhavan on 19 February 2014. Hon'ble President, Pranab Mukherjee hosted an official banquet in honour of His Majesty the King which was preceded by official discussions. The other bilateral engagements included meeting with Hon'ble Vice-President, M. Hamid Ansari and delegation-level bilateral discussions with Hon'ble Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh. His Majesty the King also received Hon'ble External Affairs Minister, Salman Khurshid and the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Shrimati Sushma Swaraj.

His Majesty the King expressed appreciation for the role and contribution of the Indian expatriate community towards progress and economic development of Bahrain. The Indian leadership expressed gratitude for the willingness of the Kingdom of Bahrain to receive and host a large number of Indian citizens and for ensuring their well-being and safety.

During the official meetings, the two sides underlined the close bilateral ties, deeply rooted in shared history and cultural affinities, sustained and nourished through growing economic linkages, multi-faceted cooperation and close people-to-people contacts. The wide-ranging discussions were held in a sincere, friendly and forward-looking atmosphere with useful exchange of views on bilateral, regional and multilateral issues of mutual interest.

The two sides agreed to further broaden and deepen the bilateral engagement in diverse fields of mutual interest. There was agreement on further enhancing high-level political exchanges, defence and security cooperation, trade and economic relations and people-to-people linkages.

The two sides expressed happiness at the regular exchange of high-level bilateral visits in recent years. Bilateral ties acquired a new momentum following the visits of His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Bahrain to India on 30-31 May 2012 and 17-18 March 2013.

They welcomed the positive outcomes of the visits of E. Ahamed, Minister of State for External Affairs on 4-5 June, 22-24 October and 24-25 November 2013 and of Salman Khurshid, Minister of External Affairs on 7-9 December 2013 to Bahrain.

The two sides stressed the importance of continuing regular bilateral consultations through the existing institutional mechanisms. The two sides welcomed the setting up of India-Bahrain High Joint Commission to be co-chaired by the Minister of External Affairs of India and Foreign Minister of the Kingdom of Bahrain, which would serve as an umbrella framework for bilateral cooperation between the two countries. This would substitute the India-Bahrain Joint Committee on Economic & Technical Cooperation established as per an Economic and Technical Cooperation Agreement signed in April 1981.

Both sides recognized the need to hold regular Foreign Office Consultations and decided that the next round of such consultations would be held in the second half of 2014. The two sides welcomed the signature of a MoU on cooperation between the Foreign Service Institute, Ministry of External Affairs, India and the Diplomatic Institute, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kingdom of Bahrain, to strengthen cooperation through exchange of information, training of diplomats and joint research in mutually agreed areas.

Both sides stressed the importance of increasing the defence and security cooperation between the two countries. It was agreed that the security dialogue will take place annually between the two countries at the level of Deputy National Security Advisors. It was also decided to strengthen sharing of information, intelligence and assessments. Both sides denounced terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and reaffirmed their desire to strengthen their cooperation in combating terrorism at both the bilateral level and within the multilateral system of the UN.

In the field of economic cooperation, the two sides noted with satisfaction the growth and progression of the bilateral trade ties with two-way non-oil trade reaching US\$1.268 billion in 2012-13. Both the sides recognized the potential for greater trade and commercial exchanges and agreed to take necessary steps to provide an impetus to the bilateral trade turnover. In this regard, the two sides commended the recent hosting of “Bahrain-India Exhibition & Conference” in Manama on 22-24 October, 2013 organized by the Ministry of Industry and Commerce of the Kingdom of Bahrain in partnership with the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and Bahrain Economic Development Board (EDB). It was noted that such events, including Bahrain’s participation in the Petrotech- 2014 and CII Partnership Summit-2014 at the ministerial level, would contribute to the realization of existing trade and investment potential. The Indian side welcomed the high-level business delegation accompanying His Majesty the King.

The two sides welcomed the opening of a new branch of Bahrain and Kuwait Bank (BBK) in New Delhi shortly.

Both the sides noted the potential for increased mutual investments and agreed to provide favourable environment for investors from both countries. Both sides agreed for regular and timely exchange of information on available investment opportunities. Recognizing the enormous growth potential of the Indian economy, the Bahraini side expressed its willingness to consider investments in India. The Indian side recognized Bahrain as an ideal gateway to the GCC markets.

Both sides informed each other of their infrastructure development plans. The Indian side conveyed that its companies had acquired considerable experience and expertise in infrastructure development, including in power generation and transmission, civil construction, railways and metros, hospitals, airports, housing, roads, etc. and indicated that they were keen to contribute in upcoming projects in Bahrain. India invited Bahrain to invest in the power, ports, highways, supply chain, logistics and warehousing areas in India.

Both sides highlighted the importance of strengthening cooperation in the field of science & technology, information and broadcasting, education, culture and sports. They expressed satisfaction at the signing of a MoU for cooperation in the field of youth and sports.

During the visit, six other MOUs were signed, including the following:

- I. MOU between Bahrain Development Bank (BDB) and Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) for partnering for enhancement of financial and non-financial services for SMEs in Bahrain;
- II. MOU between Bahrain Economic Development Board (EDB) and NASSCOM;
- III. MOU between Bahrain Economic Development Board (EDB) and CII;
- IV. MOU between Tamkeen and National Skills Development Corporation (NSDC) of India;
- V. Memorandum of Understanding between Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi and University of Bahrain;
- VI. MOU between National Authority for Qualifications and Quality Assurance of Education & Training (QQA), Bahrain and National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), India

Both leaders noted that these MoUs will provide framework for enhancing cooperation in the respective fields between the two countries.

The two sides exchanged views on regional and international issues of mutual interest, including the security situation in West Asia and South Asia. Both sides also reiterated the importance of peaceful resolution of all issues through dialogue, be they regional or global.

The two sides acknowledged the close relations between India and the GCC countries and reiterated their commitment to further strengthen cooperation, including by finalizing the India-GCC Free Trade Agreement.

In the context of the UN reforms, both sides emphasized the importance of an effective multilateral system, centred on a UN reflective of contemporary realities, as a key factor in tackling global challenges. They stressed upon the urgent need to pursue UN reforms, including of the Security Council through an expansion in both categories of its membership, to make it more representative, credible and effective. HM the King reiterated his country's support for India's candidature for permanent membership of the UN Security Council as well as for Indian candidature as a non-permanent member of the UNSC for 2021-22.

His Majesty the King thanked Hon. President of India for the warm and gracious hospitality extended to him and the members of his delegation. He extended his invitation to Hon. President Pranab Mukherjee and Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh to visit Bahrain at a mutually convenient time, which was gladly accepted.

**Source:** *Embassy of India, Embassy of India, Ghudaibiya,*  
<http://www.indianembassybahrain.com/state-visit-king-hamad.html>

#### **4. List of MoUs/Agreements signed during the State Visit of King of Kingdom of Bahrain to India, New Delhi, 19 February 2014.**

S.No.	Name of Agreement/ MoU	Signatory from India	Signatory from Bahrain	Remarks
1	Memorandum of Understanding for Cooperation in the fields of Youth and Sports between the Government of the Kingdom of Bahrain and the Government of the Republic of India	Salman Khurshid, Hon'ble Minister of External Affairs, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India	Prince Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Chairman of the Supreme Council for Youth and Sports of the Kingdom of Bahrain	The MoU aims at promoting and strengthening bilateral cooperation between the two countries in the field of Sports & Youth through institutional exchanges particularly through exchange of youth and sports teams in various disciplines.
2	MoU on the Establishment of a "High Joint Commission" for Bilateral Cooperation	Salman Khurshid, Hon'ble Minister of External Affairs, of	HE Khalid bin Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Khalifa, Minister of Foreign	This new MoU will replace the existing Joint Committee for the Technical and Economic Cooperation (established in

S.No.	Name of Agreement/ MoU	Signatory from India	Signatory from Bahrain	Remarks
	between India and Bahrain	Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India	Affairs of the Kingdom of Bahrain	1981) by "High Joint Commission", to be chaired by the Foreign Ministers, and will serve as an umbrella framework for all bilateral cooperation between the two countries.
3	MoU between the Foreign Service Institute of MEA and the Diplomatic Institute, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Bahrain	Salman Khurshid, Hon'ble Minister of External Affairs, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India	HE Khalid bin Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Khalifa, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Bahrain	The MoU aims at promoting cooperation between the FSI and the Diplomatic Institute, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Bahrain, including exchange of information on structure and content of training programmes, exchange of trainees, students, faculty members, experts and researchers.

*Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, <http://www.mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/22937/List+of+MoUs+Agreements+signed+during+the+State+Visit+of+King+of+Bahrain+to+India>*

### **5. List of MOUs/Agreements signed on the sidelines of the State Visit of King of Bahrain to India, New Delhi, 20 February 2014.**

List of MOUs/Agreements signed on the sidelines of the State Visit of King of Bahrain to India.

S.No.	Name of Agreement/ MoU	Signatory from India	Signatory from Bahrain	Remarks
1	Memorandum of Understanding between Bahrain Development Bank (BDB) and Small	N.K. Maini, Deputy Managing Director, SIDBI	Sheikh Mohammed bin Essa Al Khalifa, Chairman, Bahrain	This MOU provides for technical assistance by SIDBI to BDB Bahrain in



S.No.	Name of Agreement/ MoU	Signatory from India	Signatory from Bahrain	Remarks
	Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) for Partnering for Enhancement of financial and non-Financial Services for SMEs in Bahrain		Development Bank	SME sector.
2	Memorandum of Understanding between Bahrain Economic Development Board (EDB) and NASSCOM	R. Chandrashekhar, President, NASSCOM	H.E. Kamal bin Ahmed, Minister of Transport and Acting CEO of EDB	This MOU promotes cooperation in ICT and exchange of IT missions.
3	Memorandum of Understanding between Bahrain Economic Development Board (EDB) and CII	S. Gopalakrishnan, President, Confederation of Indian Industry	S. H.E. Kamal bin Ahmed, Minister of Transport and Acting CEO of EDB	This MOU allows for reaching out to companies in each other country for newer business opportunities.
4	Memorandum of Understanding between Tamkeen and National Skills Development Corporation (NSDC)	Dilip Chenoy, Managing Director and CEO, National Skills Development Corporation	H.E. Kamal bin Ahmed, Minister of Transport and Acting CEO of EDB or equivalent	The MoU will promote sharing of quality and experience in technical and vocational training.
5	Memorandum of Understanding between Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India and University of Bahrain	Prof. Sudhir Kumar Sopory, Vice Chancellor, JNU	Dr. Ebrahim Mohammed Janahi, President of University of Bahrain	The first MoU between the two universities will promote better understanding and cooperation among the faculty and students.
6	Memorandum of Understanding between Prof A N Rai, Dr Jawaher Al	Prof A N Rai, Dr Jawaher Al		This MoU allows



S.No.	Name of Agreement/ MoU	Signatory from India	Signatory from Bahrain	Remarks
	Understanding between National Authority for Qualifications and Quality Assurance of Education & Training (QQA), Bahrain and National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), India	Director, National Assessment and Accreditation Council	Mudhahki, Chief Executive, National Authority for Qualifications and Quality Assurance of Education & Training	for partnership to enhance external quality assurance in both legal jurisdictions and to develop higher education institutions.

**Source:** Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, <http://www.mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/22963/List+of+MOUs+Agreements+signed+on+the+sidelines+of+the+State+Visit+of+King+of+Bahrain+to+India>

## **b. EGYPT**

### **6. Lecture by Chairperson of the Observer Research Foundation, Sudheendra Kulkarni at the Maulana Azad Centre for Indian Culture, Cairo, 20 February 2014.**

Chairperson of the Observer Research Foundation (ORF), a leading Indian think tank and senior Indian journalist Sudheendra Kulkarni will deliver a lecture on the topic "Mahatma Gandhi in the Internet Age" at the Maulana Azad Centre for Indian Culture in Downtown Cairo on 24 February at 5:00pm. Sudheendra Kulkarni has served earlier as senior aide to India's Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee and was a leading member of the Bharatiya Janata Party, currently India's main opposition party. He is a well-known socio-political activist and author in India, a leading columnist in Indian newspapers and a commentator on TV channels.

