



# INDIA SPEAKS

(Monthly Digest of Official Indian Statements on Middle East)

No. 66

January 2015

## BILATERAL ISSUES

### a. EGYPT

#### 1. Tenth India-Egypt Foreign Office Consultations held in Cairo, Cairo, 8 December 2014

The tenth round of the India-Egypt Foreign Office Consultations was held in Cairo on 7-8 December 2014. The Indian delegation was led by H.E. Ambassador Anil Wadhwa, Secretary (East) in the Ministry of External Affairs of India and the Egyptian Delegation by H.E. Ambassador Yasser Morad, Assistant Foreign Minister for Asia, Australia and New Zealand at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Arab Republic of Egypt. The two sides discussed and reviewed the entire gamut of bilateral relationship and also exchanged views on regional and global issues of mutual interest.

Ambassador Anil Wadhwa also held meetings with the Secretary General of the League of Arab States, H.E. Nabil El Araby and Mohamed Dawood, First Under Secretary and Head of Egyptian Commercial Services, Ministry of Industry, Trade and SMEs on 8 December 2014 and discussed issues of common benefit. Both sides expressed willingness to cooperate on a number of issues which will boost trade and investments.

Ambassador Wadhwa and Ambassador Nabil El Araby, Secretary General of the League of Arab States also jointly released the Arabic translation of the complete Constitution of India at a special event organized at the headquarters of the League of Arab States in Cairo. Former Deputy Prime Minister Yahia Gamal, himself a prominent expert in Constitutional Law, was present along with a number of diplomats, intellectuals and media personalities. Several speakers spoke about the importance of the Constitution of India in sustaining institutions of democracy and applauded the collaboration between the Embassy of India, Cairo and International IDEA to bring out an Arabic version that could be of great value to countries in transition.

For more details on the events contact the Indian Embassy at [info.cairo@mea.gov.in](mailto:info.cairo@mea.gov.in), or follow us on Facebook (Indian Embassy Cairo).

**Source:** *Embassy of India, Cairo,* [http://www.indembcairo.com/en-us/presscentre/pressreleases.aspx?udt\\_656\\_param\\_detail=42177](http://www.indembcairo.com/en-us/presscentre/pressreleases.aspx?udt_656_param_detail=42177)

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## **2. Launch of Arabic Translation of the 'Indian Constitution' held at the League of Arab State, Cairo, 8 December 2014**

The Embassy of India in collaboration with the League of Arab States and International IDEA organized the official launch of the Arabic Translation of the Indian Constitution on 8 December, at 1330 hours in the Secretariat of the League of Arab States. Secretary General of the Arab League, H.E. Nabil El Araby launched the Constitution along with Secretary (East) H.E. Ambassador Anil Wadhwa from the Ministry of External Affairs.

The dais was shared by H.E. Anil Wadhwa, H.E. Navdeep Suri, Ambassador of India to Egypt, Ayman Ayoub, Regional Director of International IDEA to Egypt, H.E. Amr Shobaki, Constitutional Expert, Dr. Yehia Algamal, Former Deputy Prime Minister of Egypt, Khaled Al Habbas, Advisor to Secretary General and Secretary General H.E. Nabil El Araby, who chaired the session.

Speaking on the occasion, the Secretary General lauded the efforts of Constitution makers of India for drafting a Constitution that meets the aspirations of all sections of society, characterized by large lingual, religious and ethnic diversity. From the Indian side, Ambassador Anil Wadhwa thanked the Secretary General and other Dignitaries and expressed hope that the launch was the first of many scholarly symposiums which would be organized in future. Ayman Ayoub, Regional Director of International IDEA to Egypt and H.E. Amr Shobaki, Constitutional Expert also expressed their views on the occasion. Speakers also spoke about the importance of Indian constitution in sustaining institutions of democracy and mentioned that Arabic translation of the Indian constitution could be of great value to countries in transition.

The translation was undertaken by International IDEA and it is the first instance of the translation of the Indian Constitution into Arabic. The PDF version of the Arabic translation will be available on the Embassy Website “[www.indembcairo.com](http://www.indembcairo.com)”

Among the dignitaries present on the occasion were the high ranking officials from the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassadors of Arab States, prominent academicians, constitutional experts, legal scholars and friends of India and partners of International IDEA.

For more details on the event contact the Indian Embassy at “[info.cairo@mea.gov.in](mailto:info.cairo@mea.gov.in)”, or follow us on Facebook (Indian Embassy Cairo).

**Source:** *Embassy of India, Cairo,* [http://www.indembcairo.com/en-us/presscentre/pressreleases.aspx?udt\\_656\\_param\\_detail=42179](http://www.indembcairo.com/en-us/presscentre/pressreleases.aspx?udt_656_param_detail=42179)

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### **3. Indian participation at Al Ahram's first "Top World's Cuisines Festival", Cairo, 11 December 2014**

The Maulana Azad Centre for Indian Culture, Embassy of India, Cairo, is facilitating the participation of Indian Chef Ashok Kumar Kanojia, at the 'Top World's Cuisines Festival' being organized in collaboration with Egyptian Ministry of Tourism and Al-Ahram establishment, in Cairo on the 13 December 2014 at Dusit Thani hotel, from 6.30 pm till midnight.

Ashok Kumar Kanojia, Chef de Partie from Hotel Samrat, a unit of the Indian Tourism Development Corporation will represent the Indian booth. Kanojia has a long experience of 32 years and has worked for many national and international conferences and also contributes regularly for VVIP caterings including Head of States and other international delegations. Ashok Kumar Kanojia has specialization in Indian curry, Tandoor and Mughlai dishes.

Kanojia will be presenting a variety of delicious Indian dishes at the festival using Indian spices. This will be a unique opportunity to taste authentic Indian dishes including both vegetarian and non-vegetarian dishes which will be moderated to suit all Egyptian tastes.

