

# **INDIA SPEAKS**

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## **BILATERAL ISSUES**

### **a. EGYPT**

#### **1. India by the Nile 2014, Cairo, 9 March 2014.**

The Embassy of India, Cairo in partnership with the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Tourism, and the Cairo Opera House and managed by Teamworks Arts, announces the return of the second edition of India by the Nile in April 2014. Last year the festival was billed as the biggest foreign festival in Egypt since the 25 January Revolution. This year the festival, running from 1-20 April, will have a grand opening with Bollywood Love Story- A Musical at the Opera House from the 3rd to the 6th of April, and will see more than 35 Indian dancers performing to the much-loved music of Indian cinema. The musical will also travel to Alexandria, Hurghada and Luxor.

Through the three weeks of the festival, the range and variety of India's diverse cultural ethos will be on display. Noted classical Indian dancer Marami Medhi will perform Kathak both in Cairo and Alexandria, while an exhibition of Saris (the traditional Indian dress for women) will showcase the beauty of India's textile traditions, with even some free lessons in Sari Draping. Shabana Azmi, a distinguished Indian actress, will be in conversation with Samir Farid, followed by a screening of her most celebrated movies, and Urvashi Butalia, a writer and feminist will speak with Dr. Saher al Mougy. All these elements celebrate the successes of 'Women of Substance' – a major theme of the festival, and recognize the challenges and similarities of women in both India and Egypt.

The festival will also see an emphasis on Indian music and art, and collaboration will be the order of the day - an Indian folk music troupe, Rajasthani Josh, will perform both in Cairo and Alexandria, while Javed Akhtar, one India's most famous lyricists will discuss the Song in Indian cinema. Political cartoonist Sudhir Tailang will display his work, and collaborate with the Egyptian Caricature Exhibition. Thinkers and writers from both India and Egypt will also be in

attendance during the Words on Water session at the Supreme Council of Culture moderated by Mohamed Salmawy.

A Press Conference will be organized at the Semiramis Intercontinental on 31 March 2013, 12 pm. All members of the Press are cordially invited to attend. For more details contact the Indian Embassy at [info.cairo@mea.gov.in](mailto:info.cairo@mea.gov.in), or follow us on Facebook (Indian Embassy Cairo) or twitter (@indembcairo)

*Source: Embassy of India, Cairo, [http://www.indembcairo.com/en-us/presscentre/pressreleases.aspx?udt\\_656\\_param\\_detail=8867](http://www.indembcairo.com/en-us/presscentre/pressreleases.aspx?udt_656_param_detail=8867)*

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## **2. India is the “Country of Honour” at “PHARMACONEX”, Cairo, 26 March 2014.**

India is the “Country of Honour” at “PHARMACONEX” being held at Cairo International Convention Centre from 1-3 April 2014. Over 35 Indian Pharma Companies to participate

A large contingent of about 35 pharmaceutical companies under the banner of Pharmaceuticals Export Promotion Council of India (PHARMEXCIL), Government of India will be participating in the forthcoming “PHARMACONEX 2014” being held at the Cairo International Convention Centre (CICC), Cairo from 1-3 April 2014. India is the “Country of Honour” at the exhibition. These Indian companies deal with high quality pharmaceutical formulations, APIs, Nutraceuticals, Medical Devices, Herbal and Biotech products, etc.

PHARMACONEX, which is being organized by the Arab-African Conferences & Exhibitions, has earmarked a large area of the exhibition hall for the PHARMEXCIL (India) Pavilion. H.E. Mounir Amin Fakhry Abdel-Nour, Minister of Trade, Industry and Investment and Dr. Adel Hassan Abdel Latif Adawy, Minister of Health and Population, Government of Egypt would inaugurate this Exhibition on the afternoon 1 April 2014 afternoon. This will be followed by the from 6-9 PM, Embassy of India, Cairo would also be organizing a “Buyer-Seller Meet / Business Interaction” for the Indian pharma companies at Hotel Semiramis, Cairo inviting all the stakeholders such as Egyptian pharma companies, chambers of commerce, representatives from Ministry of Health, Ministry of Trade, Industry and Investment and other concerned departments of Egypt to take maximum benefit from the presence of a large number of prominent pharma companies from India.

With its impressive growth in pharmaceutical exports in recent years, India is increasingly being dubbed as “The Pharmacy of The World”. Today, there is no place in the world where Indian drugs cannot be bought. India is among the top six producers of pharmaceuticals – exports grew by 11 percent to US\$14.7 billion in 2012-13, with 55 percent heading to Western markets. India is also the world’s largest producer of generics and a top exporter of formulations in volume terms; its vaccines are exported to over 150 countries, include 90 percent of world measles vaccine demand. 25 percent of India’s exports went to North America. India also has over 10,500 manufacturing units spread among 3,000 companies, including 1,297 producing to WHO GMP standards. There are 513 Indian sites registered with the US FDA. The country now has 19

dedicated pharmaceutical special economic zones to stimulate pharmaceutical investment, while also offering major tax breaks for investors.

The Indian Pharma delegation would be led by Sudhanshu Pandey, Joint Secretary, Department of Commerce, Government of India and Dr. P.V. Appaji, Director-General, Pharmaceuticals Export Promotion Council of India (PHARMEXCIL). PHARMEXCIL is the premier organization under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India, to promote the Indian pharmaceutical industry. The PHARMEXCIL delegation comprises MDs/CEOs of several prominent Indian pharma companies such as Akhil Healthcare Ltd, QualitekPharma, Natural Capsules Ltd, Pharmacia India, etc.

*Source: Embassy of India, Cairo, <http://www.indembcairo.com/en-us/presscentre/pressreleases.aspx?udt 656 param detail=9871>*

### **3. Second Edition of the 'India by the Nile' Cultural Festival, Cairo, 31 March 2014.**

The second edition of the 'India by the Nile' Cultural Festival got off to an unprecedented start yesterday. The cast and crew of the musical 'Bollywood: A Love Story' was received at Cairo Airport by the Chairman, Egyptian Tourism Authority and Chairman of the Airports Authority. For the first time in the history of Cairo Airport, several dance sequences from the musical were performed by the members of the cast within the premises of Terminal-3. Later, several hundred bystanders and airport officials joined in the 'flash mob'.

Television crews from 23 different channels including regional ones like BBC Arabic and Al Arabiyya covered the event. Some channels had also made arrangements to send out a live feed. Ambassador Navdeep Suri, Cultural Counsellor and Head of Press Office gave over 20 interviews to explain the festival programme and its objectives.

