

## **INDIA AND GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL**

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) as a collective entity has vital significance for India and constitutes the “extended” neighborhood of India. The region’s substantial oil and gas reserves are of immense importance for India’s energy security. The GCC countries collectively host a large Indian expatriate community. Through collaborative initiatives in trade, investment, infrastructure development, and people to people ties, this partnership not only bolsters economic growth within the region and India but also contributes to a more stable and prosperous global economy.

### **Strategic Dialogue:**

2. From the strategic point of view, India and GCC share the desire for political stability and security in the region. The common political and security concerns of India and GCC translate into efforts for peace, security and stability in the Gulf region and South Asia. The emerging common security perceptions create further opportunities for India-GCC cooperation in the future. The GCC states are also going through significant transformation, and therefore, the areas of cooperation are also broadening to new horizons.

3. The first-ever India-GCC Political Dialogue was held on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly on September 26, 2003. Both sides recognized the significance of this dialogue, which marked a new era in the India-GCC relationship. India and GCC signed an MoU on the Mechanisms of Consultations on September 10, 2022, during EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar’s visit to Riyadh (September 10-12, 2022). This was followed by the first India-GCC Senior Officials Meeting was held in March 20, 2023 in Riyadh.

4. In year 2024, the first ever India–GCC Joint Ministerial Meeting for Strategic Dialogue was held on September 9, 2024 in Riyadh. EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar co-chaired the meeting along with His Excellency Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani, Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Qatar, as President of the GCC Ministerial Council. This was the first meeting between India and GCC at the Foreign Ministers’ level, and was attended by FMs of all the GCC countries and GCC Secretary General His Excellency Jasem Mohamed Albudaiwi. The ministerial meeting also adopted a India-GCC Joint Action Plan (JAP) 2024-2028 for undertaking various joint activities in diverse areas including health, trade, security, agriculture and food security, transportation, energy, culture, amongst others.

5. Shri Arun Kumar Chatterjee, Secretary (CPV&OIA), visited Riyadh on September 7-8, 2025 for India-GCC Political Dialogue. He held wide-ranging discussions with his counterpart Dr. Abdulaziz Aluwaisheg, Assistant Secretary General (ASG) for Political Affairs and Negotiations of GCC and reviewed the implementation of JAP 2024-2028.

## Economic and Commercial Relations:

6. India's economic linkages with the GCC have increased steadily. In FY 2024-25, India-GCC bilateral trade reached USD 178.56 billion (Exports: USD 56.87 billion; Imports: USD 121.68 billion), accounting for 15.42% of India's global trade. In the last five years, India's trade with the GCC has expanded steadily, registering an annual average growth rate of 15.3%. KSA is India's 2<sup>nd</sup> largest GCC trade partner after UAE. The GCC region is also a significant source of Foreign Direct Investment, with over USD 31 billion cumulative investment as of September 2025.

7. India and GCC formally launched negotiations for a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) after finalizing the Terms of Reference (ToR) in February 2026.

### India's trade with GCC countries

Country	2021-22			2022-23			2023-24			2024-25		
	Import	Export	Total	Import	Export	Total	Import	Export	Total	Import	Export	Total
KSA	34.101	8.759	42.86	42.035	10.728	52.763	31.4	11.56	42.9	30.121	11.756	41.877
UAE	44.833	28.045	72.88	53.232	31.609	84.840	48.0	35.6	83.6	63.422	36.636	100.058
Oman	6.841	3.148	9.99	7.911	4.477	12.388	4.5	4.4	8.9	6.548	4.065	10.613
Kuwait	11.002	1.242	12.24	12.247	1.560	13.808	8.3	3.1	10.4	8.285	1.934	10.219
Qatar	13.194	1.838	15.03	16.808	1.967	18.775	12.3	1.7	14.0	12.463	1.682	14.145
Bahrain	0.753	0.900	1.65	1.015	0.965	1.980	0.83	0.9	1.7	0.845	0.797	1.642
Total	110.7	43.93	154.6	133.24	51.30	184.55	105.3	56.3	161.59	121.68	56.87	178.56

(All figures in USD billion)

7. **Indian Community:** Close to 10 million Indians reside in GCC countries. Remittances sent by Indians living in the GCC countries accounted for almost 38% of total remittance received by India in FY 2024-25 (USD 52.44 billion). The Indian diaspora in the GCC countries has been recognized for their contribution to the development of the region.

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(31 May 2026)