For more information, please contact the Indian Embassy Cairo at the Maulana Azad Centre for Indian Culture (MACIC) at [macic@indembcairo.com](mailto:macic@indembcairo.com) or [info.cairo@mea.gov.in](mailto:info.cairo@mea.gov.in) or follow us on Facebook (Indian Embassy Cairo) or twitter (@indembcairo).

*Source: Embassy of India, Cairo, [http://www.indembcairo.com/en-us/presscentre/pressreleases.aspx?udt\\_656\\_param\\_detail=42184](http://www.indembcairo.com/en-us/presscentre/pressreleases.aspx?udt_656_param_detail=42184).*

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### **4. Selling Sovaldi medicine in Egypt, Cairo, 18 December 2014**

It has come to our attention that certain unscrupulous elements are engaged in selling Sovaldi medicine in Egypt as genuine companies. These companies are claiming that their Sovaldi products are being produced in India.

2. In this connection it is to be confirmed that only seven Indian companies namely "Cipla, Cadila, Hetero, Ranbaxy, Mylan Laboratories, Strides Arcolab, Sequent Scientific" are licensed by GILEAD to manufacture Sovaldi medicine. It may also to be mentioned that their production of Sovaldi medicine is still in the R&D stages and have not gone into production yet.

3. Any company other than the seven mentioned-above, claiming to sell Sovaldi products are engaging themselves in illegal and criminal act and will be liable to face legal action.

*Source: Embassy of India, Cairo, [http://www.indembcairo.com/en-us/presscentre/pressreleases.aspx?udt\\_656\\_param\\_detail=42190](http://www.indembcairo.com/en-us/presscentre/pressreleases.aspx?udt_656_param_detail=42190)*

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### **5. Press Conference on International Yoga Day, Cairo, 22 December 2014**

A Press Conference was organized by the Indian Embassy in Cairo on 21 December 2014 to brief the members of Media about the recent declaration by United Nations to celebrate 21 June as International Yoga Day. The United Nations General Assembly in its 69th Session held on 11 December 2014 had adopted a resolution proposed by India and co-sponsored by 177 nations to

declare 21 June as International Yoga Day. The declaration was significant as it came into effect barely 80 days after the idea was first mooted by India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his maiden speech at the United Nations General Assembly on 27 September.

Briefing the Media persons, India's Ambassador to Egypt, H.E. Navdeep Suri stated that Yoga has emerged as a global brand and it is now internationally practiced. He added that Yoga is the most iconic element of India's spiritual heritage and offers a healthy lifestyle that harmonizes human mind and spirit. It promotes a holistic approach towards health and well-being and is not only about exercise but about the unity of mind with eternal self, the world and the nature. He also informed that with an objective of rediscovering our heritage, a separate ministry, AYUSH, has been established which is dedicated to alternative health, including yoga and Ayurveda.

Suri highlighted that Yoga - India's Intangible Cultural heritage - needs to be widely understood by the international community as it promotes cultural and civilization dialogue between peoples, societies and cultures. He informed that the Prime Minister had this broader objective in mind when he suggested celebrating 21 June as International Yoga Day.

Emphasizing the need to preserve traditional knowledge, the Ambassador stated that India has taken significant steps in this direction by establishing a Traditional Knowledge Digital Library (TKDL); a database which has over 34 million pages of stored Information on India's ancient medicinal formulations and traditional knowledge in the field of healthcare. He stated that documenting traditional knowledge in the form of a library helps in pre-empting any attempt to obtain false patents based on misappropriation.

During the Conference, live demonstrations of various 'Asanas' (Yogic exercises) were performed by Bharat Singh, a yoga teacher from India, who also teaches Yoga at Maulana Azad Centre for Indian Culture (MACIC), the Indian cultural centre in Cairo. A documentary touching on yoga's rich, philosophical and social history titled 'Yoga - Aligning to the Source' was also screened during the conference which was appreciated by all.

On the popularity of Yoga in Egypt, the Ambassador stated that Yoga is one activity, which is witnessing increased participation from Egyptians and this year, over 115 Egyptian students have enrolled for Yoga classes at MACIC. He added that given the popularity of Yoga in Egypt, the possibility of having a 'Wellbeing Weekend' is also being explored during the upcoming India by the Nile Festival. After the Conference, members from print and electronic media visited the Yoga Hall being run by Indian Embassy in downtown Cairo and saw live demonstrations of the Yoga 'Asanas' by the Egyptian Students.

For more details on the event contact the Indian Embassy at [info.cairo@mea.gov.in](mailto:info.cairo@mea.gov.in), or follow us on Facebook (Indian Embassy Cairo).

**Source:** Embassy of India, Cairo, [http://www.indembcairo.com/en-us/presscentre/pressreleases.aspx?udt\\_656\\_param\\_detail=42195](http://www.indembcairo.com/en-us/presscentre/pressreleases.aspx?udt_656_param_detail=42195)

## **6. India-Egypt Sign Executive Programme on Science and Technology Cooperation, Cairo, 23 December 2014**

India and Egypt today signed an ambitious new Executive Programme on Cooperation in the field of Science and Technology. The documents were signed in Cairo in the premises of the Ministry of Scientific Research and in the presence of H.E. Dr. Sherif Hamad, Minister of Scientific Research of the Arab Republic of Egypt and H.E. Navdeep Suri, Ambassador of India to Egypt.

The new Executive Programme was finalized at the end of the 3rd Joint Committee Meeting on Science & Technology held in Cairo on 22-23 December 2014. The Indian delegation was led by Dr. Arabinda Mitra, Advisor and Head, International Bilateral Cooperation, Department of Science & Technology, while the Egyptian side was led by Prof. Dr. Hazem Mansour, Assistant to the Minister of Scientific Research.