Ambassador Nasser Hamdy, Chairman of the Egyptian Tourism Authority formally welcomed the arrival of the group and said that their presence and the spontaneous public participation in their performances showed the exceptional friendship between the people of Egypt and India. He also expressed the hope that the Cultural Festival would send out a positive message that Egypt is safe for tourists and would help Egypt at this critical juncture.

Ambassador Navdeep Suri said, 'We are delighted to start our ambitious 'India by the Nile' Cultural Festival with this magnificent arrival ceremony at the airport. The festival will present a kaleidoscopic picture of India. Recognizing the popularity of Indian films in Egypt, the programme not only includes the musical Bollywood Love Story but also a panorama of India films and the participation of Shabana Azmi and Javed Akhtar. He added 'But there is more to India than Bollywood and the Festival features classical Indian dance form Kathak, the vigorous Rajasthani folk music by Rajasthan Josh, interactions between writers and intellectuals, cartoons by Sudhir Tailang, an exhibition of Sarees and, of course, a week of Indian cuisine'.

The high profile opening events yesterday were made possible by the active participation of the Ministries of Tourism, Civil Aviation and Information & Broadcasting and each of them contributed to the success.

Photographs of the arrival ceremony are enclosed.

For further information, please contact Indian Embassy Cairo at [info.cairo@mea.gov.in](mailto:info.cairo@mea.gov.in), or the embassy website at [www.indembcairo.com](http://www.indembcairo.com), on our Facebook page Indian Embassy Cairo or visit us at [www.indiabythenile.com](http://www.indiabythenile.com)

*Source: Embassy of India, Cairo, [http://www.indembcairo.com/en-us/presscentre/pressreleases.aspx?udt\\_656\\_param\\_detail=12871](http://www.indembcairo.com/en-us/presscentre/pressreleases.aspx?udt_656_param_detail=12871)*

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## **b. JORDAN**

### **4. Anil Trigunayat appointed as the next Ambassador of India to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, New Delhi, 25 March 2014.**

Anil Trigunayat, (YOA: 1989) currently Ambassador of India to Libya, has been appointed as the next Ambassador of India to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

He is expected to take up his assignment shortly.

*Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, <http://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/23141/Anil+Trigunayat+appointed+as+the+next+Ambassador+of+India+to+the+Hashemite+Kingdom+of+Jordan>*

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## **c. KUWAIT**

### **5. Indian Embassy participated in “We all in love with Kuwait” celebration, Kuwait, 3 March 2014.**

The Embassy of India, Kuwait, participated in the Annual Festival titled “We all in love with Kuwait” from 24 - 27 February 2014. The event was hosted with much enthusiasm at Om Kalthoom Hall, 360 Mall, which witnessed participation by many Diplomatic Missions resident in Kuwait and various cultural organizations. The event was held under the auspices of “Kuwait House of National Works”.

The Indian Embassy also joined the celebrations along with the Ministries and other Embassies on the occasion of the Independence Day and the Liberation of Kuwait. A cultural function was also held.

The India Pavilion was well-decorated with “Incredible India” tourism promotion material and travel packages from various local Tour operators and Travel Agencies in Kuwait. Many visitors came to the India Pavilion and showed keen interest in various places of tourist interest. At the end of the event, Kuwait House of National Works appreciated the participation of the Embassy in the event.

*Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait, <http://www.indembkwt.org/DispNews.aspx?ID=350>*

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## **6. Uttar Pradesh set up Non-Resident Indians (NRI) Cell, Kuwait, 9 March 2014.**

The Government of Uttar Pradesh has set up a Non-Resident Indians (NRI) Cell within Udyog Bandhu, a registered society under the Department of Infrastructure and Development, to facilitate constructive interaction between the State Government and overseas Indian community. The NRI Cell shall act as a single point of contact for all queries of NRIs/PIOs having their origin in Uttar Pradesh.

The newly created NRI Cell has been mandated to evolve an efficient mechanism towards connecting with NRIs from Uttar Pradesh and to continuously work towards resolution of their issues in coordination with the different departments. The NRI Cell will also provide them with a unique platform to seamlessly connect with their roots. The contact details of the single point contact source for the NRI Cell are as follows:

Director, (NRI Cell), Udyog Bandhu, 12-C, Mall Avenue, Lucknow – 226001 Uttar Pradesh, India

Tel.: 0091-522-2237582, 2237583

Fax: 0091-522-2238902, 2237345

E-mail: [info@udyogbandhu.com](mailto:info@udyogbandhu.com), [nricecellup@gmail.com](mailto:nricecellup@gmail.com)

More detailed information on the NRI Cell can be had from their website (<http://www.udyogbandhu.com>).

The NRI Cell within Udyog Bandhu of Government of Uttar Pradesh is dedicated to extend benefit to all NRIs/PIOs, especially the people of Uttar Pradesh origin living abroad.

*Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait, <http://www.indembkwt.org/DispNews.aspx?ID=351>*

## **7. New simplified procedure for obtaining Non-Relationship Certificate, Kuwait, 10 March 2014.**

For the past few years or so the Indian Nationals have been facing difficulty in obtaining Non-Relationship Certificate with required attestation from India which are to be submitted with Embassy's further attestation to the Kuwait authorities for obtaining Visa for their intended domestic worker of Indian Nationality. The Kuwait authorities accept this certificate after legal translation to Arabic and attestation by Ministry of Justice in Kuwait.

The Embassy, apart from accepting duly attested Non-Relationship Certificate/ Affidavit brought from India, would also accept typewritten Affidavit in English language executed at the Indian Embassy both by the husband and wife who are holding valid Indian Passports for further obtaining Non-Relationship bilingual certificate from the Embassy. In this connection, applicants are required to use revised form 15 B of the Embassy in English only. The applicable fee for affidavit executed by the spouses at the Embassy is KD 6.500 plus ICWF charges.

Those who are able to bring properly attested Non-Relationship Certificate/ Affidavit from India would not be required to execute Affidavit at the Embassy.

To enable the Embassy to issue a bilingual "Non-Relationship" Certificate for submission to the Government of Kuwait, a format has been devised. The certificate would have to be typewritten and submitted by the applicant sponsoring the domestic worker from India along with (a) prescribed application-cum-undertaking and (b) affidavit in original executed earlier at the Embassy or the Non-Relationship Certificate/Affidavit obtained from India. The applicable fees is KD 6.250 plus ICWF charges.

