

INDIA SPEAKS

(Monthly Digest of Official Indian Statements on Middle East)

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June 2014

BILATERAL ISSUES

a. EGYPT

1. Narendra Modi Sworn in as 15th Prime Minister of India, New Delhi, 26 May 2014.

Narendra Modi was sworn in as the 15th Prime Minister of India on the majestic forecourts of the Rashtrapati Bhavan (Presidential Palace) in New Delhi as the sun set on the 26 May 2014. The solemn ceremony was attended by the leaders of eight South Asian nations, as well as a galaxy of leading political figures, artistes, intellectuals, and special invitees.

Modi took the solemn oath in which he swore to protect and uphold the Constitution of India. Simultaneously on the new website of the Prime Minister, he stated: “As we devote ourselves to take India’s development journey to newer heights, we seek your support, blessings and active participation. Together we will script a glorious future for India. Let us together dream of a strong, developed and inclusive India that actively engages with the global community to strengthen the cause of world peace and development.”

Along with the Prime Minister, 44 Ministers were also sworn in. The key Ministries of Home, Foreign Affairs, Finance, and Defence will be handled by Rajnath Singh, Sushma Swaraj and Arun Jaitley, all of whom are veteran leaders from the Bharatiya Janata Party, the party that won the majority in the recently concluded Parliamentary elections.

In a radical step aimed at galvanizing the new administration, Prime Minister Modi has indicated that there will be a significant downsizing of the Government in accordance with his principle of “minimum Government, maximum governance,” with related Ministries clubbed together in a cluster and looked after by a single Cabinet Minister. The, he has indicated, will ensure quicker pace of work and better coordination.

In the run-up to the swearing in, in the first move of its kind, the PM extended invitations to Heads of Governments in seven nations of the South Asian Association for Regional

Cooperation (SAARC), in addition to Mauritius, with whom India enjoys a historic relationship. The attendees at the event included President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan, President Abdulla Gayoom of Maldives, President Mahinda Rajapakse of Sri Lanka, Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay of Bhutan, Prime Minister Navinchandra Ramgoolam of Mauritius, Prime Minister Sushil Koirala of Nepal, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif of Pakistan, and the Speaker Dr. Shirin Chowdhry of Bangladesh. The initiative to invite all key leaders from the South Asian region is testimony to the desire of the new government to foster bilateral and multilateral cooperation and to promote peace and harmony in the region.

For more information, please contact Indian Embassy Cairo at info.cairo@mea.gov.in or follow us on Facebook at Indian Embassy Cairo.

Source: Embassy of India, Cairo, http://www.indembcairo.com/en-us/presscentre/whatsnew.aspx?udt_506_param_detail=18935

2. On first day in office, Prime Minister Narendra Modi holds talks with Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif of Pakistan, New Delhi, 27 May 2014.

On first day in office, Prime Minister Narendra Modi holds talks with Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif of Pakistan, other South Asian leaders.

On the morning of 27 May 2014, the newly sworn in Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi met with his Pakistani counterpart Nawaz Sharif to discuss bilateral relations between the two countries. The meeting, the first between the two leaders, continued for 45 minutes, well beyond schedule. Prior to meeting Nawaz Sharif, Prime Minister Modi met with the other leaders from South Asia who had come to attend his swearing in. These included meetings with Hamid Karzai, President of Afghanistan, Lyonchen Tshering Tobgay, Prime Minister of Bhutan, Navin Ramgoolam, Prime Minister of Mauritius; Mahinda Rajapakse, President of Sri Lanka; Sushil Koirala, Prime Minister of Nepal; and Abdulla Yameen, President of Maldives

This is the first time that India has invited all SAARC members to attend a swearing-in ceremony of an Indian Prime Minister. It is also the first time since the India and Pakistan won independence that a Prime minister from one country has attended such a ceremony in the other.

Earlier in the day, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif visited the Jama Masjid mosque in Old Delhi. The Jama Masjid, India's largest mosque, was built by the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan in the year 1656. Prime Minister Sharif also visited the Red Fort, the erstwhile palace of the Emperor. The Indian Prime Minister traditionally delivers his Independence Day address from Red Fort on August 15th every year. Following his bilateral meeting with Prime Minister Modi, Sharif also called on the former Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee at his residence. In 1999, PM Vajpayee, one of the founding members of BJP, had travelled to Lahore in an iconic journey that resulted in the Lahore Declaration that resumed a peace dialogue between the two countries.