The Executive Programme will be valid for the period 2015-2018 and will focus cooperation on vital sectors of Biotechnology (Agriculture Biotechnology and enzymes bio-technology); Nano-Technology (material sciences and sensors); and Information & Communication Technology (e-Health, e-Education and e-Governance). Both sides will arrange Joint Research and Development Projects, exchange of visits by Scientists and training programmes, and scientific workshops and conferences for which they will be organizing two workshops in Egypt and one in India. The two sides also agreed that the 4th Joint Committee Meeting will be held in India in early 2016.

Welcoming the positive spirit of the bilateral discussions and the ambitious framework of the Executive Programme, Dr. Sherif Hamad, Minister of Scientific Research said that it would provide an excellent platform for enhancing bilateral cooperation in Science and Technology and would help in finding common solutions to various problems that people are facing.

Ambassador Navdeep Suri applauded the efforts of the two sides and drew attention to the emergence of India as a global hub for frugal engineering. 'India's scientific community and entrepreneurs are coming up with technological solutions that offer a unique AAA proposition. They are Affordable, Adaptable and Appropriate for the needs of developing countries like Egypt that face socio-economic challenges similar to those faced by us in India,' he remarked. Ambassador Suri also emphasized on the importance of implementing the provisions of the Executive Programme in a time-bound manner and encouraged pro-active use of video-conferencing to bridge the physical divide.

The signing ceremony was preceded by a meeting between Ambassador Suri and H.E. Dr. Sherif Hamad, Minister for Scientific Research that provided the opportunity for discussions on priority areas of cooperation. Ambassador Suri also presented the Minister a copy of the book 'The India Idea' which profiles some of the path-breaking innovations from India.

For more details, please contact the Indian Embassy at 'info.cairo@mea.gov.in' or follow us on Facebook (Indian Embassy Cairo).

**Source:** *Embassy of India, Cairo,* [http://www.indembcairo.com/en-us/presscentre/pressreleases.aspx?udt\\_656\\_param\\_detail=42197](http://www.indembcairo.com/en-us/presscentre/pressreleases.aspx?udt_656_param_detail=42197)

### **7. Indian Sarangi Instrumental Group at Fayoum International Festival for Folk Music from 17 - 20 December 2014, Cairo, 29 December 2014**

Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) sponsored the four-member Indian Sarangi Instrumental group who participated in the first Fayoum International Festival for Folk Music. The festival was organized by Egyptian Ministry of Culture at Fayoum from 17 - 20 December 2014, coinciding with the phenomenon of the alignment of the sun on Qasr Qaroun Temple. The four-day festival included performances by various artists and musical groups from India, Bangladesh, Kazakhstan, Spain and Egypt at different venues in the Fayoum Governorate.

The Indian group presented an enthralling performance at the inauguration ceremony of the festival at Fayoum cultural Palace on 17 December in the presence of Governor of Fayoum Dr. Hazem Attiatallah and many dignitaries from the field of music. Indian group in the festival included Ustad Moinuddin Khan on Sarangi, Ustad Ghanshyam Rao on Tabla, Ustad Sabir Khan on Sarangi and Ustad Mohsin Khan on Swarmandal. Ustad Sabir Khan sang a very popular Rajasthani folk song 'Kesariya balama' at the end of the group's performance.

These musical instruments are commonly used in Hindustani Classical music. The Sarangi is a bowed, short-necked string instrument, carved from a single block of tun (red cedar) wood and has a box-like shape with three hollow chambers: pet (stomach), chaati (chest) and magaj (brain). It has about 35–37 steel / brass strings, among which three main playing strings are played not with the finger-tips but with the nails, cuticles and surrounding flesh. The Swarmandal is commonly used as an accompanying instrument for vocals. The name combines swara (notes) and mandal (group), representing its ability to produce a large number of notes. The Tabla is a percussion instrument used traditionally in the Indian subcontinent.

The music festival concluded with the magical performances by various groups, including that by the Indian group at the famous Qaroun Palace on the evening of 20 December. Indian group mesmerized the audience with its performance during the concluding event. Governor of Fayoum Dr. Hazem Attiatallah, who attended the programme, expressed his sincere thanks for Indian group's participation in the festival and honoured the group with memento. About Indian participation in the festival, Deputy Chief of Mission Vishvas Sapkal said that as the name of the instrument is 'Sarangi' (which produces sau rangs i.e. hundred colours), the group added several wonderful colours of Indian classical music to the festival, which was very well appreciated by the audience.

For more details, please contact the Indian Embassy at 'info.cairo@mea.gov.in' or follow us on Facebook (Indian Embassy Cairo).



*Source: Embassy of India, Cairo, [http://www.indembcairo.com/en-us/presscentre/pressreleases.aspx?udt\\_656\\_param\\_detail=42209](http://www.indembcairo.com/en-us/presscentre/pressreleases.aspx?udt_656_param_detail=42209)*

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### **8. Scholarships offered by the Indian Government, Cairo, 30 December 2014**

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

The first category, 13 Scholarships (three for undergraduates and ten for Doctoral Studies), are given every year under the Indo-Egyptian Cultural Exchange Programme 2012-2015 to deserving Egyptian students for pursuing higher education in reputed institutes of excellence in India. The courses are in any branch or discipline, including science and technology, social sciences or humanities, except for medicine and medicine-related fields. The Indian Embassy coordinates with the Ministry of Higher Education in Egypt to process the applications of the candidates for these scholarships. Suitable candidates nominated by the Ministry are then selected by the Indian Embassy after testing their English Proficiency before forwarding their names to concerned Indian Universities for acceptance. Candidates desirous to pursue courses in India can avail of the Scholarship for the year 2015-2016 by applying to Missions Department of the Ministry of Higher Education, Government of Egypt. The scholarship will cover tuition fees, a substantial living allowance and health cover.