The formats of the Affidavit, Bilingual Non-Relationship Certificate and the application-cum-undertaking with instructions are attached. Indian Nationals are free to prepare these type written on their own. The 'Facilitation Centre' at the Embassy would also be offering the typewriting of these services shortly.

For further links, see:

[http://www.indembkwt.org/press/Bilingual\\_Non\\_Relationship\\_Certificate.doc](http://www.indembkwt.org/press/Bilingual_Non_Relationship_Certificate.doc)

[http://www.indembkwt.org/press/NON\\_RELATIONSHIP\\_AFFIDAVIT.doc](http://www.indembkwt.org/press/NON_RELATIONSHIP_AFFIDAVIT.doc)

*Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait, <http://www.indembkwt.org/DispNews.aspx?ID=352>*

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## **d. LIBYA**

### **8. Azar A.H. Khan appointed as the next Ambassador of India to the State of Libya, New Delhi, 19 March 2014.**

Azar A.H. Khan presently Counsellor in the Embassy of India, Cairo, has been appointed as the next Ambassador of India to the State of Libya.

He is expected to take up his assignment shortly.

*Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, <http://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/23117/Azar+AH+Khan+appointed+as+the+next+Ambassador+of+India+to+t+he+State+of+Libya>*

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### **9. Ambassador's visit to Misurata and Zliten (12-13 March 2014), Tripoli, 19 March 2014.**

Ambassador His Excellency Anil Kumar Trigunayat visited Misurata, the business capital of Libya from 12-13 March 2014.

He was received by the Chief of the Misurata Protocol Department who in his official interactions with the Ambassador expressed his keen desire to receive Indian assistance in capacity building in the field of diplomatic protocol and security.

Ambassador thereafter met with the Chairman of the Misurata Local Council along with other members of the Council and discussed ways and means to have B-2-B exchanges as well as cooperation in the field of culture, education and health inter alia. The possibility of sister city cooperation between Misurata and an Indian city was also explored.



He also visited the state-owned Libyan Iron and Steel Company (LISCO) to which Dastur Engineering International; an Indian firm is the principle consultant for an ongoing project which is likely to be completed by mid 2014.

He then visited the Misurata Free Zone where the official of the Misurata Free Zone Company made a brief presentation about the benefits of investing in the free zone for purpose of trade, commerce, manufacturing and services, requesting Ambassador to exhort Indian companies in the field of Industry, Commercial activities and services sector to avail of the advantages of investing in the free zone.

This was followed by a visit to 'Al Naseem' a modern food processing industry to explore business cooperation in the field of dairy products among others.

He also met with the President of Misurata University to explore possible areas of cooperation in the education sector.

He also interacted with the Indian community in Misurata particularly those engaged in the health sector enquiring about their well being. A visit to the Misurata Central hospital was also made.

A visit to the Misurata Exhibition on the martyrs of Libyan revolution of 2011 was made by the Ambassador where he paid his homage to those who sacrificed their lives for 'New Libya'.

On his way back to Tripoli, he called upon the Mayor of Zliten city where an Indian company is currently operating a large cement plant and where a major infrastructure project was recently secured by Punj Lloyd.

On the visit he was accompanied by Second Secretary (Political & Info) & the Head of Chancery.

*Source: Embassy of India, Cairo, [http://indianembassy.ly/Press-Center/Press-Releases?p=articles&news=7&title=Ambassador%E2%80%99s%20visit%20to%20Misurata%20and%20Zliten%20\(March%2012-13,%202014\)](http://indianembassy.ly/Press-Center/Press-Releases?p=articles&news=7&title=Ambassador%E2%80%99s%20visit%20to%20Misurata%20and%20Zliten%20(March%2012-13,%202014))*

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#### **10. Libya-India business networking event, Tripoli, 20 March 2014.**

A Libya-India business networking event was hosted by the Embassy on 19 March 2014 at the Safir Indian restaurant in Tripoli that was attended by several leading members of the Libyan business community from all over Libya, the Libyan Businessmen Council and representatives of leading Indian companies in Libya.

At the event Ambassador H.E. Anil Kumar Trigunayat announced that there will be a large Indian participation led by the Indian Trade Promotion Organization (ITPO), a premier trade promotion agency under the Indian Ministry of Commerce & Industry in the 42nd Tripoli

International Fair hosted at Tripoli's International Fairgrounds from 2-12 April 2014 after a gap of three years.

There will be over 160 representatives of at least 80 companies, in sectors including the processed/semi processed food products (marine, tea, coffee and fruit), textile/garments/apparel, leather products, electrical/electronic home appliances/equipment, handloom and handcraft products, carpets, furniture, cosmetic/personal care products/herbal care products, pharmaceutical products and gems, jewellery products.

Also an "India Day" under the title "Indian-Libya: Business Partners in Progress and Development" will be held on 6 April 2014 which will be a huge networking session for government officials, Indian and Libyan business representatives as well as the various chambers of commerce and business councils.

Further at around the same time, a high level delegation of around 14 CEO's representing various Indian companies in the fields of pharmaceuticals, health, food products, leather, IT, machinery, construction and engineering, iron and steel, energy, and consultancy would be visiting Libya from 6-8 April 2014. The CEOs delegation will be led by India's premier business organization, the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII). The delegation would explore business potential both in the public and private sector and both in Tripoli and the rest of Libya. The visit is being arranged in collaboration with Libyan Business Council and Tripoli Chamber of Commerce & Industry.

**Source:** Embassy of India, Tripoli, <http://indianembassy.ly/Press-Center/Press-Releases?p=articles&news=8&title=Libya-India%20business%20networking%20event%20held%20on%20March%2019,%202014>

## **e. OMAN**

### **11. Embassy of India, Muscat celebrated the annual 'ITEC Day', Muscat, 26 March 2014**

Embassy of India, Muscat celebrated the annual 'ITEC Day' on Wednesday, 26 March 2014. This year's event was a special one as it marked the 50th year Golden Jubilee of the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation Programme, popularly known with its acronym - ITEC. His Excellency Shaikh Abdullah bin Nasser bin Abdullah Al Bakri, Minister of Manpower was the Chief Guest.

Celebrated on the premises of the Indian Embassy, despite the inclement weather, the Dinner Reception in the evening was attended by a large gathering of about 250 guests comprising a large number of ITEC Alumni, Member of the Shura Council, Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Oman Chamber of Commerce & Industry, senior officials in the Omani Government, representing various Ministries, and media.