Source: Embassy of India, Cairo, http://www.indembcairo.com/en-us/presscentre/whatsnew.aspx?udt_506_param_detail=18936

b. ISRAEL

3. Netanyahu congratulates Narendra Modi for victory in India election, Jerusalem, 16 May 2014.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called the newly-elected Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and congratulated him on his success at the polls.

... In their phone call, Netanyahu expressed his admiration for Indian democracy, and the two agreed to deepen cooperation between the two countries...

Source: Ha'aretz, Tel Aviv, <http://www.haaretz.com/news/world/1.591033>

4. Modi keen to strengthen ties with Israel: Netanyahu, Jerusalem, 19 May 2014.

JERUSALEM: India's Prime Minister-designate Narendra Modi has expressed his desire to "deepen and develop" ties with Israel, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said.

"On Friday, I spoke with the Prime Minister-elect of India. There too there is a clear expression of the desire to deepen and develop economic ties with the State of Israel," Netanyahu told his cabinet at its weekly meeting.

Netanyahu, who is looking to strengthen economic ties with Asia which is likely to overtake the Jewish state's close ally United States as the largest export destination, has recently put a lot of emphasis on promoting bilateral trade with India, China, Japan and other Asian countries.

Netanyahu did not lose time in reaching out to Modi - all set to be India's next prime minister after BJP secured a landslide victory in the Lok Sabha polls - as part of his goal to benefit from untapped potential in the huge market there.

The two countries have been negotiating a Free Trade Agreement for the last several years.

While relations between India and Israel have deepened and diversified ever since diplomatic relations were established in 1992, the five years of BJP rule in the past gave a major impetus to the ties.

Israel's Prime Minister Ariel Sharon visited India in 2003 and prominent BJP leaders - L K Advani and Jaswant Singh - had come to Israel to discuss cooperation in wide ranging fields.

Israel's support to India during the Kargil war had helped build a relationship of trust which saw defence cooperation between the two countries registering a significant high.

Source: Embassy of Israel, New Delhi, <http://embassies.gov.il/delhi/NewsAndEvents/Pages/Modi%20keen%20to%20strengthen%20ties%20with%20Israel.aspx>

5. Events, Tel Aviv, 20 May 2014.

Ambassador of India, Jaideep Sarkar inaugurated India Pavilion in the First Israel Innovation Conference MIXIII 2014 on 20 May 2014 in Exhibition Grounds, Tel Aviv. The first such Indian high-tech industry event in

Israel, India Pavilion is also the largest country Pavilion in MIXiii with more than 30 exhibitors, including SMEs, start-ups from high-tech and bio-med sectors, government R&D organizations and a venture capital firm.

Source: Embassy of India, Tel Aviv, http://www.indembassy.co.il/events.php?event_id=47

6. Narendra Modi on Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Congratulatory Call, New Delhi, 20 May 2014.

I spoke to PM Netanyahu. We value our friendship with Israel & will script a golden chapter in the history of India-Israel relations.

Source: Twitter, Narendra Modi@narendramodi, <https://twitter.com/narendramodi>

7. Events, Tel Aviv, 22 May 2014.

Naftali Bennett, Israel's Minister of Economy visited India Pavilion on 22 May at MIXiii along with Avi Hasson, Chief Scientist and Ohad Cohen, Deputy Director General in Ministry of Economy. Minister Bennett met the officials, exhibitors and delegates from India and was very appreciative of Indian participation. Stating that Israel attaches a lot of importance to its relationship with India he expressed strong support for strengthening bilateral co-operation. He spoke about his visit to India in October 2013 and his personal efforts towards materializing this potential.

Source: Embassy of India, Tel Aviv, http://www.indembassy.co.il/events.php?event_id=48

8. India and Israel to Further Strengthen Cooperation in Education Sector, New Delhi, 29 May 2014.

Alon Ushpiz, the Ambassador of Israel to India met Smriti Irani, Hon'ble Minister of Human Resource Development, on 29 May 2014 to discuss strengthening of educational relations between India and Israel.

Recalling the close ties in different fields like Science and Technology, Education, Culture, Economic, Commercial etc. between India and Israel, the Hon'ble Minister stressed that education is an engine of growth and collaborative knowledge creation is very important for building a better world.

