

India-Saudi Arabia Bilateral Cooperation

India and Saudi Arabia enjoy cordial and friendly relations reflecting the centuries old economic and socio-cultural ties. Their diplomatic relations were established in 1947. The historic visit of King Abdullah to India in January 2006 was a watershed moment that resulted in the signing of the 'Delhi Declaration'. It was followed later by the 'Riyadh Declaration' in 2010 during the visit of Hon'ble Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh to the Kingdom from February 27 to March 01, 2010 which elevated the bilateral relations to a Strategic Partnership. The visit of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi to Riyadh in April 2016 captured the spirit of enhanced cooperation in the political, economic, security and defence realms. During the visit, King Salman conferred the Kingdom's highest civilian honor, the King Abdulaziz Sash, on the Hon'ble Prime Minister, indicating the importance Saudi Arabia attached to its relations with India. The visit of Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman to India in February 2019 further took forward this momentum. During the visit, it was announced that the Kingdom would invest approximately US\$ 100 billion in India and 06 MoUs/Agreements were signed in various fields, including investment, tourism, housing, exchange of audio-visual programmes, and an agreement was signed to pave way for Saudi Arabia to join the International Solar Alliance (ISA), which was launched by the Hon'ble Prime Minister.

2. The Hon'ble Prime Minister visited Riyadh again on October 28-29, 2019, during which the Strategic Partnership Council (SPC) Agreement was signed, which established a high-level council to steer the Indo-Saudi relationship. 12 MoUs/Agreements were signed during the visit across several fields, including energy, security, defense production, civil aviation, medical products, strategic petroleum reserves, small and medium scale industries, and training of diplomats. During the visit, the Hon'ble Prime Minister also delivered the keynote address at the 3rd Future Investment Initiative Summit.

3. The Hon'ble Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, H.R.H. Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, visited India on September 9-11, 2023 to participate in the G20 Leaders' Summit and to co-chair 1st Leaders' Meeting of the India-Saudi Arabia Strategic Partnership Council along with Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi. During the visit, 08 MoUs/MoCs/Agreements were signed by the two sides across several fields including energy, banking, investment, manufacturing, archival cooperation, anti-corruption and water desalination. During the visit, the India-Saudi Investment Forum was also organized and Minister of Investment for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, H.E. Mr. Khalid A. Al Falih, and the Hon'ble Minister of Commerce & Industry, Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution, and Textiles, Shri Piyush Goyal, co-chaired the Ministerial Session of the India-Saudi Investment Forum 2023.

4. The two leaders have been in frequent touch with each other telephonically, the most recent being the telephone conversation between the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India H.E. Shri Narendra Modi and the Crown Prince and Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, H.R.H. Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, on December 26, 2023. During the call, the two leaders reviewed progress in Bilateral Strategic Partnership in follow up to the State Visit of the Crown Prince in September 2023. They also shared

concerns at the situation in West Asia, specially terrorism, violence and loss of civilian life, agreed to work together for peace, security and stability in the region. On February 17, 2024, Hon'ble External Affairs Minister met with the Saudi Foreign Minister on the sidelines of Munich Security Conference 2024 and reviewed bilateral relations and current situation in West Asia.

On June 6, 2024, Crown Prince congratulated Hon'ble Prime Minister on victory in the elections.

Strategic Partnership Council

5. The Strategic Partnership Council (SPC) has two sub-committees – I) Committee on Political, Security, Social and Cultural Cooperation; and II) Committee on Economy and Investments. Both sub-committees have four functional levels of engagements – I) Summit level (Prime Minister & Crown Prince); II) Ministerial-level; III) Senior Officials' Meetings; and IV) Joint Working Groups (JWGs). Four JWGs have been formed under each sub-committee. The JWGs under the Political committee are I) Political & Consular; II) Legal & Security; III) Social & Cultural; and IV) Joint Committee on Defence Cooperation. The JWGs under the Economic committee are I) Agriculture & Food Security; II) Energy; III) Technology & Information Technology; and IV) Industry & Infrastructure.

Recent Outgoing Ministerial Visits

6. **Hon'ble Minister for Health & Family Welfare and Chemicals & Fertilizers, Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya**, visited Riyadh on August 25-26, 2022. During his visit, he held bilateral consultations with the Saudi Minister of Environment, Water and Agriculture, Abdulrahman Abdulmohsen A. AlFadley and Saudi Minister of Industry and Mineral Resources, Bandar bin Ibrahim AlKhorayef. He also held discussions, with the heads of SABIC and Maaden, regarding India-Saudi cooperation in the field of chemicals and fertilizers.