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

The application forms as well as detailed guidelines, including the list of participating universities are available at ICCR's website: [http://www.iccrindia.net/Dear\\_Applicant1.pdf](http://www.iccrindia.net/Dear_Applicant1.pdf). The application form can be downloaded from the Home Page at [www.indembcairo.com](http://www.indembcairo.com). Applications, downloaded and filled-in, should be mailed to [macic@indembcairo.com](mailto:macic@indembcairo.com). The deadline for receiving the applications at MACIC, Embassy of India at 23 Talaat Harb Street, Down Town, Cairo, is on 15 January 2015.

For more information, please contact the Indian Embassy Cairo at the Maulana Azad Centre for Indian Culture (MACIC) at [macic@indembcairo.com](mailto:macic@indembcairo.com) or follow us on Facebook (Indian Embassy Cairo) or twitter (@indembcairo).

*Source: Embassy of India, Cairo, [http://www.indembcairo.com/en-us/presscentre/pressreleases.aspx?udt\\_656\\_param\\_detail=42213](http://www.indembcairo.com/en-us/presscentre/pressreleases.aspx?udt_656_param_detail=42213)*

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## **b. IRAN**

### **9. Industrialization around Kaziranga National Park, New Delhi, 16 December 2014**

#### **Question:**

Will the Minister of Environment, Forests and Climate Change be pleased to state:

- (a) Whether the Government has received complaints regarding industrialization around the restricted Numaligarh refinery and Kaziranga National Park?
- (b) If so, the details thereof and the action taken by the Ministry thereon?
- (c) Whether the Central Pollution Control Board has detected any industrial units in the restricted area?
- (d) If so, the number of industrial units functioning against the guidelines issued by the Government?
- (e) The action taken by the Ministry as per 1996 notifications and the penal provisions imposed against the units and officials?
- (f) Whether the State Government has notified any industrial Zone in this area without the consent of the Ministry and if so, the details thereof?

#### **Answer:**

Minister of State (Independent Charge) For Environment, Forests and Climate Change Prakash Javadekar

(a) to (e): A public complaint and applications under the Right to Information Act, 2005 were received regarding industries around Kaziranga National Park (KNP). Information was provided leading to filing of an Application before National Green Tribunal (NGT) by an individual. In pursuant of the said Application before NGT, the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) surveyed the area and observed that 11 stone crushers within No Development Zone (NDZ) around KNP, 23 stone crushers in the vicinity of NDZ, 34 brick kilns within NDZ, 22 tea leaf processing units within NDZ, 3 tea leaf processing units outside of NDZ, etc were located. Authorities in the State of Assam including the Assam Pollution Control Board have been asked to implement the orders of the NGT in the matter apart from the provision of 1996 notification.

(f) The State Government has not informed if any industrial zone has been notified by any department of Government of Assam in said NDZ.

*Source: Lok Sabha (Council of People), Unstarred Question No. 3715, asked by P.C. Mohan, <http://164.100.47.132/LssNew/psearch/QResult16.aspx?qref=8332>*

### **10. Agreement with the Government of Iran for developing a multipurpose Cargo Port in Chabahar in Iran, New Delhi, 18 December 2014**

#### **Question:**

Will the Minister of Shipping be pleased to state:-

- (a) Whether the Government has signed any agreement with the Government of Iran for developing a multipurpose Cargo Port in Chabahar in Iran?



- (b) If so, the details thereof?
- (c) The investment proposed for development of the said port?
- (d) The main purpose for which the said port is being developed/proposed to be developed by India?

**Answer:**

Minister of State in The Ministry Of Shipping Pon. Radhakrishnan

(a)to(d): No, Madam. The estimated capital investment for India's engagement in the Chabahar Port Project is US\$ 85.21 million and an additional annual revenue expenditure of US\$ 22.95 million for a 10 year period. The development of Chabahar Port is expected to give fillip to trade between India, Iran and other Central Asian countries.

*Source: Lok Sabha (Council of People), Unstarred Question No. 4292, asked by P. P. Mohammed Faial, <http://164.100.47.132/LssNew/psearch/QResult16.aspx?qref=10738>*

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**c. ISRAEL**

**11. Indo -Israel Agreement on Terrorism, New Delhi, 2 December 2015**

**Question:**

Will the Minister of Home Affairs be pleased to state:

- (a) Whether any strategic understanding has been reached between India and Israel to tackle global terrorism?
- (c) Whether any agreement has been signed during the visit of Home Minister to Israel recently?
- (d) If so, the details thereof; and
- (e) The time by which the agreement is likely to be implemented?

**Answer**

Minister of State In The Ministry Of Home Affairs Haribhai Parathibhai Chaudhary

(a) & (b): Both India and Israel are committed to tackling terrorism and cooperate in this effort through bilateral mechanisms, notably the Joint Working Group on Counter Terrorism. Both the countries recognize their mutual interest in cooperation in order to protect their population, assets and interests from threats.

(c): No, Madam

(d) to (e): Does not arise

*Source: Lok Sabha (Council of People), Unstarred Question No. 1488, asked by Vinayak Bhaurao Raut, <http://164.100.47.132/LssNew/psearch/QResult16.aspx?qref=8572>*

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**12. Defence Purchase from Israel, New Delhi, 5 December 2015**

**Question:**

Will the Minister of Defence be pleased to state

- (a) Whether the Government has signed new defence equipment purchase agreements with private companies from Israel?
- (b) If so, the details thereof along with the cost involved therein?
- (c) The details of criteria for selection of defence equipment from Israel?

- (d) Whether the policy relating to Buy and Make with Transfer of Technology is being implemented for all purchases from Israel?
- (e) If so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

**Answer:**

Minister of Defence Manohar Parrikar

(a) To (e) Procurement of defence equipment is made from various indigenous as well as foreign sources, including Israeli vendors. Two contracts have been concluded with Israeli vendors during Current Financial Year in respect of capital procurement of defence equipment. Divulgence of details will not be in the interest of national security.

