

India-Oman Bilateral Brief

1. The Sultanate of Oman is a strategic partner of India and an important interlocutor at the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Arab League, and Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) fora. India and Oman are linked by geography, history, and culture and enjoy warm and cordial relations. While people-to-people contact between India and Oman can be traced back 5000 years, diplomatic relations were established in 1955, and the relationship was upgraded to a Strategic Partnership in 2008.

Political Relations:

2. Oman is a crucial pillar of India's West Asia Policy and its oldest regional strategic partner. The political engagement between the two countries has increasingly taken on a more strategic shape. The historical India-Oman bilateral ties were transformed into a strategic partnership in November 2008.

3. As a mark of this special friendship, India has extended an invitation to the sultanate of Oman to participate in the G20 Summit and meetings as a guest country during India's Presidency in 2023. Discussions are also underway to take forward the cooperation in strategic areas like Space, Rare Earth Minerals, and Cyber Security.

4. Visits at the highest level have been exchanged frequently between India and Oman.

Visits from India to Oman:

a) Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi visited Oman in February 2018.

b) Minister of State for External Affairs and Parliamentary Affairs, Shri V. Muraleedharan visited Oman on 18-19 October 2023.

c) Shri Ajit Doval, National Security Adviser (NSA) of India paid an official visit to Oman on 25-27 June 2023.

d) Shri S. Somanath, Secretary of the Department of Space and ISRO Chairman, led a five-member delegation on an official visit to Oman on 14-15 June 2023.

e) Dr. Ausaf Sayeed, Secretary (CPV) & OIA, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India visited Oman on 27 February 2023 for India-Oman Strategic Consultative Group (IOSCG) meeting.

f) Minister of State for Health & Family Welfare, Dr. Bharati Pravin Pawar visited Oman on 24-25 November 2022 to attend the 3rd Global Ministerial Conference on Anti-Microbial Resistance (AMR) in Muscat.

g) Minister of State for External Affairs and Parliamentary Affairs, Shri V. Muraleedharan visited Oman on 3-4 October 2022 and on 15-17 December 2020.

h) External Affairs Minister, Dr. S. Jaishankar visited Oman on 23-25 December 2019.

Visits from Oman to India:

a) HH Sayyid Asaad bin Tarik Al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for International Relations & Cooperation Affairs and Personal Representative of His Majesty Sultan visited India to participate in G20 Summit held on 09-10 September 2023. He was accompanied by H.E. Sayyid Badr bin Hamad bin Hamood Albusaidi, Foreign Minister, H.E. Qais bin Mohammed al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry & Investment Promotion, H.E. Said bin Mohammed Al Saqri, Minister of Economy, and H.E. Pankaj Khimji, Advisor Foreign Trade and International Cooperation at Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion.

b) H.E. Eng Said bin Hamoud Al Maawali, Minister of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, visited India on 18 August and held a meeting with Shri S Somanath, Chairman of the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO), and a number of ISRO officials and specialists.

c) The Foreign Minister of Oman, H.E. Sayyid Badr bin Hamad bin Hamood Albusaidi visited India on 01-03 March 2023 to participate in G20 Foreign Minister's Meeting and Raisina Dialogue 2023.

d) Dr. Fatma Al Ajmi Undersecretary of the Ministry of Health for Administrative, Financial and Planning Affairs led 5 member delegation to India on 24-25 February 2023 to participate in 1st JWG meeting on Health.

e) H.E. Qais bin Mohammed al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion of the Sultanate of Oman visited India in May 2022 to attend 10th JCM.

f) The Foreign Minister of Oman, H.E. Sayyid Badr bin Hamad bin Hamood Albusaidi (FMSB) visited India on 23-24 March 2022.

g) Sayyid Badr al-Busaidi, then Minister Responsible for Defence Affairs (MRDA) visited India in September 2018.

Other visits from Oman during G-20:

a) H.E. Said bin Mohammed Al Saqri, Minister of Economy, Sultanate of Oman. Visited India for G20 Development Ministers Meeting on 11-13 June 2023.

b) H.E. Saud bin Hamoud bin Ahmed Al Habsi, Minister of Agriculture Fisheries and Water Resources, Sultanate of Oman visited India for G20 Agricultural Ministers Meeting on 15-17 June 2023.

c) H.E. Salem bin Mohammed Al Mahrooqi, Minister of Heritage and Tourism, Sultanate of Oman visited India for G20 Tourism Ministers Meeting on 21-22 June 2023.

d) H.E. Dr Rahma bint Ibrahim Al Mahrooqi, Minister of Higher Education Research and Innovation, Sultanate of Oman visited India for G20 Education Ministers Meeting on 22 June 2023 and for G20 Research and Innovation Ministers meeting on 05-06 July 2023.

