



المركز العربي للأبحاث ودراسة السياسات  
Arab Center for Research & Policy Studies

# Indo-Arab Relations

The Evolving Dynamics with a Rising Power

May 5-6, 2018

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## About the Conference

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At the onset of Indian independence in August 1947, ending centuries of colonial rule and subjugation, few could have predicted that the country would be where it is now. India today stands as the world's seventh largest economy, with an estimated Gross Domestic Product of US\$ 2.2 Trillion. Statistics from the World Bank indicate that the rate of growth of the Indian economy, already one of the fastest in the world, will reach 7.7% by 2019-2020, and project that by 2022, India will be the globe's fourth largest economic power.

In order to sustain its economic growth, India has become the world's third largest oil importer, as well as the fourth largest importer of liquefied gas, with annual per capita oil consumption in India expected to rise to 25% to reach 1.5 barrels by 2022. This can only be achieved with increased oil imports and, in turn, ever stronger relations with oil producing countries in the Gulf.

Such vital trade ties form only a part of the Indo-Arab relationship, which stretches deep into history. Particularly through trade, ascendant Islamic states acted as the conduit between the Mediterranean World and India. Arab merchants introduced Indian spices, exotic animals and precious stones as well as sandalwood and ebony from India. Beginning in the eighth century, small settlements of Arab traders had established themselves on the Indian Subcontinent.

The Arabs of antiquity had an intimate knowledge of Indian civilization, including through the access which Arab scholars enjoyed to Indian schools of thought and scholarly traditions. In medieval Mesopotamia, scholarly institutions founded on Indian pedagogical ideals hosted mathematicians and philosophers who had studied in Indian schools, including the medieval physician Al Hareth bin Kalda Al Thaqafi, who had studied with Indian scholars at Gundeshapur. In tandem with this trade in goods and ideas, an exchange of gifts and books also grew between Arab and Indian rulers, with the Abbassid Caliph Al Mansour being one of the most important Muslim Arab recipients of works of mathematics and medicine written in India. Some of these early works on mathematics, astronomy and astrology and medicine which made their way from India to the Middle East included a work by Abrahama Sadhanta, which came into Arabic translation with the title

Sind Hind; Arkand, written by Kahadika; and Aryabhata's work on the decimal system. It was the transfer of this knowledge which allowed Europe to discover the decimal system through Arab-ruled Iberia.

Together with this knowledge in scientific fields came the export of Indian value systems and stories through the transmission of stories and parables. Most famously, these included allegorical Kalila wa Dimna, which in turn travelled around the world from its Arabic translation. These stories also inspired a group of medieval Arab geographers and travelers to explore the Indian subcontinent. Notable visits began soon after the Umayyad conquest of Sindh, and included Al Sirafi's travels to China and India during the tenth century and rose to a pinnacle during Ibn Battuta's famous journey. In Sindh itself, a growing community of Arabic speaking scholars quickly made large contributions to Islamic jurisprudence and wider Islamic civilization. The Sindhi city of Mansoura was home to a number of Arabic grammarians and poets, only decades after its construction by the Umayyads. Arab admiration for India was perhaps best expressed by the fifteenth century polymath Qalqashandi, who said of India "A great kingdom, abundant justice, abundant bounty and good politics. The people of India are the best informed when it comes to wisdom, medicine, geometry and curious inventions."

By the late fifteenth century, Portuguese encroachment on the maritime routes in the Indian Ocean led to competition with the Ottoman and other Muslim states for control of the sea trade. Growing Portuguese influence also impacted the Arab spice trade to Europe via the Red Sea, with Portuguese navigators trying to cut the Red Sea out and to establish an independent connection to India. After European domination of these trade routes, and of Asia, the Arabs and Indians were again united, this time in the struggle against European colonialism. This informed the shared attitudes to anti-colonialism and anti-colonial sentiments, adopted by both the Indian independence movement and Arab nationalists. It also explains why the Arab states were quick to join the Non-Aligned Movement following independence.

After the end of the Cold War however, a number of transformations on the world stage impacted Arab-Indian relations over a number of issues. This went hand in hand with the rise of India-Israel relations, with the volume of bilateral trade between India and Israel going from US\$ 200 million in 1992, to \$1 billion in 2000 to \$4 billion in 2016. With the fall of the Soviet Union, the regional calculus which defined

Indian defense policy accelerated growing ties with Israel, which appeared more than ready to export military technology to India. Israeli-Indian cooperation now covers a number of other domains, including research and development and joint industrial manufacturing in defense technologies, agriculture, telecommunications, water resources management and urban planning. By April, 2017, New Delhi and Tel Aviv had signed a two billion-dollar agreement covering defense manufacturing. The rapid acceleration of ties between the two countries has, of course, come at the expense of Palestinian rights of which India had long been a champion.

Despite its ambitions on the world stage, India's development is held back by a number of structural weaknesses. The country, despite its massive power, is home to one-third of the world's poor and remains one of the nations most afflicted by food insecurity. These are compounded by a financial deficit and a slow pace of private sector investments as well as the inability to confront environmental pollution. The twin challenges of meeting economic demand as well as its environmental challenges will be difficult to balance.

India would require an investment of \$2.5 trillion to carry out the changes expected to meet its 2030 climate change goals, in addition to another \$200 billion to carry out improvements to its agricultural and related sectors. Yet, with 25% of its population living without access to electricity, India's economic development can only be possible with the energy it must import from abroad. In fact, the volume of energy imported by India is expected to increase by up to 25% between now and 2040. Compounding all of these problems is India's inability to tackle the challenge of bureaucratic and administrative corruption, which it must do in order to become more attractive to foreign capital.

A comprehensive understanding of Arab-Indo relations calls for a strategic research approach. Such an understanding must take into account India's position in world trade and, specifically, its position as the world's nineteenth largest exporter, with the value of Indian exports to the world market reaching an estimated \$265 billion. Similarly, an attempt to understand Indo-Arab relations must take in India's need for energy resources, particularly as 86% of India's oil imports come from OPEC member states. Sources for Indian hydrocarbons imports go beyond the Arab states, however: New Delhi is the second largest importer—after China—of Iranian gas, which it does at the rate of 400,000 barrels-of-oil-equivalent (BOE)

per day. A third point which must be considered is India's regional and wider global ambitions. India's geographical outreach to its Arab neighbors is not solely driven by the desire for oil, but also by the need to secure a number of strategic interests it shares with the Arab region and, in particular, the Arab Gulf states. The clearest illustration of this is found in Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's work to reach out to West Asia. The concomitant rolling back of the United States from the region as well as New Delhi's competition with China have both also contributed to India's reaching out to the Arab states.