Kulkarni's most recent book is titled Music of the Spinning Wheel: Mahatma Gandhi's Manifesto for the Internet Age. Arguing that the Internet and other digital-era technologies have the potential to realize Mahatma Gandhi's revolutionary message as symbolized by the spinning wheel, it attempts to bring out a new dimension of Gandhi's life and philosophy (especially his misunderstood thoughts on science, technology and industry) by showing why he may be regarded as a visionary of the Internet Age. The book shows how there is a direct correlation between the moral message of the spinning wheel (in which Gandhi would spin home-made cotton) and the revolutionary possibilities of modern technology.

**Source:** Embassy of India, Cairo, [http://www.indembcairo.com/en-us/presscentre/pressreleases.aspx?udt\\_656\\_param\\_detail=5838](http://www.indembcairo.com/en-us/presscentre/pressreleases.aspx?udt_656_param_detail=5838)

### **7. Lecture by Chairperson of the Observer Research Foundation, Sudheendra Kulkarni at the Maulana Azad Centre for Indian Culture, Cairo, 25 February 2014.**

Chairperson of the Observer Research Foundation (ORF), a leading Indian think tank and senior Indian journalist Sudheendra Kulkarni delivered a lecture on the topic "Mahatma Gandhi in the Internet Age" at the Maulana Azad Centre for Indian Culture in Downtown Cairo on 24th February. Yehia Gamal, former Deputy Prime Minister was the Chief Guest and spoke about the importance of Satyagraha (truth force) and Ahimsa (non violence) in Gandhi's philosophy, referring to the eternal nature of these concepts. He praised the role of Nehru and Gandhi in the shaping of modern India. Earlier, Ambassador Navdeep Suri welcomed the guests, stating that he was happy to introduce one of India's leading intellectuals, Sudheendra Kulkarni. Referring to many connections between India and Egypt on the personality Gandhi, he mentioned the success of the poster competition entitled "Did you sense the spirit of Gandhi in Tahrir?" as evidence of the continuing relevance of Gandhi in Egypt. Dr. Maged Osman, former Minister for Information Technology, and a large number of distinguished guests attended the lecture.

Kulkarni spoke on the deep connections between Gandhian philosophy and modern technology, emphasizing that the traditional spinning wheel and the internet were similar in that both were democratic tools, which has the potential to empower all. He mentioned that new networked global community was emerging in which these new technologies were providing intellectual and practical tools to the common people to change social, political and economic structures. This is transforming our localized collective intelligence to a global collective intelligence. Kulkarni's most recent book is titled Music of the Spinning Wheel: Mahatma Gandhi's Manifesto for the Internet Age.

Sudheendra Kulkarni has served earlier as senior aide to India's Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee and was a leading member of the Bharatiya Janata Party, currently India's main opposition party. He is a well-known socio-political activist and author in India, a leading columnist in Indian newspapers and a commentator on TV channels.

**Source:** *Embassy of India, Cairo,* [http://www.indembcairo.com/en-us/presscentre/pressreleases.aspx?udt\\_656\\_param\\_detail=6843](http://www.indembcairo.com/en-us/presscentre/pressreleases.aspx?udt_656_param_detail=6843)

## **c. IRAN**

### **8. Oil Import from Iran, New Delhi, 7 February 2014.**

#### **Question:**

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

- (a) The quantity of crude oil imported from Iran during the last three years and the current year, year wise
- (b) Whether the Government proposes to increase oil import from Iran in the near future
- (c) If so, whether the Government has signed any agreement with Iran for the purpose; and
- (d) If so, the details thereof along with the progress made so far in implementation of Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline.

#### **Answer**

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

(a). The total crude oil imported from Iran by Indian companies during the last three years is as under:

Year	Quantity (MMT)
2013-14(up to Dec. 2013)	6.74
2012-13	13.14
2011-12	18.11
2010-11	18.50

(b) &(c). Quantum of crude oil imported by Indian refineries from various sources is decided by them on the basis of technical, commercial and other considerations. The oil companies finalize the Term Contract volumes based on techno-economics and energy security point of view.

(d). Iran-Pakistan –India (IPI) was considered by India earlier. However, no progress has been made since 2008 as several critical issues like the project structure, delivery period of Gas, safety and security, pricing etc could not be addressed. Presently, the project is not under active consideration.

*Source: Lok Sabha (House of the People), Unstarred Question No. 2675 asked by Asaduddin Owaisi, <http://164.100.47.132/LssNew/psearch/QRresult15.aspx?qref=149848>*

### **9. Iran's Nuclear Programme, New Delhi, 12 February 2014.**

#### **Question:**

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

- (a) Whether any deal between Iran and major world powers have come into being to end the standoff over Tehran's nuclear ambitions;
- (b) If so, the details thereof; and
- (c) Whether India is likely to be benefitted by this agreement and if so, the details thereof?

#### **Answer**

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

(a) Iran and the E3+3 (China, France, Germany, Russia, UK and US) agreed on 24 November 2013 in Geneva on a Joint Plan of Action (JPA) as an interim understanding on the nuclear issue to be implemented over the next six months.

(b) Iran is to take the following voluntary measures: reduce the existing stockpile of 20 percent enriched uranium, stop enrichment of Uranium to 20 percent for six months; stop installation of new centrifuges or activation of already installed new centrifuges for uranium enrichment at Natanz and Fordow or new locations for enrichment; freeze its existing stockpile of low-enriched fuel, halt construction on the core of the Arak research reactor and not construct any reprocessing facility; and accept enhanced monitoring of its nuclear fuel cycle activity. In exchange, the EU and the US have agreed to halt imposition of additional sanctions including further curbs on oil trade and provide relief from existing sanctions in terms of access to funds, relaxation of some trade curbs in areas such as petrochemicals, precious metals and airplane and automobile

components. The implementation of the JPA began on 20 January 2014 after the IAEA reported that Iran had taken the initial steps it committed to in November 2013.

(c) This agreement is consistent with India's position that the Iranian nuclear issue should be resolved peacefully through dialogue. Further, limited relief from sanctions has been offered to Iran as part of the reciprocal steps agreed in the Joint Plan of Action; this does not yet include substantive lifting of sanctions on crude oil and gas trade with Iran.

*Source: Lok Sabha (House of the People), Unstarred Question No. 3310 asked by Asaduddin Owaisi, <http://164.100.47.132/LssNew/psearch/QResult15.aspx?qref=150682>*

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### **10. Official Visit of Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran to India (27-28 February 2014), New Delhi, 27 February 2014.**

Ministry of External Affairs

(XP Division)

MOST IMMEDIATE/MEDIA ADVISORY

As on 27 February 2014 at 1300 hrs

Official Visit of His Excellency Dr. Mohammad Javad Zarif, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran to India from 27-28 February 2014.

Friday, 28 February 2014

1100 hrs: Call on the Vice President

Venue: 6, Maulana Azad Road

Photo Op: Agencies Only

1830 hrs: Meeting with Minister of External Affairs

Venue: Hyderabad House

Photo Op: AV Media

Please note:

Media is requested to arrive 1 hour before each event.

Access restricted to holders of PIB card only.

*Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, <http://www.mea.gov.in/media-advisory.htm?dtl/23010/Official+Visit+of+Minister+for+Foreign+Affairs+of+the+Islamic+Republic+of+Iran+to+India+February+2728+2014>*

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## **d. IRAQ**

### **11. Indo-Iraq Bilateral Security Agreement, New Delhi, 18 February 2014.**

#### **Question:**

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

- (a) Whether India and Iraq have discussed bilateral security related issues in the recent past;
- (b) If so, the details thereof;

- (c) Whether any agreement for cooperation between the countries has been signed during the bilateral discussion; and  
(d) If so, the details thereof?

**Answer**

Minister of State in the Ministry of Home Affairs (Mullappally Ramachandran)

(a) & (b): Yes, Madam. Hon'ble Prime Minister of Iraq visited India in August, 2013. This visit was followed by the visit of National Security Advisor of Iraq in December, 2013. During his visit, the National Security Advisor of Iraq also met Hon'ble Union Home Minister and discussed bilateral security matters.

(c): No, Madam.

(d): Does not arise in view of (c) above.

*Source: Lok Sabha (House of the People), Unstarred Question No. 3903 asked by Pradeep Kumar Majhi, <http://164.100.47.132/LssNew/psearch/QResult15.aspx?qref=150370>*

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## **e. ISRAEL**

### **12. Indo Israel Working Group, New Delhi, 12 February 2014.**

**Question:**

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

- (a) whether a meeting of the Indo-Israel Working Group on counter terrorism was held in the recent past at New Delhi and if so, the details of the discussions held and the outcome thereof;  
(b) Whether Israel has offered its services to fight terrorism and if so, the details thereof; and  
(c) The manner in which the Government is going to utilize the services of the Israeli experts in countering terrorism?

**Answer**

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

(a) Yes. The last meeting of the India-Israel Joint Working Group (JWG) on Counter Terrorism was held in New Delhi on 20 February 2013. During the JWG, both sides exchanged perceptions of threat emanating from terrorism and emphasized their determination to fight the menace. They also discussed elements of regional and global terrorist threats, respective national counter terrorism strategies, state sponsored terrorism and need to strengthen bilateral and international cooperation to counter this threat.

(b)&(c) India and Israel agreed to enhance dialogue and co-operation in the area of counter terrorism and agreed to work towards finalization of agreements on Cooperation in Homeland and Public Security Issues, Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters and Protection of Classified Materials and Information.

*Source: Lok Sabha (House of the People), Unstarred Question No. 3488 asked by Uday Singh alias Pappu Singh, <http://164.100.47.132/LssNew/psearch/QResult15.aspx?qref=150699>*

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### **13. Indo Israel working group on counter terrorism, New Delhi, 13 February 2014.**

**Question:**

- (a) whether a meeting of the Indo-Israel working group on counter terrorism was held in the recent past at New Delhi, if so, the details of the discussions held in the meeting and outcome thereof;
- (b) Whether Israel has offered its services to fight terrorism and if so, details thereof; and
- (c) In what manner Government is going to utilize the services of the Israeli experts in countering terrorism?

**Answer**

The Minister of State for External Affairs (Salman Khurshid)

(a) Yes. The last meeting of the India-Israel Joint Working Group (JWG) on Counter Terrorism was held in New Delhi on 20 February 2013. During the JWG, both sides exchanged perceptions of threat emanating from terrorism and emphasized their determination to fight the menace. They also discussed elements of regional and global terrorist threats, respective national counter terrorism strategies, state sponsored terrorism and need to strengthen bilateral and international cooperation to counter this threat.

(b) & (c) India and Israel agreed to enhance dialogue and co-operation in the area of counter terrorism and agreed to work towards finalization of agreements on Cooperation in Homeland and Public Security Issues, Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters and Protection of Classified Materials and Information.

*Source: Rajya Sabha (Council of States), Unstarred Question No. 2379 asked by N. K. Singh and Janardhan Whagmare, <http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/QResult.aspx>*

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**14. Agricultural Cooperation between India and Israel, New Delhi, 18 February 2014.**

**Question:**

Will the Minister of Agriculture be pleased to state:-

- (a) Whether India and Israel have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for agriculture cooperation during the year 2008;
- (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) the details of the significant achievements made so far in this regard?

**Answer**

Minister of State in the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Processing Industries (Charan Das Mahant)

(a) to (c): No, Madam.

*Source: Lok Sabha (House of the People), Unstarred Question No. 3782 asked by Shivaramagouda Shivanagouda, <http://164.100.47.132/LssNew/psearch/QResult15.aspx?qref=150219>*

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**15. Bilateral Security Relations Agreements Between India and Israel Signed, New Delhi, 27 February 2014.**

The Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India signed three agreements to further strengthen the bilateral security relations with Israel here today.

These agreements are Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty in Criminal Matters; Agreement on Protection of Classified Material and Agreement on Cooperation in Homeland and Public Security.

The Agreements were signed on behalf of the MHA by Rajiv Sharma, Additional Secretary. On behalf of the Govt. of Israel, two Agreements were signed by Alon Ushpiz, Ambassador of Israel in India and One Agreement by Amir Kain, Director, Ministry of Defence.

The three Agreements were signed in the presence of Anil Goswami, Home Secretary, Govt. of India.