The capital procurement process for defence including issues of Transfer of Technology and vendor selection are governed by the provisions of Defence Procurement Procedure (DPP). The DPP provides for five categories of procurements namely Buy (Indian), Buy & Make (Indian), Make (Indian), Buy & Make and Buy (Global) in order of preference.

*Source: Lok Sabha (Council of People), Unstarred Question No. 2189, asked by Bhagwant Mann <http://164.100.47.132/LssNew/psearch/QResult16.aspx?qref=8695>*

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**13. Indo-Israel Ties, New Delhi, 17 December 2014**

**Question:**

Will the Minister of External Affairs be pleased to state:

- (a) Whether Israel has expressed its keen desire to share new technologies and innovative ideas with Indian farmers?
- (b) If so, the details thereof; and
- (c) The details of other areas decided for further cooperation between the two countries?

**Answer**

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

(a) Israel has been collaborating with India in various sectors in the field of agriculture including sharing of new technologies and innovative ideas.

(b) An Agreement for cooperation in agriculture was signed between the two countries in 1993. The Agreement provided for cooperation in Agricultural Science and Technology including Research & Education, Extension, and Training & Joint Research Projects. These provisions were implemented through periodic Action Plans.

(c) The current Action Plan (2012-15) is being implemented in the States of Haryana, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Bihar, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and Punjab. It includes training of Indian officers in Israel in various fields. Under the plan, Israeli experts regularly visit the participating states for demonstrations, trainings and establishment of Centres of Excellence. Centres of Excellence are aimed to introduce scientific and integrated approach to agriculture across various sectors like horticulture, sub-tropical fruits, bee-keeping etc.

*Source: Lok Sabha (Council of People), Unstarred Question No. 3936, asked by A. Arunmozhithevan, <http://164.100.47.132/LssNew/psearch/QResult16.aspx?qref=10698>*

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#### **14. Home Ministers visit to Israel, New Delhi, 17 December 2014**

##### **Question:**

Will the Minister of Home Affairs be pleased to state:

- (a) Whether the Minister has made an official visit to Israel recently?
- (b) If so, the details thereof;
- (c) Whether any agreements were reached with Israel during his visit?
- (d) If so, the details thereof?

##### **Answer:**

Minister of State in the Ministry Of Home Affairs Haribhai Parathibhai Chaudhary

- (a) & (b): Yes, Madam. Hon'ble Union Home Minister visited Israel from 5-7 November 2014. During the visit, he held meetings with Hon'ble Prime Minister of Israel, Hon'ble Defence Minister of Israel and Hon'ble Minister for Public Security of Israel and discussed issues relating to bilateral security cooperation between the two countries.
- (c): No, Sir.

*Source: Rajya Sabha (Council of State), Unstarred Question No. 2718, asked by RajKumar Dhoot, <http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/QResult.aspx>*

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#### **15. Sharing of new technologies by Israel, New Delhi, 18 December 2014**

##### **Question:**

Will the Minister of External Affairs be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Israel has expressed its keen desire to share new technologies and innovative ideas with Indian farmers, if so, the details thereof; and
- (b) whether it is also a fact that Israel is also considering to expand their activities in India further, provided India responds with quicker and effective coordination, if so, the details thereof?

##### **Answer**

The Minister of State in the Ministry Of External Affairs Retd. Gen. Dr. V.K. Singh

- a) Israel has been collaborating with India in various sectors in the field of agriculture including sharing of new technologies and innovative ideas. An Agreement for cooperation in agriculture was signed between the two countries in 1993. The Agreement provided for cooperation in Agricultural Science and Technology including Research & Education, Extension, and Training & Joint Research Projects. These provisions were implemented through periodic Action Plans.
- b) The current Action Plan (2012-15) is being implemented in the States of Haryana, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Bihar, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and Punjab. It includes training of Indian officers in Israel in various fields. Under the plan, Israeli experts regularly visit the participating states for demonstrations, trainings and establishment of Centres

of Excellence. Centres of Excellence are aimed to introduce scientific and integrated approach to agriculture across various sectors like horticulture, sub-tropical fruits, bee-keeping etc. There is effective coordination between the two countries on these collaborations. 27 Centres of Excellence are at various stages of development across different States. Five of them have already been completed and commissioned.

*Source: Rajya Sabha (Council of State), Unstarred Question No. 2872, asked by T. Rathinavel, <http://164.100.47.5/qsearch/QRresult.aspx>*

#### **d. KUWAIT**

##### **16. Policy measures for the protection and welfare of Indian female domestic workers, Kuwait, 9 December 2014**

The Government of India has taken several policy measures since the year 2007 for the protection and welfare of Indian female domestic workers coming to the GCC countries for employment, as stated below:-

- a. A female domestic worker should not be less than 30 years of age;
- b. The Employment contract should be between the sponsor and the worker and that the attestation of this contract is mandatory from Indian Embassy;
- c. Every foreign employer recruiting Indian female domestic worker has to provide bank guarantee of US\$ 2,500 with the Indian Embassy;
- d. A pre-paid mobile phone should be provided by the employer to domestic worker;
- e. Payment of minimum monthly wage to female domestic workers (KD 70 per month in Kuwait); and
- f. 24X7 Telephone Helpline, run by the Embassy, for information and advice to Indian workers as regards their grievances, immigration and other matters.

2. The bank guarantee policy measure has already been implemented in Saudi Arabia, UAE, Oman, Bahrain and Qatar. As it is now necessary to submit bank guarantee of US\$ 2,500 by sponsors in Kuwait employing Indian female domestic workers, the Embassy had issued a press release on 12 September 2014. There is no denying of the fact that there have been many instances in the past of non-payment of wages, severe physical and mental abuse, and acute harassment of Indian domestic workers in Kuwait. Very often passports of Indian domestic workers are kept by their sponsors in Kuwait.