The ITEC Day provides an opportunity to the alumni, who have been trained in India under this Programme, for an annual get-together at the Embassy, as a platform to interact with them and



learn from their experiences, which they share during the function. Accordingly, a number of ITEC alumni spoke at the event.

Delivering his welcome address, His Excellency J.S. Mukul, Ambassador of India spoke on the highlights of the ITEC programme and its progress and expansion since its inception on 15th September, 1964 under the vision of India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru that India would share its unique socio-economic development experience and technological achievements with other developing countries. He recalled that since India's Independence in 1947, South-South Cooperation has been a fundamental pillar of India's foreign policy and diplomacy aimed at meeting the challenges of socio-economic development, cooperative efforts among developing countries resting on a partnership based on solidarity and mutual respect & voluntary cooperation. It is in this context that India has been sharing its knowledge, expertise and experience gained over the years with our developing-country partners like Oman.

Traditionally known as the knowledge centre, India is today emerging as the IT and cutting-edge technology hub. Currently, with over 380 Universities, over 11,000 colleges and 1,500 research institutions, India has the second largest pool of scientists and engineers in the world. In India, over 2.5 million graduates are added to the workforce every year, including 300,000 engineers and 150,000 IT professionals. The country's achievements in areas such as space-technology, computers, nuclear science, automobiles, pharmacy, manufacturing, biotechnology, energy, nanotechnology, aviation, theoretical physics and statistics, among others, shows that invention and innovation in India are now an important part of the economic activity. Briefly, India has one of the largest technical education systems in the world with a total of 14,123 degree-granting institutions and over 3 million seats in technical and professional education. This provides the back-stopping and resource base to be leveraged by ITEC.

ITEC Programme, fully-funded by the Government of India, has evolved and expanded over the years. Under ITEC, 161 countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America & the Caribbean, East Europe, as well as Pacific and Small Island countries are invited to share in the Indian developmental experience in various fields. Every year India provides over 8000 scholarships through around 300 short, medium and long-term courses in 47 institutions which are state-of-the-art centers of learning & excellence. The ITEC programme covers a very diverse range of subjects from traditional areas like agriculture, SMEs, management, English language to leading-edge technologies covering IT, Science & Technology, biotechnology, etc. Over the years, the ITEC programme has generated immense goodwill and substantive cooperation among the developing countries.

The added skills which are being provided by ITEC facilitate human resource development, capacity building, skills upgradation and empowerment for increased jobs, and thus meet fully Oman's goals to develop its human resources or capacity building through education, training and vocational courses. Also, Oman's priority for increased jobs and diversification of its

economy through small & medium enterprises (SMEs) dovetails fully with the ITEC programme. In addition to the civilian ITEC slots, India also increasingly provides military training to the Royal Navy, Air Force and Army of Oman. Ambassador urged the training departments and officials in various Ministries and establishments of Omani Government to take maximum advantage of India's progress and innovation in various fields. The ITEC programme is also open to the private sector in Oman, which is also in conformity with the Sultanate's policy of jobs creation through the private sector. In the last few decades, India has become a center for global research and development (R&D). India is emerging as a prominent hub for innovation and is expanding its investment in this field and is ready to share its experience with all friendly countries, including of course Oman.

Under the ITEC programme, India had been extending 50 fully-funded training scholarships to Oman annually up to FY 2011-12 covering technical and vocational training courses from traditional areas to cutting-edge technologies. Given the popularity of the ITEC programme in Oman, the number of ITEC scholarships for Oman had been increased to 85 in 2012-13, and thereafter to 125 during current financial year 2013-14. Keeping in mind our exceptionally close bilateral relations and Oman's interest and optimal utilization, the Ambassador announced during the function that the ITEC scholarships for Oman have been further increased to 150 for the next financial year 2014-15 starting from 1 April which marks an increase of 200 percent, i.e., from 50 to 150, during the last two years.

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

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## **f. QATAR**

### **12. Doha Hockey Friendship Festival , Doha, 5 March 2014**

Under the aegis of Qatar Hockey Federation and as part of the Doha Hockey Friendship Festival, a hockey match between women artistes of CHAK DE, Indian movie fame and DOHA GIRLS is scheduled at 7.00 PM on Thursday, 6 March 2014 at Al Rayyan stadium. Six girls from the original movie cast would be participating in the match.

This event is followed by an Indian cultural programme organized by Indian community associations based in the State of Qatar.

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

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### **13. A High Level Composite Delegation from Qatar, New Delhi, 26 March 2014.**

Visits New Delhi on 25 and 26 March 2014; Both Sides Discussed Issues and Proposals of Mutual Interest in Different Sectors Including Investment, Banking and Finance, Energy, Petrochemicals and Fertilizers, Civil Aviation and Tourism among others.

An 18-member high-level official delegation led by HE Sultan bin Rashid Al Khater, Under Secretary in the Ministry of Economy and Commerce, Government of Qatar visited New Delhi on 25 and 26 March 2014.

The two delegations had cordial and productive discussions in the framework of the historically close and friendly relations, and the multi-dimensional and growing cooperation between India and Qatar. Both sides discussed issues and proposals of mutual interest in a number of sectors including investment; banking and finance; energy; petrochemicals and fertilizers; civil aviation and tourism. Besides delegation level talks, bilateral meetings between counterparts from the two sides were also held.

Among members of the visiting delegation were Qatar's Ambassador to India, and senior officials of Qatar including Ministry of Economy & Commerce, Civil Aviation, Qatar Holding / Qatar Investment Authority, Hassad Food, Qatar Central Bank, Qatar Petroleum International, Qatar Airways, Muntajat and Katara Hospitality.

Indian delegation at the official discussions with the Qatari delegation was led by Dr. Arvind Mayaram, Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs (DEA), Ministry of Finance. It included India's Ambassador to Qatar, and senior officials from a number of Ministries/Departments including Finance, External Affairs, Small and Medium Enterprises, Industrial Policy and Promotion, Disinvestment, Petroleum and Natural Gas, Fertilizers, Civil Aviation and Tourism.

His Excellency Al Khater also met with Sumit Bose, Finance Secretary and R.P. Watal, Secretary (Expenditure), Ministry of Finance, Government of India and Secretary (East), Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India.

Both sides shared the view that there is a vast potential to further strengthen cooperation in the above-mentioned and other sectors, and agreed to actively follow up the discussions held during the visit of the Qatari delegation.

The visiting delegation also interacted with a number of representatives of India's corporate sector at business events organized by Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI).