Finally, the Arab states, for their part, are motivated to build stronger relations with India by their need for more diverse international partnerships, particularly with the rising powers. The Arab states also stand to benefit from a relationship with India in terms of the diversification of their economies. This means, in particular, the drive for Arab states to advance their technology and manufacturing sectors with Indian help. These transformations, however, come at a time when the Arab Gulf states host seven million Indian workers and import a large volume of goods from India.

Indian Prime Minister Modi's policy of reaching out to West Asia, announced in 2014, paves the way for a meaningful Indo-Arab strategic partnership which goes beyond stereotyped notions and ideological dispositions which fell victim to domestic Indian political disputes. Such a strategic partnership would not only help to achieve their limited interests, but also reduce traditional Arab reliance on the West for political, security and economic assistance. The developmental and political upheavals experienced by both India and the Arab states, and the unraveling of traditional alliances across the globe, have provided the opportunity for such a new Indo-Arab partnership.

Our conference is rooted in the belief of the importance of the historically rich relations between the Arabs and India, as well as the need to forecast their future growth. "Indo-Arab Relations: The Evolving Dynamics with a Rising Power" will form a part of the "The Arabs and the World" series of conferences, held annually by the ACRPS since 2011 and which focuses on the relations which tie the Arab peoples with other nations.





# Timetable

# Day One: Saturday May 5, 2018

## Auditorium (2)

8:30 – 9:00	Registration
9:00-11:00	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Opening Remarks and Session One</b> <b>Historical Relations between India and the Arab Gulf States</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Moderator: Marwan Kabalan</b></p> <p><b>Sahibe Alam Al Nadwi:</b> Relations between India and the Arabian Peninsula in the Mughal Era <b>Suad Bait Fadhil and Yousef Al Ghilani:</b> Economic Relations between Oman and India between the Mid-18th Century and the Early 20th Century <b>Moain Sadeq:</b> Indo-Qatari Relations from the 18th Century to the Early 20th Century</p>
11:00-11:30	Coffee Break
11:30-13:00	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Session Two</b> <b>Cultural and Academic Dimensions of Indo-Arab Relations</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Moderator: Haider Saeed</b></p> <p><b>Aftab Ahmad:</b> The Dynamic Role of Translation in the Promotion of Indo-Arab Relations <b>Chamseddin Alkilani:</b> India in the Arab Imagination <b>Javed Ahmad Khan and Deepa Karuppan:</b> Contemporary Researches on Indo-Arab Relations in Indian Universities</p>
13:00-14:00	Lunch Break

14:00-16:00	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Session Three</b>  <b>Indian Communities in the Arab Gulf States</b>  <b>Moderator: Samir Seifan</b></p> <p><b>Nasser Al Sadi:</b> Indian Communities in the Arabian Gulf Region before the Oil Boom  <b>Vekkal John Varghese:</b> Brokering Mobility: State Policy, Networks and Migration Industry between India and the Arab Gulf States  <b>Mohanad Al-Nidawi:</b> Indian Communities in the Arab Gulf States: Influence and Impact  <b>Siham Maatallah:</b> Indian Migrant Communities in the Arab Gulf States: External Motives and Internal Drivers</p>
16:00-16:30	Coffee Break
16:30-18:00	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Session Four</b>  <b>India's Relations with the Arab States in North Africa</b>  <b>Moderator: Mohammed Al-Misfer</b></p> <p><b>Aftab Kamal Pasha:</b> India's Ties with West Asia and North Africa: Political and Economic Factors  <b>Atmane Lamrani:</b> The African Continent as the Convergence Point for Moroccan and Indian Economic Interests  <b>Essam Abdelshafy:</b> Indo-Egyptian Relations Since 2011</p>

# Day Two: Sunday May 6, 2018

## Auditorium (2)

9:00-10:30	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Session One</b> <b>India's West Asian Policy and The Arab World</b> <b>Moderator: Majed Al-Ansari</b></p> <p><b>Dibyesh Anand:</b> Understanding India's Shifting Approach toward the Arab World: From Anti-Coloniality to Post-Coloniality</p> <p><b>Ayman Yousef and Mahmoud Fatafta:</b> Palestine and Israel in Indian Foreign Policy: Principles and Pragmatism</p> <p><b>Omaisir Anas:</b> The End of India's Reluctant West Asian Policy</p>
10:30-11:00	Coffee Break
11:00-12:30	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Session Two</b> <b>Future of Indo-Arab Relations: Energy and Other Issues</b> <b>Moderator: Adel Zagha</b></p> <p><b>Muhammad Azhar:</b> Indo-Arab Relations: Energy and Other Aspects</p> <p><b>Naser Al-Tamimi:</b> Increasing Energy Consumption in India: Challenges and Opportunities for the Arab Gulf States</p> <p><b>Girijesh Pant:</b> Changing Text of Indo-Arab Relations: Energy and Beyond</p>
12:30-14:00	Lunch Break

14:00-15:30

**Session Three**

**Indo-Arab Relations: Strategic and Security Issues**

**Moderator: Suhaim Al Thani**

**Bahia Aladhoubi:** Indo-Omani Military Relations 1913-1970

**Kadira Pethiyagoda:** India-Gulf Relations: A Strategic Opportunity

**Emad Kaddorah:** The Geopolitical Significance of the Arabian Gulf in Indian Strategy



# Participants

## Aftab Ahmad

Assistant Professor at the India Arab Cultural Centre, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi, India. He previously worked with UNHCR, All India Radio and National Technical Research Organization as an Arabic-English Interpreter, News Reader and Arabic Linguist respectively. Ahmad obtained his doctoral degree from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

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### **The Dynamic Role of Translation in the Promotion of Indo-Arab Relations**

Translation is one of the major sources of cultural and civilizational exchanges among different societies and has played a crucial role in bringing these societies and cultures together throughout human civilization. History tells us that thanks to translation the Indian cultural and scientific heritage has been translated into different languages of the world. For example, it was translation that introduced the Indian medical and scientific system to the Arabs and then spread it to the rest of the world. The world knew about the concept of zero only after Arab scholars translated the Indian mathematical treatise into Arabic. The Abbasids' House of Wisdom in Baghdad (Bayt Al-Hikma) played a major part in the propagation and spread of knowledge in arts and sciences. This paper focuses on the possibility of the expansion of cultural relations between India and the Arab world through translation work in the 21st century and how this can help promote cordial political and economic relations with most Arab countries. It also attempts to highlight the important works that have been translated into Arabic and vice versa during the 21st century and which played a key role in the exchange of thoughts and ideas. Further, it also tries to point out the organizations and individuals who are engaged in translation. To conclude, the paper explores the reasons behind the decrease of translation and attempts to identify new avenues which are important to strengthen cultural relations between the two regions.