e) H.E. Dr. Mahad bin Said bin Ali Baowain, Minister of Labour, Sultanate of Oman visited India to participate in the G20 Labour and Employment Ministerial meeting held on 21 July 2023 in Indore.

f) H.E. Salim bin Nasser Al Aafi, Minister of Energy and Minerals, Sultanate of Oman visited India to participate in the G20 Energy Ministerial meeting held on 22 July 2023 in Goa.

g) Dr. Abdullah bin Ali Al Amri, Chairman of Environment Authority, Sultanate of Oman visited India to participate in the G20 Environment and Climate Sustainability Ministerial Meeting on

28 July 2023.

h) H.E. Sheikh Ghosn Hilal Al Alawi, Chairman of State Audit Institution (SAI), Sultanate of Oman visited India to participate in the G20 Anti-Corruption Ministerial Meeting on 12 August 2023.

i) H.E. Dr. Hilal bin Ali Al Sabti, Minister of Health, Sultanate of Oman visited India to participate in G20 Health Ministerial Meeting on 18-19 August 2023.

j) H.E. Dr. Ali Amur Ali Al Shidhani, Undersecretary for Communications and Information Technology, Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology of Oman visited India to participate in G20 Digital Economy Ministers Meeting, held in Bangalore on August 19.

k) H.E. Qais bin Mohammed Al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion of Sultanate of Oman visited India to participate in the G20 Trade & Investment Ministerial Meeting held on 24-25 August 2023 at Jaipur.

l) H.E. Sayyid Saeed Sultan Al Busaidi, Undersecretary for Culture, Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth visited India to participate in the G20 Culture Ministerial Meeting held on 26th August 2023 at Varanasi.

Agreements and Bilateral Cooperation mechanisms:

5. Key bilateral agreements/MoUs between India and Oman cover cooperation in Health; Tourism; Military Cooperation; peaceful uses of Outer Space; visa exemption for diplomats/officials; Legal and Judicial Cooperation in Criminal Matters; Extradition; legal and judicial cooperation in civil and commercial matters; Agriculture; Civil Aviation; Avoidance of Double Taxation; Standards and Measures; Manpower; Maritime Issues; Maritime Transport; Joint Investment Fund; and Cultural Cooperation. There are also MoUs for Cooperation between Oman's National Defence College (NDC) and the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA) of India; Cooperation between FSI and Omani Diplomatic Institute; and State Audit Institution of Oman and the Office of Comptroller and Auditor General of India.

6. During the visit of Hon'ble Minister of State for External Affairs V Muraleedharan (MOSVM) in October 2022, the Central Bank of Oman (CBO) signed a landmark Memorandum of

Understanding (MoU) with the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) to link the payment systems between the two countries. Another MOU between Oman News Agency and Asia News International was exchanged. The MOU facilitates the exchange of news and information between both countries.

Defence Cooperation:

7. Oman is India's closest defense partner in Gulf region and defense cooperation has emerged as a key pillar of the strategic partnership between India and Oman. Oman is the first Gulf country with which all the three wings of India's defense forces hold joint exercises. Recently, in August 2022, a 13 day joint military exercise Al Najah IV was held in Rajasthan. In recent years, both countries have cooperated in ensuring maritime security in the Indian Ocean region. In this regard, the first meeting of the Joint Maritime Committee constituted was held on 23 February 2022 virtually. On 30 July – 03 August, 2023, Admiral R Hari Kumar, Chief of the Naval Staff of India led a delegation to Oman and held important bilateral meetings. The first ever India-Oman Defence Industrial Seminar was held in Muscat on 24 September 2023.

Economic & Commercial Relations:

8. The economic and commercial relations between India and Oman are robust and buoyant. Bilateral trade during FY 2021-2022 reached US\$ 9.988 billion and for the year 2022-2023 reached US\$ 12.388 billion. Investment flows, both ways, have been robust, as reflected in numerous joint ventures, established both in India and Oman. There are over 6000 India-Oman joint ventures in Oman with estimated investment of over US\$ 7.5 billion.

9. Oman-India Joint Investment Fund (OIJIF) is a 50-50 Joint Venture between the State Bank of India and the erstwhile State General Reserve Fund (SGRF) of Oman. It was set up in July 2010 as a special purpose vehicle (SPV) to invest in India. OIJIF commenced its operations in 2011 with an initial seed capital of US\$ 100 million, fully invested across seven Indian companies from diversified sectors. After successful utilization of funds under Tranche I and II, OIA and SBI are under negotiations for the 3rd Tranche of OIJIF and investments may start by the year 2023. The estimated investment under 3rd Tranche is USD 300 million.

