

India-Saudi Arabia Relations

India and Saudi Arabia enjoy cordial and friendly relations reflecting the centuries old economic and socio-cultural ties. The establishment of diplomatic relations in 1947 was followed by high-level visits from both sides. King Saud visited India in 1955 and the Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru visited the Kingdom in 1956. The visit of the Prime Minister Indira Gandhi to Saudi Arabia in 1982 further boosted the bilateral relations. In the recent times, the historic visit of King Abdullah to India in 2006 resulted in signing of 'Delhi Declaration' imparting a fresh momentum to the bilateral relationship. The visit provided the framework for cooperation in all fields of mutual interest. The reciprocal visit by Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh to Saudi Arabia in 2010 raised the level of bilateral engagement to 'Strategic Partnership' and the 'Riyadh Declaration' signed during the visit captured the spirit of enhanced cooperation in political, economic, security and defence realms.

Recent Bilateral Visits

A. Visits from the Saudi side

1. **Visit of King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz to India (2006):** The landmark visit of King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz to India in January 2006 as the Chief Guest of Republic Day celebrations opened a new chapter in the Indo-Saudi bilateral relations. King Abdullah referred to India as his 'second home' and signed the 'Delhi Declaration', first such bilateral document ever signed by a Saudi King which provided a comprehensive road map for the bilateral relations.
2. Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al Faisal visited India in February 2006 to follow up on King's visit and visited twice thereafter, in February 2008 and December 2008. The other ministerial visits from Saudi side during 2006-08 included that of Justice Minister, Minister for Higher Education, Minister of Health, Minister of Commerce & Industry and Petroleum Minister.
3. Prince Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, the Governor of Riyadh, accompanied by a high-level delegation, paid an official visit to India in April 2010.
4. Grand Imam of the Holy Mosque of Makkah Sheikh Abdul Rahman Al-Sudais paid a five-day visit to India in March 2011. Sudais is the first ever Imam of Makkah to visit India.
5. Prince Bandar bin Sultan, Secretary General of National Security Council of Saudi Arabia visited India on March 28, 2011, as special envoy of the Saudi King and met Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh.
6. Dr. Tawfiq Al-Rabiah, Saudi Commerce & Industry Minister led a 76-member delegation to New Delhi from 4-6 January, 2012, for 9th Indo-Saudi Joint Commission Meeting.
7. Saudi Assistant Petroleum and Mineral Resources Minister Abdul Aziz bin Salman visited India and held meeting with Indian Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister S. Jaipal Reddy on February 24, 2012.
8. Saudi Parliamentary delegation led by Shoura Council Chairman Dr. Abdullah bin Mohammad bin Ibrahim Al-Sheikh visited India from May 7-10, 2012 and held meetings with Vice President, Prime Minister, Lok Sabha Speaker and EAM.

9. Saudi Labour Minister Adel Fakeih visited India from November 5-6, 2012, to attend a conference organised by World Bank titled 'Employment and Development' and met Minister of Overseas Indian Affairs Mr. Vayalar Ravi on the sidelines.

B. Visits from the Indian side

1. **Visit of Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (2010):** Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh visited Saudi Arabia from February 27-March 1, 2010 and held discussions with King Abdullah, Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al Faisal, Commerce Minister Zainal Aireza and Petroleum and Mineral Resources Minister Ali Al Naimi. King Abdullah felicitated Dr. Manmohan Singh with the King Abdulaziz Sash of the First Order. Prime Minister addressed the Majlis Al Shura and Council of Saudi Chambers of Commerce and Industry during the visit. The King Saud University conferred Honorary Doctorate on the PM.
2. Petroleum & Natural Gas Minister S. Jaipal Reddy visited Riyadh to participate in the Extraordinary Ministerial Meeting of International Energy Forum (IEF) on February 22, 2011 and held discussions with his Saudi counterpart Ali Al Naimi.
3. External Affairs Minister S.M. Krishna accompanied by Mohsina Kidwai, Chairperson of the Haj Committee of India, visited Jeddah on March 26, 2011, to sign the Haj Agreement for the year 2011. Shri Krishna met Fouad bin Abdulsalam Al-Farsi, Saudi Haj Minister and asked for an increase in the Haj quota.
4. Union Health and Family Welfare Minister Shri Ghulam Nabi Azad visited Riyadh to offer condolences on the death of the Crown Prince Sultan on October 25, 2011.
5. National Security Adviser Shri Shivshankar Menon visited Riyadh on December 4-5, 2011, to deliver a talk at '*Gulf Forum 2011*'.
6. Defence Minister Shri A. K. Antony led a 9-member delegation to Riyadh from February 13-14, 2012, and held discussions with Saudi King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz, Defence Minister Prince Salman bin Abdulaziz and Deputy Defence Minister Prince Khaled bin Sultan.
7. Deputy Chairman of Rajya Sabha, Shri K. Rahman Khan visited Saudi Arabia to attend the G-20 Parliament Speakers' Consultative Meeting on February 25-26, 2012 and held meetings with Dr. Abdullah bin Mohammad al-Sheikh, Chairman, Saudi Shoura Council; Prince Turki Al Faisal, Chairman, King Faisal Centre, and Dr. Ali Qasim M. Al Qahtani, Saudi Assistant Deputy Minister for Manpower Training Development.
8. MOS for External Affairs Shri E. Ahmed visited the Kingdom to participate in the 'Friends of Yemen' meeting in Riyadh from May 23-26, 2012 and held meetings with Yemeni Prime Minister Mohammad Basindawa and Foreign Minister Dr. Abu-Bakr Abdullah Al-Qirbi on the sidelines of the meeting. He also met Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al-Faisal, Defence Minister Prince Salman, Haj Minister Dr. Bandar bin Mohammad Al Hajjar during the visit.
9. Minister of Law and Justice Shri Salman Khurshid led a 3-member delegation to the Kingdom from June 17-18, 2012, to offer condolences on the death of Crown Prince Naif bin Abdulaziz Al Saud.