7. **Hon'ble Minister of External Affairs, Dr. S. Jaishankar**, visited Saudi Arabia on September 10-12, 2022. During the visit, the Hon'ble Minister called on Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, and co-chaired the inaugural Ministerial meeting of the Committee on Political, Security, Social and Cultural Cooperation (PSSC) with the Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud. He also met the Secretary General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Dr. Nayef Falah Mubarak Al-Hajraf – during which the two sides also signed an MOU on Mechanism of Consultations between India and the GCC.

8. **Hon'ble Minister of Commerce & Industries and Textiles and Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution, Shri Piyush Goyal**, visited the Kingdom on September 18-19, 2022. During the visit, the Hon'ble Minister co-chaired the inaugural Ministerial meeting of the Economic and Investments Committee, along with the Saudi Energy Minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman Al-Saud. In addition, he also met the Saudi Minister of Commerce, Majid bin Abdullah Al Qasabi. He also held detailed discussions on avenues of commercial

cooperation with the heads of Royal Commission for Riyadh City (RCRC), Saudi Exim bank and with prominent business persons in the Kingdom.

9. **Hon'ble Minister of State for External and Parliamentary Affairs**, Shri V. Muraleedharan, paid an official visit to Saudi Arabia on May 01-03, 2023. Prior to this, he had also visited Saudi Arabia, from April 25-28, 2023, to lead the evacuation exercise under Operation Kaveri.

10. **Hon'ble Minister of State for Tourism and Ports, Shipping and Waterways of India**, Shri Shripad Yesso Naik, visited the Kingdom on September 27-29, 2023 to attend the World Tourism Day 2023 celebrations organised by the UNWTO and the Saudi Ministry of Tourism in Riyadh. He also had interactions with Saudi Minister of Tourism during the visit.

11. **Hon'ble Minister of Power and New & Renewable Energy**, Shri Raj Kumar Singh, visited the Kingdom on October 8-9, 2023 to participate in the Middle East North Africa Climate Week 2023 at an invitation from the Saudi Minister of Energy, H.R.H. Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman Al-Saud. The Hon'ble Minister also met with the Saudi Minister of Energy and later held bilateral discussions with the Saudi Minister of Investment, Khalid Al-Falih. During the visit, the two sides signed an MoU in the field of Electrical Interconnection, Green/Clean Hydrogen and Supply Chains.

12. **Hon'ble Minister of Commerce & Industries and Textiles and Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution**, Shri Piyush Goyal, visited the Kingdom on October 24-25, 2023 to participate in the 7th edition of Future Investment Initiative Forum 2023. During the visit, the Hon'ble Minister met with the Saudi Minister of Energy, Minister of Investment, Minister of Industry & Mineral Resources, and Minister of Commerce. He also met with several industry and business leaders.

13. **Hon'ble Minister of Minority Affairs**, Smt. Smriti Zubin Irani, visited the Kingdom on January 6-8, 2024 to Jeddah. She attended the 3rd edition of Haj and Umrah Conference organised by the Saudi Ministry of Haj and Umrah Affairs. She also met with the Minister of Haj and Umrah Affairs of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Dr. Tawfiq bin Fawzan Al Rabiah. The two Ministers signed the Bilateral Haj Agreement 2024. Hon'ble Minister of State for External and Parliamentary Affairs, Shri V. Muraleedharan, also accompanied the Hon'ble Minister of Minority Affairs.

14. **Hon'ble Minister of State for Defence and Tourism**, Shri Ajay Bhatt, visited Riyadh on February 4-8, 2024 and led the Indian delegation to the World Defence Show 2024.

15. **Secretary (CPV & OIA), Ministry of External Affairs**, Shri Muktesh K. Pardeshi, visited Madinah, Jeddah and Riyadh on May 4-7, 2024. During his visit, he met with the Saudi Vice Haj & Umrah Minister Dr. Abdul-Fattah bin Sulaiman Mashat, President & Interim CEO of Saudi Center for International Strategic Partnerships Mr. Raad Al Barakati, Assistant Secretary General of the Gulf Cooperation Council Dr. Abdulaziz Aluwaisheg,

Deputy Minister for Political Affairs at Saudi Ministry of Foreign Affairs Dr. Saud Al Sati, and Assistant Ministers at Saudi Ministry of Energy Mr. Mohammed Albrahim and Mr. Nasser Al Qahtani. Shri Pardeshi reviewed arrangements for Indian pilgrims for Haj 2024 and visited Jeddah Haj Terminal. He also had interaction with Indian Community members in Jeddah and Riyadh.

