



Ministry of External Affairs

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India - Iran Joint Statement- " Civilisational Connect, Contemporary Context" during the visit of Prime Minister to Iran

May 23, 2016

At the invitation of the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran H.E. Dr. Hassan Rouhani, the Prime Minister of the Republic of India H.E. Mr. Narendra Modi paid a state visit to Iran on 22-23 May 2016.

2. Prime Minister Modi called on the Supreme Leader Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Hosseini Khamenei on 23 May and held talks with President Rouhani following his official welcome in an impressive ceremony. President Rouhani hosted a lunch in honour of Prime Minister Modi.

3. Prime Minister Modi and President Rouhani witnessed the signing of the following cooperation documents and jointly addressed media:

i. India-Iran Cultural Exchange Programme

ii. MoU between the Ministry of External Affairs of India and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Iran on Policy Dialogue between Governments and Interaction between Think Tanks

iii. MoU between Foreign Service Institute, MEA and the School of International Relations, Iran's MoFA

iv. Implementation Protocol between Department of Science and Technology, Ministry of S&T and Iran's Ministry of Science, Research and Technology on cooperation in the fields of science and technology

v. MoU between Indian Council for Cultural Relations and Islamic Culture and Relations Organisation of the Islamic Republic of Iran

vi. Bilateral contract on Chabahar Port for port development and operations between IPGPL [India Ports Global Private Limited] and Arya Banader of Iran

vii. MoU between EXIM Bank and Iran's Ports and Maritime Organisation [PMO] specifying the current terms of credit line for Chabahar Port Project

viii. Confirmation Statement between EXIM Bank and Central Bank of Iran on Projects in Iran

ix. MoU between ECGC [Export Credit Guarantee Corporation] Limited of India and the Export Guarantee Fund of Iran [EGFI]

x. MoU between National Aluminium Company Limited [NALCO] and the Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organisation [IMIDRO]

xi. MoU between IRCON and Construction, Development of Transport and Infrastructure Company [CDTIC] of Iran

xii. MoU for cooperation between the National Archives of India and the National Library and Archives Organisation of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

4. In their friendly, cordial and wide-ranging discussions, the two sides exchanged views on bilateral relations, the evolving regional situation as well as global issues of mutual interest. They recalled the principles on development of bilateral relations articulated in the "New Delhi Declaration" of 23 January 2003.

5. President Rouhani and Prime Minister Modi expressed their satisfaction at the progress in bilateral ties since their meeting in July 2015 in Ufa. Prime Minister Modi complimented the leadership of Iran on Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and subsequent developments, including lifting of certain sanctions, which represent the triumph of diplomacy and sagacity. The President of The Islamic Republic of Iran, appreciated India's stance and support for close cooperation extended to the Government of The Islamic Republic of Iran during the period of imposed sanction and expressed the view that the Iranian people never forget the positive role India played in that period.

6. The leaders were united in their determination to build a strong, contemporary and cooperative relationship that draws upon the strength of the historical and civilisational ties between the two countries, leverages their geographical proximity, and responds to the needs of an increasingly inter-dependent world. They were also of the view that their governments must enable and encourage utilisation of the emerging opportunities to the maximum possible extent in all areas of bilateral economic and commercial cooperation, in particular connectivity and infrastructure, energy, and trade & investment. To this end:

i. President Rouhani and Prime Minister Modi agreed to further intensify high-level engagement through more frequent and wider exchange of bilateral visits at all levels, as well as meetings on the sidelines of regional and multilateral meetings.

ii. Both sides decided to give full play to the strategic location and unique role of Iran and India for promoting multi-modal connectivity within and across the region, hoped that India's participation in developing Chabahar Port will open a new chapter in bilateral cooperation and regional connectivity, and encourage more maritime links and services between the two countries, details of which will be worked out by authorities concerned.