3. While the bank guarantee provision has been implemented for Indian female domestic workers in other GCC countries since 2007, its implementation has been effective in Kuwait from 13 September 2014. The bank guarantee is required only for female Indian domestic workers and that too those coming to Kuwait after the introduction of bank guarantee provision in September 2014. The bank guarantee is not needed for those Indian female workers who are already working in Kuwait.

4. The bank guarantee will be returned to the sponsor once he/she fulfils his/her contractual obligations. Only in rare cases of non-payment of dues etc., the bank guarantee will be used to settle the dues.

5. The Indian authorities have proposed in March 2014 to the authorities of Kuwait to conclude early an Agreement on labour cooperation for domestic workers recruitment. India has signed a similar agreement with Saudi Arabia in January 2014.

6. The Embassy is working with concerned authorities in Kuwait for the strengthening further of historically close and friendly ties between India and Kuwaiti.

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

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### **17. Policy Measures for Indian domestic workers, Kuwait, 15 December 2014**

To protect the interests as well as to safeguard the welfare of about three lakh Indian domestic workers in Kuwait, the Embassy is maintaining separate shelters for females and males. Common complaints received by Embassy from Indian domestic workers are physical & mental abuse, neglect of medical conditions and non-payment of wages.

2. Several policy measures have been taken for the protection and welfare of Indian domestic workers coming to the GCC countries for employment, as stated below:-

- a). A female domestic workers should not be less than 30 years of age;
- b). The Employment contract should be between the sponsor and the worker and that the attestation of this contract is mandatory from Indian Embassy;
- c). Every employer recruiting Indian female domestic worker has to provide bank guarantee of US\$ 2,500 with Indian Embassy;
- d). A pre-paid mobile phone should be provided by the employer to domestic worker;
- e). Payment of minimum monthly wage to domestic workers (KD 70-75 per month) in Kuwait; and
- f). 24x7 Telephone Helpline run by the Embassy, for information and advice to Indian workers as regards their grievances, immigration and other matters.

3. All Indian domestic workers holding visa Article 20, who find themselves in financial or any other distress, are temporarily accommodated in above-mentioned shelters so that they can be immediately provided with food, clothes and basic amenities, including some medical attention. The Embassy arranges for their repatriation to India at Government's cost. Small allowance is also paid for their travel to their hometown etc., from the nearest airport of disembarkment in India.

4. In addition to Hindi/English, a team of officials in the Embassy knowing Indian-regional languages, is also available for contact in case of need:-

- i. Telugu: M. Thriveni Reddy: Mobile No. 97108538; Ms. Dina Ratnam: Mobile No. 66560773; K.S.S. Naidu, Mobile No. 66442433;

- ii. Tamil: M. Hamza: Mobile No. 66586006; Ms. Sunila Krishnan, Attaché (Labour-II); Mobile No. 97264242;
- iii. Malayalam: M. Sudhrendran: Mobile No. 99183576; Bobby Mathew Mobile No. 66932975; Smt. Dhanya Nair, Mobile No. 65689503;

5. Indian domestic workers can seek clarifications, on the telephone helpline No. 25674163 of the Embassy. S. Goldar, Deputy Chief of Mission (Mob No. 97229942), and Ashok Kumar, Attaché (Labour) (Mob No. 97229946) may also be contacted in cases of emergency.

*Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait, <http://www.indembkwt.org/DispNews.aspx?ID=690>*

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### **18. Phasing out of Hand-Written Passports, Kuwait, 28 December 2014**

All Indian nationals residing in Kuwait are advised to apply for urgent re-issuance of new passports under the following circumstances-

#### **(i). Handwritten Passports**

(a) The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) has set a deadline of the 24 November 2015 for globally phasing out of all non-Machine Readable Passports (MRPs). From the 25 November 2015 onwards, foreign Governments may deny Visa or entry to any person travelling on a non-Machine Readable Passport.

(b) The Government of India has been issuing Machine Readable Passports since 2001. The Passports, however, issued before 2001 and particularly those issued during mid 1990s with a validity of 20 years will fall in the category of non-MRPs. All handwritten passports with pasted photographs are also considered non-MRPs.

(c) Indians living in Kuwait holding handwritten passports as explained in Para (b) above, with validity beyond the 24 November 2015 are advised to apply for re-issue of their passports well before the deadline in order to avoid any inconvenience in obtaining valid visa or international travel.

#### **(ii) Passports valid for less than six months**

Many international travellers may not realize that having a passport with short validity remaining is sometimes not good enough to obtain Visas or to enter certain foreign countries. Indian citizens travelling on Passports which may expire in less than six months, should renew their passports before any upcoming international travel. It is especially important to check the passports needs of any minor who may be accompanying their parents as passports for minors have a shorter validity period (5 years) than passports for adults (10 years). The universal practice in vogue now is: "Once your passport crosses the nine-year mark, it is time to get a new passport".

#### **iii) Exhaustion of Visa Pages**

Some countries do not accept passports which may have fewer than two pages remaining. Please check your passport to ensure that you have enough blank visa pages. There is no provision now



of additional booklets/pages and you will be required to apply reissuance of passport following standard procedures. Frequent travellers may opt for a Jumbo Indian Passport containing 64 pages, as against a normal passport with 36 pages.

iv) For more details related to passport services, visit the website – <http://www.indembkwt.org/Pages/Passport.aspx> - or call Kalidas Roy, Attaché(Cons) at Mob: 97295728 or J.S.Dangi, Second Secretary(Cons) at Mob: 97229947.

*Source: Embassy of India, Kuwait, <http://www.indembkwt.org/DispNews.aspx?ID=694>*

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## **e. QATAR**

### **19. Treaty on transfer of sentenced persons between India and Qatar, New Delhi, 2 December 2014**

The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, today approved the signing of the treaty on transfer of sentenced persons between India and Qatar.

The signing of the Treaty shall facilitate Indian prisoners imprisoned in Qatar or vice-versa to be near their families, for serving the remaining part of their sentence and shall facilitate their social rehabilitation.

