

# **INDIA SPEAKS**

(Monthly Digest of Official Indian Statements on Middle East)

No. 61

August 2014

## **BILATERAL ISSUES**

### **a. EGYPT**

#### **1. Pankaj Advani wins IBSF 6-Red world snooker title in Egypt, Cairo, 1 July 2014**

India's ace cueist Pankaj Advani added another feather in his cap when he defeated Kacper Flilpiak of Poland to win the IBSF World 6-Red snooker Championship, in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt on Sunday, 29 June. He became the first player in the world to win world titles in the long and shorter formats of both billiards (time and point) and snooker (15-Red and 6-Red). Advani now has 9 world titles in billiards and snooker to his credit. This win takes him to highest tally of world titles by any Indian cueist in the Open Men's category.

Talking to journalists after winning the title, Advani said "This is a dream. I actually wasn't expecting anything from this championship. For the last two months, I've been playing quite a bit of billiards, so to come into a world snooker championship and win is simply unreal". He thanked his family, Coach Arvind Savur, Billiards and Snooker Federation of India (BSFI) and his employer ONGC for their unflinching support. He also appreciated the organizers and the IBSF for conducting such a massive event in Egypt.

Advani had previously won the IBSF (International Billiards and Snooker) World Snooker Championship held at China in 2003 at the age of 18. He remains the only person to have won all five billiards tournament in a season and the youngest sportsman to have won the world titles in Billiards for a record 8 times.

Besides Advani, the Indian women team comprising Vidya Pillai and Ameer Kamani shared the bronze medal jointly with Team Hong Kong. Receiving the team at Cairo airport on their arrival from Sharm El-Sheikh this morning, Indian Ambassador to Egypt Navdeep Suri congratulated Pankaj Advani on his remarkable accomplishment. "Your achievements have made India proud. We must treasure our champions and ensure that they receive our affection and respect", Navdeep Suri said.

*Source: Embassy of India, Cairo, [http://www.indembcairo.com/en-us/presscentre/pressreleases.aspx?udt\\_656\\_param\\_detail=30994](http://www.indembcairo.com/en-us/presscentre/pressreleases.aspx?udt_656_param_detail=30994)*

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## **2. Iftar Banquet hosted by Indian Ambassador, Cairo, 15 July 2014**

On 15 July, the Ambassador of India Navdeep Suri hosted a grand Iftar banquet at his residence. Around 150 guests attended including serving and former Egyptian Cabinet Ministers, leaders of political parties, senior officials, senior academics, artists and media representatives.

Present on the occasion were Minister of Communication & IT, Eng. Atef Ahmed Helmy; the Minister of Health & Population, Dr. Adel Adawy; Minister of Irrigation and Water Resources, Hossam El Din Moghazi. Also present were Former Prime Minister Dr. Essam Sharef, Former Administrative Development Minister Dr. Ahmed Darwish, Former Foreign Minister Dr. Mohamed Al Orabi and President of the Reform & Development Party, Mohamed Anwar Esmat Al Sadat. Hamdeen Sabahi, former Presidential candidate and founder of the Popular Current party also attended.

In his welcome remarks, Ambassador greeted the Egyptian people on the occasion of the Holy Month of Ramadan. He spoke about India's religious, cultural and ethnic diversity and the special place of Islamic civilization in India, which is home to the second largest number of Muslims in any country and also to all the major religions of the world. The influence of the Islamic civilization permeates all aspects of India's life and culture. The most well-known example of this is the Taj Mahal in Agra in India and lesser known is the fact that the oldest mosque in India, the Jum'ah Masjid in the state of Kerala dates back to the life of the Prophet Muhammad. Ambassador conveyed his message of India's unity in diversity in the Holy Month of Ramadan and how Iftar provided an occasion to celebrate India's composite culture.

The Iftar banquet received an extremely positive response from the distinguished guests. Several of them complimented the Indian embassy for this special initiative and said that it always reminds them of India's multicultural identity and the respect and tolerance for all faiths that is embedded in Indian culture.

*Source: Embassy of India, Cairo, [http://www.indembcairo.com/en-us/presscentre/pressreleases.aspx?udt\\_656\\_param\\_detail=33008](http://www.indembcairo.com/en-us/presscentre/pressreleases.aspx?udt_656_param_detail=33008)*

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## **b. IRAN**

### **3. Oil supply to India from Iran, New Delhi, 16 July 2014**

#### **Question:**

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

- (a) Whether oil supplies to India from Iran have been hit by fresh commercial sanctions imposed by the US on Iran under Iran Threat Reduction and Syria Human Rights Act, 2012 (ITRSHRA);
- (b) If so, the details in this regard;
- (c) Whether the new sanctions are likely to hamper India's plan to develop the Chabahar Port in Iran and if so, the facts thereof; and

(d) The alternative measures taken or being taken by the Government to bridge the gap of oil import?

**Answer:**

The Minister of State in the Ministry of External Affairs (Gen. Retd. V. K. Singh)

(a) to (c) Following talks between Iran and the “E3+3” countries (China, France, Germany, Russia, UK and the US) an interim agreement known as the “Joint Plan of Action” was reached by both sides on 24 November 2013, which provides for a temporary freeze on further unilateral financial sanctions against Iran by these countries till 20 July 2014.

Government, therefore, continues efforts to promote India’s participation in the development of the Iranian port of Chahbahar as it will help promote India’s economic interests throughout the region including in Afghanistan, Iran and in the Central Asian region.

(d) Government has been taking all necessary measures to enhance India’s energy security. Indian oil companies continuously engage in diversifying their crude oil purchase basket to eliminate dependence on any particular country or region.

*Source: Lok Sabha (Council of People), Unstarred Question No. 840, asked by Asaduddin Owaisi, <http://164.100.47.132/LssNew/psearch/OResult16.aspx?qref=650>*

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**4. Iran Pakistan India Gas Pipeline, New Delhi, 21 July 2014**

**Question**

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

- (a) Whether the Government has started the work on Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline project;
- (b) If so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons there for;
- (c) Whether the Government has consulted various stakeholders before arriving at any decision in this regard; and
- (d) If so, the findings of the said discussions and the efforts made by the Government to start the said project at the earliest?

**Answer**

Minister of State (independent charge) in the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (Dharmendra Pradhan)

(a) to (d). Iran-Pakistan-India (IPI) Gas Pipeline Project has been under discussion with the Governments of Iran and Pakistan since 2005. 60 MMSCMD of gas is proposed to be supplied in Phase-I, to be shared equally between India and Pakistan. In Phase-II 90 MMSCMD of gas is envisaged to be supplied. Several rounds of discussions have taken place, involving the India-Pakistan-Iran Joint Working Group (JWG), India-Pakistan JWG and the India-Iran Special JWG. The matter has also been discussed at the Ministerial level. Several critical issues, viz., the delivery point of Iranian gas, the project structure including project finance, guarantees related to safety of the pipeline and security of supply, pricing of gas, location of international seat of

arbitration, etc. are yet to be resolved. In view of critical issues remaining unresolved there has been no further development in this project.

*Source: Lok Sabha (Council of People), Unstarred Question No. 1445, asked by Devajibhai Govindbhai Fatepara Ravneet Singh,*  
<http://164.100.47.132/LssNew/psearch/QResult16.aspx?qref=1954>

### **c. IRAQ**

#### **5. Adverse effect of Iraq crisis on Indian rupee, New Delhi, 8 July 2014**

##### **Question**

Will the Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance be pleased to state:-

- (a) Whether it is a fact that escalation of crisis in Iraq has adversely affected the Indian rupee;
- (b) If so, the details thereof; and
- (c) The details of remedial measures Government has taken or proposes to take in this regard?

##### **Answer**

Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance (Nirmala Sitharaman)

(a) & (b) Since the escalation of the Iraq crisis in the second week of June 2014, the exchange rate of the rupee (RBI Reference Rate) has depreciated marginally from Rs. 59.33 on 12 June 2014 to Rs. 60.14 per US \$ on July 1, 2014. The details are as follows:

Date	Rs. /US\$
12-06-2014	59.33
13-06-2014	59.48
16-06-2014	60.01
17-06-2014	60.37
18-06-2014	60.12
19-06-2014	60.00
20-06-2014	60.28
23-06-2014	60.19
24-06-2014	60.11
25-06-2014	60.28
26-06-2014	60.16
27-06-2014	60.10
30-06-2014	60.09
01-07-2014	60.14

(c) The Government closely monitors the emerging global economic situation and calibrates appropriate policy responses to cope with it.

*Source: Rajya Sabha (Council of State), Unstarred Question No. 190, asked by Rajkumar Dhoot, <http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/OREsult.aspx>*

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## **6. Safe evacuation of Indians in Iraq, New Delhi, 9 July 2014**

### **Question**

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

- (a) Whether several Indians, including nurses, were/are trapped/held captives in Iraq and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) The assistance provided to Indian nationals stranded in Iraq so far;
- (c) The details of the help desks opened at the Indian Embassy in Iraq and India;
- (d) The steps taken by the Government in consultation with the Iraqi Government to ensure the safety and security of Indian nationals and their safe evacuation; and
- (e) The number of Indians returned to the country and the estimated number still residing/trapped in Iraq and yet to be evacuated?

### **Answer**

The Minister for External Affairs (Sushma Swaraj)

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

Statement referred to in reply to parts (A) to (E) of the Lok Sabha starred question No. 42 Regarding "Safe evacuation of Indians in Iraq" to be answered on 09 July 2014

(a) Several Indians got trapped in the conflict areas following sudden attacks and capturing of several cities in northern and central Iraq by the Islamic State of Iraq and Sham (ISIS) beginning 8 June.

A group of 46 nurses working in a local hospital in the city of Tikrit got stuck due to the conflict, but have now been safely brought back to India. Another group of about 41 Indian nationals working in a construction company in Mosul were taken captive by an unidentified group. The Government of India is making every efforts and taking all steps to secure their release as well.