*Source: Press Information Bureau, New Delhi,*  
<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx?relid=104305>

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## **f. JORDAN**

### **16. Work Permits, Amman, 11 February 2014.**

The concerned Jordanian authority has informed that all foreign nationals working in Jordan without valid work permits will be apprehended and deported back to their respective countries.

In this connection, all Indian nationals working in Jordan are urged to get their work permits validated to avoid detention and deportation.

*Source: Embassy of India, Amman,* [http://www.indembassy-amman.org/Republic\\_Day\\_2014.html](http://www.indembassy-amman.org/Republic_Day_2014.html)

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## **g. KUWAIT**

### **17. Indian Embassy took part in Hala February celebrations, Kuwait, 5 February 2014.**

The 15th HALA FEBRUARY FESTIVAL (HFF) 2014 was inaugurated on 31 January 2014. The festival was organized with much zeal and enthusiasm at Salem Al-Mubarak Street, Salmiya. The Festival coincides with Kuwait's National Day and Liberation Day. HFF is being organized by the State of Kuwait since February 1999 mainly to promote tourism. HFF organizing committee organizes art, sports, live carnival shows and entertainment events and display of vintage vehicles and motorbikes during the month. The event witnessed participation by various agencies of the Government of Kuwait and Diplomatic Missions resident in Kuwait. This year the festivities would last till the end of February.

The Embassy of India, Kuwait joined in the celebrations by participating in the opening ceremony on 31 January 2014. The Indian pavilion was exquisitely decorated with Indian artefacts, handicraft items, imitation jewellery, handmade Indian saris, "Incredible India" posters, tourism material and other items. A large number of visitors came to the India pavilion



and showed keen interest in the exhibits. Many of them, especially children, took the opportunity to take photographs posing with the exhibits.

*Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait, <http://www.indembkwt.org/DispNews.aspx?ID=342>*

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### **18. Indian Community Welfare Fund charges, Kuwait, 5 February 2014.**

There has been some criticism on the Embassy charging KD 0.500 on passport and attestation services towards the Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) w.e.f. 27 January 2014. The criticism relates to the intentions behind charging this fee, its accounting procedure, the manner of its collection and the criteria for its utilization. In this regard, the Embassy of India would like to clarify that these concerns are unfounded. While the Embassy welcomes constructive criticism from our community, the following clarifications are given on the subject for the benefit of all.

#### **Background**

There is a large expatriate Indian community in the Gulf region, majority of them belonging to the low income group, i.e., domestic workers and unskilled labour. There are often circumstances when our low income group Indians come under tremendous distress and are not able to meet their expenses or their sponsors refuse to pay these expenses. There was genuine need for the urgent Government of India intervention in these cases out of humanitarian considerations. The expatriate Indian community had in fact demanded setting up of a welfare fund to help such group of people.

#### **Objectives**

To help destitute Indians abroad under distress through the ICWF by providing financial assistance to such individuals in cases like airlifting the mortal remains, airlifting critical medical cases, initial legal assistance, and providing financial assistance to stranded Indians in Kuwait.

#### **Government of India established fund**

- a) The Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) has been approved by the Government of India (GOI) and was established as per the orders of Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (MOIA), India w.e.f. 01 December 2008 for meeting the expenses like airlifting of mortal remains, airlifting to India in extreme medical transfer, initial legal assistance, etc to the distressed and destitute Indians specially those in domestic and unskilled sectors. The details are available under emigration services on MOIA website.
- b) The MOIA, based on strength of Indian expatriate community, started the ICWF in all Indian Embassies in the Gulf region with an initial grant Rs 15 lakhs each. After three years, this fund was to be self-sustained by the Mission by collecting a nominal fee towards ICWF on various types of consular, labour, and attestation services provided by the Mission.
- c) The rates for this nominal fee was also fixed by the GOI i.e. Rs. 100/- per document, which comes out to be KD 0.500 (rounded off to nearest hundred Kuwaiti fills.)

d) The GOI guidelines do not provide any category of individuals who can be exempted from this nominal fee. Hence, it is charged across the board.

#### Accounts

There is a proper bank account for handling the ICWF in the Embassy. The daily collection is deposited in the concerned bank account on next working day. Being the Government of India fund, it is properly audited and annual reports are sent to concerned Ministries.

There is proper arrangement in the software which provides for the amount collected under this head and it is mentioned in the receipt. The same is given to the applicant while accepting any service in consular and labour section.

#### Expenditure

The amount collected under ICWF is meant for helping the low income group expatriate Indian community who are under distress. Almost a decade now the Embassy has been helping destitute Indians. In the year 2013, Embassy incurred expenditure of KD 35,899/- under following mentioned details:

Description	Number	Amount in KD
Air ticket to Destitute workers	218	14,205
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incidental money (for shelter inmates)</li> <li>Incidental money (some deportation inmates)</li> </ul>	576	11,416
	319	5,600
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Airlifting hospitalized Indian to India</li> </ul>	6	1,292
	4	(Total)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Escort Duty (for above patients)</li> </ul>		
Airlifting mortal remains to India	24	2,917
Basic amenities to female jail inmates	27	62
Miscellaneous Expenses		407
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>35,899</b>

#### Contribution

It was envisaged that Indian community in Kuwait would contribute voluntarily to augment the fund which is helping low income group Indians. But there has been no voluntary contribution so

far from individuals or community/social organization while expectation from the ICWF has increased. The expenditure is increasing with each passing year and it is likely to be KD 50,000/- for the current year 2014.

#### Conclusion

There is a need for sustaining the ICWF funds so that all distressed destitute Indians could be helped. Hence, as per the GOI guidelines, the nominal fee of KD 0.500 is charged on all consular & labour services.

*Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait, <http://www.indembkwt.org/DispNews.aspx?ID=341>*

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#### **19. Notice about Fake Website for Online India Visa, Kuwait, 7 February 2014.**

It has come to our notice that a fake website ([www.indiavisa.co.in](http://www.indiavisa.co.in)) was in circulation for applying the Indian Visa for online visa seekers.

Following points may be noted down:

It is compulsory to fill the visa application online. The proper website address is [www.indianvisaonline.gov.in](http://www.indianvisaonline.gov.in) Once the online application is filled, the printout is taken for submitting to the outsource visa centre at BLS International Sharq and Fahaheel. In case of Special and diplomatic passports, the application has to be submitted to Embassy of India, Kuwait.

There is no provision of online payment of visa fee. So any website asking for visa fee by credit/debit card is fake website. The visa fee is actually deposited as cash in the outsourcing centre at BLS International Sharq and Fahaheel with the copy of online filled application.

Any such instances of fake website should be brought to the immediate notice of the Embassy of India by email ([ssinfo@indembkwt.org](mailto:ssinfo@indembkwt.org)) or mobile to A.K. Srivastava (mob number 97229914).

*Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait, <http://www.indembkwt.org/DispNews.aspx?ID=343>*

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#### **20. Discontinuation of Air India Express flight from Kuwait to Mangalore and Kochi, Kuwait, 10 February 2014.**

The Embassy took up strongly the issue with our Ministry of Civil Aviation so as to safeguard the interests of the Indian community in Kuwait.

Ajit Singh, Hon'ble Minister of Civil Aviation has stated the following on the subject:

At present, Air India Express has a fleet of 21 aircraft, including 4 leased aircraft. The lease period of these 4 aircraft is expiring and they will be out of service in the first quarter of 2014;

Due to this situation, Air India Express is forced to curtail some of the loss making flights and had to cancel the Kochi-Mangalore-Kuwait and vice versa flights effective from 14 February, 2014; and

However, they will continue to operate thrice weekly flights on Kozhikode-Kuwait and vice versa sector and have changed the timings slightly, so as to provide immediate connection to Kochi passengers on these flights. Also, many of the Mangalore-Kuwait passengers who stay in the area between Mangalore and Kozhikode will also be able to avail Air India's thrice weekly direct flights between Kozhikode and Kuwait.

Copy of Hon'ble Civil Aviation Minister's letter dated 30 January 2014 is attached below for information.

अजित सिंह  
AJIT SINGH



2/2  
नागर विमानन मंत्री  
भारत सरकार  
राजीव गांधी भवन,  
सफदरजंग हवाई अड्डा, नई दिल्ली - 110003  
Minister of Civil Aviation  
Government of India  
Rajiv Gandhi Bhawan,  
Safdarjung Airport, New Delhi - 110 003  
AV-18050/135/2013-A1/74040  
30th, January, 2014

663-F  
Dear Shri Ahamed,

D.O. No. 1503/MOS(EA)-2013

Please refer to your D.O.-letter No. 1503/MOS(EA)-2013 dated 20<sup>th</sup> December, 2013 regarding discontinuation of Air India Express flight from Mangalore to Kuwait.

Air India has informed that Air India Express operated Kochi-Mangalore-Kuwait & vice versa flights from 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2013. The flight was unable to recover the cost of operation and is incurring heavy losses. At present Air India Express has a fleet of 21 aircraft, including 4 leased aircraft. The lease period of those 4 aircraft is expiring and they will be out of service in the first quarter of 2014. Due to this situation Air India Express is forced to curtail some of loss making flights and had to cancel the Kochi-Mangalore-Kuwait & vice versa flights effective from 15<sup>th</sup> February, 2014. They will continue to operate thrice weekly flights on Kozhikode-Kuwait & vice versa sector and have changed the timings slightly, so as to provide immediate connection to Kochi passengers on these flights. Subsequently, many of the Mangalore-Kuwait passengers who stay in the area between Mangalore and Kozhikode will also be able to avail Air India's thrice weekly direct flights between Kozhikode and Kuwait.

Further, Ministry of Civil Aviation has forwarded Note Verbale to MEA for forwarding the same to Embassy of Sultanate of Oman and Embassy of the State of Kuwait requesting them to reschedule the flight schedule on Trivandrum-Muscat-Trivandrum and Calicut-Kuwait-Calicut sector respectively to give maximum relief to the passengers of these areas.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,

*Ajit Singh*

(AJIT SINGH)

Shri E. Ahamed,  
Minister of State for External Affairs,  
Government of India,  
171, South Block,  
NEW DELHI - 110001.

*Source: Embassy of India, <http://www.indembkwt.org/DispNews.aspx?ID=346>*

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### **21. Indian Embassy participated in KNPC Open day, Kuwait, 17 February 2014.**

The Embassy of India, Kuwait, participated in the Kuwait National Petroleum Company's Shuaiba Refinery's (KNPC-SHU) Open Day on 13 February 2014. The event was hosted with much zeal and enthusiasm at KNPC Camp, Wafra by the organizers, which witnessed participation by a number of Diplomatic Missions resident in Kuwait and various cultural organizations. The event was inaugurated by Mutleq Al-Azmi, Deputy CEO for Shuaiba Refinery.

The Embassy of India, Kuwait, joined the celebrations along with three Indian Schools in Kuwait, namely, Salmiya Indian Model School, Fahaheel Al-Watanieh Indian Private School and Indian Community School, Salmiya. The children from these schools were elegantly dressed in traditional Indian attires from the colourful States of Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Goa and Punjab. They participated with passion and energy and each group gave a wonderful dance performance which enthralled more than 500 attendees during the event. Their performances were lauded by one and all.

The India Pavilion was well-decorated with Indian artefacts, handicraft items, imitation jewellery, handmade Indian saris, "Incredible India" tourism promotion material and travel packages from various local Tour and Travel Agencies in Kuwait. A large number of visitors came to the India Pavilion and showed keen interest in the exhibits.

The Embassy also arranged for live preparation of Indian fast-food delicacies for promoting of Indian food, which was enjoyed by the guests.

*Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait, <http://www.indembkwt.org/DispNews.aspx?ID=348>*

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## **h. LEBANON**

### **22. WARNING: Beware of fake websites, Beirut, 7 February 2014.**

Beware of fake websites which dupe applicants for Indian Visas. Such websites are operating under different URLs with registration in various international jurisdictions. One such example is <http://www.indiavisa.co.in>

If you encounter such websites, please report them to the relevant Cyber Crime Law Enforcement Agency. Please also ensure that you go to the official website of the Indian Embassy/Consulate or service provider authorized by the Government of India in your area of residence to get authentic information for Indian Visas and other Consular services.