## Aftab Kamal Pasha

Director of the Gulf Studies Program at the Centre for West Asian Studies, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. He has also served as Associate Dean and Chairman of the same school and Director of the Maulana Azad Centre for Indian Culture in Cairo, Egypt. He has authored, edited and co-edited, and contributed chapters to over eighty-five books on India, the Gulf, West Asia and North Africa. He holds a PhD in International Studies from Jawaharlal Nehru University.

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### India's Ties with West Asia and North Africa: Political and Economic Factors

Even prior to 1947, India's relations with the Arab states were well-grounded in growing mutual benefit and an almost complete absence of contentious bilateral issues. India supported Arab independence as well as the Palestinian cause. While Nehru supported Nasser and other Arab nationalist and secular regimes, he also had good relations with monarchies that had close ties with Pakistan and supported the Kashmir cause. Since 1973, the region's oil and its strategic location made it a burgeoning economic and political partner in the areas of: energy/food security; foreign workers - 7 million; and growing trade, financial and investment cooperation. Political and security relations have also been highly important. For India, security and stability is possible if it forms part of the West Asia and North Africa (WANA) security architecture. In the current global and regional context, Arab-Israeli issues, ISIS, turmoil in some Arab states, the growing power of Iran, ethno-sectarian divisions and the Kurdish issue will remain major drivers of the emerging political and security calculus. India's policy to avoid taking sides in intra-regional disputes and balance ties with all states will remain a major challenge. Ultimately, India desires inclusive institutional mechanisms for strategic dialogue, but the reality is a highly unpredictable and unstable political and security environment in the WANA/Gulf region.

## Atmane Lamrani

Doctoral Student at The Institute of Moroccan-Mediterranean Relations, Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdallah University in Fez. He is a founding member of The Draa-Tafilelet Foundation of Experts and Researchers in Morocco, and a teacher at the Regional Academy of Education, Training and Higher Education, Draa Tafilelet, Morocco. He has published many articles in Moroccan and international publications.

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### **The African Continent as the Convergence Point for Moroccan and Indian Economic Interests**

The African continent is of vital political and economic interest for global actors and is presently the site of intense competition between several African states as well as rising powers looking to secure their interests in Africa. In addition to Africa's continuing and historical role as a site for foreign direct investments, Africans are also increasingly shaping their own consumer market.

This paper shall explore the complex of Indo-Moroccan relations, taking in their historical legacy as well as the horizons for a future relationship. The paper also focuses on the present, where economic considerations remain paramount to both sides when defining the terms of their bilateral relationship, especially when it comes to issues like the Western Sahara.

The paper explores the development and growth of bilateral trade between Morocco and India, beginning with the beginning of India's strategic push towards greater economic growth. One of the conclusions of the paper is that the various modes of cooperation between Morocco and India have contributed to increasing not only bilateral trade, but also the exchange of expertise and the flows of investments into the African markets. Additionally, India has been able to share its experience of using trade forums as a means of accelerating industrialization. Nonetheless, the path ahead for a "triangle" of cooperation between India, Morocco and the African continent remains long.

## Ayman Yousef

Professor at the Arab American University in Jenin, Palestine since 2004. Yousef is also lecturing for a Master's programme in Conflict Resolution and Development in Palestine. He obtained a PhD in International Relations from MS University of Baroda in India in 2000. He has published many books and scholarly articles, including *Israel and the Rising Powers: The Relationship with Turkey China, India and Russia*, published by the Madar Center for Israeli Studies in 2011.

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### **Palestine and Israel in Indian Foreign Policy: Principles and Pragmatism**

The years following the close of the Cold War were marked by large scale changes to the world map. This includes, partly, attempts by a number of Asian powers to advance their influence on the new world order. India is one notable example of this, with its attempts to advance strategically and increasingly projecting its power both regionally and globally. India's claims to an expanded international role stem from it being the world's second-most populous country, the seventh largest by area and the second largest market, and its control of the third largest army and the seventh largest navy.

This paper sets out from the premise that Indian foreign policy is based on "balancing" its commitment to the Palestinian Cause and the Palestinian demand for justice against its strategic economic and cultural partnership with Israel. The author traces the indicators of how Indian foreign policy has shifted over the preceding decades, and particularly since the beginning of Indian diplomatic relations with Israel (in 1992). The paper also presents an overview of Indian political doctrine as it relates to the Palestinian Cause during the Cold War, and the changes to that policy since then. The author concludes that New Delhi has indeed been able to strike a balance of sorts between Palestine and Israel, and that they have achieved this through the use of a diverse arsenal of hard and soft power tools to be able to maintain a relationship with two pivotal players in the Middle East.

## Bahia Aladhoubi

Doctoral Candidate in History at Sultan Qaboos University. She lectured in the Department of History at the same university from 2014-2017. Aladhoubi received a Cambridge Diploma for Teaching and Training from the University of Cambridge in 2014. She has several books, the most important of which is *The Political and Cultural History of Al-Qabil Region from 1273 AH / 1856 - 1373 AH / 1954*, published by the Omani Society for Writers and Authors in 2017.

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## Indo-Omani Military Relations 1913-1970

The Gulf region entered into political and cultural relations with the Indian Subcontinent with the emergence of the British presence in India in the 19th and 20th centuries, when the British Government signed a number of agreements with the Gulf States. Military relations emerged between the British India government, and the Gulf States, including Oman, which maintained strong economic and cultural attachments to the Indian Subcontinent. This study deals with Indo-Omani relations from 1913 to 1970 by tracing the impact of the attack on Muscat in 1915 by the troops loyal to the Imamate during the reign of Sultan Taimur bin Feisal (1913-1932), and looking also at how the presence of troops from the Indian Army in Muscat until 1970 shaped all aspects of what would become the Omani Armed Forces, as well as the influence on language.