Recent Incoming Ministerial Visits

16. **Saudi Minister of Energy visits India:** On October 21, 2022, Saudi Minister of Energy Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman, who's also the Chairman of the Ministerial Committee for Economy and Investment in India-Saudi Arabia Strategic Partnership Council, paid a visit to India. During the visit, Prince Abdulaziz held meetings with the Hon'ble Minister of Commerce and Industry, Shri Piyush Goyal; Hon'ble Minister of Petroleum, Shri Hardeep Singh Puri; Hon'ble Minister of Power, Shri Raj Kumar Singh, and a number of leaders of the Indian business sector.

17. **Visits of Saudi Ministers to India as part of the G20:** During India's Presidency of the G20, numerous Saudi ministers have visited India for the sectoral meetings and have also held bilateral meetings with their counterparts on the sidelines.

- Minister of Finance, Mohammed Al-Jadaan in December 2022, February 2023, July 2023 and August 2023
- Minister of Foreign Affairs, Prince Faisal bin Farhan bin Abdullah bin Al Saud in March 2023
- Minister of Tourism, Ahmed bin Aqil al-Khateeb in June 2023
- Minister of Education, Yousef bin Abdullah Al-Benyan in June 2023
- Minister of Environment, Water and Agriculture, Abdulrahman bin Abdulmohsen Al-Fadhli in June 2023
- Minister of Human Resources and Social Development, Ahmad bin Sulaiman AlRajhi in July 2023
- Minister of Energy Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman Al-Saud in July, 2023
- Minister of Health Fahd bin Abdurrahman Al-Jalajel in August, 2023
- Minister of Communications and Information Technology Abdullah Alswaha in August, 2023
- Minister of Commerce Majid bin Abdullah Al Qasabi in August, 2023

18. President of the Saudi Shura Council, Dr. Abdullah Mohammed Ibrahim Al-Sheikh, visited India in October 2023 to participate in the G20 Parliamentary Speakers' Summit.

19. Saudi Minister of Hajj and Umrah Dr. Tawfiq bin Fawzan Al-Rabiah visited India on December 5, 2023.

20. Admiral Fahad Abdullah S. Al-Ghofaily, Chief of Staff, Royal Saudi Naval Forces visited to India for four day official visit on January 10-13, 2024. Al-Ghofaily called on Admiral R. Hari Kumar, the Chief of the Naval Staff, and held discussions on mechanisms

and measures to further strengthen Navy to Navy cooperation. He met with the Chief of Defence Staff, Defence Secretary, Chief of Air Staff, Vice Chief of Army Staff, and the Secretary (CPV&OIA), MEA.

21. A delegation from the Saudi Investment Ministry led by Assistant Minister of Investment, Ibrahim bin Youssef Al-Mubarak, participated in the Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit 2024 held in Gandhinagar on January 10-12, 2024.

Economic Cooperation

22. India is the second largest trade partner of Saudi Arabia whereas Saudi Arabia is the fourth largest trading partner of India. During FY23 bilateral trade was valued at US\$ 52.76 billion. During this period, India's imports from Saudi Arabia grew by 23.47% to reach US\$ 42.03 billion and exports to Saudi Arabia were worth US\$ 10.72 billion registering an increase of 22.48% on yoy basis. Total trade with Saudi Arabia accounted for 4.53% of India's total trade in FY 2022-23.

23. There are around 2,783 Indian companies registered as joint ventures/100% owned entities with investments worth approximately US\$ 2 billion in the Kingdom (January 2022). Major Indian companies and corporate groups such as L&T, TATA, Wipro, TCS, TCIL, Shapoorji & Pallonji, etc. have established a strong presence in Saudi Arabia.

24. Saudi direct investments in India amount to US\$ 3.15 billion (March 2022). Major Saudi investment groups include ARAMCO, SABIC, ZAMIL, E-holidays, and Al Batterjee Group. Additionally, PIF has also has invested approximately US\$4.6 billion in many Indian Start-ups through the Soft Bank's 'Vision Fund'.

25. In June 2020, Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund (PIF) announced a US\$ 1.49 billion (2.32% stake) investment in Reliance Industries' Jio Platforms, and in November 2020, PIF announced another investment of US\$ 1.3 billion (2.04% stake) in Reliance Retail Ventures Limited. In the food sector, in May 2020, Saudi Agricultural and Livestock Investment Company (SALIC) acquired a 29.91% stake in Daawat Foods Ltd. with an investment of US\$ 17.23 million. In July 2021, PIF invested in India-based healthtech Healthifyme's US\$ 75 million Series C funding round.