(b) & (c) On 19 June, the Government suspended emigration clearance to Iraq, until further notification and advised Indian nationals to avoid all travel to Iraq. The Government issued travel advisories on 15 June, 24 June and 28 June advising Indian nationals to leave Iraq by commercial means. Our nationals living in areas affected by the ongoing armed conflict have been advised to stay indoors as far as possible and to remain in contact with our Embassy in Baghdad for necessary guidance and updated information on the evolving security situation. Those Indian nationals, who do not have travel documents or need other consular services, have been advised to seek assistance from our Embassy in Baghdad.

Our Mission in Baghdad and the Ministry of External Affairs have established 24 hour helplines to assist our nationals in Iraq and their concerned family members in India. The Government has set up special camp offices in Najaf, Karbala and Basra and strengthened our Embassy in

Baghdad through the addition of 25 staff members. These new officers are proactively contacting Indian nationals and companies where they work, offering all necessary assistance, including provision of travel documents, air tickets and facilitation in any other form for travel out of Iraq.

The contact details of our camp officers in these cities, available on the websites of our Embassy in Baghdad and the Ministry of External Affairs, are as follows:

1) Najaf +964 771 6511190; +964 771 6511181; +964 771 6511179

Email: controlroomnajaf@gmail.com

2) Karbala: +964 771 6511183; +964 771 6511180; +964 771 6511176

E-mail: controlroomkarbala@gmail.com

3) Basra: +964 771 6511185; +964 771 6511182; +964 771 6511178

E-mail: controlroombasrah@gmail.com

4) 24 hour help line in Baghdad: +964 770 444 4899; +964 770 484 3247; +964 771 6511189; +964 771 6511193

Emails: amb.baghdad@mea.gov.in; [hoc.baghdad@mea.gov.in](mailto:hoc.baghdad@mea.gov.in); [cons.baghdad@mea.gov.in](mailto:cons.baghdad@mea.gov.in); edubaghdad@yahoo.com

5) 24 hour help lines in Ministry of External Affairs.+91 11 2301 2113; +91 11 2301 7905; +91 11 2301 4104

Email: controlroom@mea.gov.in

The details of these help lines have been well publicized through the media.

(d) & (e) Our Embassy in Baghdad is in close and regular contact with the Iraqi Government authorities and Iraqi Red Crescent Society for safe return of Indian nationals from Iraq.

A few thousand Indians were estimated to be in Iraq, mostly in relatively safer autonomous Kurdistan region and in southern Iraq before the conflict. Our Embassy has been providing all necessary assistance to Indian nationals desirous of returning to India, including through provision of travel documents, air tickets and special flights.

As of 6 July, 2,117 Indian nationals were provided assistance for travelling back to India. This includes air tickets to 1,020 Indian nationals.

*Source: Lok Sabha (Council of People), Unstarred Question No. 42, asked by K. C. Venugopal, <http://164.100.47.132/LssNew/psearch/QResult16.aspx?qref=618>*

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## **7. Impact of Iraq crisis on import of oil, New Delhi, 9 July 2014**

### **Question**

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

a) Whether current Iraq crisis will have any impact on India's import of oil from Iraq;

- b) If so, the details thereof and the alternative measures being explored by Government in the event of non-supply of oil from Iraq; and
- c) The details of measures/ contingency plan prepared by Government for both short and medium term to tackle any war like situation, particularly in Iraq and also keep the prices of petroleum products under check?

**Answer**

The Minister of State (independent charge) in the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (Dharmendra Pradhan)

(a) and (b) : Currently, there is no impact on import of crude oil from Iraq due to the prevailing crisis in that country. Indian oil companies import Iraqi crude oil from the Basrah terminal located in southern Iraq and the export facilities at Basrah are operational and the loadings of crude oil are going on normally.

(c) In order to deal with any contingency arising out of further deepening in crisis in Iraq, the Indian oil companies have formulated their short and medium term contingency plans. The contingency plans, inter-alia, include the following measures:

(i) The oil companies will approach other term suppliers i.e. National Oil Companies of countries with whom they presently have crude oil term contracts for additional volume, over and above the existing planned term lifting, so as to compensate for any reduction in imports from Iraq.

(ii) The oil companies can also make up any subsequent uncovered shortfall in crude oil availability by increasing spot procurement of high sulphur and low sulphur grades from the international market through the tender route.

*Source: Rajya Sabha (Council of People), Unstarred Question No. 364, asked by Sanjay Raut, <http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/OREsult.aspx>*

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**8. Effect of Iraq crisis on supply of crude oil, New Delhi, 9 July 2014**

**Question**

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

- a) Whether the supply of crude oil from Iraq has been affected by the recent crisis in that country;
- b) If so, the details in this regard; and
- c) What are the preparations of Government to face the situation if the crisis deepens further affecting the supply of crude oil drastically?

**Answer**

Minister of State (Independent Charge) in the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (Dharmendra Pradhan)

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



Statement referred to in reply to parts (a) to (c) of Rajya Sabha Starred Question No.49 asked by Balwinder Singh Bhunder to be answered on 9.7.2014 regarding Effect of Iraq Crisis on Supply of Crude Oil.

(a) and (b): Currently, there is no impact on import of crude oil from Iraq due to the prevailing crisis in that country. Indian oil companies import Iraqi crude oil from the Basrah terminal located in southern Iraq and the export facilities at Basrah are operational and the loadings of crude oil are going on normally.

(c) In order to deal with any contingency arising out of further deepening in crisis in Iraq, the Indian oil companies have formulated their short and medium term contingency plans. The contingency plans, inter-alia, include the following measures:

a. The oil companies will approach other term suppliers i.e. National Oil Companies of countries with whom they presently have crude oil term contracts for additional volume, over and above the existing planned term lifting, so as to compensate for any reduction in imports from Iraq.

b. The oil companies can also make up any subsequent uncovered shortfall in crude oil availability by increasing spot procurement of high sulphur and low sulphur grades from the international market through the tender route.

c. Standalone refiners viz., Reliance, Essar and MRPL would be requested to reserve additional stock of HSD/SKO/MS/LPG over and above the normal month to month requirement, to enable the PSU oil marketing companies to meet the domestic demand.

d. In case there is a shortfall in availability of HSD/SKO/LPG from indigenous refineries due to shortfall in crude oil availability, then the same can be imported.

e. Ministry of Railways and Ministry of Shipping could also be requested for support regarding priority movement of POL products and berthing of POL tankers, respectively.

f. ONGC Videsh Ltd. (OVL) has equity sweet crude in Sakhalin-I, Imperial (Russia), Sudan (North and South), Brazil and Azerbaijan. Besides these, OVL also has equity sour and heavy crude from Colombia and Venezuela. OVL's share of crude oil can also be brought to India.

*Source: Rajya Sabha (Council of People), Unstarred Question No. 49, asked by Balwinder Singh Bhunder, <http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/QResult.aspx>*

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## **9. Impact of crisis in Iraq on crude oil prices, New Delhi, 16 July 2014**

### **Question**

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

(a) Whether it is a fact that crude oil prices are likely to go up in view of the political crisis in Iraq in view of occupation of several major oil wells by the ISIS;



(b) If so, the alternative arrangement made by Government to procure crude oil to meet the domestic needs; and

(c) The details of crude oil imported from Iraq and its percentage of total crude imported from abroad?

**Answer**

Minister of State (Independent Charge) in the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (Dharmendra Pradhan)

(a) & (b): Currently, there is no impact on import of crude oil from Iraq due to the prevailing political crisis in that country.

(c): Import of Crude Oil from Iraq vis-à-vis the percentage with respect to total import of crude oil during 2011-2012, 2012-2013 and 2013-14 (Provisional) is as under:

**(Figures in MMT)**

Year	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
Import from Iraq	24.12	24.04	24.63
Total Import	171.73	184.79	189.24
Percentage	14.04%	13.01%	13.02%

*Source: Rajya Sabha (Council of People), Unstarred Question No. 865, asked by VijayJawaharlal Darda, <http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/QResult.aspx>*

**10. Attack kidnapping of Indians, New Delhi, 17 July 2014**

**Question**

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

(a) Whether a large number of incidents of attacks and kidnapping on Indians in oil richer nations, particularly in Iraq have been reported during the last three months, if so, the details thereof;

(b) Whether many Indian employees who are working in these countries are in distress and seeking Indian Government's help for their safety; and

(c) If so, the details of steps taken/being taken by Government to ensure safety and security of our people in these countries?

**Answer**

The Minister of State in the Ministry of External Affairs (Gen. Retd. V.K. Singh)

a) There are no reported incidents of attacks and kidnapping of Indian nationals in oil rich Gulf nations.

Some Indians were trapped in the conflict areas following sudden attacks and capturing of several cities in northern and central Iraq by the organization named Islamic State of Iraq and Sham (ISIS) beginning 8 June. A group of 41 Indian nationals working in a construction company in Mosul were taken captive by an unidentified group.

Another group of 46 nurses working in a local hospital in the city of Tikrit, Iraq got stuck due to the conflict. They were abducted to Mosul on 3 July by an unidentified group. On 4 July, they were released and a special Air India flight was arranged on the same day to bring them back to India.

b) No incident of Indian workers in distress in the oil-rich Gulf countries seeking Government's help for their safety has been reported by our Embassies in these countries.

However, due to ongoing turmoil in Iraq, the Government is facilitating Indian nationals in Iraq in their safe return to India, if they so desire.

c) The Government is closely monitoring the security situation in Iraq and is making every effort and taking all necessary steps to ensure safe return of our nationals from there. Our Embassy in Baghdad is in close and regular contact with the Iraqi Government authorities for assisting Indian nationals currently in Iraq. Our Embassy in Baghdad and the Ministry of External Affairs have established 24-hour helplines to assist our nationals in Iraq and their concerned family members in India. We have also set up special camp offices in Basra, Najaf and Karbala and strengthened our Mission in Baghdad through the addition of 25 staff members. These field offices are proactively contacting Indian nationals and companies where they work, offering their services for the facilitation of our nationals to leave Iraq by offering air tickets as well as help with immigration and departure facilities. The details of these helplines have been well publicized through the media.