The study is divided into three sections, dealing first with the historical and geographical profiles of Oman and India. Secondly, it turns to the role of the Indian forces in assisting the Sultans and the presence of Indian officers in the Omani Army. Finally, it explores the linguistic influences and Indian military uniforms in the Omani army. The study finds that the struggle between the Imamate and the Sultanate between 1913 and 1915 influenced the presence of Indian troops in Muscat, and that British "Political Agents" in Muscat played a role in the development of Indo-Omani military relations.

## Chamseddin Alkilani

Researcher at the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies. He has published many books and studies including, most recently, *Introduction to Syrian Political Life: From Entity's Formation to Revolution*, published by the Arab Center in 2018. His other publications include *The Arab Depiction of Europe in the Middle Ages* and *Transformations of the Elites' Attitudes Towards Lebanon*.

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### India in the Arab Imagination

The Arab canon saw the pinnacle of Arab authorship on India in the tenth century AD. Arabic manuscripts flourished with knowledge and imagery and were marked with credibility and rich detail. These Arab researchers, through their journeys, their geographical, historical, literary compositions, books, and encyclopedic texts, painted a vivid and complex image of Indian civilization and its economic, social, cultural and religious worlds.

This study, using a comparative analytical approach to historiography, presents a picture of what Arabs knew about the Indian sub-continent, and how they evaluated it, according to their cultural repertoire and values. It arrives at the *'Ajā'ib and Gharā'ib* tradition of documenting the wonders of the world and folklore. It documents ideas, judgments, imaginings and attitudes about Indian lands and seas, and describes the manifestations of cultural progress, and the flourishing trade and cultural and commodity exchanges with Arabs and the world.

The study is divided into two thematic sections. The first relates to India in the Arab imagination; its urbanization, its richness in various fields, and its uniqueness as a country. The second focuses on the study of the "Indian Sea", or the Abyssinian Sea as the Arabs once called it, in an attempt to understand its vast coastline, the architecture, the movement, and far-flung southern borders, full of wonders, marvels and mythological stories.

## Deepa Karuppan

Librarian at the Centre for West Asian Studies, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi. She is currently engaged in the compilation of an annotated reference work on India and West Asia. Karuppan holds a Master's degree both in Library Science and History. She has contributed chapters in edited books on the topic of contemporary researches on West Asia.

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### Contemporary Researches on Indo-Arab Relations in Indian Universities

As neighbors, both Arab countries and India have attempted, through academia, to understand each other's society, culture and economic relations especially in the last four or five decades. In the area of international studies, for instance, the Arab world is the most important topic of research among academics and policy makers in India as Indian universities and research institutions have shown increasing interest in understanding the various aspects of Indo-Arab relations under the Areas Studies program. It is now time to explore how the Arab people and their governments are perceived among Indian academics and researchers, and how scholarly discourses have been changing with the shift in geo-strategic and economic situations in these regions, particularly in the period after the Cold War to the globalization that took place from the latter part of the 20th century to the beginning of the 21st century where we see new dimensions and challenges confronting researchers in understanding Indo-Arab relations. This paper aims to examine and discuss Indian academics and researchers' approaches towards emerging Indo-Arab relations in recent decades, and to point out the neglected themes and issues that are of relevance in the present times.

## Dibyesh Anand

Head of the Department of Politics and International Relations at the University of Westminster, London. He is currently working on colonial practices of postcolonial states, with special focus on India in Kashmir and China in Tibet. He obtained his PhD from the Department of Politics at the University of Bristol, UK. Anand is the author of monographs "Geopolitical Exotica: Tibet in Western Imagination" and "Hindu Nationalism in India and the Politics of Fear".

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### Understanding India's Shifting Approach toward the Arab World: From Anti-Coloniality to Post-Coloniality

India's approach toward West Asia has witnessed a change best described as one marked by shared ethos of anti-coloniality, non-alignment and desire to create sovereign nation-states to one marked by post-coloniality where the focus is exclusively on serving the interest of a rising power. This is best illustrated through the case of Palestine-Israel. The visible shift in India's foreign policy from resolutely pro-Palestine to a balancing act between Palestine and Israel and to a tilt toward Israel is often understood in terms of a dilution of the Non-Alignment Movement (NAM), the end of the Cold War, the security interests of India, American influence, the efforts of Israel, the necessity for defence cooperation, and so on. While these are all important, there are three other factors that are often missed out. First is the shift in domestic politics of India as it emerges as a major power from secular nationalism to Hindu nationalism; Hindu nationalism being akin to Zionism in terms of being majoritarian. Second is the divisive politics and chaos in the Arab world where major countries are economically strong but geopolitically in decline; India's recent warmth toward Israel is no different from that of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia or Egypt. Third is the unresolved Kashmir question. India's behaviour in Kashmir echoes that of Israel's in Palestine; there is a shared coloniality of discourses and practices. This paper will analyse these under-reported factors and highlight the different ways in which they explain India's approach toward the Arab world in general and Israel-Palestine in particular.

## Emad Kaddorah

Head of the Editing Department at the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies. He obtained an MA in Strategic Studies in 1993. He has published four books, most recently *Turkey: An Ambitious Strategy and Constrained Policy, a Geopolitical Approach* (2015). He has also published twelve peer-reviewed articles including "Flashpoint Ukraine: The Pivot of Geography in Command of the West's Eastern Gateway," (July 2014); "Salafism in Turkey: The Challenges of Spreading in a Sufi Society," (March 2017); "Geo-sectarian Regional Contest over the Gulf," (Spring 2018).

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### The Geopolitical Significance of the Arab Gulf States in Indian Strategy

Indian foreign policy and the country's orientation to the world are undergoing a number of changes. Today, New Delhi is actively engaged in projecting its influence beyond its geographic neighborhood in South Asia and the Indian Ocean. Indeed, India is seeking to turn itself into a world power, placing its own interests above its earlier "ideological" commitments. This new push by India is driven by the country's growing and changing needs, and an ambition to achieve a position of global prominence commensurate to its own ascendancy, in addition to India's need to secure energy security.

Here, the Gulf is of paramount strategic importance, bolstered by its geographic proximity and hydrocarbons assets. While Gulf-India relations are well developed, there remain some regional challenges standing in the way of stronger relations between the Gulf states and India. Specifically, these include traditionally strong relations between New Delhi and Tehran which have an impact on relations with the Arab states of the Gulf. For India, strong ties between the Gulf states and Pakistan have been a further complicating factor for decades.