*Source: Embassy of India, Embassy of India, Beirut, <http://www.indianembassybeirut.org/alerts/view/30>*

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## **i. OMAN**



### **23. Official visit of Minister Responsible for Foreign Affairs, Sultanate of Oman to India (28 February 2014), New Delhi, 26 February 2014.**

At the invitation of Hon'ble External Affairs Minister, Salman Khurshid, His Excellency Yousuf bin Alawi bin Abdullah, Minister Responsible for Foreign Affairs, Sultanate of Oman will pay an official visit to India on 28 February 2014 to discuss bilateral, regional and other issues of mutual interest.

India's close and friendly relationship with Oman is based on historical people to people contacts. Oman is an important trading partner of India in the Gulf with two-way trade exceeding US\$4.6 billion in 2012-13. India has been the topmost destination for Omani non-oil exports. Our two-way bilateral investments have reached over US\$7.5 billion.

The contribution of over 700,000 strong vibrant Indian communities in the progress and development of Oman is well acknowledged and appreciated.

*Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, <http://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/23005/Official+visit+of+Minister+Responsible+for+Foreign+Affairs+Sultanate+of+Oman+to+India+February+28+2014>*

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### **24. Visit of His Excellency Yousuf Bin Alawi Bin Abdullah, Minister Responsible for Foreign Affairs of Sultanate of Oman to India from 27-28 February 2014, New Delhi, 28 February 2014.**

Ministry of External Affairs  
(XP Division)

MOST IMMEDIATE/MEDIA ADVISORY

As on 27 February 2014 at 1300 hrs

1230 hrs: Call on the Vice President

Venue: 6, Maulana Azad Road

Photo Op: Agencies Only

1300 hrs: Meeting with Minister of External Affairs

Venue: Hyderabad House

Photo Op: AV Media

Please note:

Media is requested to arrive 1 hour before each event.

Access restricted to holders of PIB card only.

*Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, <http://www.mea.gov.in/media-advisory.htm?dtl/23011/Visit+of+Minister+Responsible+for+Foreign+Affairs+of+Sultanate+of+Oman+to+India+February+27+28+2014>*

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## **j. SAUDI ARABIA**



**25. Higher pesticide residue levels in vegetables exported to Saudi Arabia, New Delhi, 5 February 2014.**

**Question:**

- a) Whether Saudi Arabia, fifth largest importer of fresh vegetables from India, has threatened to take strong action against consignments from India due to higher-than permissible pesticide residue levels; and
- b) What damage control measures are being taken by Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) to address these issues much before other gulf countries importing fresh vegetables from India follow suit?

**Answer**

The Minister of State in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (Dr. E.M. Sudarsana Natchiappan)

(a) In September, 2013, Ministry of Agriculture of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia formally raised the issue of presence of higher than permissible level of pesticides in 'pepper' consignments from India with the Embassy of India in Riyadh. The Saudi Authority informed that in case of repetition of crossing the permissible limit of pesticide residue, it would take strong action in this matter. The Spices Board has strengthened its pre-export surveillance for export of spices.

(b) APEDA has taken following actions to address the quality issues and also to promote the export of fruits and vegetables:

i) APEDA has been regularly issuing advisory to the exporters of vegetables to Saudi Arabia. The advice to exporters is to strictly adhere to the import requirement of Saudi Arabia and desist from making any shipments without getting the product tested prior to export.

ii) APEDA provides financial assistance to exporters of vegetables for implementing Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) to assure the safety of produce.

iii) For export testing purposes, APEDA has recognized 23 laboratories after following a very stringent procedure of assessment, audit and surveillance.

iv) Export standards for 51 fruits and vegetables have been developed and notified under AGMARK.

*Source: Rajya Sabha (Council of States), Unstarred Question No. 1557 asked by Wansuk Syiem, <http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/QResult.aspx>*

**26. Participation of Indian companies in 'Saudi PLAS/PETROCHEM/PRINT/PACK 2014' Exhibition from 17-20 February, 2014 and SIBN Business-to-Business interaction on 18 February 2014 at Indian Embassy, Riyadh, 11 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 three separate blocks earmarked 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 and the product range are available on the Embassy Website: [www.indianembassy.org.sa](http://www.indianembassy.org.sa)]. These Indian companies export a variety of high quality plastic and packaging machineries and materials world over.

Coinciding with the Saudi PPPP 2014, the Saudi India Business Network (SIBN) is organizing sector specific event focusing on Petrochemical, Plastic, Printing and Packaging industries in India, and to promote business to business interaction between India and Saudi Arabia in this particular sector. The event would be organized in the Embassy of India, Riyadh, Auditorium on 18 February 2014, at 11:00 AM. All interested Saudi and Indian investors and businessmen are invited to attend the event. Media personnel are also invited to attend the SIBN event. For further details/information, please contact the Embassy at "com.riyadh@mea.gov.in"; "pol.riyadh@mea.gov.in"; "com@indianembassy.org.sa" or contact at 011-4884144 Extn. 228/208.

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

## **27. Labour Cooperation agreement with Saudi Arabia, New Delhi, 13 February 2014.**

### **Question:**

Will the Minister of Overseas Indian Affairs be pleased to state?

- (a) Whether India has signed a labour cooperation agreement with Saudi Arabia, if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether the said agreement would cover about a quarter of the 28 lakh Indian expatriates working in Saudi Arabia; and
- (c) Whether it is also true that the said agreement could be the stepping stone for a more comprehensive pact covering all Indian workers in the Gulf Kingdom, if so, the details thereof?

### **Answer**

Minister of Overseas Indian Affairs (Vayalar Ravi)

(a) Yes Sir, India has signed labour cooperation for domestic service workers recruitment with Saudi Arabia. The agreement aims to protect the rights of employer and worker and regulate contractual relations between them. The agreement provides for standard employment contract, disposal of contractual disputes in fixed timeframe, fostering friendly relations between employer and the worker, and controlling recruitment cost in both countries. The agreement also defines responsibilities of both parties to the agreement, settlement of disputes and a Joint Committee for periodical review, assessment and monitoring of its implementation.

(b) The agreement would cover about six lakh workers.

(c) It is hoped that, the agreement will help in negotiating a comprehensive Memorandum of Understanding on manpower covering all categories of Indian workers in Saudi Arabia.

**Source:** *Rajya Sabha (Council of States), Unstarred Question No. 2398 asked by T.M. Selvaganapathi and Chandan Mitra, <http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/QResult.aspx>*

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### **28. Press Release, Riyadh, 17 February 2014.**

The Embassy of India hereby informs all concerned that M/s VFS LLC GCC, the service provider to whom passport, visa and attestation services have been outsourced in the Eastern and Central Provinces of Saudi Arabia have relocated their Centre at Batha to a new location.

The complete address and contact details of the new location are:

2nd Floor, Shamshia Building, Near SABB bank, Opp. G Mart, Abdul Aziz Road, Shara Washam, Batha Centre, Riyadh. Call Centres: 0114124727, 0114080366

Passport (Normal & Tatkal) and Attestation services will be available at the new Centre with effect from 25 February, 2014. Visa services will also be available at the New Centre with effect from 26 February, 2014. The purpose of the New Centre is to provide better service to the applicant in minimum amount of time. The New Centre is more spacious and has better amenities than the existing Centre.

The services at the Umm al Hammam Centre will not be affected in any way except that Attestation services have been moved to the Batha Centre.

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

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### **29. Press Release, Riyadh, 17 February 2014.**

There are reports of fraudulent website links claiming to be websites for Indian Visa Services.

The Embassy of India hereby clarifies that M/s VFS LLC GCC is the only service provider to whom passport, visa and attestation services have been outsourced in the Eastern and Central Provinces of Saudi Arabia and their website could be accessed at <http://in.vfsglobal.sa.com>.

Online visa applications are accepted by the Embassy which could be filled at URL <https://indianvisaonline.gov.in/visa/indianVisaReg.jsp>

Applicants intending to avail Visa services are advised to fill up online application only on the URL address mentioned above. The Embassy shall not responsible for application filled up at any other website or URL claiming to belong to Embassy of India, Riyadh.

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

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### **30. Indians stuck up in Saudi Arabia, New Delhi, 20 February 2014.**

#### **Question:**

(a) Whether it is a fact that a large number of Indians have been stuck up in Saudi Arabia;

- (b) Whether as per version of the Indian Mission in Saudi Arabia, these people had illegally entered in the above region;
- (c) Whether these people are maltreated and have been denied their emoluments; and
- (d) Whether Government has initiated some action plan to rescue the above beleaguers people?

**Answer**

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

(a) During the seven-month grace period given by the Saudi government from April-November 2013 to overstaying expatriate workers to either correct their legal status or leave the country without facing any penal action, over 1.4 million Indian workers availed the concessions. During this period, over 141,000 Indian workers left Saudi Arabia on final exit, including those who returned availing the concessions and others who left the country on completion of their normal contractual period.

Some Indian workers did not avail the concessions to correct their legal status. Of these, 82 persons have currently been accommodated in the shelter arranged by our mission in Riyadh. From time to time, expatriate workers, in violation of local labour laws, are detained in Saudi Deportation Centres before their final deportation to India.

(b) The government of India has no information on any Indian who entered into Saudi Arabia illegally. However, the status of some expatriate workers becomes illegal as and when they violate local labour laws during the course of their stay.

(c) & (d) The Government of India continues to raise these and related issues with the concerned authorities in Saudi Arabia for facilitating and expediting early deportation of all Indian workers who did not or could not correct their legal status during the grace period.

*Source: Rajya Sabha (Council of States), Starred Question No. 2845 asked by Baisnab Parida, <http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/QResult.aspx>*

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**31. Indians returned from Saudi Arabia due to Nitaqat Law, New Delhi, 20 February 2014.**

**Question:**

Will the Minister of Overseas Indian Affairs be pleased to state?

- (a) The number of Indians who had returned from Saudi Arabia following the enforcement of Nitaqat law; and
- (b) The details of those who have returned from Saudi Arabia, State-wise?

**Answer**

Minister of Overseas Indian Affairs (Vayalar Ravi)

(a): The number of Indians who left on final exit with Emergency Certificate as well as with regular passport during and after the 7-month grace period (6 April 2013 to 3 November, 2013)

announced by the Saudi authorities is 141301 (as on 27 November 2013). These Indian nationals could return to India without facing any penal action and with no ban on their return.

(b): The state-wise number of persons issued with Emergency Certificates by the Indian Embassy at Riyadh and Consulate General of India at Jeddah are as in Annexure-A.

For the annexure, see: <http://164.100.47.234/question/annex/230/Au2859.htm>

*Source: Rajya Sabha (Council of States), Unstarred Question No. 2859 asked by M.P. Achuthan, <http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/QResult.aspx>*

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### **32. Official Visit of His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud Crown Prince, Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to India, Riyadh, 21 February 2014.**

At the invitation of the Hon'ble Vice President M. Hamid Ansari, His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Crown Prince, Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister of the Kingdom of the Saudi Arabia is paying an official visit to India from 26-28 February 2014. He is accompanied by a high-level delegation including cabinet ministers, senior officials and captains of industry.

The bilateral visit of His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud is the highest level political visit to India from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia after the landmark visit of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques His Majesty King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al Saud in January 2006 as the chief guest of the Republic Day celebrations. The official visit of Hon'ble Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh to Riyadh in 2010 and the Riyadh Declaration signed on 28 February 2010 elevated the bilateral engagement to 'Strategic Partnership' covering security, economic, defence and political areas.

During the visit, His Royal Highness the Crown Prince will call on Hon'ble President Pranab Mukherjee and meet Hon'ble Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh. He will hold bilateral talks with Hon'ble Vice President M. Hamid Ansari.

India and Saudi Arabia share friendly relations based on close people-to-people contacts. In recent years, there has been significant progress in bilateral cooperation in key areas of mutual interest, including energy security, trade and infrastructure development projects.

Saudi Arabia has become our 4th largest partner with bilateral trade in excess of US\$43 billion in 2012-13. Saudi Arabia is also India's largest crude oil supplier accounting for about one-fifth of our total imports in 2012-13.

Indians form the largest expatriate community in Saudi Arabia and their positive contribution in the progress and development of their host country is well recognized. There are over 2.88 million Indian nationals presently working in Saudi Arabia.