*Source: Rajya Sabha (Council of People), Unstarred Question No. 956, asked by Sanjay Raut, <http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/QResult.aspx>*

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### **11. Number of Indians working in Iraq, New Delhi, 17 July 2014**

#### **Question**

Will the Minister of State in the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs be pleased to state:-

- (a) Whether Government has any information about the number of Indians working in Iraq, if so, the details thereof;
- (b) Whether it is a fact that many Indians working in conflict-prone areas in Iraq have sought Government's help to come back to the country; and
- (c) If so, the number of such people sought to be evacuated and the number out of them who have been brought back and the measures that are proposed to be taken for their rehabilitation?

#### **Answer**

Minister of State in the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (Gen. Retd. V.K. Singh)

(a): During the last three years, emigration clearance for Iraq has been granted to 10356 workers.

(b) & (c): A total of 120 Indians stranded in conflict areas, out of estimated 210, have been evacuated so far, including 46 nurses in Tikrit. In addition, about 2200 Indian nationals in relatively safe areas have also been given assistance to return to India.

The Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs, in cooperation with the Embassy of India in Iraq is in constant contact with the Iraqi authorities regarding the evacuation of the workers willing to return to India. The requests being received through different channels like State Government organizations and individuals are being taken up instantaneously.

In coordination with the State Governments, the returnees are being facilitated to reach their respective destinations safely.

*Source: Rajya Sabha (Council of State), Unstarred Question No. 85, asked by D. Raja, M.P. Achuthan and P. Rajeeve, <http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/QResult.aspx>*

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## **12. Indian citizens trapped in Iraq, New Delhi, 17 July 2014**

### **Question**

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

- (a) Whether terrorists have taken hostage of Indian citizens in Iraq;
- (b) Whether the Government of India is in contact with Iraqi Government and officials to help its Indian citizens entangled in Iraq;
- (c) Whether Government of India has set up any control room or started any helpline for information and contact of families of Indian entangled in violence affected areas of Iraq;
- (d) The number of Indians apprehended to be entangled in Iraq;
- (e) Whether the efforts are being made by Government of India for their release; and
- (f) If so, the details thereof?

### **Answer**

The Minister of State in the Ministry of External Affairs (Gen. Retd. V.K Singh)

- a) A group of 41 Indian nationals working in a construction company in Mosul were taken captive by an unidentified group.

Another group of 46 nurses working in a local hospital in the city of Tikrit got stuck due to the conflict. They were abducted to Mosul on 3 July by an unidentified group. On 4 July, they were released and a special Air India flight was arranged on the same day to bring them back to India.

b) Our Embassy in Baghdad is in close and regular contact with the Iraqi Government authorities to assist our nationals currently in Iraq.

c) Our Mission in Baghdad and the Ministry of External Affairs have established 24 hour helplines to assist our nationals in Iraq and their concerned family members in India. We have also set up special camp offices in Basra, Najaf and Karbala and strengthened our Mission in Baghdad through the addition of 25 staff members.

The contact details of our camp officers in Iraq cities, available on the websites of our Embassy in Baghdad and the Ministry of External Affairs, are as follows:

- 1) Najaf; +964 771 6511190; +964 771 6511181; +964 771 6511179

Email: controlroomnajaf@gmail.com

2) Karbala; +964 771 6511183; +964 771 6511180; +964 771 6511176

E-mail: controlroomkarbala@gmail.com

3) Basra: +964 771 6511185; +964 771 6511182; +964 771 6511178

E-mail: controlroombasrah@gmail.com

4) 24 hour help line in Baghdad: +964 770 444 4899; +964 770 484 3247; +964 771 6511189; +964 771 6511193

Emails: [amb.baghdad@mea.gov.in](mailto:amb.baghdad@mea.gov.in); [hoc.baghdad@mea.gov.in](mailto:hoc.baghdad@mea.gov.in); [cons.baghdad@mea.gov.in](mailto:cons.baghdad@mea.gov.in); edubaghdad@yahoo.com

5) 24 hour help lines in Ministry of External Affairs: +91 11 2301 2113; +91 11 2301 7905; +91 11 2301 4104; Email: controlroom@mea.gov.in

The details of these helplines have been well publicized through the media.

(d) An estimated 22,000 Indian nationals were in Iraq at the beginning of the conflict. This included 500 in Baghdad, 2,300 in Najaf, 1,000 in Karbala, 3,000 in Basra, 15,000 in Kurdistan and about 200 in other cities.

(e) & (f) The camp offices set up in Basra, Najaf and Karbala and our Embassy in Baghdad are proactively contacting Indian nationals and companies where they work, offering their services for the facilitation of our nationals to leave Iraq by offering air tickets as well as help with immigration and departure facilities. Government is making all efforts and taking all steps to secure the release of 41 Indian nationals who have been taken captive in Mosul.

The Government is facilitating return of Indian nationals in commercial carriers from Baghdad, Najaf and Basra. Over 3,000 Indian nationals have left for home with the assistance of our Embassy in Baghdad and the camp offices. The Indian Community Welfare fund (ICWF) is being used to provide assistance to Indian nationals in Iraq.

*Source: Rajya Sabha (Council of State), Unstarred Question No. 947, asked by Ishawarlal Shankarlal Jain, <http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/QResult.aspx>*

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### **13. Help to Indians trapped in Iraq, New Delhi, 17 July 2014**

#### **Question**

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

(a) Whether many Indians were taken hostages and trapped in the war-torn cities of Iraq by insurgents of Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS); if so, the details of Indians taken hostages and trapped therein;

(b) The efforts that were made by Government to get released the hostages and evacuate Indians from Iraq; and

(c) The number of Indians who have been evacuated and the efforts that have been made to ensure the safety of others left behind in Iraq?

**Answer**

Minister of External Affairs (Sushma Swaraj)

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

Statement Referred to in reply to parts (A) To (C) of the Rajya Sabha starred question No. 143 regarding “Help to Indians Trapped in Iraq” for answer on 17.07.2014

(a) An estimated 22,000 Indian nationals were in Iraq at the beginning of the conflict. This included 500 in Baghdad, 2,300 in Najaf, 1,000 in Karbala, 3,000 in Basra, 15,000 in Kurdistan and about 200 in other cities. Some Indians got trapped in the conflict areas following sudden attacks and capturing of several cities in northern and central Iraq by the Islamic State of Iraq and Sham (ISIS) beginning 8 June.

A group of 46 nurses working in a local hospital in the city of Tikrit got stuck due to the conflict, but were safely brought back to India in a special Air India flight on 5 July. Another group of about 41 Indian nationals working in a construction company in Mosul were taken captive by an unidentified group. The Government of India is making every effort and taking all steps to secure their release as well.

(b) & (c) Our Embassy in Baghdad is in close and regular contact with the Iraqi Government authorities and Iraqi Red Crescent Society for safe return of our nationals from Iraq.

On 19 June, the Government suspended emigration clearance to Iraq, until further notification and advised Indian nationals to avoid all travel to Iraq. The Government issued travel advisories on 15 June, 24 June and 28 June advising Indian nationals to leave Iraq by commercial means. Our nationals living in areas affected by the ongoing armed conflict have been advised to stay indoors as far as possible and to remain in contact with our Embassy in Baghdad for necessary guidance and updated information on the evolving security situation. Those Indian nationals, who do not have travel documents or need other consular services, have been advised to seek assistance from our Embassy in Baghdad.

Our Mission in Baghdad and the Ministry of External Affairs have established 24 hour helplines to assist our nationals in Iraq and their concerned family members in India. The Government has set up special camp offices in Najaf, Karbala and Basra and strengthened our Embassy in Baghdad through the addition of 25 staff members. These new officers are proactively contacting Indian nationals and companies where they work, offering all necessary assistance, including provision of travel documents, air tickets and facilitation in any other form for travel out of Iraq.

The contact details of our camp officers in these cities are available on the websites of our Embassy in Baghdad and the Ministry of External Affairs. The details of these helplines have been well publicized through the media.

Our Embassy has been providing all necessary assistance to Indian nationals, including provision of travel documents, air tickets and special flights.

As of 14 July, over 3,500 Indian nationals have been provided assistance for travelling back to India. This includes air tickets to over 2,500 Indian nationals.

*Source: Rajya Sabha (Council of State), Starred Question No. 143, asked by Balwinder Singh Bhunder, <http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/QResult.aspx>*

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#### **14. Impact of Iraq turmoil, New Delhi, 18 July 2014**

##### **Question**

Will the Minister of Finance be pleased to state:-

- (a) Whether the Government has assessed the possible impact of Iraq turmoil on the Indian economy; and
- (b) If so, the details thereof and the corrective measures taken/being taken by the Government in this regard?

##### **Answer**

Finance Minister (Arun Jaitley)

(a) and (b): The turmoil in Iraq has the potential to have an impact on international prices of oil. If oil prices rise significantly and remain persistent at higher levels, India's import bill of petroleum, oil and lubricants (POL) and the current account deficit may be impacted. Higher international oil prices can also have implications for domestic inflation and fiscal deficit, depending on the pass-through of higher international oil prices to the domestic economy and the rise in energy cost. Further, business sentiments can be affected by such uncertainties. The problems in Iraq had pushed up the international crude oil prices in the second and third week of June 2014, which, however, declined subsequently. Hardening of international oil prices and market expectations on the same could be the main reason that led to the depreciation of the rupee in the immediate aftermath of the Iraq crisis.

The Government closely monitors the emerging situation and calibrates appropriate policy responses to cope with it. India's exchange rate policy is guided by the broad principles of careful monitoring and management of exchange rates with flexibility, while allowing the underlying demand and supply conditions to determine the exchange rate movements over a period in an orderly manner.

*Source: Lok Sabha (Council of State), Unstarred Question No. 1332, asked by Dr. Kirti Somaiya, <http://164.100.47.132/LssNew/psearch/QResult16.aspx?qref=1665>*

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#### **15. Implications of Conflict in Iraq and Afganistan, New Delhi, 23 July 2014**

##### **Question**

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

- (a) Whether the Indian Government has made any assessment of the implications of the conflict situation in Iraq and Afghanistan on the strategic and security interests of the country; and  
(b) If so, the details thereof?

**Answer**

The Minister of State in the Ministry of External Affairs (Gen. Retd. V.K. Singh)

(a) & (b) Government continues to carefully assess the implications of the ongoing conflict situation in Iraq and Afghanistan on India's security and strategic interests. Government is committed to taking all necessary steps to safeguard India's security and territorial integrity. Government is closely following the ongoing developments in these countries particularly with regard to the safety and security of Indian nationals there.