During the discussion the new Joint Research programme between India and Israel was taken up in which both countries have pledged to take up joint research programmes amounting up to US\$ 5 million per year. It was highlighted that in the first round 66 joint research proposals have been received and the evaluation by the experts from both the sides will start today and will be completed by June 2014.

Ambassador Ushpiz informed that Israel offers 200 Post Doctoral fellowships of which about 80 percent are availed by the Indian students. Hon'ble Minister was happy to learn that Israel is also launching another scholarship programme of 40 slots for bachelor and 30 scholarships for Masters programmes in Israel.

The Ambassador also highlighted that Nobel Laureate Ada E Yonath, who received the Nobel Prize in Chemistry with Dr. V. Ramakrishnan will be visiting India during March 2015. Hon'ble Minister directed the officials that apart from academic conferences and seminars, we should facilitate meetings with young students who would be inspired and motivated towards research in Basic Sciences due to an interaction with Ada E Yonath.

The Ambassador also invited the Hon'ble Minister to visit Israel.

Source: Press Information Bureau, New Delhi,
<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx?relid=105271>

c. KUWAIT

9. Consular wing to function on Budha Purnima, Kuwait, 11 May 2014.

The Embassy of India will remain closed on Wednesday, 14 May 2014 on account of Buddha Purnima.

However, Consular Wing will remain open for Passport, Visa and Attestation Services for the benefit of General Public.

Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait, <http://www.indembkwt.org/DispNews.aspx?ID=360>

10. Advisory regarding narcotics/drugs for Indian Community in Kuwait, Kuwait, 29 May 2014.

There is, unfortunately, an increase in cases relating to detention / arrest of Indian nationals on alleged charges of carrying or possessing narcotic drugs in Kuwait. Out of 260 Indian nationals who are currently in Kuwaiti Jails, 137 persons are facing crimes related to drugs.

It may be noted that the punishment under the Kuwaiti laws for violation of drug related crimes may lead to life imprisonment or even death. If anybody is caught by local authorities on account of use / possession / trade / transportation of narcotics/drugs or any related prohibited item, it could be difficult for the Embassy to help/intervene in the matter as the case will be dealt with as per Kuwaiti laws. Therefore, one must strictly obey rules and regulations regarding the laws about drugs in this country.

With a view to creating high awareness among the Indian nationals in the matter, the Embassy would like to bring the following information for their attention:

What are Narcotics/Drugs?

There are, generally, many kinds of drugs some are prescribed while others are known as club drugs, illicit or illegal substances and designer drugs, which include:

- (i) Antidepressants,
- (ii) Barbiturates,
- (iii) Cannabis,
- (iv) Depressants,
- (v) Hallucinogens,
- (vi) Inhalants,
- (vii) Narcotics [Marijuana, Morphine, Cocaine, Heroin, Dry ICE, LSD, MDMA (ecstasy), amphetamines (speed)].
- (viii) Steroids,
- (ix) Stimulants,
- (x) Tobacco.

(The list is only indicative and not exhaustive).

Suggestions for taking precaution and/or safety tips for Indian community

As per the statements of inmates, it was observed that friends or relatives of expatriate living in Kuwait, contacts the passenger and hand over packets/gifts/small bags etc in India for delivering to their relatives in Kuwait. Please avoid such things as many times these tricks were done to use you as courier. These things may contain narcotics or prohibited medicines which would result in your arrest and punishment in Kuwait. Strictly avoid accepting any such packet or gift from strangers at airport or with a person you develop friendship during travel. Please refuse accepting any such items given by him.

Further, the monetary temptation should be avoided where you are asked to visit a place, hold a packet, keep packet/friends attaché / suitcases with you for some time, etc are some of the tricks which may land you up in the police net with jail term for transporting/possessing narcotics.

Use/carrying of Prescription Medicine from India to Kuwait

The general medicine should be brought with doctor's prescription and the quantity should not exceed 2 weeks' requirement. Further, Ayurvedic/Homeopathic medicine due to its composition can be construed as containing alcohol while narcotics can be camouflaged as white sugar pills. Hence one should be careful while bringing these medicines and must carry doctor's prescription and possess limited quantity. One must check also with the Kuwaiti authorities about latest updates on regulations governing carrying of medicines from abroad.