*Source: Embassy of India, Riyadh,*

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

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**33. Official Visit of Crown Prince Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to India (26-28 February 2014), New Delhi, 24 February 2014.**

Ministry of External Affairs

(XP Division)

**MOST IMMEDIATE/MEDIA ADVISORY**

As on 25 February 2014 at 11:30 hrs

Official Visit of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to India from 26-28 February 2014.

Wednesday, 26 February 2014

1500 hrs: Arrive Delhi

Venue: Air Force Station, Palam

Photo Op: AV Media

1845 hrs: Meeting with the Vice President & Signing of Agreement

Venue: Hyderabad House

Photo Op: AV Media

Thursday, 27 February 2014

1115 hrs: Call on the President

Venue: Rashtrapati Bhavan

Photo Op: Agencies only

1215 hrs: Meeting with the Prime Minister

Venue: 7, Race Course Road

Photo Op: Agencies Only

1630 hrs: Call on by Minister of Defence

Venue: Hotel The Leela Palace

Photo Op: Agencies Only

1700 hrs: Call on by Minister of External Affairs

Venue: Hotel the Leela Palace

Photo Op: Agencies Only

Friday, 28 February 2014

1000 hrs: Departure

Please note:

Media is requested to arrive 45 minutes before each event.

Access restricted to holders of PIB card only.

*Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, <http://www.mea.gov.in/media-advisory.htm?dtl/22995/Official+Visit+of+Crown+Prince+Salman+bin+Abdulaziz+Al+Saud+Deputy+Prime+Minister+and+Minister+of+Defence+of+the+Kingdom+of+Saudi+Arabia+to+India+February+2628+2014>*

### **34. Document signed during the Official Visit of Crown Prince, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to India, New Delhi, 26 February 2014.**

Document signed during the Official Visit of Crown Prince, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to India.

S.No	Name of Agreement/ MoU	Nodal Ministry in India	Signatories India	Signatories Saudi Arabia	Comment
1	Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on Defence Cooperation	Ministry of Defence (Cabinet approval obtained by the nodal Ministry)	Hon'ble MOS for Defence, Jitendra Singh	H.E. Dr Nizar bin Obaid Madani, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs	This MOU will institutionalize and strengthen our bilateral defence cooperation with Saudi Arabia. The MOU further seeks to promote cooperation in defence industry, science, technology and transfer of technology.

*Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, <http://www.mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/23007/Document+signed+during+the+Official+Visit+of+Crown+Prince+Deputy+Prime+Minister+and+Minister+of+Defence+of+the+Kingdom+of+Saudi+Arabia+to+India>*

### **35. Joint Statement on the occasion of the Official Visit of Crown Prince, Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to India (26-28 February 2014), New Delhi, 28 February 2014.**



At the kind invitation of Hon'ble Vice President of the Republic of India, M. Hamid Ansari, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was on a three-day official visit to India beginning 26/4/1435H, corresponding to 26 February 2014.

During the visit, His Royal Highness called on Hon'ble President of the Republic of India, Pranab Mukherjee. He also held bilateral discussions with Hon'ble Vice President, M. Hamid Ansari and Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Dr. Manmohan Singh.

The discussions were held in the spirit of the strong friendship that binds the two countries. During the talks, the two sides expressed their happiness with the rapid expansion of the friendly relations between the two countries in all fields. They underlined the remarkable growth in bilateral trade as also in fields of energy, scientific and cultural exchanges and security cooperation, since the historic visit of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud to India in 2006, which witnessed the signing of "Delhi Declaration" laying the foundation for establishing a strategic partnership and developing cooperation between the two countries in various fields, and the landmark visit of the Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh to the Kingdom in 2010, during which "Riyadh Declaration" was signed, which further deepened bilateral cooperation in all fields.

Both sides stressed the importance of strengthening the strategic partnership and its further development in all areas, to serve the common interests of the two countries and their peoples. They praised the positive outcome of the 10th meeting of the Saudi-Indian Joint Commission held in Riyadh in January 2014, and its recommendations for enhancing cooperation in economic, commercial, investment, cultural and technological fields.

The two sides agreed upon the importance of encouraging the business communities in the two countries to increase their investments and to take advantage of the existing investment opportunities in Saudi Arabia and India, especially in the fields of infrastructure and technology transfer, as also to further consolidate cooperation in the areas of skilled human resources in information technology, electronics and telecommunications.

The two sides directed the authorities concerned in both countries to finalize the framework agreement between the General Investment Authority in Saudi Arabia (SAGIA) and Invest India, which will facilitate investments by the private sectors in the two countries, especially in the fields of the petrochemical industries, pharmaceuticals, medical equipments, and for the establishment of joint ventures in these fields. The two sides agreed to address the issues hindering the growth and flow of investments and promotion of trade between the two countries.

The two sides expressed their satisfaction over the developing defence cooperation between the two countries, especially in the fields of exchange of expertise and training. In this context, they

welcomed the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding on Defence Cooperation between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Republic of India.

Both sides renewed their condemnation of the phenomena of terrorism, extremism and violence, affirming that it is global and threatens all societies and is not linked to any race, colour or belief.

The two sides expressed satisfaction at the growing bilateral trade in the energy sector, with Saudi Arabia being the largest supplier of crude oil to India. The Indian side appreciated the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for being a reliable source of crude oil. On its part, the Saudi side reiterated its commitment to meet any such future requirements of India, as embodied in the Delhi (2006) and Riyadh (2010) declarations. The Indian side also expressed its appreciation for Kingdom's laudable efforts in providing necessary supplies to bring about stability in world oil markets.

As outlined in the Delhi (2006) and Riyadh (2010) declarations, the two sides agreed to explore ways and means to transform the buyer-seller relationship in the energy-sector to one of deeper partnership focusing on investment and joint ventures bilaterally and also in third countries. They agreed to hold further discussions on this during the next meeting of the annual India-Saudi Arabia energy consultations.

The Indian side thanked the Saudi leadership for hosting a large Indian community and for ensuring their continued welfare and wellbeing.

In the field of media and cultural cooperation, the two sides agreed on strengthening cooperation in the area of radio and television, as also in fields of media coverage, exchange of programs and training. They agreed on exchanging expertise in the regulation of audiovisual media between the concerned regulatory bodies of the two countries, as well as on activation of the agreement signed between Saudi Press Agency (SPA) and the Press Trust of India (PTI). The two sides emphasized the importance of continued promotion of cultural cooperation and exchanges between the two countries, in the framework of the Memorandum of Cooperation signed in 2010.

The Saudi side informed that the Kingdom has initiated the necessary steps to transfer a number of Indian prisoners, in implementation of the agreement on the Transfer of Sentenced Persons signed in 2010 in Riyadh.

The two sides discussed a number of regional and international issues of mutual interest, including the developments in Syria, the Iranian nuclear issue and the situation in Afghanistan, in the light of their common interest in the region's stability, peace and security.

Regarding the Palestinian issue, the two sides expressed their hope for achieving a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in accordance with the Arab Peace Initiative and the international legitimacy, in a way that guarantees the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people,

including the establishment of their independent, united and viable state, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

The two sides expressed grave concern over the seriousness of the situation in Syria and emphasized the urgent need to stop the killing of innocent people. The two sides supported full implementation of the Geneva Communiqué of 30 June 2012, which called for negotiations between all parties, leading to the formation of a transitional governing body.

His Royal Highness Crown Prince Salman bin Abdulaziz, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence expressed his thanks and appreciation for the Hon'ble President, Hon'ble Vice President and Hon'ble Prime Minister of the Republic of India for the warm hospitality extended to him and the accompanying delegation.

*Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, <http://www.mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/23014/Joint+Statement+on+the+occasion+of+the+Official+Visit+of+Crown+Prince+Deputy+Prime+Minister+and+Defence+Minister+of+the+Kingdom+of+Saudi+Arabia+to+India+2628+February+2014>*

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## **k. TUNISIA**

### **36. Press Release, Tunis, 3 February 2014.**

His Excellency Salman Khurshid, the External Affairs Minister of India paid an official visit to the Republic of Tunisia, 2-3 February 2014. It was the first bilateral visit by an External Affairs Minister of India to Tunisia since the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

Minister Khurshid called on the President His Excellency Dr. Moncef Marzouki, Prime Minister H.E. Mehdi Jomaa and met with Foreign Minister His Excellency Mongi Hamdi. He also met with Sheikh Rashid Ghannouchi, President, Ennahda party and Beji Caid Essebsi, President, Nida Tounes party. He also met with His Excellency Mohamed Shafik Sarsar, President of ISIE. Minister Khurshid conveyed the felicitations of the government and the people of India to the Tunisian leadership on the historic achievement of the adoption of the Constitution by the democratically-elected National Constituent Assembly. He also conveyed India's wholehearted support for the people of Tunisia in their struggle for democracy and India's admiration for the significant progress made by the government and leadership of Tunisia in the transition towards a durable democracy. He informed the Tunisian leadership of India's readiness to share its expertise in building durable institutions of democracy, particularly in connection with voting methods and the work of the Election Commission.

During his call on Prime Minister Mehdi Jomaa, Minister Khurshid also handed over a letter from Dr. Manmohan Singh, Prime Minister of India felicitating him on his assumption of office and congratulating the people and government of Tunisia on the historic achievement of the adoption of the Constitution.

In his discussions with Foreign Minister Hamdi, Minister Khurshid reviewed bilateral relations and had an exchange of views on regional and international issues. He expressed his happiness at the smooth operation of TIFERT, the bilateral joint venture in phosphatic fertilizers, and also held discussions on further diversifying trade and investment ties.

*Source: Embassy of India, Tunis,*

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

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### **37. Media Statement by External Affairs Minister, Tunis, 3 February 2014.**

I am deeply honoured and happy to be present in Tunis at such an exhilarating moment in the history of your country. The democratically-elected National Constituent Assembly of Tunisia has approved the Constitution of Tunisia by consensus. I take this opportunity to congratulate the government and the people of Tunisia for the successful adoption of the Constitution, in their path towards sustainable democracy. The fact that my visit to Tunisia happens to be the first bilateral visit by an External Affairs Minister of India to Tunisia demonstrates our support for Tunisia in this important journey.

At this important juncture, India wants to be on the right side of history by supporting the democratic institutions being established in Tunisia. We are ready to offer our full assistance to the electoral processes, in keeping with the requirements and priorities of Tunisia, through provision of logistic and technical expertise. In particular, we have had successful experience in the use of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) in India and are willing to provide these to Tunisia, as and when required by them.

India and Tunisia traditionally enjoy cordial and friendly relations. The two countries also share common views on regional and international issues. My visit provided an excellent opportunity to meet with the whole gamut of Tunisian leadership to review a wide range of bilateral, regional and international issues. I have had fruitful meetings with the President, Prime Minister, Industry Minister and the President of the ISIE (Election Commission) of Tunisia. Additionally, I have had good discussions with the President of Ennahda party, President of the Nida Tounes party as well as other political leaders. I will soon be holding talks with my counterpart, the Foreign Minister of Tunisia, to further build on the substantive issues on all fronts.

In the trade and investment sector, we would like to diversify the bilateral relationship through increase in exchanges and joint ventures in new areas of pharmaceuticals, auto industry, software, olive oil, tourism and hospitality, as well as textiles. India and Tunisia are already long-standing partners in the field of phosphatic fertilizers. I am happy that our joint venture in phosphates, TIFERT SA worth US\$450 million is functioning well and I look forward to a sustainable production of this plant. I am also encouraged that in October last year, Mahindra & Mahindra have established an assembly plant for production of Pickup Trucks at Sousse with their Tunisian partner M/s MEDICARS providing technical support. Additionally, we have set up Joint Working Groups in the key fields of Science & Technology (S&T), Information

technology, Small and Medium Enterprises, Oil and Natural Gas as well as Pharmaceuticals which are meeting regularly.

Importantly, India has partnered with Tunisia under the India Africa Forum Summit (IAFS) platform for enhanced cooperation on capacity building, education and S&T. A twinning programme between the Pasteur Institute of Tunisia and the International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology in India has been agreed upon for cooperation in specific training programmes in the areas of biochemical sciences.