Prior to 2004, there was no domestic legislation under which foreign prisoners could be transferred to the country of their origin to serve the remaining part of their sentence, nor was there a provision for the transfer of prisoners of Indian origin convicted by a foreign court to serve their sentence in India.

Hence the Repatriation of Prisoners Act, 2003 was enacted for serving this purpose. For achieving the objectives of the Act, a Treaty/Agreement is required to be signed with countries having mutual interest with India and later to be notified in the Official Gazette.

The Government of India has so far signed Agreements with the Governments of United Kingdom, Mauritius, Bulgaria, Brazil, Cambodia, Egypt, France, Bangladesh, South Korea, Saudi Arabia, Iran., Kuwait, Sri Lanka, UAE, Maldives, Thailand, Turkey, Italy, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Israel, Russia, Vietnam and Australia. Negotiations have also been concluded with the Governments of Canada, Hong Kong, Nigeria and Spain.

*Source: Press Information Bureau of India, New Delhi, <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx>*

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### **20. President of India's message on the eve of National Day of Qatar, New Delhi, 17 December 2014**

The President of India Pranab Mukherjee has extended his greetings and felicitations to the Emir and people of the State of Qatar on the eve of the National Day of the State of Qatar (18 December 2014).

In his message to His Highness Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani, the Emir of the State of Qatar, the President has said, "On behalf of the Government and the people of India and on my

own behalf, it gives me great pleasure to extend warm greetings and felicitations to you and to the friendly people of the State of Qatar on the occasion of your National Day.

India greatly values its close and time-tested relations with the State of Qatar, which are deeply rooted in history. We look forward to further strengthening and deepening our multifaceted ties for the mutual benefit of our two countries.

I take this opportunity to convey to Your Highness my best wishes for your personal good health and well-being, as also for the continued progress and prosperity of the people of the State of Qatar”.

*Source: Press Information Bureau of India, New Delhi, <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx>*

## **21. PM greets the citizens of Qatar on their National Day, New Delhi, 18 December 2014**

The Prime Minister Narendra Modi has greeted the citizens of Qatar on their National Day. "On Qatar National Day, my greetings to the citizens of Qatar. I am very optimistic about stronger cooperation with Qatar in the coming years", the Prime Minister said.

*Source: Press Information Bureau of India, New Delhi, <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx>*

## **22. Public Advisory in connection with Passports for Indian Nationals, Doha, 30 December 2014**

Indian citizens living in India and abroad are advised to apply for urgent re-issuance of their passports in the following cases:-

### **(i). Handwritten Passports**

The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) has set a deadline of 24 November 2015 for globally phasing out of all non-Machine Readable Passports (MRPs). From 25 November 2015 onwards, foreign Governments may deny Visa or entry to any person travelling on a non-Machine Readable Passport.

The Government of India has been issuing Machine Readable Passports since 2001. The Passports, however, issued before 2001 and particularly those issued during mid 1990s with a validity of 20 years will fall in the category of non-MRPs. All handwritten passports with pasted photographs are also considered non-MRPs.

By the end of November 2014, it is estimated that there are approximately 2.86 lakh handwritten passports in circulation. Approximately six crore Indians hold valid passports.

Indian citizens residing in India and abroad and holding such passports with validity beyond the 24 November 2015 are advised to apply for re-issue of their passports well before the deadline in order to avoid any inconvenience in obtaining valid visa or international travel.

### **(ii) Passports valid for less than six months**

Many international travellers may not realize that having an unexpired passport is sometimes not enough to obtain Visas or to enter certain foreign countries. Indian citizens travelling on Passports which may expire in less than six months should renew their passports before any upcoming international travel. It is especially important to check the passports needs of any minor who may be accompanying their parents as passports for minors have a shorter validity period (5 years) than passports for adults (10 years). The universal practice in vogue now is; “Once your passport crosses the nine-year mark, it is time to get new passport”.

(iii) Exhaustion of visa pages

Some countries do not accept passports which may have fewer than two pages remaining. Please check your passport to ensure that you have enough visa pages. There is no provision of additional booklets/pages and you will be required to apply reissuance of passport following standard procedures. Frequent travellers may opt for Jumbo Passport containing 64 pages.

2. All Passport Issuing Authorities have instituted a simple and fast-track procedure for renewal of passports. For more details related to passport services, website – [www.passportindia.gov.in](http://www.passportindia.gov.in) - or the National Call Centre (1800-258-1800 - Toll Free) may be accessed. Indian citizens living abroad should visit the website of respective Indian Mission/Post.

*Source: Embassy of India, Doha,*

[http://www.indianembassyqatar.gov.in/pages/press\\_release\\_detail.php?id=98&page=1](http://www.indianembassyqatar.gov.in/pages/press_release_detail.php?id=98&page=1)

### **23. Thirteenth Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) and 7<sup>th</sup> Vibrant Gujarat Summit in Gujarat, Doha, 31 December 2014**

The thirteenth Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) Convention in Gandhinagar, Gujarat from 7-9 January 2015 is a historic event commemorating the 100th anniversary of the return of the greatest Pravasi, the Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi, to his motherland. PBD is celebrated on 9 January every year to mark the contribution of overseas Indian community in the development of India. Ninth January was chosen as the day to celebrate this occasion as it was on this day in 1915 that Mahatma Gandhi returned to India from South Africa, led India's freedom struggle and changed the lives of Indians forever.

The thirteenth PBD will be followed by the 7<sup>th</sup> Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit in Gandhinagar from 11-13 January 2015. The Vibrant Gujarat Summit has evolved as a major global business and investment event. It is heartening that a business delegation led by Remy Rowhani, Director General, Qatar Chamber of Commerce, & Industry (QCCI) is participating at Vibrant Gujarat 2015.

These conventions are taking place against the backdrop of several major initiatives taken by Hon'ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Government to make India a more attractive destination and partner, both for foreign companies as well as the Indian Diaspora. The landmark 'Make in India' campaign launched by Hon'ble Prime Minister on 25 September 2014 will be a major focus during the upcoming global events in Gandhinagar.