This paper explores the continuing geopolitical significance of the Gulf region and its status within Indian strategy. It also examines the impact of other regional actors—including China, Pakistan and Iran—on Indo-Gulf relations.



## Essam Abdelshafy

President of the Academy of International Relations in Turkey and Director of the Egyptian Institute for Political and Strategic Studies since September 2014. He was previously Professor of Political Science and International Relations at Sakarya University, Turkey, between September 2015 and October 2017. He holds a PhD in Political Science and International Relations from Cairo University.

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### Indo-Egyptian Relations Since 2011

In the years following the January, 2011 revolution in Egypt, Cairo has sought to bolster its ties with India. With the official Indian position welcoming of the popular revolution, elected president Mohammed Morsi visited New Delhi in March, 2013. Yet the counter-revolutionary forces in Egypt have similarly sought to protect those same relations with coup leader Abdelfattah Sisi undertaking several mutual visits to India in 2015, 2016 and 2017. Sisi is driven by a desire to expand his own manufacturing base and military capabilities as well as attract foreign investment to Egypt.

This paper highlights the key milestones of the Indo-Egyptian relationship since 2011. It focuses on how the bilateral relationship affects both countries, including from an international strategic perspective. The author highlights also the most prominent issues of shared concern for the two sides, focusing also on the influences of outside players (a potential "third side") and how these shape the priorities of the shared Indo-Egyptian relationship. The paper is divided into three sections. The first includes an overview of the developments in Indo-Egyptian relations. The second examines the political, economic and strategic aspects of post-2011 Indo-Egyptian relations. The third section is concerned with how Indo-Egyptian relations influenced the Egyptian regime internally. One conclusion is that despite both sides' awareness of the importance of their bilateral relationship—politically, economically and militarily—Indo-Egyptian relations have remained, since the 1950s, tied to a broader, external force, on both the regional and global levels.

## Girijesh Pant

Professor (retired) in the School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, India. He was previously Dean of the School and Vice Chancellor at Doon University, India. His areas of academic interest, research and writings include: Political Economy of Development with a focus on West Asia including GCC, Global Energy Affairs, India's Energy Security and India's Economic Relations with GCC Countries. His current research is on India's Energy Transition.

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### Changing Text of Indo-Arab Relations: Energy and Beyond

The text of Indo-Arab relations is changing. Their dynamic civilizational engagement still resonates as a point of reference but somewhere lost its momentum in the twists and turns of global politics at different points in time. In the contemporary context, these relations witnessed a resurgence with oil becoming the defining factor. Not richly endowed with hydrocarbon, India has had to import to meet its growth momentum from the global energy market. The quest for energy brought the oil exporting Arab countries into prominence in the matrix of Indo-Arab relations. Consequently, the volume of Indo-Arab trade went up dramatically although remaining largely limited to the hydrocarbon sector. With the geostrategic shift in the global energy market triggered by structural changes in the hydrocarbon industry and the drive to move on to a low carbon energy regime, a new context has been created. Further, the Asian shift in the energy market has provided a new rationale for energy-based relations. The Arab countries' initiatives to "normalize" their rentier economy by creating local capacities has expanded space and scale of their global economic engagement. The future economy is driven by a process of digitalization which opens new areas of collaboration between India and the Arab countries to build local capacities in terms of human resources. The 'Look East' dynamics of Arab policy and 'Link West' orientation of Indian reach-out reflect the recognition of new strategic realities and a new text for Indo-Arab relations.

## Javed Ahmad Khan

Professor and Officiating Director at the Centre For West Asian Studies in Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi. His areas of academic interest include Indo-Arab economic relations and Islamic banking & finance. He holds a PhD in Economics from the Aligarh Muslim University, India. Among his publications are: *India and West Asia – Emerging Market in the Liberalization Era* (1999) and *India's Energy Security and the Arabian Gulf* (2005).

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### Contemporary Researches on Indo-Arab Relations in Indian Universities

As neighbors, both Arab countries and India have attempted, through academia, to understand each other's society, culture and economic relations especially in the last four or five decades. In the area of international studies, for instance, the Arab world is the most important topic of research among academics and policy makers in India as Indian universities and research institutions have shown increasing interest in understanding the various aspects of Indo-Arab relations under the Areas Studies program. It is now time to explore how the Arab people and their governments are perceived among Indian academics and researchers, and how scholarly discourses have been changing with the shift in geo-strategic and economic situations in these regions, particularly in the period after the Cold War to the globalization that took place from the latter part of the 20th century to the beginning of the 21st century where we see new dimensions and challenges confronting researchers in understanding Indo-Arab relations. This paper aims to examine and discuss Indian academics and researchers' approaches towards emerging Indo-Arab relations in recent decades, and to point out the neglected themes and issues that are of relevance in the present times.

## Kadira Pethiyagoda

Non-Resident Fellow in Asia-Middle East Relations at the Brookings Doha Center and Global Governance Director at Sri Lanka's Lakshman Kadirgamar Institute. His research focuses on India's relations with the Gulf States. Previously, Pethiyagoda worked as a Foreign Affairs advisor to an Australian Shadow Foreign Minister and advised several other parliamentarians on foreign policy matters. He holds a PhD from the University of Melbourne, Australia.

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### India-Gulf Relations: A Strategic Opportunity

In an increasingly multipolar world, Indian and Chinese agendas are expanding in the region. Relationships involving Asia and the Gulf will thus have significant impact on power relations both regionally and globally, with India and China beginning to feature more prominently in the rivalry between the region's power centers, the Gulf, Iran and Israel. Within this context, India-GCC ties promise to be among the most important relationships for both sides in the future world order. New Delhi is being forced to consider the strategic aspects of relations with GCC states due to the emergence of several factors within the last decade. These include: existing priorities gaining greater strategic relevance; state fragility and instability in the wider Middle East; expanded regional aspirations; an increasingly multipolar Middle East; and evolving relations with Pakistan. This paper offers an in-depth discussion on key factors determining India-Gulf relations and ends with a discussion of the Narendra Modi Government's likely future behavior toward the Gulf.

## Mahmoud Fatafta

Assistant Professor in journalism, political science and critical thinking in several Palestinian colleges and universities. He is Founder of the "Researchers without Borders" group in Palestine, as well as creator of The Forum for Thought and Academic Research. He received his PhD in International Relations from Tunis El Manar University. Fatafta has published many books, including *Indian Foreign Policy Towards the Palestinian Question (1947-2005)*.