Under capacity development, a good number of Tunisians have been trained in India in various sectors. India provides annual scholarships to our Tunisian friends under the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme and for the year 2014-15, 45 slots have been earmarked for Tunisia. Additionally, under the India-Africa S&T cooperation, 22 Tunisian researchers and scientists have been selected.

India looks forward to continuing our partnership with Tunisia on deepening and strengthening our bilateral relationship in all spheres.

*Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, <http://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/22811/Media+Statement+by+External+Affairs+Minister+in+Tunis>*

### **38. School symbolizes India-Tunisia friendship through traditional dress, Tunis, 6 February 2014.**

Bouslim Preparatory School in Zaghuan province organized a cultural manifestation and a fashion show of traditional Tunisian and Indian dress on 6 February 2014, at which Ambassador Nagma M. Mallick was the chief guest. Bouslim Preparatory school has been twinned with O.P. Jindal School, Chhattisgarh in India since several years. The two schools have established a strong tradition of exchanges of mail between the students and exchange of information about the cultural practices of each other's countries.

At the school, Ambassador Nagma M. Mallick was received by Hamdi Djerbi, Governor of Zaghuan province, several other local dignitaries along with Sabri Ben Hassen, Headmaster and the faculty members of the school. The tour of the school began in the reception area with a display of miniature models of traditional Indian clothing sent by the students of O.P. Jindal School. Thereafter school students between the ages of 12 and 18 presented a fashion show of traditional Indian and Tunisian clothing representing the different provinces and traditions of the two countries. The students also presented traditional dances and a small skit in English. Ambassador Mallick, addressing the students, spoke of the cultural traditions of India and Tunisia and expressed her deep appreciation for the efforts of the students to demonstrate the linkages between the cultures of the two countries and the friendship between the people of India and Tunisia. She expressed the hope that the students there would be able to visit India for studying further or for a visit.

*Source: Embassy of India, Tunis, [http://www.embassyofindiatunis.com/pdf/Press%20Release-Bouslim%20School%20\(English\).Pdf](http://www.embassyofindiatunis.com/pdf/Press%20Release-Bouslim%20School%20(English).Pdf)*

### **39. 'An evening of Tunisian culture' hosted by NGO Art and Democracy, Tunis, 24 February 2014.**

Art and Democracy, a Tunisian NGO, organized an evening of Tunisian culture in a traditional Tunisian house in the Medina of Tunis on 24 February, 2014. Ambassador Nagma M. Mallick was the Chief Guest at the ceremony at which was also present His Excellency Mehrzia Laabidi, Deputy Speaker of the National Constituent Assembly (NCA), HE Abdelkarim Harouni, former Minister for Transport, His Excellency Habib Khedher, Rapporteur General of the NCA, several legislators of the NCA, some entrepreneurs and representatives of many other civil society organizations. Art and Democracy is an organization devoted to promoting a better understanding of Tunisian culture and a greater awareness of democratic norms and traditions among the people of Tunisia.

The President of the association, Abderahmen Boukhari, began the proceedings with a short presentation on his NGO and of the projects that it had successfully implemented over the last 3 years. His Excellency Laabidi introduced many of the civil society organizations present there and explained their work in the context of grassroots democracy in the country. Many of the associations, drawn from diverse regions of Tunisia, made presentation about their own work, in different sectors such as promoting sports for disadvantaged children, promoting education in remote areas and fostering awareness of Tunisian culture. His Excellency Harouni made a brief presentation on the democratic traditions practiced and developed since 2011 in Tunisia. Ambassador Nagma Mallick began her speech by congratulating the people of Tunisia and the NCA for their extraordinary achievement in adopting the Constitution; she expressed her admiration for the work of civil society organizations and grass-roots organizations in Tunisia and concluded by presenting a brief overview of India-Tunisia bilateral relations. Several well-known Tunisian songs, both traditional and revolutionary, were sung by a Tunisian musical troupe Usoul, with the members of the audience joining in the singing. A delicious Tunisian meal was also served at the event, a confluence between culture, civil society and belief in democracy.

*Source: Embassy of India, Tunis, [http://www.embassyofindiatunis.com/pdf/Press%20Release%20-%20An%20evening%20of%20Tunisian%20culture%20\(English\).Pdf](http://www.embassyofindiatunis.com/pdf/Press%20Release%20-%20An%20evening%20of%20Tunisian%20culture%20(English).Pdf)*

## **I. UNITED ARAB EMIRATES**

### **40. Guidelines for Bringing Medicines and Drugs in UAE, Abu Dhabi, 5 February 2014**

As certain chemicals and drugs are banned in UAE, it is essential to check and ensure that the medicines which someone is carrying does not contain a banned or restricted substance. List of drugs and medicines banned in UAE are available on the website: [www.uaeinteract.com/travel/drug.asp](http://www.uaeinteract.com/travel/drug.asp)



If for medical or emergency reasons one needs to carry any medicines, it should be ensured to have a medical prescription from a UAE licensed doctor. If treatment was undertaken outside UAE, one must carry both a doctor's prescription as well as detailed medical report, both of which should be suitably attested.

Residents and non-resident patients can bring into the UAE a maximum of three month supply of prescription medicine, for their personal use.

Psychotropic medicines can be brought by non-residents to cover their personal consumption for a maximum of three month period.

Psychotropic medicines can be brought in by resident in a quantity sufficient for 1 month consumption. However, residents can bring a maximum three month supply if the medicine is not available in the UAE provided that they obtain the prior approval of the Drug Control Department

Resident and non-resident patients should not bring narcotic medicines into the country without the prior approval from the Ministry of Health. Each case will be studied and approved. A valid prescription and medical report from the concerned hospital or department will be required.

Medicines that arrive in the country via postal courier cannot be released to the patient unless the above requirements are fulfilled.

For more information related to restrictions on carrying of medicines, drugs and chemicals into UAE, one must check Dubai Customs website or [www.dubai.ae](http://www.dubai.ae) beforehand.

*Source: Embassy of India, Abu Dhabi, <http://www.indembassyuae.org/PR16.html>*

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#### **41. Online Indian Visa Application Form, Abu Dhabi, 5 February 2014**

... It has come to this mission's notice that a website with the heading of Online Indian Visa Application Form and with URL address <https://india-visa.co/index.php> is available on internet. This website claims to have expertise in Indian tourist, business and long term entry visa. The website instructions ask users to pay service fee of 55 Pounds or 90 US Dollar or in equivalent Euros/Indian Rupees. This website is only charging service fees and is asking applicants to pay visa fee later when applying at the visa centre. This mission has been informed that a few applicants have turned at difference BLS International centres after filling up the online visa application on this website and having made the payment for service fee. It seems that some unscrupulous elements are creating a website similar to the Online Visa Application website of Govt. of India and are deceiving people to pay service fee. The original authentic website for online visa application has URL address <http://www.indianvisaonline.gov.in> Applicants are advised not to make any online payments for any visa service.

*Source: Embassy of India, Abu Dhabi, <http://www.indembassyuae.org/PR15.html>*

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#### **42. Open House, Abu Dhabi, 5 February 2014.**



It has been a constant endeavour of Embassy of India in Abu Dhabi and Consulate General of India, Dubai to make its services transparent and more accessible to Indian nationals in UAE. As part of these efforts the Embassy/ Consulate would be holding “Open House” at its premises on every working day (Sunday to Thursday from 10.00 to 12.00 hrs). During the Open House, any member of the Indian Community can interact with concerned officers without any prior appointment.

This initiative needs to be seen as part of slew of measures taken by the Embassy for the benefit of Indian nationals. Some of these are listed below:-

Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) has been set up from which various kinds of assistance is provided to Indians in distress on case – to- case basis depending on the need and the financial condition of the individual. Facilities for transportation of mortal remains, repatriation of Indian workers by providing free one- way air- ticket, emergency medical care, boarding and lodging for distressed Indian workers etc. are provided from ICWF.

Embassy has also established Indian Workers Resource Centre (IWRC) which runs a 24x7 toll - free multilingual information helpline No. 800- 46342 (800- INDIA). IWRC also offers free counselling services to Indian nationals on psychological, financial and legal matters.

Passport services have been outsourced by the Embassy so that no one needs to visit the Embassy or the Consulate for the same. The outsourced passport centres are located all over UAE, which can be reached on the helpline No.04-2555530 (Dubai) and 02 4456994 (Abu Dhabi). Similarly, attestation services are also provided through outsourced centres through IVS Global, who can be reached on the helpline number 043579585/ 043579636.

The services for registration of deaths of Indians and for completion of other formalities related to either transportation of mortal remains to India or for burial/ cremation in UAE are provided 24x7 on gratis basis even on holidays and after office hours by the Embassy and Consulate.

The Embassy and the Consulate officials regularly visit the various jails of UAE to enquire and ensure the welfare of Indians in these jails and provide other consular services.

An agreement for transfer of sentenced persons between India and the UAE has come into force in March 2013. Any Indian national who has been sentenced and is serving his sentence in any of the UAE jails, can make a request and submit an application to the officials of the Embassy/ Consulate during their visit to jails. However, this request for transfer is subject to certain conditions including consent of the Government of UAE and Government of India.

The details of various facilities provided by the missions and the contact numbers for the various services are available on the websites of the Embassy (<http://www.indembassyuae.org>) and the Consulate (<http://www.cgidubai.com>) Moreover, the Embassy can also be reached at its number 02 4492700 for various services and seeking information.

*Source: Embassy of India, Abu Dhabi, <http://www.indembassyuae.org/PR17.html>*

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**43. Tie Up between India Post and UAE, New Delhi, 12 February 2014.**

**Question:**

Will the Minister of Communication and Information Technology be pleased to state:-

- (a) Whether the India Post and the United Arab Emirates have tied-up for money transfer;
- (b) If so, the details thereof;
- (c) Whether India Post has tied-up or proposes to have tie-ups with other countries; and
- (d) If so, the details thereof along with the terms and conditions for the same?

**Answer**

The Minister of State in the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (Killi Kruparani)

(a) to (d) The Department of Posts, Government of India and Wall Street Exchange Centre LLC, a subsidiary of the UAE Post Group have signed agreement for electronic money transfer on the International Financial System (IFS) platform of the Universal Postal Union (UPU). The same service has been operational with LA Banque Poste, France since November, 2012. The beneficiary can take payment at any of the designated 17,500 post offices in the country on eMO network. This service is governed by the terms and conditions stipulated by the Reserve Bank of India from time to time.

*Source: Lok Sabha (House of the People), Unstarred Question No. 3431 asked by Suresh Kumar Shetkar, <http://164.100.47.132/LssNew/psearch/QResult15.aspx?qref=149688>*

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**44. Ambassador presents credentials to the Vice President of the UAE, Abu Dhabi, 25 February 2014.**

Ambassador T.P. Seetharam formally presented his credentials to His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, the Vice President and Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates today, on 2 March 2014 at a presentation ceremony held at the Mushrif Palace, Abu Dhabi. The presentation ceremony was held in the presence of His Highness Sheikh Saif bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior; His Highness Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Presidential Affairs; His Highness Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak Al Nahyan, Minister of Culture, Youth and Community Development and Her Excellency Reem Al Hashimy, Minister of State.

Ambassador T.P. Seetharam had arrived in Abu Dhabi on 29 December 2013

*Source: Embassy of India, Abu Dhabi, <http://www.indembassyuae.org/pressrelease.html>*

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## **SPECIFIC ISSUES**

### **m. ISSUES OF INDIAN LABOUR**

**45. Exploitation of workers from Maharashtra in Gulf Countries, New Delhi, 6 February 2014.**

**Question:**

Will the Minister of Overseas Indian Affairs be pleased to state?

(a) Whether it is a fact that every year thousands of workers from Maharashtra go to Gulf Countries for employment; and

(b) Whether Government has received any complaints regarding the exploitation of workers in last three years, if so, the details thereof

**Answer**

Minister of Overseas Indian Affairs (Vayalar Ravi)

(a): Emigration clearance granted to workers from Maharashtra to go to Emigration Check Required (ECR) Countries during the last three years i.e. 2011, 2012 and 2013, is as follows:

2011 16,698

2012 19,259

2013 19,579

(b): From time to time complaints are received from the emigrants against the registered recruiting agents which generally relate to overcharging, non-fulfilment of contractual obligations, ill- treatment by the foreign employer etc.

