

# MEI INDIA WATCH

(Monthly survey of India's relations with the Middle East)

No. 11

December 2010

## Political Issues

### Egypt

**1. Egypt says it voted for India for UNSC seat**

New Delhi, Tuesday, 2 November 2010

Expressing 'strong disappointment' over reports in the Indian media, Egyptian Ambassador in New Delhi has said that Egypt voted for India's candidature for the non-permanent seat at the UNSC.

**Source:** *The Indian Express*, New Delhi

<http://www.indianexpress.com/news/egypt-says-it-voted-for-india-for-uns-c-seat/705829/>

**2. Conversion row: Cops arrest Egyptian engineer on ship**

Mumbai, Saturday, 13 November 2010

An Egyptian Engineer Karim Rehman sailing in Kuwaiti flagship vessel *Al-Mir-Qab* was arrested after he was found distributing a 12-page pamphlet 'inviting people practicing Hinduism to a better religion called Islam.' He has been booked under Indian Penal Code for deliberate and malicious intention of outraging religious feelings.

**Source:** *The Indian Express*, New Delhi

<http://www.indianexpress.com/news/conversion-row-cops-arrest-egyptian-engineer/710499/>

### Iran

**3. Khamenei urges Muslims to 'help' Kashmir**

Tehran, Tuesday, 16 November 2010

The Supreme leader of Iran Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has urged the Islamic *Ummah* to sympathize and provide assistance to Kashmir. He said: 'Today the major duties of the elite of the Islamic *Ummah* is to provide help to the Palestinian nation and the besieged people of Gaza,

to sympathize and provide assistance to the nations of Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq and Kashmir...'

**Source:** *The Times of India*, New Delhi

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/middle-east/Khamenei-urges-Muslims-to-help-Kashmir/articleshow/6935375.cms>

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#### **4. Iran's supreme leader backs Kashmir 'struggle'**

**Tehran, Friday, 19 November 2010**

In a message to Iranian Hajj pilgrims, Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has appealed to the Muslim elite worldwide to back the 'struggle' in Jammu and Kashmir, equating the northern Indian state with the 'nations' of Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan.

**Source:** *The Hindustan Times*, New Delhi

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/Iran-s-supreme-leader-backs-Kashmir-struggle/Article1-628346.aspx>

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#### **5. Iranian envoy summoned for Khamenei's K-remark**

**New Delhi, Saturday, 20 November 2010**

Angry at the critical statements by Iranian supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on Kashmir, on Friday (19 November) India summoned the charge d'affaires of the Iranian embassy to lodge a formal protest. In retaliation, India also, for the first time, abstained from a UN vote on human rights violations in Iran.

**Source:** *The Times of India*, New Delhi

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Iranian-envoy-summoned-for-Khameneis-K-remark/articleshow/6957552.cms>;

**See also:** *The Indian Express*, New Delhi

<http://www.indianexpress.com/news/khamenei-remark-india-hits-back-abstains-a/713589/>

*The Hindu*, Chennai

<http://www.hindu.com/2010/11/20/stories/2010112066421600.htm>

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#### **6. India changed its vote at U.N. for some other reason: Iran**

**New Delhi, Saturday, 27 November 2010**

Describing the English translation of Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei as 'weak,' Iranian officials say India should not have changed its vote for this reason alone at a recent meeting of the United Nations committee on human rights. The issue involved was that of mention of Kashmir as a 'nation' by the Iranian leader twice in six months and once by a Foreign Ministry official.

**Source:** *The Hindu*, Chennai

<http://www.hindu.com/2010/11/27/stories/2010112754601600.htm>

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## Israel

### **7. Rabbi Holtzberg's father accuses Chabad of fraud**

**Mumbai, Tuesday, 23 November 2010**

Rabbi Nachman Holtzberg, father of Rabbi Gavriel Holtzberg who was killed in the attack on Chabad House during 26/11, has accused the ultra-orthodox Jewish group Chabad of 'large scale manipulation and falsification of records... to grab' the Nariman House property in Mumbai.