The above guidelines are indicative and issued in the interest of the Indian community for taking adequate precautions and to strictly observe the laws of land relating to narcotics/drugs in Kuwait.

Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait, <http://www.indembkwt.org/DispNews.aspx?ID=361>

d. LIBYA

11. Inaugural re-launch meeting of the Libya India Friendship Association, Tripoli, 25 May 2014.

The inaugural re-launch meeting of the Libya India Friendship Association was held on 24 May 2014 at the Embassy of India attended by both the Libyan and Indian friends with Dr. Nuri Al-Madani, Former Ambassador of Libya to India and Anil Kumar Trigunayat, Ambassador of India as the Chief Guests.

In the welcome remarks made by Anil Kumar Trigunayat, Ambassador of India stressed the importance of the voluntary association as a common platform to foster popular friendships to help generate goodwill and greater mutual understanding. He also underlined that the dynamism of the association was entirely dependent on the spirit of volunteerism of the members and the potential of the association was limitless. LIFA can become the major platform for not only promoting friendship and cultural exchanges but could also undertake various socio-cultural and humanitarian projects for the benefit of our Libyan friends. The Association is expected to have its Chapters and branches in major Libyan cities to carry forward the message of friendship and cooperation especially with the engagement of the Libyan youth.

Dr. Nuri Al-Madani, Former Ambassador of Libya to India in his opening speech gave an overview of the possible scope of activities that the LIFA could undertake to further its cause. He also pointed out to the existence of a similar association in the past prior to the revolution of February 2011 and how the new LIFA could be an improvement over it.

The LIFA members got to know each other during the course of the meeting shared their valuable views/comments/suggestions/ideas and a steering committee comprised of Libyans and Indians (two each) with a Libyan Chair to guide the activities of the LIFA was also constituted in the said meeting.

The meeting was covered by Libyan media and ended with Indian refreshments.

For relevant information, see: <http://indianembassy.ly/Culture-Tourism/LIFA>

Source: Embassy of India, Tripoli, <http://indianembassy.ly/Press-Center/Press-Releases?p=articles&news=11&title=%20Inaugural%20re-launch%20meeting%20of%20the%20Libya%20India%20Friendship%20Association%20held%20on%2024%20May%202014>

12. Ambassador's meeting with the Chairman of Libyan High National Elections Commission, Tripoli, 28 May 2014.

Ambassador of India H.E. Anil Kumar Trigunayat made a farewell call on H.E. Dr. Emad A. Assayh, the Chairman of Libyan High National Elections Commission (HNEC) at his office in the presence of Abobaker Ali Mohammed, Commissioner, HNEC on 28 May 2014.

Ambassador of India H.E. Anil Kumar Trigunayat congratulated Dr. Emad A. Assayh on his appointment as the new Chairman of HNEC and on the successful conclusion of the election for the 60 member Constitution Drafting Committee (CDC).

In view of the forthcoming general elections in Libya, Ambassador referring to the recently concluded general elections in India underlining the vibrancy of the largest democracy in the world pointed out to the existence of a MoU between HNEC and the Election Commission of India (ECI) for cooperation in the field of elections including capacity building, ways to tap the full potential of which was explored in the said meeting.

Dr. Assayh expressed his keen desire for the early activation of the MoU to realize the full potential of cooperation in the field of elections but only after the situation in Libya stabilized and sought active cooperation and support of the Ambassador for the same.

While reiterating India's continued support and assistance to the State and people of Libya in their quest for democracy and nation building, Ambassador enquired Dr. Assayh about the current situation in Libya to which Dr. Assayh said that he was very grateful to India for the full support and cooperation pointing out that India had the unique distinction of being a country working very closely with HNEC since the very outset and to put in place an institutional mechanism for cooperation in the field of elections. Praising the Indian democracy he added that Libya could gain immensely from the Indian democratic experience.

Dr. Assayh also informed Ambassador about a HNEC briefing for various international stakeholders to be held on 2 June 2014 requesting Indian participation in the same as it would provide the so called friends of Libya an opportunity to learn about the ongoing electoral process.

Dr. Assayh thanked the Ambassador for his farewell call and wished him success for his future assignment and Ambassador on his part conveyed the best wishes of the people of India to 'New Libya' in her transition to democracy led by HNEC.