iii. Welcoming the signing of the trilateral Agreement on Establishing Chabahar Transport and Transit Corridors later today in the presence of President Rouhani, Prime Minister Modi and President Ashraf Ghani, the leaders stressed the historical significance of the Agreement. They pointed out that the growing multi-cornered cooperation on connectivity will provide Afghanistan an assured and alternative access to regional markets, thus contributing to development, peace and stability in Afghanistan and also the region as a whole. They look forward to early delineation of all necessary rules and procedures leading to operationalisation of the transport and transit routes within the timelines stipulated in the Agreement.

iv. The Iranian side welcomed the investment of Indian side in setting up plants in sectors such as fertilisers, petrochemicals and metallurgy in Chabahar FTZ on terms mutually beneficial to the concerned parties. President Rouhani and Prime Minister Modi also welcomed prospects for participation of India's railways in various ongoing and future projects. In this regard, they noted the steps for cooperation taken by IRCON and CDTIC of Islamic Republic of Iran. They also noted the potential for cooperation in the sphere of mines and mining. In this regard, they noted the steps for cooperation taken by NALCO and IMIDRO. It was decided to establish a Bilateral Ministerial Task Force to guide the process to utilise mutual complementarities between India and Iran in the context of connectivity and Chabahar FTZ. The Task Force could also examine enhancement of Iranian investments in India.

v. Both sides also noted their shared desire to develop an Information and Communication Technology Zone in Chabahar and promote cooperation between States of India and Provinces of Iran.

vi. The Indian side thanked the Iranian government for India's ongoing participation and investment in the development of oil and gas sector in Iran. In this regard, they expressed the hope that a Heads of Agreement will be concluded by the third quarter of 2016 leading to further developments including commercial contract for Farzad B later this year. The two sides also reaffirmed that the companies involved strictly abide by the time line already agreed. In addition, President Rouhani and Prime Minister Modi encouraged further Indian participation and investment in onshore exploration and production in oil and gas blocks. The leaders noted with satisfaction the decision to convene a bilateral 'Energy Dialogue' with participation of important stake holders alternately in India and Iran, to focus on all aspects of mutual concern in the energy sector.

vii. President Rouhani and Prime Minister Modi agreed to strengthen the longstanding trade ties between the two countries by, inter alia, stepping up the momentum of economic engagement through early conclusion of a Preferential Trade Agreement, preferably within a year. The two leaders also directed that Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement and Bilateral Investment Treaty should be concluded before the end of the year. India fully supports the accession of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the World Trade Organization and the ongoing consensus building efforts among WTO members to reactivate the accession process, consistent with the objective of making the Organization universal and inclusive.

viii. Recognising the key role of effective banking channels for affecting business transactions, both sides welcomed technical discussions between two central banks, hoped for an early conclusion of practical arrangements on the same.

ix. Noting the recent exchanges of business delegations between the two countries and the significance of such exchanges for promoting economic and commercial cooperation, President Rouhani and Prime Minister Modi welcomed the decision of the Confederation of the Indian Industry (CII) to open a regional office in Tehran. They mandated the relevant authorities to organised country-specific events for promoting trade and economic cooperation. The two sides agreed that the Iranian side could open a similar office in India.

x. From the perspective of developing better and wider understanding of each other's vast civilisational heritage and tourism potential, President Rouhani and Prime Minister Modi expressed the hope for a successful outcome of first meeting of the Joint Working Group on Tourism. They were confident that more people-to-people contacts through more frequent exchanges of students and common people, including tourists, updating the existing visa regime and greater consular facilitation for each other's citizens will cement the bonds that exist between the two countries. In this context, they highlighted the potential of developing in particular religious tourism which can benefit from enhanced civil aviation links between the two countries. They directed the authorities concerned to take expeditious initiatives in that regard.

xi. They also welcomed the prospects of developing cooperation as per mutual interest and agreement in a number of other areas, including higher education, science and technology, environment, agriculture, promoting small and medium entrepreneurs through regular interaction and institutional mechanisms, and directed relevant authorities to work out further details.