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### Palestine and Israel in Indian Foreign Policy: Principles and Pragmatism

The years following the close of the Cold War were marked by large scale changes to the world map. This includes, partly, attempts by a number of Asian powers to advance their influence on the new world order. India is one notable example of this, with its attempts to advance strategically and increasingly projecting its power both regionally and globally. India's claims to an expanded international role stem from it being the world's second-most populous country, the seventh largest by area and the second largest market, and its control of the third largest army and the seventh largest navy.

This paper sets out from the premise that Indian foreign policy is based on "balancing" its commitment to the Palestinian Cause and the Palestinian demand for justice against its strategic economic and cultural partnership with Israel. The author traces the indicators of how Indian foreign policy has shifted over the preceding decades, and particularly since the beginning of Indian diplomatic relations with Israel (in 1992). The paper also presents an overview of Indian political doctrine as it relates to the Palestinian Cause during the Cold War, and the changes to that policy since then. The author concludes that New Delhi has indeed been able to strike a balance of sorts between Palestine and Israel, and that they have achieved this through the use of a diverse arsenal of hard and soft power tools to be able to maintain a relationship with two pivotal players in the Middle East.

## Moain Sadeq

Professor of History and Archeology at the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Qatar University. He previously taught at the University of Chicago and Toronto. His research and materials revolve around history and archeology in the Middle East. He has excavated archaeological sites in Qatar (1980-1984) and Palestine (1994-2000). He holds a PhD in History and Archeology from the Free University of Berlin.

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### Indo-Qatari Relations from the 18th Century to the Early 20th Century

The geographical location of the Qatari peninsula, which extends into the Gulf, has played an important role throughout the ages, not only as a stopover for traders and their vessels that roam the Gulf, but also for population stability, with some settlements inhabited since the fifth millennium BC. These areas include Bir Zekreet, Shaqra, and Al Khor, whose discoveries point to the existence of an advanced industry, imported from the Ubaid civilization.

The presence of "Catara" on several maps, including Ptolemy's map in the middle of the second century AD, indicates the importance of Qatar in that period, and also indicates the existence of continuous urban development during the following centuries. Qatar became a cradle for scholars whose names and achievements were recorded in Syriac records. The acceleration of civilizational development in Qatar followed, as a result of the economic revolution that came with the flourishing trade of pearls and animal products and of land and sea trade through Qatari ports. This led to the rapid development of civilization in Qatar and the emergence and development of several cities during the period from the 18th century to the beginning of the twentieth century, such as Ruwaida, Brega and Zubarah. This brought Indian attention to trade relations with Qatar, which began during the last quarter of the 18th century AD.

This paper sheds light on Qatari and Gulf relations with India during the period between the 18th century and the early 20th century, based on archaeological excavations, official records, and historical sources.

## Mohanad Al-Nidawi

Professor at the Faculty of Political Science, Mustansiriya University, Baghdad. He holds a doctorate in political science from the same university. He has written several books, including *Israel in the Nile Basin: A Study of Israeli Strategy*, *The African Union and Conflict Resolution*, *The Indian Experience in Africa*, *Human Rights and Democracy* and *Economic Relations between India and the Gulf States: Reality, Challenges and Opportunities*.

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## Indian Communities in the Arab Gulf States: Influence and Impact

Indian relations with the Gulf Countries are of ever-growing importance in light of the increasing international and regional roles played by the two parties. India is an emerging global force that is expected to have an international impact in the foreseeable future, while the Gulf remains a region of great geopolitical and economic importance as an energy and economic powerhouse in the Arab region and the world. This study shows that India and the Gulf countries are aware of the importance of their relations, and the role of the Indian communities in the Gulf countries to positively affect their relations, allowing both parties to pursue their interests. The study explores the important role of Indian communities in the development of Indo-Gulf relations.

The paper is divided into four sections. The first explores the role of Indian communities in shaping Indian foreign policy, while the second looks at the question of foreign workers in the Arab Gulf countries. The study then investigates the impact of the Indian communities in the Gulf Arab countries, and, finally, provides a number of conclusions about their future in the Gulf. The study concludes that the GCC countries are hugely significant to India due to their geographic proximity to the Subcontinent. Ultimately, the maturing of the Gulf-India relationship into a fully-fledged "strategic partnership" requires the intensification of cooperation between the two sides across all fields.

## Muhammad Azhar

Professor of Economics in the Department of West Asian and North African Studies, Aligarh Muslim University, India. He was previously a Research Associate in the Gulf Studies Programme, Centre of West Asian and African Studies, Jawahar Lal Nehru University, and a consultant at the Indian Council of Research in International Economic Relations, New Delhi. Azhar obtained his PhD from Aligarh Muslim University on the topic of Foreign Investment by the Arab Countries of the Gulf since 1973.

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### Indo-Arab Relations: Energy and other Aspects

Indo-Arab relations in the contemporary period have revolved around energy, expatriate workers, remittances, crude and manufactured fertilizers and agricultural commodities. Energy security and food security are the most important for India, whereas secured markets for oil exports and food security are most important for the Arab countries. Saudi Arabia has been the largest supplier of crude petroleum oil to India, whereas Qatar has been the largest supplier of natural gas. In addition, about 80 percent of India's imports of natural calcium phosphate unground came from Arab countries during 2016-17. About 60 percent of India's imports of phosphoric acid originated from the Arab countries. Arab countries were also the source of about one-third of India's imports of diammonium phosphate during the same year. The Arab region also hosts about 8.5 million Indian expatriate workers who constitute a crucially important source of remittance earnings for India. According to the World Bank report, India received about \$36 billion from Arab countries as remittance inflow in 2014. Although energy has been the cornerstone of Indo-Arab relations, there are other crucial aspects to this relation. This paper studies the various bases on which Indo-Arab relations have stood and flourished and investigates the future of non-energy aspects of Indo-Arab relations.



## Naser Al-Tamimi

Independent Researcher based in the UK. His research interests focus on areas such as energy policies in the Gulf and Iran, and Asian-Gulf relations, especially with China. Al-Tamimi holds a PhD in International Relations from Durham University in Britain. He authored the book *China-Saudi Arabia Relations, 1990-2012: Marriage of Convenience or Strategic Alliance?* published by Routledge in English in 2013.