Source: Embassy of India, Tripoli, <http://indianembassy.ly/Press-Center/Press-Releases?p=articles&news=12&title=Ambassador>

e. PALESTINE

13. India supports building of two schools in Palestine, Ramallah, 20 May 2014.

India today transferred the second instalment for an amount of US\$700,000 to the Ministry of Education, State of Palestine as a part of the MoU signed to support building of two schools (i) Jawaharlal Nehru Secondary School for Girls in Asera Al Shamalyeh and (ii) Jawaharlal Nehru Secondary School for Boys in Abu Dees in Palestine. The MoU was signed during the visit of President Mahmoud Abbas to India in 2012. The value of the project is US\$1.8 million. The constructions of the two schools are in progress. The Representative of India, Mr. B.S. Mubarak presented the cheque of US\$700,000 to Fawaz Mujahed, Director General, Ministry of Education on 20 May 2014.

Source: Representative Office of India, Ramallah,

<http://roiramallah.org/pdf/India%20supports%20building%20of%20two%20schools%20in%20Palestine.pdf>

f. QATAR

14. Indian Prime Minister Narendra thanks his Qatari counterpart Sheikh Abdullah Bin Nasser Bin Khalifa Al-Thani

I thank Qatar PM Sheikh Abdullah Bin Nasser Bin Khalifa Al-Thani for his kind wishes. We will take India-Qatar ties to newer heights.

Source: Twitter, Narendra Modi@narendramodi, <https://twitter.com/narendramodi>

g. SAUDI ARABIA

15. Twenty-five Indian Firms Exploring New Business Opportunities At Prestigious Saudi Energy Show, Riyadh, 13 May 2014.

Cementing the bilateral strategic and economic relations, twenty-five Indian engineering firms with capabilities to supply and service critical machinery and technology products to power and oil exploration sectors, will explore further business possibilities at the forthcoming 'Saudi Energy Show' at Riyadh International Convention and Exhibition Centre on 26-28 May 2014. The initiative to organize the India Pavilion at the Saudi Energy Show is being taken by EEPC India, formerly known as the Engineering Export Promotion Council with the support of the Indian government.

Keen on forging industry-to-industry relationship with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Indian participation in the prestigious Saudi Energy Show, is being promoted by the Indian Embassy in Riyadh. Economy forms an intrinsic part of India Saudi Arabia strategic partnership and promoting economic engagement is the key element of Delhi Declaration of 2006 and Riyadh Declaration of 2010. India-Saudi Arabia bilateral trade exceeded US\$ 43 billion during 2013-14 and has already exceeded US\$ 43.6 billion during April 2013-February 2014. There is increasing trend of upward bilateral investments between the two countries. However, there remains vast untapped potential to further diversify bilateral trade and commerce. The recent visit of Saudi Crown Prince, Defence Minister and Deputy Prime Minister Prince Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud to India in February 2014 has provided a renewed thrust to bilateral relations especially in the economic and trade areas.

India's oil import during 2013-14 was US\$ 167 billion making it among the largest oil importing countries of the world and largest volumes of imports being sourced from Saudi Arabia. India imports around 19percent of its oil imports from the Kingdom. The Indian engineering industry with exports exceeding US\$ 62 billion has made a mark world over and is moving fast up the value chain providing critical equipment in various high-tech areas. The Indian engineering capabilities can cater to the oil exploration sector as well. Several companies like Engineers India Ltd. have been active in the Middle East having earned name for themselves.

Likewise, fuel transmission major 'GAIL India' with its massive network and expansion plans is engaging more with the global partners in terms of technological collaborations.

India is also emerging as a potential refining hub because of lower capital costs to the extent of 25–50 percent in comparison to other Asian countries. Some companies from the Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) sector from Gujarat are also participating in the Saudi Energy Show 2014.

Source: Embassy of India, Riyadh,

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

16. Pre-Event Press Release, Riyadh, 25 May 2014.

Sub: Participation of 25 Indian companies in 'SAUDI ENERGY 2014' Exhibition from 26-28 May 2014 and SIBN Business-to-Business Meeting on 27 May 2014 at Indian Embassy, Riyadh

An Indian business delegation led by EEPC India (formerly Engineering Exports Promotion Council of India), consisting of 25 Indian companies is participating in the 'Saudi Energy 2014' Exhibition from 26-28 May 2014 at the Riyadh International Convention and Exhibition Centre (RICEC), Riyadh. The Indian Ambassador H.E. Hamid Ali Rao will inaugurate the Indian Pavilion in Hall No. 1 of RICEC on 26 May 2014, at 1630 hrs. All media personnel, journalists and interested people are invited for the inauguration.