10. India is among Oman's top trading partners. India is the 2nd largest market for Oman's crude oil exports for the year 2022 after China. India is also the 2nd largest market for Oman's non-oil exports for the year 2022 after Saudi Arabia and 3rd largest source of its import after UAE and Saudi Arabia. India's exports to Oman in FY 2022-2023 is US\$ 4.477 billion. Oman is India's 31st largest export market for the FY 2022-2023. India's imports from Oman in FY 2022-2023 were US\$ 7.911 billion. Oman is India's 24th largest import source for the FY 2022-2023.

Year	Export from India	Import by India	Total trade
2017-2018	2,439.46	4,264.29	6,703.76
2018-2019	2,246.31	2,759.00	5,005.31
2019-2020	2,261.81	3,669.33	5,931.14
2020-2021	2,355.30	3,087.93	5,442.22
2021-2022	3,148.33	6,840.65	9,988.98.
2022-2023	4,477.25	7,911.18	12,388.43

11. Main items of India's exports to Oman: Mineral fuels, mineral oils and products of their distillation; Inorganic chemicals; Organic or Inorganic compounds of precious metals; Iron and Steel; cereals; Ships, boats and floating structures; electrical machinery & equipment; Boilers, machinery and mechanical appliances, parts thereof; organic chemicals, Article of Iron an Steel; Ceramic products etc. in addition to traditional export items like tea, coffee, spices, dairy produce, articles of apparel, meat and other food items, etc.

12. Main items of India's imports from Oman: Mineral fuels, mineral oils and products of their distillation; Fertilizers; Ships, boats and floating structures; Plastics and Articles thereof; Salt; Sulphur; Earth and Stone; Plastering Materials, Lime and Cement; Organic Chemicals; Inorganic Chemicals; Organic or Inorganic compounds of precious metals; Aluminum and Articles Thereof; Aircraft , spacecraft, and parts thereof; Iron and Steel.

Cultural Cooperation:

13. There is also a deep socio-cultural bond between India and Oman, rooted in the strength of people-to-people contact. Omanis are familiar with Indian culture because of the millennia-old people-to-people exchange, the presence of a large Indian community in Oman, and geographical proximity. Yoga is quite popular in Oman, especially among expatriates and local youth. As a run-up to the IDY, Embassy organized more than 150 curated events by several yoga enthusiasts/volunteers across Oman, which received wide reception in the country. Embassy also organized a mega event on 21 June 2022 to commemorate the 8th IDY.

On 16 February 2023 Embassy organized a special Yoga Session for Oman's National Hockey Team (Men and Women) and launched 'Oman Yoga Yatra'. Embassy organized an event to celebrate the 9th International Day of Yoga (IDY) on 21st June 2023 on the theme 'Yoga for Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam'.

14. Indian films have also been filmed in Omani locales, introducing Arab culture to India and further strengthening the cultural ties between the two countries. Bollywood has garnered tremendous viewership in Oman, which depicts the deep cultural bond shared by the people of both countries. Realizing the increasing popularity of Bollywood, major cine houses in Oman screen Indian hits regularly.

Indian Community in Oman:

15. There are about 684,771 Indians in Oman including 5,31,435 work visa holders. There are some Indian families living in Oman for more than 150-200 years. A total of 1825 Indian-origin people have Omani citizenship as on July 2023. Thousands of Indians work as doctors, engineers, chartered accountants, teachers, lecturers, nurses, managers, etc. The role played by the Indian expatriate community in building Oman is often acknowledged by Omani Government. 21 Indian schools are offering a curriculum catering to the educational needs of more than 40,535 Indian students.

16. Indian community in Oman is organized under Indian Social clubs in Muscat, Salalah, Sohar, and Sur. These clubs have several sub-groups called Linguistic Wings which cater to their members' cultural and social needs.

17. The Hindu merchant community has two temples, one over a century old, and cremation grounds. Churches have been permitted, and a Gurudwara has been there for over two decades, along with at least two other temporary structures used as Gurudwaras. Indian Embassy receives good support from local authorities in delivering services aimed at the welfare of the Indian community in Oman.

18. Outstanding contributions of Indians and People of Indian Origin in Oman to the strengthening of our bilateral relations have been recognized by the Government of India through Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awards. The Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awardees from

Oman are: ShriKanaksiKhimji (2003), Dr. P. Mohamed Ali (2004), P.N.C. Menon (2009), S.K. Virmani (2010), Kiran Asher (2012) R.M Parakh (2015) and Dr. Vinodan V. T. (2019).

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