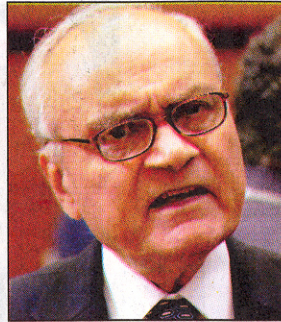


'Tehran needs to allay some suspicions'

India worried about Iraq violence: Envoy

by ASHWIN HONAWAR



Chinmaya R Gharekhan

cial Envoy to West Asia, he disclosed, was created by the Indian Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, nearly a year ago, keeping in mind the importance of the region.

"Some 65 per cent of India's energy requirements are met by the region which also has a sizeable population of Indian citizens. This, plus the ancient ties that India had with the region makes it very important for us," he noted, regretting that such a post should have been created much earlier. Gharekhan was also India's ambassador to the UN from 1986 and 1992.

He said, India will continue to support the Palestinian people as before, despite the change of the political leadership in that country. "I have myself visited Palestine and Israel thrice since my designation as the special envoy, the last being in December 2005."

We don't talk in terms of our relations with Palestine as Hamas. The elections,

which were free and fair have created a new Palestinian government and we have already established contact with them. Our representative based in Ramallah has already called upon the Palestinian premier and extended our support," he added. India, he pointed out, had recently donated \$15m towards building various facilities in Palestine

Asked about India's vote against Iran recently in the UN on Tehran's nuclear controversy, Gharekhan said, New Delhi respects Iran's stance that it is a signatory to the Non Proliferation Treaty and has no ambitions to build nuclear weapons. However, Tehran, he said, needed to allay some suspicions about its nuclear program that had emerged in recent years.

"As the Indian PM said, we are not in favour of another nuclear power in the region," he added.

The special envoy assured Indian citizens working in Qatar and other parts of the Middle East that their country cares about them. "We are not at all neglecting them because they are our valued citizens. All our ambassadors in the region are doing their best to look after the interest of our nationals but in some cases, it is also a matter of resources," he added.

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Picture: QASSIM RAHMATULLAH

First Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister H E Sheikh Hamad bin Jassem bin Jabor Al Thani and H E Sheikha Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani with other guests attending the Sixth Doha Forum on Democracy, Development and Free Trade opening yesterday.

Dan Rather moderates democracy meet

by AYSE ALIBEYOGLU

DOHA: Democracy, development, free and fair trade, the rule of law, international security and cooperation, for the developing as well as the developed countries, were the main topics being addressed by speakers at the opening ceremony of the Doha Forum.

"The Middle East region has not yet reached its full potential, however those in the West should realise that change can not be imposed from outside but from within, and begin to form real partnerships between

growing economies, to ensure a better future for us all and realise that in terms of policy - one size does not fit all" on this high note the panel discussion began.

The Sixth Doha Forum on Democracy, Development and Free Trade opening session was held yesterday evening at the Doha Sheraton Hotel, moderated by world renowned CBS News Anchor, Dan Rather.

The panellists included: Baroness Symons, Member of House of Lords, London; AbdulAziz Abdulghani, President of Council State of

Yemen; Rossevelt Skeritt, Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of Dominica and Azouz Begag, Minister delegate for the promotion of opportunities.

AbdulAziz Abdulghani stressed, "the advanced nations must help developing countries to integrate in the international trade system and ensure a citizens right to fool, education and healthcare".

In support of this statement, Rossevelt Skeritt added that it should be in the interest of all nations to "improve the life expectancy and life experiences of all

people in this world, and to satisfy not only primary needs of humankind but also tangible needs, such as education, in order for self actualisation".

"A New World Order needs to be created" commented Skeritt, "free of poverty, ignorance, greed and prejudice".

Azouz Begag highlighted the importance for "a culture of tolerance" and the key to achieving this is "dialogue and the free movement of people and ideas in order for development to occur".

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