xii. Driven by mutual desire to promote Indology and Persian Studies so that the current and future of citizens of the two countries are better informed of the mutually enriching and close interaction among India and Iran, both sides welcomed a number of initiatives underway and planned in the cultural sphere. They appreciated the organisation of the event 'India and Iran, Two Great Civilisations: Retrospect and Prospect' in Tehran from 23-25 May 2016 jointly by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) and the Academy of Persian Language and Literature (Farangistan). Noting the importance of the MoU signed between the ICCR and the Islamic Culture and Relations Organisation (ICRO), they encouraged scholars, authors, media, film community, artistes, youth and sportspersons to participate in each other's cultural and other such festivals planned for the coming two years. They hoped that other measures such as renewed Cultural Exchange Programme, creating an Eminent Persons Group for exploring further avenues of cooperation, and establishing a Chair for Hindi language in Tehran University and also supporting the Persian language courses in India, will further boost the efforts to cherish and preserve the shared cultural heritage of the two countries.

7. President Rouhani and Prime Minister Modi, had an in-depth exchange of views on regional and international situation. As developing countries, India and Iran shared the view that all countries must be able to pursue the aspirations of their people for peace and prosperity in the international system. In the context of the need to enhance consultations on international affairs between the policy makers and strategic analysts of the two countries, the leaders welcomed the renewal of the MoU for exchanges between the Foreign Service Institute of India and the School of International Relations of Iran, and signing of the MoU on Policy Dialogue between foreign ministries and interaction between think tanks. They also called for continued cooperation between Indian Council of World Affairs and the Institute for

Political and International Studies.

8. Noting with deep concern that terrorism and ideologies of violent extremism continue to infest and ingress the region posing a grave threat to peace, security, stability and development, they stressed the need to completely eradicate all forms of terrorism, and defeat the forces of extremism. They urged an immediate end to all support and sanctuaries enjoyed by terrorist groups and individuals and were of the view that States that aid, abet and directly or indirectly support terrorism should be condemned. They called upon all States to have zero tolerance towards terrorism, explicitly reject and stop the use of terrorism against other countries, dismantle terrorism infrastructure where it exists, end forthwith all support and financing to terrorists using their territories to harm other countries and ensure that all perpetrators of terrorism who are in their jurisdiction are brought to justice. The two sides reiterated their resolve to strengthen the international consensus and legal regimes against terrorism, including effective cooperation among the states in resolving the outstanding issues related the draft Comprehensive Convention against International Terrorism conducive to its finalization. Government of India also supported the initiative, taken by Islamic Republic of Iran in the United Nation General Assembly in 2013, titled Word against violence and extremism (WAVE).

9. They also welcomed the growing interaction between their National Security Councils and agreed to enhance regular and institutionalised consultations between them and others concerned on terrorism, security and related issues such as organised crime, money-laundering, narcotics trade and cyber crime.

10. Noting the significance of consultation and cooperation between the two countries on common interests related to maritime trade and security in their shared neighbourhood, they welcomed the organisation of meeting of officials from Indian Ocean Rim Association countries in Chabahar on May 19-20, 2016. They also directed that the Joint Working Group on Defence under Defence Secretaries, is convened early and recommends measures to enhance interaction in the defence sphere.

11. Both sides stressed that the interests of peace and stability in the region are best served by a strong, united, prosperous and independent Afghanistan. As executive leaders of two important countries with stake in stability of the region, they stressed the significance of strengthening India-Iran-Afghanistan trilateral consultations and coordination, including by suitably supplementing their cooperation on Chahbahar. The Iranian side extended its support for India in hosting the Sixth Ministerial Meeting of the Heart of Asia Istanbul Process on Afghanistan.

12. Prime Minister Modi expressed deep appreciation and gratitude for the gracious hospitality extended to his delegation and him by President Rouhani. He cordially invited H.E Rouhani to visit India at the earliest and convenient time as an important step for furthering development of relations between the two countries, President Rohani accepted the invitation of Prime Minister Modi.

Tehran

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