[The list of participating Indian companies and their product ranges are available on the Indian Embassy Website (www.indianembassy.org.sa). These Indian companies export a variety of high quality electrical and engineering machineries and goods world over.]

Coinciding with the Saudi Energy 2014, the Saudi India Business Network (SIBN) is organizing sector-specific event focusing on electrical, power and engineering sectors in India, and to promote business to business interaction between India and Saudi Arabia in these sectors. The event would be organized in the Embassy of India, Riyadh, Auditorium on 27 May 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>

h. TURKEY

17. Rahul Kulshreshth appointed as the next Ambassador of India to the Republic of Turkey, New Delhi, 5 May 2014.

Rahul Kulshreshth (IFS: 1985), currently Joint Secretary at Headquarters, has been appointed as the next Ambassador of India to the Republic of Turkey.

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/23286/Rahul+Kulshreshth+appointed+as+the+next+Ambassador+of+India+to+the+Republic+of+Turkey>

18. The President of India, Pranab Mukherjee has condoled the loss of lives in the Soma coal mines in western Turkey, New Delhi, 16 May 2014.

In a message to Abdullah Gul, the President of Republic of Turkey, the President has said, “On behalf of the Government and the people of India, I write to express deepest condolences on the loss of lives and destruction caused by the devastating accident that has occurred in the Soma coal mine in western Turkey.

I understand that search efforts are ongoing. The people of India stand by the people of Turkey in this difficult hour and wish all success to those rendering the rescue and relief operations”.

Source: The President of India, New Delhi, <http://presidentofindia.nic.in/pr160514.html>

i. UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

19. Scholarship Programme for Diaspora Children -2014-15, Abu Dhabi, 1 May 2014.

The Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs [MOIA], New Delhi has launched a scheme called the “Scholarship Programme for Diaspora Children -2014-15” to assist children/wards of Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs) and Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) in pursuing under graduate courses in several disciplines in India.

The following are the highlights of the SPDC-2014-15:

Hundred scholarships are being offered for undergraduate courses in several disciplines including Engineering/Architecture/Technology, Humanities/Liberal Arts, Commerce, Management – BBA/BBM, Journalism, Hotel Management, Agriculture/Animal Husbandry, Science, Law etc.

The programme is open only to PIOs/NRIs from the specified 40 countries having a larger concentration of Indian Diaspora.

Fifty percent of the scholarship slots would be reserved of PIOs. However, in the event of the non-availability of suitable PIO candidates, the unfilled slots could be assigned to NRI candidates.

NRI candidates would be eligible for the grant of the scholarship only if their total family income per month does not exceed an amount equivalent to US\$ 2,250 (US dollars two thousand two hundred and fifty only).

Children of NRIs should have pursued at least three years of education, inclusive of 11th & 12th or equivalent (not beyond), in a foreign country during the last six years, and should have passed the qualifying examination abroad.

PIO/NRI Students already studying in India on a self-financing basis or under any other arrangement will not be eligible under this scheme, which is open only for fresh admissions in the first semester/year of undergraduate courses.

Candidates would be selected on the basis of their performance in the qualifying examination (equivalent to plus 2 stages in India) which decides the eligibility to apply for the scholarship scheme. The candidates would also have to fulfil all the criteria prescribed for the purpose.

The amount of scholarship admissible would be 75 percent of the total Institutional Economic Cost (IEC) or US\$ 4,000 (US dollars four thousand only) per annum in respect of NITs and other institutions covered under DASA Scheme with effect from the academic year 2011-12 and where there is no increase in tuition fees for the academic year 2011-2012, the existing limit of 75 percent of IEC or US\$ 3600, whichever is less would continue and could be made by the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs, Government of India to the applicants selected for the SPDC. IEC includes Tuition fee, Hostel fee & other institutional charges (food charges are excluded).

Admission may be sought in one of the institutes/colleges/universities given in 'Appendix 'C' attached in the Guidelines.

The last date for receipt of duly filled-in application forms in the prescribed format by ED.CIL is 10 June 2014.