*Source: Lok Sabha (Council of State), Unstarred Question No. 2079, asked by Jyotiraditya Madhavrao Scindia, <http://164.100.47.132/LssNew/psearch/QResult16.aspx?qref=1519>*

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**16. Transcript of Media Briefing by Official Spokesperson, New Delhi, 23 July 2014**

**Question:**

Akbar, can you give us some update on Iraq? What is the fate of the 40 construction workers who are held there?

**Answer:** Official Spokesperson (Syed Akbarudeen)

Let me try and take you back to when this crisis started, where we were at that stage and where we are today. We were in a situation where 150 Indian nationals were in the zone of conflict, and several others were very concerned about their safety and security although they were not in the zone of conflict. Where are we today? Out of the 150 who were in the zone of conflict, you are aware that 46 nurses were brought back through Erbil. Not many of you are aware, another 58 nurses have been brought out of the zone of conflict in extremely difficult circumstances, but very quietly through land routes and they have come back. There are 58 of them. Of course, you were very concerned of 46 and I do understand your concern for them. But 58 others have been over the period of last three weeks brought back in some small numbers in very difficult circumstances with the aid and assistance of our friends in Iraq. Those 58 are also back. There were 46 who were back previously. That leaves a number of Indians who are in Mosul in captivity, and some very small others who are there. Let me assure you, some others in zones of conflict like these other nurses who we have brought out in smaller places. And we will not be able to share further information of what is happening in the zone of conflict because it impedes our operational ability there. But let me assure you that we are working at all levels. We have diplomatic envoys who are working on this matter even today. Also, we are working at the ground level. But like none of you know how 58 nurses were brought back very quietly, we cannot share that information with you who helped us, how much we knew because all of you had lost interest in them except for the Government of India which is committed to working to



ensure that every Indian in difficulty will be brought back. That is our endeavour that is our hope even if you follow it or if you do not.

*Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, <http://www.mea.gov.in/media-briefings.htm?dtl/23717/Transcript+of+Media+Briefing+by+Official+Spokesperson+July+23+2014>*

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### **17. Special schemes for Indian citizens who returned from Iraq, New Delhi, 24 July 2014**

#### **Question**

Will the Minister of State in the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs be pleased to state:-

- (a) Whether Government has noticed about the difficulties face by the Indians in Iraq and the citizens who came back from Iraq; and
- (b) If so, whether Government is planning for any special scheme to help them to get employment inside India?

#### **Answer**

Minister of State in the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (Gen. Retd. V.K. Singh)

- (a) Yes, Sir.
- (b) Government of India is not planning any special scheme as the State Governments engage in the task of providing necessary assistance, if required, to such returnees.

*Source: Rajya Sabha (Council of State), Starred Question No. 1708, asked by K.N. Balagopal, <http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/OREsult.aspx>*

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### **18. External Affairs Minister's response to Calling Attention Motion on "Situation arising out of Indians stranded in Iraq and steps taken by the Government in this regard" in Lok Sabha, New Delhi, 24 July 2014**

I rise to respond to the House on the Calling Attention Notices regarding "Situation arising out of Iraq civil war" and "Urgent need to bring back the 41 labourers stranded in Iraq and also the remaining Indians, those who wish to come back."

At the outset, I would like to reiterate to this august House that the Government fully shares the concerns of the Hon'ble Members of Parliament regarding the recent developments in Iraq and safety and security of Indian nationals stranded in Iraq.

The Government of India remains deeply concerned with the ongoing conflict and deteriorating security scenario in Iraq, resulting out of sudden attacks by the Islamic State of Iraq and Sham (ISIS). The speed with which the ISIS began their attacks on 8 June and captured several cities in Northern and Central Iraq took everyone by surprise. Since then, the security situation in Iraq has remained critical and fragile.

An estimated 22,000 Indians were in Iraq at the onset of the conflict. This included 500 in Baghdad, 2,300 in Najaf, 1,000 in Karbala, 3,000 in Basra, 15,000 in Kurdistan and 200 in other cities. Some Indians got trapped in the conflict areas following these sudden attacks.

A group of 46 nurses working in a local hospital in the city of Tikrit got stuck due to the conflict. They were taken to Mosul on 3 July by an unidentified group. On 4 July, they were released and a special Air India flight was arranged on the same day to bring them back to India. They reached Kochi safely on the morning of 5 July by the special flight, which also brought back 134 other Indian workers, including 80 to Hyderabad and 54 to Delhi.

Another group of about 41 Indian nationals working in a construction company in Mosul were taken captive by an unidentified group. The Government is making all efforts and taking all steps to secure their release as well.

The Government of India has been regularly and closely monitoring the security situation in Iraq. Since the onset of crisis in Iraq, we have regularly issued travel advisories for our nationals, including on 15 June, 24 June and 28 June. Indian nationals have been advised to avoid all travel to Iraq, until further notification and a ban has been imposed by the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs on emigration to Iraq by ECR category travellers effective 19 June 2014.

We have reiterated our advice to our nationals in Iraq to leave the country by commercial means if it is safe to do so. Our nationals living in areas affected by the ongoing armed conflict have been advised to stay indoors as far as possible and to remain in contact with our Embassy in Baghdad for necessary guidance and updated information on the evolving security situation. Those Indian nationals, who do not have travel documents or need other consular services like air tickets, help with immigration clearances etc., have been advised to seek assistance from our Embassy in Baghdad.

Since 15 June, 24-hour helplines in dedicated control rooms have been set up by our Embassy in Baghdad and the Ministry of External Affairs to assist our nationals in Iraq and their concerned family members in India. The details of these help lines have been well publicized through the media.

We have also set up special camp offices in Basra, Najaf and Karbala and strengthened our Mission in Baghdad through the addition of 25 staff members. These field offices are proactively contacting Indian nationals and companies where they work, offering their services for the facilitation of our nationals to leave Iraq by offering air tickets as well as help with immigration and departure facilities. We have sent our former Ambassador to Iraq to strengthen and coordinate our Embassy's efforts to assist our nationals. The Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) is being used to provide assistance to our nationals in Iraq.

The inter-ministerial ‘Standing Group for Repatriation of Indian Nationals from Abroad’ has put in place robust constituency plans for safe and expeditious evacuation of our nationals from Iraq, if situation so demands. While we prepare ourselves to meet any emergency situation, as of now, we remain engaged in facilitating our nationals in safe areas in Iraq to return home by providing all required assistance including, travel documents and air tickets.

As of 22 July, over 4,000 Indian nationals have been provided assistance for travelling back to India, including air tickets to over 3,000 nationals, since the setting up of the camp offices.

The safety and security of Indian nationals, especially 41 Indian nationals in captivity in Mosul, is a matter of foremost concern and preoccupation for us. We are leaving no stone unturned for their safe return.

I assure this August House that it would remain the earnest endeavour of our Government to assist every Indian citizen currently in Iraq and ensure their safe return.

*Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, <http://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/23741/External+Affairs+Ministers+response+to+Calling+Attention+Motion+on+Situation+arising+out+of+Indians+stranded+in+Iraq+and+steps+taken+by+the+Government+in+this+regard+in+Lok+Sabha+July+24+2014>*

### **19. New Contact Details of MEA Control Room, Kuwait, 25 July 2014**

In view of the precarious security situation in Iraq, MEA had set-up a Control Room effective from 17 June 2014. Following are the new contact details of the MEA Control Room:

Phones:	Fax:	Email:
+91 11 2301 1954	+91 11 2301 3945	controlroom@mea.gov.in
+91 11 2301 2292	+91 11 2301 0889	+91 11 2301 7160

The 24-hour helpline, as per details below, set up by the Indian Embassy in Baghdad, on 15 June 2014 also remains operational. The contact details are as follows:

Phones:	Email:
a. +964 770 444 4899	a. amb.baghdad@mea.gov.in
b. +964 770 484 3247	b. hoc.baghdad@mea.gov.in
c. +964 771 651 1189	c. cons.baghdad@mea.gov.in
d. +964 771 651 1193	d. edubaghdad@yahoo.com

Website: [www.indianembassybaghdad.in](http://www.indianembassybaghdad.in)

The camp offices in Najaf, Karbala and Basra, functional since 28 June 2014 for assisting Indians nationals in Iraq, also remain operational as per details below:

Najaf	Karbala	Basra
a. +964 771 6511190	+964 771 6511183	+964 771 6511185
b. +964 771 6511181	+964 771 6511180	+964 771 6511182

c. +964 771 6511179      +964 771 6511176      +964 771 6511178

E-mail: controlroomnajaf@gmail.com      E-mail:controlroomkarbala@gmail.com      E-mail:controlroombasrah@gmail.com

All Indian nationals in Iraq requiring assistance in returning to India may contact the station nearest to their location as indicated above. All necessary assistance, including provision of travel documents, air tickets and facilitation in any other form for travel out of Iraq, will be provided to those Indian nationals desirous of returning back to India.

*Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait, <http://indembkwt.org/pages/NewContactDetails.aspx>*

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#### **d. ISRAEL**

##### **20. Official Spokesperson's response to a media question on escalation of violence in Gaza and Israel, New Delhi, 10 July 2014**

In response to a media query regarding the recent escalation of violence in Gaza and Israel, the official Spokesperson said:

"India is deeply concerned at the steep escalation of violence between Israel and Palestine, particularly, heavy air strikes in Gaza, resulting in tragic loss of civilian lives and heavy damage to property. At the same time, India is alarmed at the cross-border provocations resulting from rocket attacks against targets in parts of Israel.

India calls upon both sides to exercise maximum restraint and avoid taking actions that may further exacerbate the situation, and threaten the peace and security of the region.

India remains firmly convinced that dialogue remains the only viable option that can effectively address the issues confronting the region and its people. We call upon both sides to resume direct talks at the earliest, in adherence to the obligations assumed by them under the peace process, for a comprehensive resolution of the Palestinian issue."

*Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, <http://www.mea.gov.in/media-briefings.htm?dtl/23602/Official+Spokespersons+response+to+a+media+question+on+escalation+of+violence+in+Gaza+and+Israel>*

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##### **21. Meeting of the Indo-Israel working group on counter-terrorism, New Delhi, 23 July 2014**

###### **Question**

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

- (a) Whether a meeting of the Indo-Israel working group on counter-terrorism was held in the recent past in New Delhi;
- (b) If so, the details thereof;
- (c) Whether Israel has offered its services to fight terrorism;
- (d) If so, the details thereof; and

(e) The manner in which the Government proposes to utilize the services of the Israeli experts in countering terrorism?

**Answer**

The Minister of State in the Ministry of External Affairs (Gen. Retd. V. K. Singh)

(a) Yes.

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

(c) to (e) Both India and Israel agreed to enhance dialogue and co-operation in the area of counter terrorism and have signed agreements on Co-operation in Homeland and Public Security, Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty and Protection of Classified Materials and Information on 27 February 2014.

*Source: Lok Sabha (Council of People), Unstarred Question No. 1899, asked by Ravneet Singh <http://164.100.47.132/LssNew/psearch/QResult16.aspx?qref=1484>*

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**22. Free trade Agreement between India and Israel, New Delhi, 30 July 2014**

**Question:**

Will the Minister of State in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry be pleased to state:-

- a) Whether it is a fact that eight rounds of discussions have been held since 2010 for a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between India and Israel;
- b) If so, the reasons for the delay in signing this Agreement; and
- c) By when Government proposes to conclude the Agreement?

**Answer:**

The Minister of State in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (Independent Charge) (Nirmala Sitharaman)

a) to c) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement referred to in reply to parts (a) to (c) of Rajya Sabha starred question No. 312 for answer on 30 July 2014 regarding "Delay in Signing of FTA with Israel"

(a) Yes, Sir. The 8th Round of discussions was held between 24-26 November 2013 in Jerusalem, Israel.

(b) India-Israel Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations are under way between India and Israel. India is aiming to achieve a mutually beneficial and balanced FTA with Israel.

(c) No deadline has been set for concluding the India-Israel Free Trade Agreement.

*Source: Rajya Sabha (Council of State), Starred Question No. 312, asked by Naresh Agrawal, <http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/OREsult.aspx>*

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**e. JORDAN**

**23. Anil Trigunayat, Ambassador of the Republic of India to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan called on Dr. Hatem Al-Halawani, Minister of Industry, Trade & Supply, Amman, 2 July 2015**

(a). H.E. Anil Trigunayat, Ambassador of the Republic of India to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan called on H.E. Dr. Hatem Al-Halawani, Minister of Industry, Trade & Supply on 2 July 2014.

(b). Ambassador Trigunayat and Minister Halawani held constructive discussions on the entire gamut of bilateral relations, especially in the fields of trade and investment, energy, and capacity building cooperation. They expressed satisfaction on the existing bilateral trade cooperation between the two countries but stressed on the need to provide further impetus to give more fillip to the relations through constructive collaboration between Public and Private Sectors of the two countries in the areas of Small & Medium Scale Industries, IT, Pharmaceutical, banking sectors; and more participations in major trade fair events. Ambassador Trigunayat proposed Minister Halawani to lead business delegation from Jordan to participate at one of the International Trade Fairs in future possibly after the Indo-Jordan Trade and Economic Committee meeting which is expected to be held in Amman in the last quarter of 2014.

(c). Discussion also focused on the inauguration of the Jordan-India Fertilizer Company [JIFCO], a Joint venture project worth US\$ 850 million in fertilizer sector, by His Majesty King Abdullah at his convenience. Another similar project in the fertilizer sector between Gujarat Narmada Fertilizer Company (GNFC) & JPMC for which an MOU was signed in March 2013 was also discussed at length. Ambassador Trigunayat also highlighted Indian investment of over US\$ 60 million in Jordan in textile sectors and their contribution in employment generation. Minister underscored importance of taking the relations to a strategic level given the vast potential between the two nations.

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

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**24. Anil Trigunayat, Ambassador of the Republic of India to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan called on Dr. Lana Mamkegh, Jordanian Minister of Culture, Amman, 10 July 2014**

(a) Anil Trigunayat, Ambassador of the Republic of India to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan called on Dr. Lana Mamkegh, Jordanian Minister of Culture, on 10 July 2014.

(b) Ambassador Trigunayat and Minister Mamkegh held constructive discussions in context of the cultural relations between the two countries that have civilizational linkages. Taking a cue

from the historic cultural linkages that India and Arab world share both the countries agreed to renew the Cultural Exchange Program (CEP). They further decided to discuss the modus operandi thereof in detail so that a functional work plan of cultural activities could be devised and its implementation ensured.

(c) The discussions further included the celebration of the 65th year of diplomatic ties between India and Jordan in 2015 by means of enhanced cultural interaction between the two countries and by organizing various events such as exhibitions showcasing traditional art and craft, film festivals etc. Honourable Minister appreciated and agreed to provide full support and impetus.

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

#### **d. KUWAIT**

##### **25. Transportation of Mortal Remains of our Nationals to India, Kuwait, 3 July 2014**

During the current calendar year from 1 January - 30 June 2014, the Embassy has registered 258 deaths of Indian nationals in Kuwait. Out of this, 203 Indian nationals died due to natural cause (such as heart attack, sickness, age etc.) and 55 unnatural deaths (16 road accident, 13 work-site accident, 10 suicide, 6 murder, 3 gas inhale, 3 drowning, 2 fire accident, 1 fall from height & 1 unknown reason). The mortal remains of 62 deceased Indian nationals were buried in Kuwait as per the wishes of their family members, whereas, the mortal remains of 196 Indian nationals were sent to India by air. The Embassy's efforts are to help in early transport of the mortal remains to India. The procedure followed and time taken is as under:

- a) Intimation of death: When an Indian national dies in Kuwait, the Embassy receives the information about the death from the employer/relatives of the deceased. Accordingly, the Embassy issues an authority letter in favour of the informer/relative, for collection of death certificate, police report from the local authorities.
- b) Registration of death: Once death certificate is collected, it has to be endorsed by the local Foreign Office, translated into English and submitted in the Embassy along with the passport of the deceased for registration of death. The Embassy issues death certificate.
- c) Burial of mortal remains: The cremation of mortal remains is not allowed in Kuwait. The local authorities, however, allow permission for burial of mortal remains of Muslims/Non-Muslims in Kuwait. The family members who wish to bury the mortal remains of the deceased are generally advised by the local authority(s) to obtain an authority letter from the Embassy for the burial of the mortal remains in Kuwait. The Embassy issues an authority letter after receiving the written consent of the family members for burial of the mortal remains in Kuwait.
- d) Transportation of mortal remains: After the registration of death, if mortal remains have to be transported to India, the relatives/employer is required to approach the airlines for issue of airway bill for transport of the mortal remains to India. The procedure is simple and not long drawn. The mortal remains of the deceased are sealed in a wooden coffin in the Sabah



Hospital only (as per the specifications of the Ministry of Health of the State of Kuwait) in the presence of a medical officer, representative of the Embassy and relatives / friends of the deceased. Thereafter, mortal remains are sent to India by air.

- e) Time taken: The time taken for transporting mortal remains depend upon the nature of death and time taken in completing various formalities by Kuwait authorities and the availability of flights to the destination.
  - a. In case of natural death (such as heart attack, sickness, age etc.), the mortal remains are sent to India generally within two to ten days depending on the time taken by the Kuwait authorities for completing various formalities and availability of flights.
  - b. In case of unnatural death (such as suicide, drowning, fire, traumatic injury, inhalation of gas, fall from height, work place, criminal activities etc.), the local authorities take considerable time for completion of their investigation into the case and give clearance for transportation of the mortal remains. In such cases, it generally takes two to four weeks for transportation of the mortal remains from the date of intimation of the death. As disposal of mortal remains other than burial is not allowed in Kuwait, in majority of cases, the mortal remains are transported to India. In cases of destitute Indian nationals, the Embassy arranges the airlifting of the mortal remains of the deceased to India by Air India (or other airlines) and the expenditure is met from the Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF).
- f) Embassy Support: The Embassy guides informants/company on procedural requirements for the repatriation of the mortal remains. During the first half of 2014, the Embassy paid for air transport of the mortal remains of 16 deceased Indian nationals from Kuwait to India, while mortal remains of 180 deceased Indian nationals were sent to India by air by the employers/relatives of the deceased. The Embassy provides air tickets to destitute Indian nationals to return to their homeland, as well as pay for air transportation of mortal remains of destitute Indian nationals to India.
- g) The details of the deceased Indian nationals, whose mortal remains were airlifted to India, with air transportation provided by the Embassy, are provided for information of Indian community in Kuwait, for the period 1 January - 30 June, 2014.

*Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait, <http://www.indembkwt.org/DispNews.aspx?ID=381>*

## **26. Growing economic and commercial ties between India and Kuwait, Kuwait, 7 July 2014**

India and Kuwait enjoy historically close, warm and friendly ties. The visit of H.H. Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Prime Minister of Kuwait to India in November 2013 has imparted a new thrust to the growing India-Kuwait relationship. The bilateral trade turnover has crossed US\$ 18 billion mark during the last financial year (April 2013 - March 2014). Kuwait is India's leading supplier of crude oil and LPG. Both countries have longstanding ties in the arena of energy security.

The current year is witnessing award of several big contracts in Kuwait to Indian companies. Shapoorji Pallonji, Mumbai has signed a contract in April 2014 with the Ministry of Public Works for the Al-Sabah Hospital Project worth US\$ 640 million and its execution would start soon. This company is also L1 as per the Central Tenders Committee (CTC) for one of the Kuwait University Projects which is worth US\$ 525 million.