10. Minister of State for External Affairs Shri E. Ahmed visited Jeddah from September 17-20, 2012 and met Saudi Haj Minister Dr. Bandar bin Mohammed Al-Hajjar and discussed Haj related issues. Shri E. Ahmad led Haj 2012 Goodwill delegation from 21 October – 1 November, 2012, and held meeting with Saudi Haj Minister Dr. Bandar bin Mohammed Hajjar in Jeddah on October 23, 2012, to discuss Haj related issues.
11. Secretary (East) Shri Sanjay Singh led a 3-member delegation to the Kingdom for the review meeting of 9th JCM on December 23, 2012.

Bilateral Agreements/MoUs:

The bilateral Agreements and MoUs signed are as follows:

1. MoU for Foreign Office Consultations
2. MoU on the Establishment of Joint Business Council between Council of Saudi Chambers of Commerce and Industry (CSCCI) and Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI)
3. Bilateral Promotion and Protection of Investments (BIPA)
4. Agreement on Avoidance of Double Taxation and Prevention of Tax Evasion (DTAA)
5. MoU on Combating Crime
6. Agreement in the field of Youth and Sports
7. MoU of Scientific and Educational Co-operation between the Ministry of HRD, India and Ministry of Higher Education, KSA
8. Extradition Treaty
9. Agreement on Transfer of Sentenced Persons
10. MoU for Cooperation in Peaceful Use of Outer Space
11. Agreement on Scientific and Technological Cooperation
12. MoU between Centre for Development of Advance Computing (C-DAC) and King Abdulaziz City for Science & Technology (KACST) on cooperation in Information Technology and Services
13. Agreement on News Cooperation between Saudi Press Agency (SPA) and Press Trust of India (PTI)
14. MoU on Cultural Cooperation

Economic & Commercial Relations: Indo-Saudi economic relations have shown remarkable growth with bilateral trade registering three-fold increase in the last five years. Saudi Arabia is the 4th largest trade partner of India and the bilateral trade was USD 36 billion in 2011-12. The import of crude oil by India forms a major component of bilateral trade with Saudi Arabia being India's largest supplier of crude oil, accounting for almost one-fifth of its needs. Saudi Arabia is the 14th largest market in the world for Indian exports and is destination of more than 1.86% of India's global exports. On the other hand, Saudi Arabia is the source of 6.35% of India's global imports. For Saudi Arabia, India is the 5th largest market for its exports, accounting for 7.55% of its global exports. In terms of imports by Saudi Arabia, India ranks 9th and is source of around 3.27% of Saudi Arabia's total imports.

Investments: According to Saudi Arabian General Investment Authority (SAGIA), it has issued 426 licenses to Indian companies for joint ventures/100% owned entities till

2010, which are expected to bring total investment of USD 1624.60 million in Saudi Arabia. These licenses are for projects in diverse sectors such as management and consultancy services, construction projects, telecommunications, information technology, pharmaceuticals, etc. Moreover, several Indian companies have established collaborations with Saudi companies and are working in the Kingdom in the areas of designing, consultancy, financial services and software development. On the other hand, Saudi Arabia is the 46th biggest investor in India with investments from April 2000 to June 2012 amounting to USD 33.81 million.

India-Saudi Trade (in million USD)

Year (April – March)	Imports from Saudi Arabia	Exports to Saudi Arabia	Total trade	% increase in bilateral trade	% increase in Indian imports	% increase in Indian exports
2007-2008	19,470.30	3,711.16	23,181.46	-	-	-
2008-2009	19,972.74	5,110.38	25,083.12	8.20	2.58	37.70
2009-2010	17,097.57	3,907.00	21,004.57	-16.26	-14.40	-23.55
2010-2011	20,385.28	4,684.40	25,069.68	19.35	19.23	19.90
2011-2012	31,060.10	5,683.29	36,743.40	46.57	52.37	21.32
2012 (April-Nov)	21,506.76	6,076.51	27,583.27	15.15	5.37	71.48

Source: Department of Commerce, GOI. (www.dgft.gov.in)

Cultural ties: Secretary Tourism, Government of India, led a high-level delegation consisting of State Tourism officers and tour operators to the Kingdom to participate in 'Road Shows' in Dammam, Riyadh and Jeddah on 7th, 9th and 11th January, 2012, respectively. A cultural troupe from ICCR comprising of a Shehnai and a Qawwali group, performed in Jeddah and Riyadh from 25-29 January 2012, coinciding with the Republic Day celebrations. A 45-member Saudi youth delegation visited India on 10-day tour from March 22, 2012, to strengthen the cooperation in the information and communications technology (ICT) sector and to step-up efforts to promote understanding and friendship among the youth of the two countries. A 54-member cultural delegation visited the Kingdom to participate in the 'Indian Cultural Week', organized in Riyadh in collaboration with the Saudi Ministry of Culture from November 3-7, 2012.

Indian Community in Saudi Arabia: The 2 million plus strong Indian community in Saudi Arabia is the largest expatriate community in the Kingdom and is the 'most preferred community' due to their expertise, sense of discipline, law abiding and peace loving nature. The contribution made by Indian community to the development of Saudi Arabia is well acknowledged. The Haj pilgrimage is another important component of bilateral relations with more than 1,70,000 Indians performing Haj every year, representing third largest contingent performing Haj.

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