**Source:** *The Indian Express*, New Delhi

<http://www.indianexpress.com/news/rabbi-holtzbergs-father-accuses-chabad-of-fraud-embezzlement/714792/>

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## Saudi Arabia

### **8. Nudged by US, India, S Arabia inch closer on terror, defence**

**New Delhi, Monday, 8 November 2010**

Four years after King Abdullah visited India in January 2006, the Indian Army would hold joint exercises with the Royal Saudi Land Force in that country in March 2011. With a friendly nudge from Washington, New Delhi and Riyadh have joined hands against global terrorism and towards increasing defence and security cooperation.

**Source:** *The Indian Express*, New Delhi

<http://www.indianexpress.com/news/nudged-by-us-india-s-arabia-inch-closer-on-terror-defence/708028/>

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## Syria

### **9. India, Syria committed to economic reforms: Patil**

**New Delhi, Wednesday, 24 November 2010**

Speaking in an interview with the Syrian Arab News Agency (SANA) in New Delhi before departing on a nine-day visit to the United Arab Emirates and the Syrian Arab Republic, President Pratibha Devisingh Patil has said that both countries are both committed to economic reforms and to achieving higher growth rates.

**Source:** *The Economic Times*, New Delhi

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/foreign-trade/India-Syria-committed-to-economic-reforms-Patil/articleshow/6980474.cms>

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### **10. Patil, Bashar seek upgradation of economic ties**

**Damascus, Saturday, 27 November 2010**

At a joint press conference Indian and Syrian Presidents said that the two countries should take their historic ties to a new level, leveraging their growing importance in the world to each other's advantage, particularly in the economic sphere.

**Source:** *The Hindu*, Chennai

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/article917699.ece>

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### **11. After UAE, Syria backs India's permanent UNSC seat claim**

**Damascus, Sunday, 28 November 2010**

After the UAE, Syria too has supported India's claim for a permanent seat in the reformed United Nations. President Bashar Assad offered Syrian support in a statement he read out to the media in the presence of President Pratibha Patil after talks between the two leaders at the People's Palace here.

**Source:** *The Indian Express*, New Delhi

<http://www.indianexpress.com/news/after-uae-syria-backs-indias-permanent-unscc-seat-claim/717121/>

**See also:** *The Hindu*, Chennai

<http://www.hindu.com/2010/11/29/stories/2010112962621400.htm>

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## **United Arab Emirates**

### **12. India, UAE to sign security cooperation agreement soon**

**Abu Dhabi, Tuesday, 23 November 2010**

India and the United Arab Emirates would, in the near future, sign an agreement on security cooperation, addressing issues specially relating to counter-terrorism and maritime security. The decision was taken during the talks between President Pratibha Patil and UAE President Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan in Abu Dhabi.

**Source:** *The Hindu*, Chennai

<http://www.hindu.com/2010/11/23/stories/2010112361501300.htm>

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### **13. President launches help centre for Indian workers in UAE**

**Dubai, Thursday, 25 November 2010**

In an effort to help Indian workers in distress in the United Arab Emirates, an Indian Workers Resource Centre to provide legal, financial and psychological counselling was launched by President Pratibha Patil in Dubai.

**Source:** *The Indian Express*, New Delhi

<http://www.indianexpress.com/news/president-launches-help-centre-for-indian-wo/715572/>

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## **Yemen**

### **14. Government orders thorough check of cargo coming from Yemen, Somalia**

**New Delhi, Wednesday, 3 November 2010**

Government has directed all air and sea ports and the postal department to thoroughly check any cargo coming from Yemen and Somalia in the wake of detection of two US-bound parcel bombs sent from Yemen in an alleged al-Qaeda plot.

**Source:** *The Hindustan Times*, New Delhi

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/specials/coverage/obamavisit/Govt-orders-thorough-check-of-cargo-coming-from-Yemen-Somalia/newdelhi/SP-Article10-621722.aspx>

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## Economic Issues

### Israel

#### **15. India and US protest farm subsidy breach**

**New Delhi, Monday, 29 November 2010**

India, the US and some other countries have protested growing instances of countries, including Israel, doling out higher levels of farm subsidies than agreed upon under the WTO-brokered multilateral trading agreement.

**Source:** *The Economic Times*, New Delhi

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/agriculture/India--US-protest-farm-subsidy-breach/articleshow/7007855.cms>

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### United Arab Emirates

#### **16. President's UAE tour to focus on attracting infrastructure investment**

**New Delhi, Monday, 22 November 2010**

On Sunday (21 November) President Pratibha Patil said that she would 'highlight the tremendous scope for investing in India's infrastructure,' while emphasizing the possibilities for further expanding trade between India and the UAE.