Kuwait Petroleum Company (KPC) has confirmed that one of the Gas Gathering Centres EPC project worth US\$ 840 million is being awarded to Larsen & Toubro, Mumbai while another Gas Gathering Centre worth US\$ 810 million would be awarded to Dodsal. L&T, Mumbai is also L1 for a feed pipeline project worth US\$ 1 billion of Kuwait Oil Company (KOC). Punj Lloyd, New Delhi has bagged US\$ 236 million KNPC's project of revamping the Ahamadi Fuel Depot which includes design, detailed EPC and commissioning of 11 new floating roof product tanks with a capacity of about 228,000 cubic meters. Simplex Project Ltd, Kolkata has secured a subcontract worth US\$ 84 million with Combined Group of Companies of Kuwait under which the Indian company would construct some service centres in Sabah Al-Ahmad City. The Energy Resource Institute (TERI), New Delhi is already doing a pilot project worth US\$ 39 million in the field of soil remediation with Kuwait Oil Company (KOC).

As regards foreign direct investment (FDI) from Kuwait to India, Kuwait investment Authority (KIA), which manages the sovereign wealth funds of Kuwait, has already made an investment of about US\$ 2.7 billion in India. KIA has further invested US\$ 5.37 million in the Power Grid Corporation of India in December 2013. Some Indian private companies such as GMR and Kotak Mahindra are in touch with KIA for attracting investments into India.

The relationship between India and Kuwait is on an upward growth trajectory. The Government of India is keen to further strengthen and widen this special relationship with the State of Kuwait, in the coming months.

*Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait, <http://www.indembkwt.org/DispNews.aspx?ID=382>*

### **27. Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA) organizing first annual Conference on Middle East, Kuwait, 14 July 2014**

The Institute of Defence Studies and Analysis (IDSA), New Delhi, which is well-known and highly reputed think tank in India, is organizing its first annual conference on Middle East region on 10-11 September 2014 in New Delhi. The theme for the conference is "Geopolitical shift in West Asia: trend and implications". The objective of the conference is to deliberate upon the rapidly changing political, security and strategic environment in the West Asia (Middle East) and the implications for the security of the region.

In this regard, the Embassy of India invites scholars from Kuwait to participate in the above Conference and present a paper on the regional security in the Gulf region. The travel ticket (economy class) and local hospitality (at the IDSA Guest House) will be borne by the IDSA, New Delhi.

Interested scholars from Kuwait who would like to participate in the above conference may please send urgently their application along with Curriculum Vitae to the Embassy of India by e-mail [dcm@indembkwt.org](mailto:dcm@indembkwt.org) or Fax: 22573902

*Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait, <http://www.indembkwt.org/DispNews.aspx?ID=391>*

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### **28. Indian Embassy participates in Annual Gergian Festival-2014, Kuwait, 15 July 2014**

The Embassy of India in Kuwait took part in the 2014 Annual Gergian Festival on 8 July 2014 held at Social Development Hall in Zahra Area, under the auspices of “The Kuwait Society for Guardians of the Disabled”. During the occasion, Embassy of India exhibited many items like traditional saris, ornaments, bangles, dance banners etc, besides distributing brochures of Incredible India. The children and adults took keen interest in the tourism promotion materials, manuscripts, jewelleryes and Indian dresses. All the stalls were beautifully decorated with embroidery and handicraft items depicting the cultural heritage of participating countries.

*Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait, <http://www.indembkwt.org/DispNews.aspx?ID=393>*

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### **29. Multiple entry 5-year and 1-year Business Visas, Kuwait, 22 July 2014**

The Embassy has been issuing long-term visas of 5-year and 1-year validity to all Kuwaiti nationals and expatriates residing in Kuwait. In addition, 6-month Tourist Visas and 1-year Medical Visas are also issued to those interested. Visas are granted on the same working day.

Those wishing to obtain 5-year or 1-year Business Visas may contact the Embassy after filling the visa form on-line at: [www.indianvisaonline.gov.in](http://www.indianvisaonline.gov.in), two photographs with white background and payable visa fee. For more details please contact Embassy at 22530600 and 22530612.

*Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait, <http://www.indembkwt.org/DispNews.aspx?ID=397>*

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### **30. New outsourcing centres for Indian passport and visa services, Kuwait, 27 July 2014**

Beginning 3 August 2014, the new service provider of the Embassy for outsourcing of passport and visa services will be M/s Cox and Kings Global Services working in collaboration with its local partner M/s Al Qabas Assurex General Trading and Contracting Company W.L.L.

Physical location of 3 centres along with their map, from which M/s Cox and Kings Global Services will operate from:

- a) Behbahani Tower, 17th Floor, Sharq, Kuwait for passport as well as visa services - <http://goo.gl/maps/MbzGZ>
- b) 2nd Floor, Jleeb Al Shuyoukh Block 1, Street 1, Xcite building, Kuwait for passport services only - <http://goo.gl/maps/UWcqE>
- c) Complex Kais Alghanim, 4th Floor, Mecca Street in front of Al Anood Complex, Fahaheel, Kuwait for passport as well as visa services - <http://goo.gl/maps/Y6H3M>

For further enquiries following may be contacted:

- a) Daud Sheikh for Sharq Centre – Mobile No. 97928978
- b) Manohar Peter Barboza for Jleeb Al Shuyoukh Centre – Mobile No. 99178302

c) Ms. Ramya Jenson for Fahaheel Centre – Mobile No. 97616305

The new outsourcing centres will open on all days when Embassy is functional. On working days (Sunday to Thursday), the operating hours would be from 0800-1200hrs in the first half and 1600-2000 hrs in the second half. On weekend (Friday and Saturday) the operating hours would be from 1600- 2000hrs.

Service Fee structure of various services and Value Added Services rendered by M/s Cox and Kings Global Services will be as follows:

Service Fee:

(a) Passport Service: KD1.200

(b) Visa Service: KD3.250

Value Added Services:

a) Photocopy: Fils 100 per page

b) Photo booth: KD2.750 for 4 photos

c) Internet kiosk: KD1.000

d) SMS Service: Fils 400

e) Courier Service: KD1.250 for Indian nationals , KD4.500 for Foreign nationals

f) Assisted Form Filling: KD1.000 for Indian nationals, KD3.000 for Foreign nationals

*Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait, <http://www.indembkwt.org/DispNews.aspx?ID=518>*

### **31. The minimum wages for various categories of Indian workers in Kuwait, Kuwait, 29 July 2014**

The minimum wages for various categories of Indian workers in Kuwait were last revised in April 2010. Considering the increase in cost of living in Kuwait since the last revision and the prevailing market wage rate for both domestic and private sector workers, it has been decided to revise the minimum wage structure for various categories of Indian workers in Kuwait with effect from 1 August 2014. However, there will be no change with regard to other terms and conditions viz. free food, free accommodation, free transport, free medical insurance, to and fro air ticket, etc. The revised minimum wage structure is enclosed.

#### **MINIMUM MONTHLY WAGES/SALARY w.e.f. 01.08.2014**

Category	Wages (KD)	Category	Wages (KD)
<b>Unskilled/Semi-skilled</b>		<b>Skilled</b>	
Labourer / Helper / Cleaner	70	Fitter I	110
Technical Labour	80	Fitter II	85
Agricultural Labourer / Farmer	80	Foreman	150
Gardener	80	Gas Cutter	115
Security Guard / Lifeguard	90	Grinder	100
Laundryman / Washerman	80	Heavy Equipment Operator	135
Barber	90	Insulator	100

Butcher	90	Ironsmith	105
<b>Skilled</b>		Lathe Worker	135
AC Mechanic I	130	Mason I	100
AC Mechanic II	100	Mason II	80
Binder I	115	Mechanic I	135
Binder II	100	Mechanic II	95
Bar Bender	85	Plumber I	100
Blaster	115	Plumber II	85
Carpenter I	100	Painter I	115
Carpenter II	85	Painter II	90
Cable Jointer I	230	Rigger I	100
Cable Jointer II	150	Rigger II	85
Crane Operator	160	Scaffolder	85
Decorator	115	Storekeeper	150
Denter	105	Steel Fixer	105
Die Maker	135	Supervisor	190
Diesel Mechanic I	140	Tailor	115
Diesel Mechanic II	100	Tech./Machine Operator I	150
Driver (Light Duty)	100	Tech./Machine Operator II	125
Driver (Heavy Duty)	115	Technician I	150
Drilling Worker(Roustabout)	115	Technician II	115
Electrician I	100	Tile Fixer	105
Electrician II	85	Turner	135
Fabricator I	130	Upholsterer / Embroider	115
Fabricator II	95	Welder I	105
		Welder II	85

<b>Hotel / Catering Staff</b>		<b>Office Staff</b>	
Baker	115	Accountant	190
Chef de Cuisine	165	Administrative Assistant	150
Chef de Partie	135	Clerk	150
Confectioner	115	Cashier	150
Captain	120	Computer Operator	150
Cook I / Commis I	115	Receptionist	150
Cook II / Commis II & III	85	Secretary	150
Housekeeper / Supervisor	115	Salesman/Buyer	130
Busboy/Bellboy/Tea-boy	85	Office-boy	85
Room Attendant	95	<b>Domestic Worker</b>	
Head Waiter	115	House Maid	70
Waiter / Waitress / Barman	85	House Boy	70

Steward	95	Cook	70
		Driver	75
<b>Professionals</b>		<b>Medical Staff</b> <b>Pvt. Clinic/Hospital</b>	
Architect/Planner/Surveyor	440	Nurse (B.Sc. Degree Holder)	350
Surveyor II	330	Nurse (Diploma Holder)	275
Auditor	440	Assistant Nurse (Certificate Course)	165
Computer Programmer	275	Lab Technician	320
Chartered Accountant	440	X-Ray Technician	320
Medical Doctor	440	Physiotherapist	285
Veterinary Doctor	440	Ayurveda Therapist	255
Draughtsman	200	Optometrist	350
Engineer (B.E. Degree Holder)	440		
Engineer (Diploma Holder)	330		
Geologist/Soil Specialist	440		
Graphic Designer	385		
Safety Officer I	330		
Safety Officer II	230		
Teacher	200		
Manager	385		
Event Manager	385		
Coordinator	200		

*Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait, <http://indembkwt.org/Pages/MinWages.aspx>*

### **32. Grant of Indian Citizenship to a foreign national married to an Indian National, Kuwait, 31 July 2014**

Some Indians have enquired about the grant of Indian citizenship to a foreign national married to an Indian national. A foreign national married to an Indian national is eligible for the following:

a. Person of Indian Origin (PIO CARD):

Any person who is spouse of a citizen of India or a Person of Indian Origin as mentioned below:

i). Who at any time held an Indian Passport; or

ii). He/she or either of his/her parents or grandparents or great grandparents was born in a permanently resident in India as defined in the Government of India Act, 1935 and other territories that became part of India thereafter provided neither was at any time a citizen of any country as may be specified by Central Government from time to time.

is entitled for a PIO Card. The card allows visa free travel to India and gives several benefits to the card holder. A PIO Card is valid for 15 years. The scheme is broad-based, covers up to four generations and also the foreign spouse of a citizen of India or a PIO.

b. Indian Citizenship by Registration (Section 5(1) (C))

- Indian Citizenship by registration can be acquired under Section 5(1)(C) by a person, who is married to a citizen of India and who are ordinarily resident in India for seven years before making application.