*Source: Press Information Bureau, New Delhi,*

<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=104692>

#### **14. Visit of a High Level Composite Delegation from Qatar to New Delhi on 25-26 March 2014, Doha, 26 March 2014**

An 18-member high-level official delegation led by His Excellency Sultan bin Rashid Al Khater, Undersecretary in Ministry of Economy and Commerce, Government of Qatar visited New Delhi on 25-26 March 2014.

Among members of the visiting delegation were Qatar's Ambassador to India, and senior officials of Qatar including Ministry of Economy and Commerce; Qatar Holding/Qatar Investment Authority; Hassad Food; Qatar Central Bank; Qatar Petroleum International; Qatar Airways; Muntajat; Katara Hospitality; and Qatar Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Government of India's delegation at the official discussions with the Qatari delegation was led by Dr. Arvind Mayaram, Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs (DEA), Ministry of Finance and included India's Ambassador to Qatar, and senior officials from a number of Ministries/Departments including Finance; External Affairs; Small and Medium Enterprises; Industrial Policy and Promotion; Disinvestment; Petroleum and Natural Gas; Fertilizers; Civil Aviation; and Tourism.

His Excellency Al Khater met with Finance Secretary and Secretary (Expenditure) in Ministry of Finance, and Secretary (East) in Ministry of External Affairs.

The two delegations had cordial and productive discussions in the framework of the historically close and friendly relations, and the multi-dimensional and growing cooperation between India and Qatar. Both sides discussed issues and proposals of mutual interest in a number of sectors including investment; banking and finance; energy; petrochemicals and fertilizers; civil aviation and tourism. Besides delegation level talks, meetings between counterparts from the two sides were also held.

Both sides shared the view that there is a vast potential to further strengthen cooperation in the above-mentioned and other sectors, and agreed to actively follow up the discussions held during the visit of the Qatari delegation.

The visiting delegation also interacted with a number of representatives of India's corporate sector at business events organized by Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI).

'India-Qatar Business Forum' organized by CII was addressed by E.M.S. Natchiappan, Hon'ble Minister of State for Commerce and Industry, Government of India; His Excellency Sultan bin Rashid Al Khater, leader of the Qatari delegation; and Anil Wadhwa, Secretary (East), Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India.

*Source: Embassy of India, Doha,*

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

## **g. SAUDI ARABIA**

### **15. Embassy Warns Against Exploitation by Illegal Agents, Riyadh, 3 March 2014.**

It has come to the notice of Embassy that some self-styled social workers and illegal agents are engaged in instigating the stranded workers currently stationed in the Embassy rented accommodation in Riyadh to make statements criticizing the authorities of the Kingdom of Saudi

Arabia. Such elements and agents are found to be filming the statements by these workers and distributing these films in a negative context through various Social Media and to various foreign NGOs with a view to produce negative reports targeting the policies of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The Embassy urges such elements to refrain from instigating the workers and to avoid making statements aimed at destroying the goodwill that exists for the more than 2.8 million Indians currently resident in the Kingdom.

During the seven months grace period announced by the Custodian of Two Holy Mosques His Majesty King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, more than 1.4 million Indians have corrected their legal status. During this period, more than 1, 40,000 overstaying Indians have left the country, in an orderly manner, fulfilling their dream of returning to India without facing any penal action or with no ban on their return to the Kingdom. The Embassy places on record its gratitude to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques for the humanitarian approach that the authorities of the Kingdom adopted during the grace period. The Embassy is also thankful to the more than 600 non-remunerative volunteers registered with the Embassy and also to the media for their efforts in helping the Indians to fully utilize the grace period.

Despite the nationwide awareness campaign carried out by the Embassy throughout the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which is a large country of 2/3rd size of India, a few hundred Indians did not/could not avail the grace period due to various reasons. To avoid them from suffering in the streets of Riyadh, the Embassy had provided them with accommodation, food, water and medical assistance since November 2013. In November 2013, there were over 400 Indians in the rented accommodation arranged in Batha by the Embassy. Due to consistent efforts of the Embassy, most of these overstaying illegal workers left the country. The Embassy had issued air-tickets to deserving cases. The Embassy continues to deploy its Arabic speaking officials at the Tarheels and Labour offices every day to assist those seeking final exit.

Currently, there are 82 Indian nationals at the rented accommodation arranged by the Embassy in Riyadh. The Embassy is paying the rent for their accommodation and also is providing them with food, water and medicines. They have not been able to get their 'final exit' as they are mostly run away cases and did not avail the concessions announced during the grace period. Some of them have legal cases pending against them. The Embassy has been regularly following up with the Saudi authorities at high levels to arrange their 'final exit' to India.

The Embassy has also informed the authorities that it is ready to provide air tickets to all 82 Indian nationals currently in the rented accommodation to help their early return to India. The fact that more than 1.4 million Indians have availed the grace period and corrected their legal status and more than 1,40,000 Indians have left the country using the grace period shows that the efforts of the Embassy has so far yielded the desired results. The Embassy is confident that the 82 overstaying stranded Indians and those in deportation centres would leave the country without

delay. The Embassy expresses the gratitude to the non-remunerative volunteers registered with the Embassy who assist the Embassy in supporting these stranded workers.

In recent weeks, Embassy has seen some media reports of concocted stories planted by illegal agents claiming to have arranged ‘final exit’ for Indians including for those stationed in the accommodation rented by the Embassy. The Embassy has received information that some agents approach the Saudi authorities claiming to be representatives of the Embassy. The Embassy has been warning the Indian community against using the services of such unauthorized agents including to get ‘final exit’ through unlawful means.

The Embassy is fully aware of its responsibility to the 2.8 million Indians resident in Saudi Arabia and to their families in India. The Embassy will continue to do all that it can do to help Indians in distress in the Kingdom, within the rules and regulations that a diplomatic mission in a foreign country is required to follow. The Embassy follows an open house policy and all Indians are welcome to visit the Embassy for any assistance.

*Source: Embassy of India, Riyadh,*

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

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#### **16. Press Release, Riyadh, 11 March 2014.**

The Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (MOIA) is organizing Know India Programme (KIP) for “Persons of Indian Origin” (PIOs) only as per following schedule:-

KIP Edition	Tentative Period	Partner State	Last Date of Receipt of Application with the Embassy of India, Riyadh
28 <sup>th</sup> KIP	9-30 June 2014	Jammu & Kashmir	10 April 2014
29 <sup>th</sup> KIP	29 August 29 – 18 September 2014	Himachal Pradesh	10 July 2014

Guidelines and application form for Know India are available at Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs website [<http://moia.gov.in>]

Eligible candidate among Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs) residing in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia may submit their application to the Embassy of India, Riyadh [P.O. Box 94387, Riyadh – 11693] by April 10, 2014 for 28<sup>th</sup> KIP (9-30 June 2014) and by 10 July 2014 for 29<sup>th</sup> KIP (29 August – 18 September 2014).