The applications and procedures/guidelines can be downloaded either from MOIA website www.moia.gov.in or Ed.CIL website www.edcilindia.co.in and also from Embassy's website www.uaeindians.org. All PIO's/NRI's are requested to avail this opportunity.

Source: Embassy of India, Abu Dhabi, <http://www.indembassyuae.org/PR-1-5-2014.html>

20. Press Release, Abu Dhabi, 4 May 2014.

The first copy of a book in Arabic titled India and the UAE: In Celebration of a Legendary Friendship was presented to H.H. Sheikh Nahyan Bin Mubarak Al-Nahyan, Minister of Culture, Youth and Community Development, UAE by the author Venu Rajamony, former Consul General of India in Dubai and currently Press Secretary to the President of India at a function organized by the Embassy of India in Abu Dhabi on 4 May 2014.

Speaking on the occasion, Ambassador T P Seetharam said that the book documents the historic and contemporary aspects of the multifaceted relations between India in UAE in a very attractive format for Emirati readers.

Introducing the book, Venu Rajamony said this was the first time a comprehensive and detailed account of the India - UAE relationship was being published in the Arabic language. Describing India - UAE relations as extra-ordinary and unique, he said very few countries can claim such a close and intensive bond since ancient times. UAE is home to one of the largest Indian communities outside of India and is the largest trading partner and a major source of Foreign Direct Investments. Remittances sent by the Indians living in UAE and the energy supplied from UAE are important factors that strengthen the Indian economy. At the same time, the full potential of the relationship is still to be explored. There is much more that can be achieved. The younger generation in both countries needs to be educated of the importance of this relationship and their energies harnessed to take India - UAE relations to new heights.

The English version of the book *India and the UAE: In Celebration of a Legendary Friendship* which has a foreword by H.H. Sheikh Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, was released in February 2010. An updated edition of the book in Malayalam was released in January 2013, by H.E. Oommen Chandy, the Chief Minister of Kerala, in the presence of H.E. Vayalar Ravi, Minister of Overseas Indian Affairs, H.E. E. Ahamed, Minister of State for External Affairs of India, in Kochi, Kerala.

The book has been translated and published in Arabic by the National Centre for Documentation and Research, Ministry of Presidential Affairs, Abu Dhabi.

The book is a treasure trove of facts, figures and stories of the ancient, yet modern and dynamic ties that India and the UAE share. It takes you on a journey through time, where glittering vistas of ancient and contemporary narratives and interviews, rare and present-day photographs and statistics are artistically juxtaposed to provide the reader with a fascinating and comprehensive glimpse of this strong and well-preserved association.

Source: Embassy of India, Abu Dhabi, <http://www.indembassyuae.org/PR-6-5-2014.html>

MULTILATERAL ISSUES/REGIONAL ISSUES

j. MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE OF NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT

21. Statement by Navtej Sarna, Special Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs and leader of the Indian delegation at the 17th Ministerial Conference of Non-Aligned Movement, New Delhi, 29 May 2014.

... Mr. President, while we can take pride in our success in rolling back colonialism and dismantling apartheid, we are also cognizant that the struggle of our brothers and sisters of Palestine has been long, arduous and painful. As a member of the UN Security Council during 2011-12, India had supported Palestine's bid for full and equal membership of the United Nations. It was during India's Presidency of the Security Council that we co-sponsored the UN

General Assembly resolution adopted in November 2012 that upgraded the status of Palestine to that of a non-member Observer State. Our struggle will, however, continue till we find a negotiated solution resulting in a sovereign, independent and viable united state of Palestine with East Jerusalem as its capital, living in secure and recognized borders, side by side and at peace with its neighbours....

... Mr. President, the conflict in Syria has raged far too long and threatens the stability and security of the region itself. India believes that there can be no military solution to the conflict. We fully support a Syrian led inclusive political dialogue that resolves the current crisis and meets the legitimate aspirations of all sections of Syrian society. We deeply regret the stalemate in the political process and urge all parties to resolve their differences and return to direct talks with political commitment...

Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, <http://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/23380/Statement+by+Shri+Navtej+Sarna+Special+Secretary+Ministry+of+External+Affairs+and+leader+of+the+Indian+delegation+at+the+17th+Ministerial+Conference+of+NonAligned+Movement>

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