Similarly, complaints are also received against unregistered agents who are not registered under the Emigration Act, 1983. State-wise data of complaints received is not maintained. However, position of complaints received against the registered and unregistered Recruiting Agents during the last three years and action taken against them is given in Annexure.

When Indian emigrants face problem with foreign employers, the Indian Mission takes up such matters with the employer/emigrant/local authorities. If the employer is at fault, that employer is black-listed (Prior Approval Category) from further employment of Indian workers in consultation with the Indian Mission concerned. As on 30 November 2013, 511 foreign employers stand black listed.

*Source: Rajya Sabha (Council of States), Unstarred Question No. 1683 asked by D.P. Tripathi, <http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/QResult.aspx>*

#### **46. Indians in jails of Gulf Countries, New Delhi, 6 February 2014.**

**Question:**

Will the Minister of Overseas Indian Affairs be pleased to state?

(a) Whether Indians are being kept in jails in Gulf Countries, if so, the details thereof; and

(b) Whether the Ministry has taken any steps to get the release of the innocent people?

**Answer**

Minister of Overseas Indian Affairs (Vayalar Ravi)

(a) The number of Indians in jails in Gulf Countries as reported by Indian Missions are given below:

Name of Country	No. of Indians in jails
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Qatar	72
Kuwait	250
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (Jeddah)	568
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (Riyadh)	1,400
Bahrain	76
Oman	106
United Arab Emirates	1,025
Total	3,497

(b) Some Indian nationals are jailed for crimes like violation of immigration/visa rules, overstay, illegal entry, non-possession of valid travel document/ valid visa/permit, etc. However, some Indians have also been jailed for grave offences like drug trafficking, murder, rape, etc.

Indian Missions/Posts abroad always strive to respond promptly to the requests/appeals by Indian citizens who are in distress. As soon as the information about detention/arrest of an Indian national is received by the Indian Mission/Post, it immediately gets in touch with the local Foreign Office and other concerned local authorities to get consular access to the detained/arrested Indian national to confirm his Indian nationality and ensure his welfare. In some countries where pro bono lawyers are available, the Mission arranges such legal assistance to the Indian prisoners.

Provisions under the Indian Community Welfare Fund for payment of small fines/penalties for the release of Indian nationals in jails/detention centres are also utilized.

Steps taken by Indian Missions/Posts include requesting local authorities for speedy trials, seeking remission of sentence, providing advice and guidance in legal and other matters, ensuring fair and humane treatment in jails and issue of emergency certificates. Our Missions also forward mercy petitions received from the family members of convicted Indians on charges of murder for clemency and release.

*Source: Rajya Sabha (Council of States), Unstarred Question No. 1782 asked by P. Rajeev, <http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/QResult.aspx>*

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#### **47. Indian labour in Dubai, Qatar and Senegal, New Delhi, 6 February 2014.**

##### **Question:**

Will the Minister of Overseas Indian Affairs be pleased to state?

- Whether the condition of migrant labour in Qatar, Dubai and Senegal is very bad which has been highlighted and expressed by human rights activists, BWI leaders and Amnesty International?
- If so, whether Government of India has made investigation; and
- The steps taken by Government to protect Indian workers in Qatar and Dubai?

##### **Answer**

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

For the annexure, see: <http://164.100.47.234/question/annex/230/As233.htm>

*Source: Rajya Sabha (Council of States), Starred Question No. 233 asked by Rama Chandra Khuntia, <http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/QResult.aspx>*

#### **48. Indians in Jails of Gulf Countries, New Delhi, 20 February 2014.**

##### **Question:**

Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state?

- (a) The number of Indians who are in jails of Gulf countries, country-wise;
- (b) The nature of the offences for which they were convicted; and
- (c) The number of Indians in Jails in gulf countries State-wise?

##### **Answer**

Minister of Overseas Indian Affairs (Vayalar Ravi)

(a): The number of Indians in jails in Gulf Countries as reported by Indian Missions are given below:

Name of Country	No. of Indians in jails
Qatar	72
Kuwait	250
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (Consulate General of India, Jeddah)	568
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (Embassy of India, Riyadh)	1,400
Bahrain	76
Oman	106
United Arab Emirates	1,025
Total	3,497

(b) : Some Indian nationals are jailed for crimes like violation of immigration/visa rules, overstay, illegal entry, non-possession of valid travel document/ valid visa/permit, etc. However, some Indians have also been jailed for grave offences like drug trafficking, murder, rape, etc.

(c) Only nationality wise details are made available to the Indian Missions/Posts in the host countries by the Government authorities there. Hence, no State-wise details are available.

*Source: Rajya Sabha (Council of States), Unstarred Question No. 2860 asked by M.P. Achuthan, <http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/QResult.aspx>*

#### **49. Rehabilitation of Gulf returnees, New Delhi, 20 February 2014.**

##### **Question:**

Will the Minister of Overseas Affairs be pleased to state?

- (a) Whether Government had formulated any scheme for the rehabilitation of Gulf returnees; and
- (b) If so, the details thereof and the funds earmarked for their rehabilitation?

##### **Answer**

Minister of Overseas Indian Affairs (Vayalar Ravi)

(a) and (b): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

For the annexure, see: <http://164.100.47.234/question/annex/230/As396.htm>

*Source: Rajya Sabha (Council of States), Starred Question No. 396 asked by M.P. Achuthan, <http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/QResult.aspx>*

## **n. AGREEMENTS BETWEEN INDIA AND GCC COUNTRIES**

### **50. Agreement between India and Gulf Countries, New Delhi, 13 February 2014.**

#### **Question:**

Will the Minister of Civil Aviation be pleased to state:-

- (a) The total number of weekly seats agreed to under bilateral agreements between India and each of the gulf countries;
- (b) The number of seats allotted to Air India and other private operators registered in the country and that of the airlines of the gulf countries, country-wise;
- (c) The number of seats allotted to different cities in the country from the above distribution;
- (d) Whether any study, negotiations etc. have been held on the seats occupancy on these routes during the last one year; and
- (e) If so, the details thereof?

#### **Answer**

Minister of State in the Ministry of Civil Aviation (K. C. Venugopal)

(a) to (b): A statement showing total number of weekly seats agreed to under bilateral agreements between India and gulf countries, the number of seats allotted to Air India and other airlines of India on India - Gulf sectors and operation of gulf carriers is enclosed as Annex-I.

(c): A statement showing country-wise, sector-wise seats allotted to Indian carriers for operation on India-Gulf sectors is enclosed as Annex-II.

(d) to (e): During the year 2013, on seats occupancy on gulf sectors negotiations were held with Abu Dhabi and capacity entitlements enhanced to 24,300 weekly seats in each direction with immediate effect, 37,130 weekly seats with effect from Winter Schedule 2014 and 50,000 weekly seats with effect from Winter Schedule 2015.

ANNEX –I

STATEMENT SHOWING TOTAL NUMBER OF WEEKLY SEATS AGREED TO UNDER BILATERAL AGREEMENTS BETWEEN INDIA AND EACH OF GULF COUNTRIES, THE NUMBER OF SEATS ALLOTTED TO AIR INDIA AND OTHER PRIVATE OPERATORS AND THE NUMBER OF SEATS OPERATED BY AIRLINES OF GULF COUNTRIES

Country	Total Operation of number of airlines of gulf weekly seats countries agreed	Airlines	Seats allotted to Air India and other private operators [Per week Services [Per week Seats
	Services Seats		
Bahrain	11500 seats + 14 s/w	Air India Air India Express Jet Airways Total	7 31 14 52 1015 5735 2450 9200 50
Kuwait	12000 seats + 2% flexibility	Air India Air India Express Jet Airways Spicejet Total	7 5 28 21 61 1015 925 5453 3969 11362 27
Oman	16016 seats	Air India Air India Express Jet Airways Indigo Spicejet Total	24 35 21 11 5 96 2928 6475 3570 1980 945 15898 98
Qatar	24292 seats	Air India Air India Express Jet Airways Total	0 31 28 59 0 5735 4760 10495 95
Saudi Arabia- Riyadh/ Jeddah	75 s/w [20000 seats] + open sky for Dhammam	Air India Jet Airways Spicejet Indigo Sub-Total	29  17 7 74 10809  3535 1260 19174
Saudi Arabia- Dhammam		Air India Air India Express Jet Airways Spicejet Sub-Total	7 18 49 42 116 854 3330 8372 8421 20977
UAE-Abu Dhabi	24330 seats	Saudi Arabia Total	 190 40151 54
	+ 2% flexi- bility	Air India Air India Express Jet Airways Spicejet Total	14 52 42 14 122 1869 9865 9597 2968 24299 77



Country	Total num- ber of weekly airlines of gulf seats agreed countries	Airlines	Seats allotted to Air India and other private operators	[Per week	[Per
week					
			Services	Seats	
UAE-Dubai	54200 seats + 2% flexi- bility	Air India	53	9315	
		Air India Express	70	12950	
		Jet Airways	63	10605	
		Indigo	70	12600	
		Spicejet	39	8268	
		G. Total	295	53738	194
UAE-Sharjah	17841 seats + 2%	Air India	28	4249	
		Air India Express	28	5180	
		Jet Airways	21	3493	
		Spicejet	15	2835	
		Total	92	15757	111
UAE-AI IN/Salalah	2500 seats	Air India Express	8	1480	0
UAE-Ras-AI- Khaimah	7 s/w [1400 seats]		0	0	7

#FOREIGN GOVERNMENT DOES NOT INTIMATE THE ALLOTTED SEATS HENCE OPERATION FIGURES HAVE BEEN GIVEN.

ANNEX

-II

STATEMENT SHOWING COUNTRY-WISE, SECTOR-WISE SEATS ALLOTTED TO INDIAN CARRIERS

SEATS			SERVICES	
COUNTRY	AIRLINES	SECTOR	/WEEK	/WEEK

Bahrain	Air India	Delhi-Bahrain-Abu Dhabi-Delhi	7	1015
	A/E	Kozhikode-Bahrain vv		7
	A/E	Kochi-Bahrain-Doha-Kochi	4	740
	A/E	Kochi-Doha-Bahrain-Kochi	3	555
	A/E	Trivandrum-Bahrain-Doha-Trivandrum	4	740
	A/E	Trivandrum-Doha-Bahrain-Trivandrum	3	555
	A/E	Mangalore-Doha-Bahrain-Mangalore	7	1295
	A/E	Mumbai-Bahrain-Doha-Mumbai	3	555
	Jet	Mumbai-Bahrain	7	1225
	Jet	Mangalore-Abu Dhabi-Bahrain	7	1225
Kuwait	Air India	Chennai-Goa-Kuwait w		4
580				
	Air India	Chennai-Hyderabad-Ahmadabad-Kuwait vv	3	
	A/E	Kozhikode-Kochi-Kuwait w	2	370
	A/E	Kochi-Mangalore-Kuwait w	3	555
	Jet	Mumbai-Kuwait	14	2450
	Jet	Kochi-Kuwait	7	1225
	Jet	Chennai-Kuwait	7	1778
	Spicejet	Diehl-Kuwait	7	1323
	Spicejet	Mumbai-Kuwait	7	1323
	Spicejet	Jaipur-Kuwait	7	1323
Oman	Air India	Chennai-Muscat vv	7	854
	Air India	Delhi-Muscat vv	7	854
	Air India	Bangalore-Hyderabad-Muscat vv		3
366				
	Air India	Ahmadabad-Mumbai-Muscat vv	7	854
	A/E	Kozhikode-Muscat vv	7	1295
	A/E	Trivandrum-Muscat w	7	1295
	A/E	Kochi-Muscat w	7	1295
	A/E	Amritsar-Muscat-Abu Dhabi-Amritsar	3	555
	A/E	Amritsar-Abu Dhabi-Muscat-Amritsar	4	740
	A/E	Mangalore-Muscat-Abu Dhabi-Mangalore		3
555				
	A/E	Mangalore-Abu Dhabi-Muscat-Mangalore	4	740
	Jet	Mumbai-Vluscat	7	1190
	Jet	Kochi-Muscat	7	1190
	Jet	Trivandrum-Muscat	7	1190
	Indigo	Mumbai-Muscat	7	1260
	Indigo	Diehl-Muscat	4	720
	Spicejet	Ahmadabad-Muscat	5	945
			SERVICES	SEATS
COUNTRY	AIRLINES	SECTOR	/WEEK	/Week
Qatar	A/E	Kozhikode-Doha vv	7	1295
	A/E	Kochi-Bahrain-Doha-Kochi	4	