*Source: Embassy of India, Riyadh,*

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

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#### **17. Embassy Warns Against Attempts by Self-Styled Social Workers To Instigate Indian Female Workers to go on Strike, Riyadh, 20 March 2014.**



It has come to the notice of the Embassy that some self-styled social workers and illegal agents have been instigating some Indian female workers in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to go on strike. These illegal agents have also found to have circulated reports on the strike through social media trying to get it published. This is the same group of illegal agents who were found earlier instigating Indian workers to make negative statements casting aspersions on the government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and uploading such statements on social media. The Embassy would like to alert all Indian nationals in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia against the nefarious attempts of such self-styled social workers and illegal agents. The Embassy also warns against the anti-Saudi activities of such anti-social elements and illegal agents, who try to spoil the goodwill that exists for Indians in the Kingdom.

It is important to note that we live in a foreign country and are required to obey the rules and regulations of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The Embassy urges all Indian workers in Kingdom to follow the rules and regulations of Saudi Arabia. Anyone who is found to be in violation of Saudi laws and indulge in strike related activities would face penalty, imprisonment and deportation by Saudi authorities. The Embassy urges all the Indian volunteers registered with the Embassy to convey this message to all Indian workers in the Kingdom.

The Embassy has a mechanism in place to take up all issues related to the welfare of Indians in Saudi Arabia with the concerned authorities. In the instant case of female workers, the Embassy is in constant touch with the workers, top management of the company and concerned Saudi authorities. The Embassy will continue to follow up the case on a priority basis.

The Embassy strongly condemns the attempt by some anti-social elements to instigate Indian workers to violate the rules of this country. Such attempts would adversely affect the welfare of the 2.8 million Indian communities currently resident in the Kingdom.

The Embassy is fully aware of its responsibility towards the 2.8 million Indians resident in Saudi Arabia and to their families in India. The Embassy will continue to do all that it can do to help Indians in distress in the Kingdom, within the rules and regulations that a diplomatic mission in a foreign country is required to follow.

*Source: Embassy of India, Riyadh,*

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

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### **18. Press Release, Riyadh, 24 March 2014.**

Embassy of India started accepting online visa along with paper applications w.e.f. 17 December 2013. From 1 April 2014 onwards, all types of visas would be accepted online only. Paper applications henceforth would be discontinued. Online visa applications could be filled at URL <https://indianvisaonline.gov.in/visa/indianVisaReg.jsp>. and its printout along with applicable fees and required documents is to be submitted to the Embassy through visa application centres of our authorized outsourcing agency M/s VFS LLC GCC. For further queries, please contact VFS

LLC GCC at Call Centres – 0114124727, 0114080366, <http://in.vfsglobal.sa.com> or the Embassy at 011-4884144 Extn. 205.

*Source: Embassy of India, Riyadh,*

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

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## **h. SYRIA**

### **19. Statement by Ambassador Asoke Kumar Mukerji, Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations at the informal meeting of the UNGA Plenary: Briefing by the UNSG and JSRS Lakhdar Brahimi on Syria, New York, 14 March 2014.**

Mr. President,

We thank the Secretary General and also Lakhdar Brahimi, Joint Special Representative for Syria for the briefing. The briefing has been most useful.

We have welcomed the sustained efforts of the Secretary General and the Joint Special Representative for an inclusive political solution to the crisis. India participated in the plenary of the Geneva-II Conference. The Indian delegation was led by our External Affairs Minister.

Bringing both sides to the negotiating table was important. To that extent, the two rounds of direct talks between the Syrian Government and the Syrian National Council held in January and February were noteworthy. It is, however, regrettable that there is, as of now, a stalemate in the political process.

We note the disturbing references this morning to terrorism in Syria. We would like to recall that neither United Nations Security Council resolutions against terrorism, nor the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, condone terrorism, and nor can there be any justification for terrorism. We recall also that Member-States have an obligation not to support or sponsor terrorist activities.

We welcome Security Council resolution 2139 stressing the need to increase humanitarian access and urge all parties to immediately cease attacks against civilians and lift the siege of populated areas. These measures can go a long way in alleviating the human sufferings caused by the conflict that began some three years ago. Unilateral sanctions which adversely impact on the population of Syria must be lifted in order to alleviate the humanitarian sufferings referred to this morning.

We are concerned that the primary organ responsible for international peace and security, which is the United Nations Security Council, is unable to act to bring about a ceasefire, which is essential for the provision of humanitarian assistance to the population of Syria.

Being deeply conscious of the humanitarian dimension of the conflict, India has provided food through the World Food Programme. At the second International Pledging Conference for Syria

held in Kuwait on 15 January 2014, India pledged US\$2 million for the United Nations Syrian Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan, or UN-SHARP.

We note the significant progress made in implementing the joint UN-OPCW project on dismantling the chemical weapon stockpile in Syria, including the cooperation extended by the Government of Syria. India has contributed financially and in terms of expertise to meeting the objectives of this operation.

Being conscious of our larger regional and global responsibilities, India stands ready to play its part in the peace process in any manner required of it. In our view, any spill over from the Syrian conflict, apart from extracting painful human cost, would also impact negatively on the entire region. Such a spill over can only be prevented through negotiations within the framework of the Geneva II process and the UN Charter.

*Source: Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations, New York,*  
<https://www.pminewyork.org/pages.php?id=1418>

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## **i. TUNISIA**

### **20. International Women's Day celebrated with gusto in Tunis on 8 March 2014, Tunis, 10 March 2014.**

The National Constituent Assembly of Tunisia (NCA) organized a celebratory ceremony on the occasion of International Women's Day on Saturday, 8 March 2014 in the audience hall of the more than 300-year old Bardo Palace which houses the Assembly. The ceremony was presided over by Mehrzia Laabidi, Deputy Speaker of the NCA. Also present were Larbi Abid, second Deputy Speaker, several serving and former women Ministers, most of the women Presidents of the Commissions of the Assembly and a host of women legislators. Women Ambassadors accredited to the Republic of Tunisia were invited as Special Guests. Ambassador Nagma Mallick attended this event. The opening statement was made by Larbi Abid, in which he spoke in glowing terms of the extraordinary role played by women legislators in the work of drafting and negotiating the Constitution, which was adopted on 27 January 2014. He began his remarks by outlining the important traditional role of women in Tunisian society; he mentioned with pride that out of 217 members of the Assembly, as many as 66 MPs were women, i.e., around 31 percent of the Tunisian legislators were female.