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### Increasing Energy Consumption in India: Challenges and Opportunities for the Arab Gulf States

The member-states of the Gulf Cooperation Council sit at the top of the pyramid of oil- and gas-exporting nations anywhere in the world. This fact has positioned the GCC states at the top of India's foreign policy priorities. This is played out in several specific ways: the fact that the Gulf states, combined, are India's largest trading partner, exporting hydrocarbons and importing much else in place. Added to this is the 8.7 million Indians who live in the GCC states and who send home tens of billions of dollars in remittances annually.

Rooted in the above considerations, this paper maps out the most important aspects of the Gulf-India relationship, asserting that the Gulf can little afford to ignore the rising economic power of India. The author further presents evidence in support of a continued economic ascendancy for India over the next two decades. In addition, the paper explores some of the most considerable obstacles to the continued development of Gulf-India relations.

Today, the GCC states are the largest exporters of oil and gas to India. The two sides are also jointly responsible for a number of joint ventures in technology, economic diversification, food security and agriculture. India is further expected to become the third largest economy in the world within a decade. In 2030, India will also be an undeniable economic, military and nuclear power. One of the paper's findings is that global transformations and the gradual shift of world economic power to Asia necessitates that the GCC states build strategic partnerships with the Asian powers on the rise.

## Nasser Al Sadi

Doctoral Candidate at Sultan Qaboos University. He has presented papers in several conferences, the most recent of which were "Social and Cultural Values in Omani Poetry" in Malaysia, 2017, "The Political Reforms of Sheikh Jaid Bin Khamis Al Kharousi 1821" in Muscat, 2016, and "Society and Politics in Oman according to Imam Muhammad bin Abdullah 1954" at the University of Nizwa in 2015.

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### Indian Communities in the Arabian Gulf Region before the Oil Boom

Indian merchants have maintained a presence in the Arabian Gulf since antiquity. The coastal cities and ports became a destination for these traders. Data from the first half of the nineteenth century indicates the presence of Indian mercantile communities in these regions. This paper investigates the size of the Indian communities in the Arabian Gulf before the discovery of oil and the economic role they played as well as their relationship with the international powers, especially Great Britain, and the local authorities. The three parts of this study include a historical prelude to the relationship before the nineteenth century, the geographical distribution of the Indian communities and their economic role, and the relationship of Indian communities with local and international authorities.

The paper demonstrates that the size of the Indian communities in the Gulf countries varies according to the economic and political developments. Since the 19th century, the number of Indians has been steadily increasing. In 1941, the number of Indians in Bahrain reached about 1,400. In the Trucial States (present day UAE), the number of Indians rose from 75 in 1877 to 183 in 1901. Oman was one of the most welcoming countries before the advent of oil, with the number of Indians in the early 19th century rising to about 4000.

## Omais Anas

Research Fellow at the India Council of World Affairs (Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India). His research focuses on International Relations Theories, West Asian Conflicts, Cyber and Public Sphere, Media and Globalization, Turkey, Egypt, Iran and Saudi Arabia. He finished his PhD in media from the Centre for West Asian Studies (CWAS), School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University.

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### The End of India's Reluctant West Asian Policy

Ideally, India's West Asia policy discourse should center around its energy needs, security and welfare of seven million Indians living in the region, large remittances coming from the region, the increasing trade volume, and the cultural and civilizational linkages. In the last decade, however, the issue of counter-terrorism has become another key element in defining bilateral interests, and cooperation on security issues has deepened as a result. There are three detractors encountered by India's West Asia policy: balancing acts between Saudi Arabia-Iran and Israel-Palestine; the role of international powers in the region; and the emergence of inter-West Asia rivalries for influence, particularly after the Arab uprisings. The region has shown its willingness to see India playing a greater role in maintaining peace and stability. Towards assuming a new role in the region, however, India's strategic choices are not unlimited, and require not just bilateral cooperation, but also to rationalize its several competitive relations regionally and globally. In resetting its strategic vision towards the region, India's relations with Saudi Arabia, Iran, Israel and its competitive relations with China and Pakistan, as well as its global partnership with Russia and the United States, are to be reconfigured - a process not without implications for its traditionally reluctant West Asia policy.

## Sahibe Alam Al Nadwi

Research Fellow in Hassan bin Mohammed Center for Historical Studies, Doha. He holds a PhD in History and Islamic Civilization from the Faculty of Dar al-Ulum, Cairo University. He has published research in Arabic, Urdu, English, Hindi and Farsi, as well as two Arabic language books.

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### Relations between India and the Arabian Peninsula in the Mughal Era

Since antiquity, trade has linked the Indian Subcontinent to the Arabian Peninsula and the Mediterranean and Red Sea regions. This commerce, which left its imprint on the religion and culture of India, strengthened under the Umayyad and Abbasid eras.

This paper is focused on the nature of the religious, cultural and commercial relations between India, the Arabian Peninsula and what would become the Gulf states during the Mughal Empire. It seeks to determine the extent of the contributions made by Mughal sultans in developing relations with the Arabian Peninsula and the Gulf. The paper highlights the relationship between the Mughal sultans and the Sharifs of Mecca and Medina, and the position taken by the Ottoman authorities.

The study concludes that the religious, cultural and commercial relations between India and the Hejaz, home of Islam's holiest sites, flourished throughout the Islamic era. This was especially true in the ninth century after the Hijra (corresponding to the 15th century CE), as Muslim rulers in India were keen to strengthen these relations and links by contributing to the establishment and endowments of khanqahs, lodges and schools. They welcomed a large number of Levantine, Egyptian, Hijazi and Yemeni scholars to their emirates, who in turn contributed to the revitalization of Islamic scholarship in the Islamic emirates of India. These religious and cultural ties led to the formation of political relations with the Ottoman authorities, especially in the first half of the 10th century AH (16th CE) and in particular with Gujrat and Bengal Sultanates.

## Siham Maatallah

Assistant Professor in the Department of Economics at the University of Tlemcen, Algeria, and a researcher in the Research Laboratory of the Informal Economy, Institutions and Development at the same university. She received a doctorate in economics from the same university in 2017. She has authored several publications, the most important of which is: "Inequality, Labor Market and Economic Growth in the MENA Region: Is Governance the Missing Ingredient to Alleviate the Situation?" in the book *Labor in an Islamic Setting: Theory and Practice*.