	A/E	Kochi-Doha-Bahrain-Kochi	3	
	A/E	Trivandrum-Bahrain-Doha-Trivandrum	4	
	A/E	Trivandrum-Doha-Bahrain-Trivandrum	3	
	A/E	Mangalore-Doha-Bahrain-Mangalore	7	1295
	A/E	Mumbai-Bahrain-Doha-Mumbai	3	555
	Jet	Mumbai-Doha	14	2380
	Jet	Delhi-Doha	7	1190
	Jet	Kochi-Doha	7	1190
SA-Riyadh	Air India	Mumbai-Riyadh w	7	2556
	Air India	Trivandrum-Kochi-Riyadh-Trivandrum	2	846
	Air India	Kozhikode-Riyadh vv	3	1026
	Air India	Delhi-Riyadh vV.	3	1026
	Jet	Mumbai-Riyadh	7	1190
	Jet	Dell-Abu Dhabi-Riyadh	7	1190
	Spicejet	Delhi-Riyadh	7	1484
	Spicejet	Lucknow-Riyadh	3	567
	Spicejet	Hyderabad-Riyadh	7	1484
SA-Jeddah	Air India	Kochi-Kozhikode-Jeddah w	1	
	Air India	Kozhikode-Jeddah w	4	1692
	Air India	Mumbai-Hyderabad-Jeddah w	2	846
	Air India	Mumbai-Jeddah vv	4	
	Air India	Delhi-Jeddah vv	3	1026
	Jet	Mumbai-Jeddah	7	1190
	Indigo	Mumbai-Jeddah`l	7	
SA-Dhammam	Air India	Delhi-Dhammam vv	7	
	A/E	Kozhikode-Dhammam vv	7	1295
	A/E	Kochi-Dhammam w	3	555
	A/E	Trivandrum-Dhammam w	4	740
	A/E	Mangalore-Dhammam w	4	740
	Jet	Murnbal-Dhammam	7	1190
	Jet	Delhi-Dhammam	7	1190
	Jet	Trivandrum-Dhammam	7	1190
	Jet	Kochi-Dhammam	7	1225
	Jet	Chennai-Abu Dhabi-Dhammam	7	
	Jet	Hyderabad-Abu Dhabi-Dhammam	7	1176
	Jet	Kozhikode-Dhammam	7	
	Spicejet	Calicut-Dhammam	7	1323
	Spicejet	Mumbai-Dhammam	7	1323
	Spicejet	Cochin-Dhammam	7	1323
	Spicejet	Mangalore-Dhammam	7	1484
	Spicejet	Trivandrum-Dhammam	7	
	Spicejet	Hyderabad-Dhammam	7	1484
		SERVICES		SEATS

COUNTRY	AIRLINES	SECTOR	/WEEK	/WEEK
UAE-Abu Dhabi	Air India	Mumbai-Abu Dhabi vv	7	1094
	Air India	Delhi-Bahrain-Abu Dhabi-Delhi	7	1258
	A/E	Mumbai-Abu Dhabi vv	7	1176
	A/E	Delhi-Abu Dhabi w	7	1176
	A/E	Kozhikode-Abu Dhabi vv	7	1295
	A/E	Kochi-Abu Dhabi vv	7	1295
	A/E	Trivandrum-Abu Dhabi w	7	1295
	A/E	Chennai-TRZ-Abu Dhabi vv	3	555
	A/E	Amritsar-Muscat- Abu Dhabi-Amritsar	3	555
	A/E	Amritsar-Abu Dhabi-Muscat-Amritsar	4	740
A/E	A/E	Mangalore-Muscat- Abu Dhabi-Mangalore	3	555
	A/E	Mangalore-Abu Dhabi- Muscat-Mangalore	4	
	Jet	Mum-Abu Dhabi- Chicago [S14]	7	2422
	Jet	Delhi-Abu Dhabi- New York [S14]	7	2422
	Jet	Kochi-Abu Dhabi	7	1225
	Jet	Bangalore-Abu Dhabi-Tehran	7	1176
	Jet	Chennai-Abu Dhabi-Kuwait	7	1176
	Jet	Hyderabad-Abu Dhabi-Dharmam	7	1176
	Spicejet	Calicut-Abu Dhabi	7	1484
	Spicejet	Mangalore-Abu Dhabi	7	1484
UAE-Dubai	Air India	Mumbai-Dubai vv	7	1953
	Air India	Mumbai-Dubai-Mumbai-GOI	7	1204
	Air India	Delhi-Dubai vv	7	854
	Air India	Delhi-Dubai vv	7	1204
	Air India	Bangalore-GOI-Dubai vv	4	488
	Air India	Chennai-Dubai vv	7	1204
	Air India	Kozhikode-Dubai vv	7	1204
	A/E	Kozhikode-Dubai vv	7	1295
	Air India	Vishakhapatnam- Hyderabad-Dubai vv	7	1204
	A/E	Kochi-Dubai vv	7	1295
	A/E	Trivandrum-Dubai vv	7	1295
	A/E	Mangalore-Dubai vv	14	2590
	A/E	TRZ-Dubai w	7	1295
	A/E	PNQ-Dubai vv	7	1295
	A/E	Amritsar-Dubai vv	7	1295
	A/E	Lucknow-Dubai vv	7	1295

	A/E	JAI-Dubai vv	7	1295
	Jet	Mumbai-Dubai	28	4550
	Jet	Mangalore-Dubai	7	1225
	Jet	Delhi-Dubai	14	2380
	Jet	Trivandrum-Dubai	7	1225
	Jet	Kochi-Dubai	7	1225
	Indigo	Delhi-Dubai	14	2520
	Indigo	Mumbai-Dubai	14	2520
		SERVICES		SEATS
COUNTRY	AIRLINES	SECTOR	/WEEK	/WEEK
	Indigo	Chennai-Dubai	7	1260
	Indigo	Hyderabad-Dubai	7	1260
	Indigo	Cochin-Dubai	7	1260
	Indigo	Trivandrum-Dubai	7	1260
	Indigo	Kozhikode-Dubai	7	1260
	Indigo	Lucknow-Dubai	4	720
	Indigo	Chandigarh-Dubai	3	540
	Spicejet	Mumbai-Dubai	7	1484
	Spicejet	Delhi-Dubai	7	1484
	Spicejet	Ahmadabad-Dubai	7	1484
	Spicejet	Cochin-Dubai	7	1484
	Spicejet	Chandigarh-Dubai	4	848
	Spicejet	Madurai-Dubai	7	1484
UAE-Sharjah	Air India	Kochi-Sharjah w	7	1015
	Air India	Chennai-Trivandrum-Sharjah w	7	
	Air India	Delhi-Lucknow-Sharjah w	3	435
	Air India	Delhi-Amritsar-Sharjah w	4	580
	Air India	Kozhikode-Sharjah vv	7	
	AlE	Kochi-Sharjah w	7	1295
	AlE	Kozhikode-Sharjah w	7	1295
	AlE	Trivandrum-Sharjah vv	7	1295
	AlE	Mangalore-Sharjah vv	7	
	Jet	Kochi-Sharjah	7	1225
	Jet	Trivandrum-Sharjah	7	1190
	Jet	Mangalore-Sharjah	7	1078
	Spicejet	Lucknow-Sharjah	4	756
	Spicejet	Varanasi-Sharjah	4	756
	Spicejet	Pune-Sharjah	7	1323
UAE-Salalah/ Alln (AAN)	AlE	Kozhikode-Salalah vv	3	
	AlE	Kochi-Salalah w	2	370
	AlE	Trivandrum-Salalah w	1	
	AlE	Kozhikode-AAN w	1	185
	AlE	Kochi-AAN w	1	185

*Source: Lok Sabha (House of the People), Unstarred Question No. 3741 asked by M.K. Raghavan, <http://164.100.47.132/LssNew/psearch/QRresult15.aspx?qref=151519>*

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**51. Bilateral trade agreement between GCC and India, New Delhi, 18 February 2014.**

**Question:**

- (a) Whether Government signed any bilateral trade agreement between Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and India to ensure fast growth of small and medium enterprises;
- (b) If so, the details thereof;
- (c) What is the current status of bilateral trade of small and medium enterprises with GCC; and
- (d) The details thereof?

**Answer**

Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (K.H. Muniyappa)

- (a) No sir.
- (b)&(c): Do not arise.
- (d): For the development of MSME sector, this Ministry enters into long term Agreements/Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) with several countries for promoting bilateral relations in the broad areas like capacity building, joint actions to improve investments, survey & feasibility studies, partnership projects, exhibitions & trade fairs, exchange of business missions and exchange of information, etc. Accordingly, this Ministry has so far signed Agreements/Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) with 17 countries.

*Source: Rajya Sabha (Council of States), Unstarred Question No. 2592 asked by Prabhakar Kore, <http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/QRresult.aspx>*

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## **o. HAJJ**

**52. Hajj Yatra, New Delhi, 12 February 2014.**

**Question:**

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

- (a) The number of pilgrims who actually performed Hajj during 2013 under the Government and the private tour operators' quota;
- (b) The criteria adopted by the Government for selection of Hajj pilgrims through the Government quota;
- (c) The number of pilgrims selected by the Union Government during 2013, State-wise;
- (d) Whether any requests from MPs have been received to consider special cases from their constituencies;
- (e) If so, the details thereof especially from Maharashtra; and
- (f) The number of such requests considered/disallowed and the reasons for the same?

**Answer**

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

(a) 121,338 pilgrims under Government quota through Hajj Committee of India (HCOI) and 14,600 pilgrims through Private Tour Operators (PTOs) performed Hajj during 2013;

(b) The criteria for selection of Hajj pilgrims through Government quota are given in Hajj Policy 2013-17 which is available on the official website of the Hajj Committee of India (HCOI). Allocation of Hajj seats to each state/union territory (UT) is done by the Hajj Committee of India (HCOI) in proportion to the Muslim population in each state/union territory vis-à-vis the national population of Muslims as per 2001 Census. The surplus seats, available from states/union territories which receive less number of applications than their allotted quota, are distributed to states/union territories with excess demand and in proportion to the Muslim population.

(c) State -wise list is enclosed at Annexure I.

(d) & (e) Yes. However, no Hajj seat quota has been fixed specifically for the Hon`ble Members of Parliament.

(f) Question does not arise.

For the annexure, see: <http://164.100.47.132/Annexure/Isq15/15/au3504.htm>

*Source: Source: Lok Sabha (House of the People), Unstarred Question No. 3504 asked by Sameer Bhujbal, <http://164.100.47.132/LssNew/psearch/OREsult15.aspx?qref=151761>*

## **p. ASIAN SECURITY**

### **53. Speech by National Security Advisor on 'Asian Strategic Trends' at 16th Asian Security Conference, IDSA (21 February 2014), New Delhi, 21 February 2014.**

... From an Indian point of view, located as we are at the intersection of West Asia and what is now called the Asia-Pacific, until recently Asia appeared to be heading in different directions, depending on whether one looked East or West. But today, in 2014, whichever way one looks, the factors of uncertainty have increased manifold, as has a sense of insecurity.

The reasons why this is so to our west are well known. The turmoil in West Asia has been well analyzed, perhaps over-analyzed; we know of the multiple transitions in Afghanistan this year, of the situation in Syria, Iraq, Libya, and so on and so forth...

*Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, <http://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/22988/Speech+by+National+Security+Advisor+on+Asian+Strategic+Trends+at+16th+Asian+Security+Conference+IDSA+February+21+2014>*

**Note:** The Exact web links for the questions in the Indian Parliament are non-functional due to technical reasons. They can be searched through the question number or the name of the Member of Parliament concerned at the Websites <http://rajyasabha.nic.in/> of Rajya Sabha and <http://loksabha.nic.in/> of Lok Sabha.



**Compiled by Alvite N**

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