Mehrzia Laabidi, Deputy Speaker gave more details on the exemplary contribution by women from across the political spectrum to the work of constitution drafting, highlighting the work done by the women Presidents of the Commissions entrusted with scrutinizing important areas of the constitution. In the same vein, Farida Laabidi, President of the Commission on Women's Rights and Liberties detailed the rights available to Tunisian women under the constitution. Selma Mabrouk of Al-Massar party made a presentation on the career of Radhia Haddad, the first women MP of Tunisia who was the only female legislator in the first Constituent Assembly of Tunisia from 1956 to 1959.

The event finished with a traditional musical programme presented by an ensemble of women in traditional Tunisian dress, interspersed by presentations by two women poets of Tunisia, Beya Jawadi and Wafa Nefissa Marzouki. A new television channel devoted to women, Nisa, was launched at the same event.

Ambassador Mallick also attended a special event organized by Ennahda party, the single largest party in the NCA, the same evening to felicitate women legislators of Ennahda party and women workers from across the country. The ceremony was a moving one in which women who had long fought for women's rights in Tunisia were honoured. The role played by women legislators of Ennahda in the Constituent Assembly was emphasized: 42 women out of Ennahda's 89 legislators are women. Sheikh Rashid Ghannouchi, President of Ennahda and Ali Laarayedh, former Prime Minister, in their speeches, called, in rousing terms, for ever greater participation by women in the work place and for equality between men and women inside homes. Tunisian songs, both traditional and revolutionary, were sung by an all-women ensemble in traditional Tunisian dress during the event.

*Source: Embassy of India, Tunis,*

[http://www.embassyofindiatunis.com/pdf/Press%20Release%20-%20Woman's%20Day%20\(English\).Pdf](http://www.embassyofindiatunis.com/pdf/Press%20Release%20-%20Woman's%20Day%20(English).Pdf)

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**21. Text of speech by Ambassador Nagma M. Mallick at the Ambassador's Forum on the Role of the International Community in Supporting Tunisia delivered as part of the annual conference of the Centre for the Study of Islam and Democracy, Tunis, 28-29 March 2014.**

Dr. Radwan Masmoudi, Chairperson of the Forum, Distinguished colleagues from the diplomatic corps, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I want to begin by saying how useful and informative I found the CSID annual conference last year and what good speakers there were. I have looked forward a great deal to the annual conference this year. Therefore, I feel privileged to be a part of the Ambassador's Forum on the Role of the International Community in Supporting Tunisia.

The huge difference from last year to now of course is the extraordinary and historic achievement of the Tunisian people earlier this year in adopting their Constitution through a process of debate and negotiation resulting finally in a valuable, hard-won consensus within the democratically-elected National Constituent Assembly. I can confidently say that witnessing the signing ceremony of the constitution by the three Presidents in the National Constituent Assembly will remain one of the most unforgettable and inspiring moments of my diplomatic career. It was particularly evocative for me as an Indian that the Tunisian constitution was adopted on 27th January, one day after the day India celebrates the adoption of her constitution – on 26 January 1950.

India fully supports the democratic transition in Tunisia. We salute the people and the leadership of Tunisia for the many firm steps you have taken on the thorny path towards a durable democracy. We know that it has not been easy to get thus far, as Tunisia has had to struggle with many problems, including religious radicalism and terrorism and an economy in very difficult straits. Nevertheless, the people of this brave country have shown the region and the world that differing ideologies and schools of thought can co-exist and work together through a difficult transition to achieve nationally-recognized objectives of democracy and the rule of law.

India sees a long-term future together with Tunisia. India can help with expertise in microfinance, capacity-building and IT and high-tech sectors over the long-term. In the immediate future, we have offered our expertise to Tunisia in election management, and we are ready to help in any way we can in this very vital sector.

I wish to recall here the visit of our External Affairs Minister, Salman Khurshid to Tunisia in early February this year to salute the Tunisian people and government on their historic achievements. This was the first-ever bilateral visit of our Foreign Minister to Tunisia in the independent history of our two countries. During his visit, he discussed cooperation in the sector of election management with the government of Tunisia. India has offered to Tunisia the gift of the full complement of electronic voting machines needed for conducting elections in Tunisia which would be worth around five million Dinars. These are in use in India since more than 20 years and are cost-effective and nearly impossible to rig. But we understand that the Tunisian electorate is unfamiliar with electronic voting machines as indeed are the voters of many countries. We will, naturally, defer to the priorities and preferences of Tunisian voters and Tunisia's ISIE in this matter. We are interested to conduct a workshop in Tunisia with officials from our Election Commission later in the year on the voting machines and other issues related to election management.

We have also offered to provide on-the-job training on the principles and practice of election management for two weeks to officials from ISIE in New Delhi in April, i.e., next month, when our General Elections will take place, with the largest electorate in the world of over 800 million voters. We are keen to welcome Mohamed Shafik Sarsar, President of ISIE to visit India to establish a collaborative relationship with the Election Commission of India. But we understand that this chapter of cooperation can begin only after the electoral law has been adopted by the National Constituent Assembly and after the juridical status and many other particulars of ISIE have been established, and we will naturally await those events before taking forward this cooperation. In any event, Tunisia has successfully conducted free and fair elections in October 2011. So the collaborative relationship between the two authorities that we are trying to establish will aim to broaden existing horizons and enhance the current expertise.

There are important economic, political and social challenges facing Tunisia recently. A word on the economic challenge. It is perfectly understandable that there may well be unintended

consequences of a newly-achieved democracy and freedom. Labour unrest and discontent can freely express themselves, and the natural result would be a drop in production. Thus Tunisia has witnessed plunging phosphate production: from an average production of 8 million tons of rock phosphate in the pre-Revolution period, the production last year was only 2.5 million tons. In our view, every Tunisian has to realize that ultimately their salvation lies within them. Tunisia's great skills in engineering, its highly-literate workforce and its natural resources must be harnessed and made more productive than before to meet the revenue requirements of a country in transition. I am confident that this realization is already there, and that the phosphate sector will see a revival just like the tourism sector is seeing a recovery currently.