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### Indian Migrant Communities in the Arab Gulf States: External Motives and Internal Drivers

Indian immigration to the Gulf Arab states expanded greatly following the increase in Gulf State oil revenues beginning in 1973. The windfall from oil drove up the demand in these Gulf states for expatriate labor, partly to take part in large-scale infrastructure investments, and India was a favored source of such labor. On the Indian side, labor migration was driven by the abject poverty, lack of food security, corruption, unemployment and a labor surplus as well as an inequitable distribution of income in India. Relying on panel (longitudinal) data, this paper will dissect the twin factors of income inequality in India as well as the price of crude oil on the migration of Indians to the Gulf states during the period from 1995 to 2016.

The results indicate that income inequality and unemployment in India, as well as the price of oil, are positively and meaningfully correlated with the numbers of Indians seeking employment in the Gulf states. Higher oil prices drive Gulf governments to undertake massive projects for the development of their infrastructures, necessitating larger numbers of expatriate laborers to make up for a local deficit.

## Suad Bait Fadhil

Doctoral Candidate in History at Sultan Qaboos University, Oman. She teaches a course on Oman and Civilization in the same university. Bait Fadhil has extensive practical experience in teaching at the Omani Ministry of Education. She obtained a master's degree in literature, with a specialism in history from Sultan Qaboos University in 2015.

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### **Economic Relations between Oman and India between the Mid-18th Century and the Early 20th Century**

This paper investigates the nature and dynamism of Indian-Omani economic ties. It explores the contribution of Indian traders to the Omani economy and to the expansion of the slave and weapons trade starting with the accession of Ahmed bin Saeed through to the reign of Sultan Faisal bin Turki (roughly 1740-1913). The paper covers four themes. The first concerns the development of trade relations between Oman and India, through research on the economic policy under the Al Said sultanate. The second deals with commercial activity by identifying the most important exports and imports. The third focuses on the gradual expansion of Indian trade in Oman. Finally, the paper explores the contribution of Indian traders in the revitalization of the slave and weapons trades in Muscat.

The study concludes that Indo-Omani trade was an inevitability born of geography. The activity that emerged during the reign of Imam Ahmad bin Saeed and Sultan bin Ahmed was due to trade flourishing under Said bin Sultan, rendering Oman a key entrepot for the export of goods and products between the Gulf States and the countries of the Indian Ocean.

## Vekkal John Varghese

Assistant Professor at the Department of History, University of Hyderabad, India, and currently a Research Excellence Visiting Fellow at the Central European University, Budapest. He has held tenures of fellowships in the University of Sussex (UK) and National University of Singapore. Varghese holds a PhD in History from the University of Hyderabad.

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### **Brokering Mobility: State Policy, Networks and Migration Industry between India and the Arab Gulf States**

This paper attempts to understand state policy, networks and the migration industry between India and the Arab Gulf States. In recent times, the role of private brokers has been on the rise across the Indian Ocean, paradoxically due to the increasing formalization of migration and a discerning globalization, unsettling the formal-informal divide in practice, agency and governance. By taking a select number of case studies of the phenomenon referred to as ‘migration frauds’ from India, with their spread in the Gulf countries, the paper also argues that the predictable neo-liberal turn into a sort of minimalist state in the domain of emigration governance is a myth in the Indian case, wherein one sees a state that is simultaneously active on the one hand and conceding and discriminatory on the other. The paper also proposes that the migration industry needs to be located and understood in terms of historically and institutionally situated migration ensembles, which is an outcome of interaction between heterogeneous actors involved on local, national and transnational scales. The mismatches of policy infrastructure add to the ensemble with significant space for negotiation for different stake holders, underlining the urgency for building synergies through diplomatic and academic exchanges.

## Yousef Al Ghilani

Assistant Lecturer at Sultan Qaboos University. He was Head of History at Sultan Qaboos University from 2003-2007, as well as the Historical Society of Oman. Al Ghilani obtained his PhD at the University of Edinburgh, UK. He has many published books and research studies, including "Oman and the Franco British Colonial Rivalry: The Bandar al Jissah Crisis 1898-1900" and "British Action over the Slave Trade with Oman 1871- 1903".

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### **Economic Relations between Oman and India between the Mid-18th Century and the Early 20th Century**

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## Moderators

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### Adel Zagha

Visiting Professor at the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies and currently working on a book on international political economics. He was previously Professor of Economics at Birzeit University, where he also served as Vice-President for Administrative and Financial Affairs until August 2016. His latest research was with the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), contributing to the writing of a report on the status of the Palestinian population until 2050. He Received his PhD in Economic Theory and Public Finance from the Free University of Berlin in 1994.

### Haider Saeed

Researcher at the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies and Editor of *Siyasat Arabiya*. He has worked in several research centers and contributed to the creation of the National Report on Human Development in Iraq. Saeed has written several books and studies on the Arab regional transitions and their relationship to the social sciences and humanities and holds a PhD from Al-Mustansiriya University in Baghdad.

### Majed Al-Ansari

Professor of Political Sociology and Researcher in the Social and Economic Survey Research Institute (SESRI) at the University of Qatar. Al- Ansari holds an MA in Social Transformation from Manchester University, UK and a PhD from the Cathie Marsh Institute at Manchester University on "The effect of religious, social, and political values on social cohesion in Qatar." He also writes a weekly article for the Qatari newspaper *Al-Arab* and has worked as a consultant for several charitable foundations.

## Moderators

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### Marwan Kabalan

Head of the Policy Analysis Unit at the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies. He was previously Dean of the Faculty of International Relations and Diplomacy at the University of Kalamoon, Damascus, Syria. Kabalan earned his PhD at Manchester University, UK. He is the author of several books and essays in politics and international relations.

### Mohammed Al-Misfer

Professor of Political Science at Qatar University. He holds a doctorate in political science from New York University. Al-Misfer has a number of published books and studies in the field of political science and on the topic of Arab nationalism. He has permanent press contributions in a number of Arabic and Qatari newspapers.

### Samir Seifan

Economist at the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies. He worked as a consultant and researcher in economic policies and business consulting in Syria with long practical experience in the public and private business sector. Seifan holds a bachelor's degree in economic sciences from Aleppo University in Syria and a diploma in finances from the Technical High School of Leipzig, Germany.

### Suhaim Al Thani

Researcher at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Qatar. Previously he was a Researcher at the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies, and Secretary of the Organizing Committee of the Forum for Gulf and Arabian Peninsula Studies. Al Thani has published a number of studies in academic journals and holds an MA in Political Science specializing in International Relations from Royal Holloway College, London.