**Source:** *The Hindu*, Chennai

<http://www.hindu.com/2010/11/22/stories/2010112262431300.htm>

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#### **17. Pratibha Patil urges UAE investors to take part in India's growth story**

**Dubai/Sharjah, Saturday, 27 November 2010**

While inaugurating the Indian Trade and Exhibition Centre in Sharjah, President Pratibha Patil urged Indian and Emirati businessmen to turn their attention to agricultural cooperation as well.

**Source:** *The Hindu*, Chennai

<http://www.hindu.com/2010/11/27/stories/2010112766471900.htm>

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### Multilateral

#### **18. Call rates to India from Gulf to cost more**

**New Delhi, Friday, 5 November 2010**

On Thursday (4 November) the Indian telecom regulator TRAI kicked off the process to raise the fee operators from West Asia have to pay to bring their call traffic into India. This would affect more than four million Indians living in the region.

**Source:** *The Economic Times*, New Delhi

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/news-by-industry/telecom/Call-rates-to-India-from-Gulf-to-cost-more/articleshow/6874127.cms>

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## Miscellaneous

### **19. Hundreds from Gujarat likely to miss Hajj**

**Ahmadabad, Friday, 5 November 2010**

Hundreds of women pilgrims from Gujarat might miss this year's Hajj as the Saudi Arabian consulate in Mumbai has not issued visas to their *Muharrams* (male companions). A woman cannot perform Hajj if she is not accompanied by a father, brother, husband, son or any other male she is forbidden to marry.

**Source:** *The Indian Express*, New Delhi

<http://www.indianexpress.com/news/hundreds-from-gujarat-likely-to-miss-hajj/707242/>

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### **20. AIE to restore 12 flights from State**

**Thiruvananthapuram, Sunday, 7 November 2010**

From December the no-frills division of Air India, Air India Express (AIE), would reinstate 12 weekly flights from Thiruvananthapuram and Kozhikode airports to various destinations in the Gulf.

**Source:** *The Hindu*, Chennai

<http://www.hindu.com/2010/11/07/stories/2010110750320100.htm>

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### **21. Pilgrims leave for Israel**

**Hyderabad, 12 November 2010**

The first batch of Christian Holy Land pilgrims comprising 46 members left on a nine-day pilgrimage to Israel, Jordan, Palestine and Egypt from Hyderabad on Thursday.

**Source:** *The Hindu*, Chennai

<http://www.hindu.com/2010/11/12/stories/2010111264370200.htm>

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### **22. Navy thwarts another pirate attempt to seize vessel near Mumbai**

**New Delhi, Saturday, 13 November 2010**

Indian warships have thwarted a piracy bid on a merchant vessel on the high seas around 450 nautical miles west of Mumbai. This is the 19<sup>th</sup> time when the Navy has warded off a piracy attempt since it began deploying warships in the Gulf of Aden in October 2008 to protect merchant vessels from sea brigands.

**Source:** *The Times of India*, New Delhi

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Navy-thwarts-another-pirate-attempt-to-seize-vessel-near-Mumbai/articleshow/6915150.cms>

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### **23. Merchant vessels safe, thanks to Indian Navy**

**Visakhapatnam, Saturday, 27 November 2010**

The Indian Navy is providing continuous protection to Indian merchant vessels effectively against piracy attack in the Gulf of Aden. At present *INS Rajput* is deployed in the Gulf of Aden to safeguard Indian vessels. It would return after three months of patrolling, when another ship would be sent there.

**Source:** *The Hindu*, Chennai

<http://www.hindu.com/2010/11/27/stories/2010112764911100.htm>

<http://www.indianexpress.com/news/over-three-decades-later-jewish-family-retraces-kochi-roots/717440/>

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#### **24. Check misuse of visitor visas, Indian envoys in Gulf told**

**New Delhi, Tuesday, 30 November 2010**

Speaking at a conference of heads of Indian missions in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, Minister of Overseas Indian Affairs Vayalar Ravi called upon Indian envoys in the Gulf countries to check the misuse of visitor visas.

**Source:** *The Hindu*, Chennai

<http://www.hindu.com/2010/11/30/stories/2010113063461300.htm>

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