India is the largest buyer of Tunisian phosphate which is processed into an important fertilizer, and this is, thus, an important link between our two countries. Tunisia is contributing to the food security of India, of which we are very proud. We are thus concerned for the revival of the phosphate industry here.

Tunisia has already shown the world that it knows how to resolve significant political differences and differences in ideology through negotiation and compromise leading to consensus. I am certain that the same spirit will prevail in bridging the political and social cleavages here. I would like to end with a quote from our External Affairs Minister made during his stay here : 'Mature democracies have much to learn from young democracies – India can learn from the determination with which Tunisia has taken forward the process of democratic transition and the spirit of compromise and consensus with which you have succeeded in adopting your Constitution'. In other words, Tunisia, we are with you, holding your hand and also learning from you.

*Source: Embassy of India, Tunis,*

<http://www.embassyofindiatunis.com/pdf/Speech%20of%20Ambassador%20at%20CSID.Pdf>

## **j. UNITED ARAB EMIRATES**

### **22. Second Meeting of the UAE-India High Level Joint Task Force on Investments (HLTFI), Abu Dhabi, 2 March 2014.**

The second meeting of the UAE – India High Level Joint Task Force on Investments ("HLTFI") was held today at the Taj Mahal Palace Hotel in Mumbai. More than 30 government and private sector representatives from India and the UAE were present.

The HLTFI, co-chaired by His Highness Sheikh Hamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Chairman of the Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Court, and by HE Anand Sharma, Union Minister of Commerce & Industry, Government of India was established in April 2012 as a platform to address mutual issues associated with existing investments between the two countries and to promote and facilitate cross-border investments.



The first meeting of the HLTFI, held in Abu Dhabi in February 2013, resulted in a wide-ranging discussion on matters of mutual interest including the identification of priority sectors of engagement for possible investments in the two countries.

Since then, work conducted by the HLTFI to strengthen and develop bilateral relations in the field of investments culminated in the signing, in December, 2013, of a Bilateral Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement (BIPPA), serving as a platform for promotion and reciprocal legal protection of investments in both countries.

As a result of decisions taken during the inaugural meeting of the HLTFI, several joint working groups have been created to address issues of mutual interest in the following sectors: Infrastructure, Investment & Trade, Energy, Manufacturing & Technology, Aviation, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Legacy Issues. At today's meeting, an action plan was agreed to expedite progress across all these joint working groups.

Building on these solid foundations, today's meeting of the HLTFI made progress on a number of fronts:

- Discussions were held on supporting the establishment of a strategic petroleum reserve in India in a manner serving the common strategic interests of both countries and based on the principles of long term strategic partnership and cooperation. The decision was taken to establish another joint working group to make progress on this effort;
- Wide-ranging discussions took place on priority sectors of engagement for channelling investments in the two countries;
- Discussions took place on expediting the resolution of current pending issues associated with existing UAE investments in India (Etisalat, Emaar & DP World), and a plan of action was agreed for the Legacy Issues sub-working group to address and resolve these issues;
- Acknowledged TAQA, the Abu Dhabi-based international energy and Water Company, as the largest private operator of hydroelectric plants in India, following its acquisition, signed on Saturday 1st March, 2014 in New Delhi, of two hydroelectric plants in India. The equity invested by the TAQA-led consortium in the acquisition of the two hydroelectric plants will amount to approximately INR3,820 crores (US\$616 million), of which 51 percent is from TAQA. The consortium will also acquire the assets' non-recourse project debt. The agreement follows the signing of the UAE-India Bilateral Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement in December 2013 and the UAE's commitment at the last HLTFI meeting to invest USD 2 billion in India's infrastructure sector.
- The UAE has invited the Indian companies in the renewable energy area to the UAE to meet with Masdar to discuss potential investments.

The UAE and India are significant trading partners and bilateral trade between the two countries is expected to continue its important growth in years to come. Alongside trade, the HLTFI would seek to achieve a similar growth path for investment with a clear roadmap between the two countries.

Commenting on the 2nd meeting of the HLTFI, HH Sheikh Hamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Co-Chair of the HLTFI and Chairman of the Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Court, said:

“Today we have advanced the work of the Joint Task Force, and laid the foundation for further mutually beneficial investments and areas of common interest. We look forward to the ratification of the Bilateral Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement, and the resolution of the outstanding issues identified at our first meeting. Together, our combined efforts will help to further strengthen bilateral trade relations and pave the way for continued strategic dialogue.”

Commenting on the 2nd meeting of the HLTFI, HE Anand Sharma, Co-Chair of the HLTFI, and Union Minister of Commerce & Industry, underlined India’s status as a major destination for foreign investments and the opportunities that exist for the UAE, especially in infrastructure areas such as roads and highways, power and utilities, civil aviation, ports, renewable energy, urban infrastructure, etc. and participation through the Infrastructure Debt Funds. He also highlighted India’s desire to participate in the hydrocarbon sector in the UAE, especially in the upstream petroleum sector. He also mentioned that he sees greater opportunities for UAE investors as strategic partners in India’s growth story.

The next meeting of the UAE – India High Level Joint Task Force on Investments will be held on a mutually agreed date and location.

The inaugural meeting of the India-UAE High Level Joint Task Force on Investments was held in February 2013 in Abu Dhabi and was attended by over 50 government and private sector representatives from India and the UAE.

*Source: Embassy of India, Abu Dhabi, <http://www.indembassyuae.org/PR20.html>*

### **23. Change of Location of M/s BLS International, Outsourcing agent for Indian passports and Visa services, Abu Dhabi, 11 March 2014.**

M/s BLS International Services Limited, providing passport and visa services to the Consulate General of India, Dubai, earlier located at No. 202, 2nd floor, Dubai National Insurance Building, Port Saeed, Deira, Dubai is now being relocated to the following address with effect from Saturday, 5 April 2014:

Office No. 13, Ground Floor, Zeenah building, (Opposite to-Deira City Centre- P3 parking)

The current BLS office will be functioning till Thursday, 3 April 2014. The BLS website, [www.blsindiavisa-uae.com](http://www.blsindiavisa-uae.com), has been updated. The phone number (04-2555530) of the call center of M/s BLS International Services Ltd. remains unchanged.

*Source: Embassy of India, Abu Dhabi, [http://www.indembassyuae.org/PR\\_4\\_6\\_2014.html](http://www.indembassyuae.org/PR_4_6_2014.html)*

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**Compiled by Alvite N**

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