26. In addition there are also projects under consideration in the oil and gas/ petroleum sectors. In the renewable energy sector, Saudi Company Al-Fanar has invested in 600MW Wind Power projects in India.

Energy Partnership

27. Energy cooperation forms a central pillar of the Indo-Saudi bilateral ties. Saudi Arabia is a key partner for India for ensuring energy security. It remained India's third largest Crude and Petroleum products sourcing destination for FY 2022-23. India Imported 39.5 MMT of crude oil from Saudi Arabia, in FY 2022-23, accounting for 16.7 % of its total

crude imports. Additionally, India's LPG imports from Saudi Arabia stood at 7.85 MMT and accounted for 11.2% of its total petroleum product imports in FY 2022-23.

Defence Partnership

28. India-Saudi Arabia defense partnership has witnessed tremendous growth in recent years. In a landmark visit, the Indian Chief of Naval Staff, General Manoj Mukund Naravane visited Saudi Arabia in December 2020. Being maritime neighbors, India and Saudi Arabia enjoy extensive naval cooperation. As on date, two editions of the bilateral naval exercise 'Al Mohed Al Hindi' have been concluded. Additionally, both sides are also having close cooperation in the domain of defence industries and capacity building. The first ever India-Saudi Joint Land Force Exercise "EX-SADA TANSEEQ-I" is scheduled to be conducted at Field Training Node, Mahajan Field Firing Range, Rajasthan from January 29 to February 10, 2024. During the visit of Hon'ble MoS (Defence) Shri Ajay Bhatt to Kingdom in February 2024, an agreement was signed by Munitions India Ltd. and the Saudis for defence export from India to Saudi Arabia worth US\$ 225 million.

Cultural Relations

29. India and Saudi Arabia enjoy a long history of cultural engagements. In recent years, bilateral cultural activities have accelerated in line with Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030. India participated as the 'Guest of Honour' at the 32nd edition of the prestigious Saudi National Festival of Heritage and Culture 'JANADRIYAH' from February 07-28, 2018. The festival was inaugurated by King Salman in the presence of the then External Affairs Minister Smt. Sushma Swaraj.

30. Yoga has also become a very popular activity in Saudi Arabia, particularly after it was recognized as a 'sports activity' in November 2017. Subsequently, the International Day of Yoga (IDY) is being celebrated by the Embassy in prominent areas of Riyadh, which witness participation from a large number of Saudi nationals, particularly the youth, in addition to the diplomatic corps, journalists and the Indian diaspora. In 2018, Nouf al-Marwaai, a Saudi national, was awarded with Padma Shri in recognition of her efforts in popularizing Yoga in Saudi Arabia. On IDY 2021, an MoU on Yoga Cooperation was signed between the Saudi Ministry of Sports and India's Ministry of AYUSH, which paved the way for the establishment of formal Yoga standards and courses in the Kingdom, marking the first time such standards were being implemented by any country in the Gulf region.

31. The year 2021-22 commemorated 75 years of India's independence as 'Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav'. The celebration also coincided with 75 years of establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Saudi Arabia. As part of this celebration the Embassy conducted a host of events, which included cultural events, exhibitions, academic activities like quizzes, international film festivals, and sports activities like golf tournament and cycle rallies. Additionally, India-Saudi Arabia cultural cooperation has also been expanding in the novel areas of cinema and entertainment, sports activities such as cricket and football and tourism exchange.

Indian Community in Saudi Arabia

32. The Indian community in Saudi Arabia numbers at more than 2.65 million and is a living bridge between the two countries. Indian diaspora is widely respected in the Kingdom for their contributions in the development of Saudi Arabia. The contributions made by the Indian community to the development of Saudi Arabia are well acknowledged. In February 2022, an Agreement on Skill Verification Program was signed between NSDC, Indian Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship and Takamol holding, Saudi Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development. Since then, the Skill Verification Program has also been initiated between India and Saudi Arabia. India and Saudi Arabia have also signed Agreement for Domestic Sector Workers in the year 2014 and Agreement for General Category Workers in 2016.

33. The annual Hajj pilgrimage is another important component of Indo-Saudi bilateral relations. During Crown Prince's visit to New Delhi in February 2019, it was announced that India's Hajj quota would be increased by 24,975 in 2019, enabling 2,00,000 Indians to perform Hajj in August 2019. Following the restrictions imposed during the pandemic, India's Hajj quota was again resumed to 175,025 pilgrims in 2023. India has also digitized the Hajj process by providing the Hajj mobile app, health facility - e-MASIHA, e-luggage pre-tagging, and linking the HGOs (Hajj Group Organizers) with the digital system, which has simplified the procedures for pilgrims.

June 12, 2024.