- In computing the period of seven years, any broken period of residence shall be included in the period specified therein.

d. Indian Citizenship by Registration (Section 5(1) (d))

- Minor children of a person who is Indian citizen can register for Indian Citizenship under section 5(1) (d).

- Application for registration of birth of his minor child born outside India to a person who is citizen of India has to be submitted at the Embassy within one year of the birth, for which parents have to submit a declaration that the child does not hold passport of another country. In cases where the request for registration of birth of the child is made after expiry of one year of the birth of the child, approval from Ministry of Home Affairs, New Delhi is required and applicant has to apply online for registration of the birth of the child. Online application can be made at the following link: [http://indiancitizenshiponline.nic.in/ic\\_form\\_public.aspx](http://indiancitizenshiponline.nic.in/ic_form_public.aspx)

e. Indian Citizenship by Registration for persons of full age:

- A Person of full age and capacity who, or either of his/her parents was earlier citizen of Independent India, and residing in India for one year immediately before making application for registration.

- A Person of full age and capacity who has been registered as an Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) for five years and who has been residing in India for one year before making application for application of registration.

Clarification: A person shall be deemed to be a Person of Indian origin if he, or either of his parents, was born in undivided India or in such other territory which became part of India after the 15 August 1947.

*Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait, <http://www.indembkwt.org/DispNews.aspx?ID=552>*

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**e. SAUDI ARABIA**

**33. Status of opening of Consulates of Saudi Arabia and UAE in Kerala, New Delhi, 9 July 2014**

**Question**



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

- (a) The present status of opening of Consulates of Saudi Arabia and UAE in Kerala;
- (b) Whether locations have been identified for this purpose;
- (c) If so, the details thereof; and
- (d) The time by which these Consulates are likely to be operational along with the services to be provided by them?

**Answer**

The Minister of State in the Ministry of External Affairs (Gen. Retd. V.K. Singh)

(a) This Ministry accorded its consent to the establishment of Consulate of United Arab Emirates in Kerala on 6 July 2012.

This Ministry is not in receipt of any proposal for the establishment of Consulate of Saudi Arabia in Kerala.

(b) No information with regard to location of the Consulate of the United Arab Emirates has so far been received from their Embassy in New Delhi.

(c) Not applicable in view of (b) above.

(d) Information with respect to time frame for opening of Consulate of the United Arab Emirates has not so far been received from their Embassy in New Delhi.

*Source: Lok Sabha (Council of People), Unstarred Question No.271, asked by Faizal P. P. Mohammed, <http://164.100.47.132/LssNew/psearch/QRresult16.aspx?qref=637>*

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**f. UAE**

**34. India's Permanent Representative to IRENA, Abu Dhabi, 8 July 2014**

Ambassador T.P. Seetharam formally presented his credentials as India's Permanent Representative to IRENA to His Excellency Adnan Z. Amin, Director-General of IRENA, on 6 July 2014, at a brief ceremony held at the IRENA headquarters in Abu Dhabi. India has now become the 19th member of IRENA to designate a Permanent Representative.

The International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) is an intergovernmental organization that supports countries in their transition to a sustainable energy future, and serves as the principal platform for international cooperation. IRENA promotes the widespread adoption and sustainable use of all forms of renewable energy in the pursuit of sustainable development.

India attaches great importance to the renewable energy sector and believes that only through a collaborative approach the goal of sustainable energy future can be realized. The accreditation of IRENA marks a significant step in this direction.

*Source: Embassy of India, Abu Dhabi, [http://www.indembassyuae.org/PR\\_07\\_08\\_2014.html](http://www.indembassyuae.org/PR_07_08_2014.html)*

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## SPECIFIC ISSUES

### 35. Lessening dependence on Middle East Countries for crude oil, New Delhi, 16 July 2014

#### Question

Will the Minister of State in the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas be pleased to:-

- (a) Whether it is a fact that supply of crude oil from Middle-East countries has become a very serious problem;
- (b) If so, the details of crude oil supplying nations to the country; and
- (c) The steps Government is taking so that the dependency on Middle-East countries would be lessened?

#### Answer

Minister of State (Independent Charge) in the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (Dharmendra Pradhan)

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

Statement referred to in reply to parts (A) to (C) of the Rajya Sabha starred question No.132 by D.P. Tripathi to be answered on 16.7.2014 regarding 'Lessening Dependence on Middle-East Countries for Crude Oil'

(a) & (b): Public Sector Oil Companies have term contracts for supply of crude oil for its own and associate refineries, with various National Oil Companies (NOCs) of the Middle East. Supplies of crude oil from Middle East sources have by and large been smooth. The details of major crude oil supplying nations to the country during the last year are Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Kuwait, Iran, UAE, Yemen etc.

(c): Public Sector Oil Companies have made significant efforts to diversify their crude oil supply sources from other regions as well. India's crude oil import basket is continuously expanding over last few years, with increased imports from South American and African countries. The region-wise crude oil import details are as under during 2011-12 to 2013-14:

#### Quantity in MMT

Region	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14 (P*)	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14 (P)
Middle East	118.6	115.4	115.9	69.1	62.4	61.2
Africa	31.1	29.6	30.4	18.1	16.0	16.1
Asia	3.4	3.3	3.4	2.0	1.8	1.8
South America	14.5	29.8	31.7	8.5	16.1	16.8
Eurasia	1.0	2.4	2.1	0.6	1.3	1.1
N. America	2.3	4.1	5.2	1.3	2.2	2.7
Europe	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.1
Australia	0.7	0.2	0.4	0.4	0.1	0.2

Total	171.7	184.8	189.2	100.0	100.0	100.0
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\*Provisional data

In addition to the efforts at geographical diversification of our import sources, efforts are being made to augment domestic production of oil and natural gas.

*Source: Rajya Sabha (Council of State), Unstarred Question No. 132, asked by D.P. Tirpathi, <http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/OREsult.aspx>*

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### **36. Indian Languishing in the Middle East, New Delhi, 17 July 2014**

#### **Question**

Will the Minister of State in the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs be pleased to state:

- (a) Whether Government is aware of thousands of expatriate Indian labourers languishing in Middle Eastern countries due to very poor labour conditions;
- (b) Whether Government is also aware that there are no regulations for the employment of Indian migrants;
- (c) If so, the action taken or proposed to be taken by Government in this regard;
- (d) Whether Government seeks to take the matter up in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC); and
- (e) If so, the details thereof, and if not, the reasons therefor?

#### **Answer**

Minister of State in the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (Gen. Retd. V.K. Singh)

(a): All the emigrants except Domestic Sector Workers (D.S.W) are governed by the Labour Laws of the respective countries. However, Complaints received from Indian workers, from time to time, are generally in the nature of non-payment/ delayed payment or underpayment of salaries, long working hours, inadequate living conditions, physical harassment, non-renewal of visa and labour card on time, refusal to pay for the medical treatment, denial of leave and air-ticket to the hometown on completion of contract period of contract, refusal of leave or 'exit/re-entry permits'/'final exit visa' etc.

(b): No, Sir. Emigration of Indian workers seeking overseas employment is regulated by the Emigration Act 1983 and the Emigration Rules, 1983 as amended from time to time.

(c): Does not arise.

(d) & (e): Though there is no specific proposal to take up such issues with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Indian Missions in the Gulf countries take up with the respective local Governments and other concerned agencies for expeditious redressal of grievance of the emigrants. The issues concerning protection of the interests of Indian nationals are also flagged during all meetings with local dignitaries and during bilateral meetings.

India has also signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Labour with major labour receiving countries like Jordan and Qatar in 1980s, United Arab Emirates (UAE) in December 2006, with Kuwait in April 2007, with Oman in November 2008, with Bahrain in June 2009, and Saudi Arabia in January 2014 (for Domestic Sector Workers). Under these MOUs, Joint Working Groups (JWG) are constituted to discuss and resolve various labour and other related issues.

*Source: Rajya Sabha (Council of State), Unstarred Question No.986, asked by Rajeev Chandrasekhar <http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/QResult.aspx>*

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**37. Statement by Permanent Representative of India during the Security Council Open Debate on “The Situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian Question”, New Delhi, 23 July 2014**

President,

India is deeply concerned at the steep escalation in the current conflict between Israel and Palestine resulting in large number of civilian casualties and heavy damage to property.

When the Council last held its open debate in April 2014, the direct negotiations between Israel and Palestine, which began in late July 2013 after a gap of more than two years, had ended without any outcome. Instead of resumption of dialogue, we are today faced with the tragic resumption of the conflict.

We in India, President, are following the current situation with great deal of concern. We have called upon both sides to exercise maximum restraint and avoid taking actions that may further exacerbate the situation and threaten the peace and security of the region. India supports all efforts for an immediate ceasefire between the parties involved.

We remain hopeful that a sustainable ceasefire will be reached between the two sides, linked to the resumption of the peace process, for a comprehensive resolution of the Palestinian issue. India remains firmly convinced that dialogue remains the only viable option that can effectively address the issues confronting the region and its people. We hope that both sides will demonstrate the necessary political will to agree to a cease fire and return to the negotiating table.

India’s deep association with, and continuing commitment to, Palestine is rooted in our modern history that goes back to our struggle for independence. We would also like to reiterate our support for a negotiated solution to the Israeli Palestinian issue based on the relevant UN resolutions, the Arab Peace Plan and the Quartet Roadmap resulting in a sovereign, independent, viable and united state of Palestine with East Jerusalem as its capital, living within secure and recognized borders, side by side and at peace with Israel.