In the framework of India's deep-rooted relations and multi-faceted cooperation with Qatar, Embassy of India, Doha has been pro-actively promoting these conferences. The steps taken by the Embassy include a substantive programme for the visit of a 'Vibrant Gujarat' business delegation to Doha from 3-5 September 2014; three business and investment events held on 25 September 2014 to mark the launch of 'Make in India' campaign; and a function held on 16 December 2014 in cooperation with Indian Cultural Centre (ICC), Indian Business & Professionals Network (IBPN) and Indian Community Benevolent Forum (ICBF), apex organizations of the Indian community in Qatar, to promote participation at the 13th PBD.

For participation, registration and other details, please visit the following websites:

Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD): [www.pbd-india.com](http://www.pbd-india.com)

Vibrant Gujarat 2015: [www.vibrantgujarat.com](http://www.vibrantgujarat.com)

Embassy of India, Doha: [www.indianembassyqatar.gov.in](http://www.indianembassyqatar.gov.in)

**Source:** *Embassy of India, Doha,*  
[http://www.indianembassyqatar.gov.in/pages/press\\_release\\_detail.php?id=96&page=1](http://www.indianembassyqatar.gov.in/pages/press_release_detail.php?id=96&page=1)

## **f. TUNISIA**

### **24. ITEC Day was celebrated with fervour in Tunis, Tunis, 8 December 2015**

To mark the 50th Anniversary of the commencement of Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme by Government of India in 1964, the Embassy of India in Tunis celebrated the ITEC Day on 5 December 2014 by hosting a reception at Hotel Carthage Thalasso, Gammarth, for Tunisians who have availed of Government of India scholarships under ITEC over the last several years. The evening began with a welcome by the Ambassador of India in Tunisia, Nagma M. Mallick, who outlined some interesting aspects of the ITEC programme in Tunisia. Some Tunisian alumni who have availed of the scholarships also reminisced about their experiences in India. They also spoke about the courses they had followed in India, how much they had enjoyed their stay in India and how professionally useful the courses had been to them in their professions. Thereafter, Kavitha Reginald, an accomplished Bharata Natyam dancer, presented a depiction of an episode of the Indian epic Ramayana, to great acclaim from the audience.

2. The ITEC Programme, which is being offered since many years in Tunisia, forms an important part of our bilateral relations. There is growing interest among Tunisian in the ITEC courses in IT & communication, telecomm technology, English language, statistics & auditing, management, environment, water resources, sustainable development, rural development, parliamentary programme, entrepreneurship etc. The number of ITEC slots being allotted to Tunisia every year is around 40-50.

3. Through this programme, India shares its experience and expertise in various fields with around 158 developing countries. Training or capacity building is one of the major activities under ITEC, whereby India offers training courses in different centres of excellence in India.

There are currently 47 such centres spread all over India conducting about 280 short-term, medium-term and long-term courses every year in a wide and diverse range of skills and disciplines.

*Source: Embassy of India, Tunis, <http://www.embassyofindiatunis.com/pdf/press-realise-dec5.pdf>*

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## **25. Government of India extends felicitations on the Presidential election in Tunisia, Tunis, 23 December 2014**

The Government of India extends its hearty felicitations to the Government and the people of the Republic of Tunisia and to the Election Commission of Tunisia (ISIE) on the successful conduct of the two rounds of the Presidential election following the equally successful holding of the legislative elections earlier. These elections attest to the skill, organizational ability and maturity of the Tunisian people and their leadership.

The Government of India congratulates Beji Caid Essebsi on his victory in the Presidential elections and wishes him all success in fulfilling his mandate of guiding the destiny of his people at this important juncture in their history.

The Government of India has noted the progress of the Tunisian people towards a durable democracy. The democratic process was enabled by the elections of October 2011, undertaken by the National Constituent Assembly and by the coalition governments formed thereafter, and finally found fruition through the National Dialogue: these labours culminating in the adoption of a Constitution by consensus. That quest for democracy has now been fulfilled by the convening of the Assembly of the Representatives of the People and the direct election of the President of the Republic of Tunisia.

India reiterates its support to democracy in Tunisia and looks forward to working with the President-elect and the new Government, when it is formed, to further strengthen and deepen Tunisia-India relations in diverse fields.

*Source: Embassy of India, Tunis, <http://www.embassyofindiatunis.com/pdf/Press%20Release%20%20in%20English.pdf>*

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## **g. UAE**

### **26. President of India's message on the eve of National Day of UAE, New Delhi, 1 December 2014**

The President of India, Pranab Mukherjee has extended his greetings and felicitations to the Government and people of the United Arab Emirates on the eve of the National Day of the United Arab Emirates (2 December 2014).

In his message to His Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the President of the United Arab Emirates, the President has said, "On behalf of the Government and the people of

India and on my own behalf, it is my pleasure to extend warm greetings and felicitations to Your Highness and to the people of the United Arab Emirates on the occasion of your National Day.

India and UAE enjoy close and friendly relations deeply rooted in civilizational links. These ties are marked by vibrant people-to-people contacts, mutually beneficial economic and trade engagement and regular high-level exchanges.

Under your sagacious and visionary leadership, the UAE has made remarkable progress. We rejoice at UAE's progress and remain committed to be a reliable partner. I am confident that our bilateral ties in various spheres will continue to diversify and strengthen in the years to come.

I take this opportunity to convey to Your Highness my best wishes for your personal good health and well-being and for the continued progress and prosperity of the friendly people of the United Arab Emirates”.

*Source: Embassy of India, Tunis, <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.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 Websites <http://rajyasabha.nic.in/> of Rajya Sabha and <http://loksabha.nic.in/> of Lok Sabha.

**Crore:** 1 Crore=10 million. Lakh=100,000

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