India has consistently held that the blockade of Gaza that adversely affects essential services, economic activities and infrastructure development must be lifted. We reiterate that this blockade

and the issue of increasing settlement activities need to be addressed to take forward the peace process to reach a mutually acceptable political solution.

We once again call on both sides to agree to an immediate ceasefire and start a process of peaceful dialogue.

I thank you...

...we remain concerned at the ongoing violence and continually deteriorating humanitarian situation in Syria. We urge all sides in Syria to sincerely implement the Security Council resolutions on humanitarian efforts and ensure humanitarian access, immediately cease attacks against civilians and lift the siege of populated areas. Unilateral sanctions which adversely impact on the Syrian population must also be lifted.

We welcome the full removal of declared chemical weapons and material in Syria. We also hope that the new Special Representative and Deputy Special Representative appointed by the UN Secretary General will help carry forward the political process. We reaffirm our support to a Syrian-led, comprehensive political solution to the crisis, in line with the Geneva Communiqué of 2012.

*Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, <http://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/23713/Statement+by+Permanent+Representative+of+India+during+the+Security+Council+Open+Debate+on+The+Situation+in+the+Middle+East+including+the+Palestinian+Question+July+22+2014>*

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### **38. Centre to help Indian workers abroad, 24 July 2014, New Delhi**

#### **Question:**

Will the Minister of State in the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs be pleased to state:

- (a) Whether Government has opened a centre to guide and help the Indian workers in UAE and other countries, if so, the details with feedback thereof;
- (b) Whether it is proposed to open such centres for Indian workers in other countries as well; and
- (c) Whether it is proposed to run the above help-line round the clock to address grievances of Indian workers, if so, the details thereof?

#### **Answer**

Minister of State Overseas Indian Affairs (Gen. Retd. V.K. Singh)

- (a) Yes, Sir. The Indian Worker Resource Centre (IWRC) at Dubai, UAE was set up in November, 2010. The Centre guides and helps Indian workers by way of disseminating information, registering, responding, and monitoring complaints. The Centre has a 24X7 helpline and redresses grievances and provides counselling. According to information received, Indian embassies in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, UAE, Oman, Yemen, and Lebanon have also established 24X7 helpline.

(b): Yes, Sir. The Ministry has advised to Indian Missions in Emigration Check Required (ECR) countries to establish such centres in their Missions.

(c): Yes, Sir. As in reply to part (a) above.

*Source: Rajya Sabha (Council of State), Unstarred Question No. 1754, asked by Baishnab Parida, <http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/QResult.aspx>*

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**39. Transcript of Media Briefing by Official Spokesperson (Libya, Gaza, and Iraq), New Delhi, 30 July 2014**

Official Spokesperson Syed Akbarudeen

The External Affairs Minister chaired a high-level on the process that is set in motion with the advisory given to Indian nationals to leave Libya at the earliest.

- 1.) A decision has been taken and six officials have been deployed in Libya and Tunisia.
- 2.) The External Affairs Minister has asked for funds to be transferred from the Indian Community Welfare Fund in the United Arab Emirates for use by Indian nationals in difficult circumstances in Libya.
- 3.) The External Affairs Minister has directed the Ministry of External Affairs to deploy a senior official of the rank of Joint Secretary to help in facilitating the return of Indian nationals from Libya to India. This official will reach Libya shortly.
- 4.) The Ambassador of India has informed that the companies in Libya, who employ 450 Indian nationals in the western part of Libya, have agreed to send back their Indian employees at their own cost.
- 5.) Tickets are being purchased for those Indian nationals who have evinced an interest in returning to India. At this stage, we have confirmations of 58 nurses who would like to return to India. We are working with others to ensure that all of them leave their places of work because we do not feel that the circumstances warrant their continuance at this stage.
- 6.) Options are being looked at for the move of Indian nationals in the eastern part of Libya i.e. Benghazi and other side to return to India.
- 7.) We hope that the first lot of Indian nationals will start returning to India before the weekend. We will keep you informed of how this process proceeds. The Indian Ambassador in Libya has been able to obtain from Ministry of Labour a permission for the departure of Indian nationals. You have to understand that there is a exit permit in place in Libya, so departure formalities will take some time as they have taken in Iraq too. However, our Mission will work to ensure that there is expeditious movement of people from Libya, should they want to return to India and this is based on our advisory that they should return to India.

I think that should sum up the outcome of today's meeting that the External Affairs Minister had.

**Question**

I actually wanted to take your attention to the Middle East. In Gaza, there has been a third UN school that has been attacked in shelling. They say that it was being used as a shelter. Just wanted to know where we stand on what is going on in that conflict right now?

**Answer**

The last Indian statement encapsulates it all and that was made by our Permanent Representative to the United Nations in Geneva. This is our approach to the humanitarian issues there and our final and definitive statement on that rests with that approach, it hasn't changed.

**Question**

This is on Libya. Like Iraq, a lot of our people, who are employed there, are facing salary issues and also contractual issues. So, are the Ministry or Mission officers dealing with that issue?

**Answer**

You are right that there are issues in the entire Middle East relating to contracts. This is neither the time nor the place to try and rectify a template regarding contractual disputes. That said we will try and ensure the departure of Indian nationals. These may entail contractual obligations, we will have to work our way through it. But this is an on-going issue which we have with various countries in West Asia. It is not possible, in a situation of crisis, to rework the formats at this stage. But this is an on-going process; the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs is regularly working on this. But please do not expect outcomes overnight on this. These are difficult and complex issues that will require engagement over a longer term to try and resolve.

**Question:**

Any updates that you can share on the Indians in Iraq, especially those in Mosul, since the couple of weeks of those who have been brought back?

**Answer**

The last update remains what it is in terms of the External Affairs Minister making a statement in the Parliament on that recently. That's where we are. I have no further additional information that will add to your understanding of that situation.

**Question:**

Could you please repeat the name of the body in UAE that you said is transferring funds for the benefit of Indian nationals in Libya?

**Answer**

This is not a body. This is what's called the Indian Community Welfare Fund or ICWF. This fund is available in all our Missions all over the world and given that in several of our Gulf Missions the funds are fairly substantial, we sometimes with the approval of External Affairs Minister who also happens to be the Minister of Overseas Indian Affairs which monitors and



regulates this fund, utilize this for Indians facing difficulties elsewhere. So, given that the UAE had some funds which can be spared, the External Affairs Minister approved the usage of some of those funds for assisting Indian nationals in Libya.

**Source:** *Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi*, <http://www.mea.gov.in/media-briefings.htm?dtl/23775/Transcript+of+Media+Briefing+by+Official+Spokesperson+July+30+2014>

#### **40. Indians in Gulf countries, New Delhi, 31 July 2014**

##### **Question**

Will the Minister of State in the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs be pleased to state:

- a) The number of Indians who are working in different Gulf countries;
- b) Whether the Ministry has any details on the basis of States, if so, the details thereof; and
- c) Whether the Ministry has any specific schemes for the welfare of these people, if so, the details thereof?

##### **Answer**

Minister of State Overseas Indian Affairs (Gen. Retd. V.K. Singh)

a) Country-wise data of the Indians working in Gulf Countries are not maintained by the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs. However the number of Emigration Clearance granted to workers in Gulf Countries (from 2011 to 2014) are as under:

<u>Country</u>	<u>(No. of Emigration clearance granted)</u>
Bahrain	59,291
Kuwait	217,061
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia [KSA]	1,198,823
Oman	251,717
Qatar	228,259
United Arab Emirates [UAE]	639,459

b) State-wise data of the Indians working in Gulf Countries are not maintained by the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs. However, the number of state-wise Emigration Clearance granted for working in Gulf Countries is at Annexure.

c) The Ministry has taken the following steps for the welfare of Indians working in different Gulf Countries:

1. A 24x7 toll-free helpline viz. Overseas Workers Resource Centre (OWRC) has been set up in Delhi to enable emigrants/ prospective emigrants to seek information and file complaints against Recruiting Agents/ Foreign Employers.
2. Migration Resource Centres (MRCs) at Cochin and Hyderabad.

3. The Ministry undertakes vigorous Awareness Campaign through the print and electronic media to educate and sensitize potential emigrant workers about the legal emigration process and hazards of illegal emigration.

4. Opening of Indian Workers Resource Centre in host countries to serve as a one stop service outlet for the information and assistance needs of emigrants. An Indian Workers Resource Centre (IWRC) has been established at Dubai, UAE.

5. Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) has been established in all the Indian Missions for on-site welfare of emigrants. It provides boarding and lodging for distressed overseas Indian workers in household domestic sectors and unskilled labourers, extending emergency medical care to the Overseas Indian in need, providing air passage to stranded Overseas Indians in need, providing initial legal assistance to the Overseas Indian in deserving cases, expenditure on incidentals and for airlifting the mortal remains to India or local cremation/burial of the deceased Overseas Indian in such cases where the sponsor is unable or unwilling to do so as per the contract and the family is unable to meet the cost, providing the payment of penalties in respect of Indian nationals for illegal stay in the host country where prime facie the worker is not at fault, providing the payment of small fines/penalties for the release of Indian nationals in jail/detention centre; etc.

6. Mandatory Insurance under Pravasi Bhartiya Bime Yojana (PBBY), which covers for death, permanent disability and medical insurance cover of any Indian emigrant who goes abroad for employment purpose after obtaining emigration clearance form the concerned Protector of Emigration (POE).

7. Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (MOIA) has introduced Mahatma Gandhi Pravasi Suraksha Yojana (MGPSY) for the Overseas Indian working having Emigration Check Required (ECR) passports in India and ECR countries. The Government contribution under MGPSY is provided in addition to the subscriber's contribution and is available for a maximum period of five years or for the period of overseas employment of the worker, whichever is less. This scheme provides life insurance, pension and resettlement on return.

*Source: Rajya Sabha (Council of State), Unstarred Question No. 2369, asked by P. Rajeeve, <http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/QResult.aspx>*

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

**Compiled by Jatin Kumar**

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