

Ambassador's message on the occasion of
70th Independence Day of India

Today we are celebrating the 70th Independence Day of our country. On this auspicious occasion, I have the pleasure to convey my heartfelt greetings and felicitations to all my fellow countrymen in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. On this joyous day we must also remember our noble patriots and martyrs, who made great sacrifices for the freedom of our home land and our nation.

2. Saudi Arabia has been a part of India's extended neighbourhood. India and Saudi Arabia enjoy excellent ties reflecting the centuries old economic and socio-cultural interactions. Since the establishment of diplomatic ties, the two countries have been engaged at the highest levels and entered into several institutionalized mechanisms of cooperation in political, energy, trade & investment, defence & security and cultural spheres.

3. In recent past, there has been a new thrust and renewed impetus on further consolidating and diversifying our ties with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The historic visit by Hon'ble Prime Minister of India H.E. Mr. Narendra Modi to Riyadh in April this year at the invitation of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, His Majesty King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud is seen as a turning point in our growing engagement with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The official engagements included meetings with the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud; Crown Prince and Minister of Interior His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed bin Naif bin Abdulaziz Al Saud; Deputy Crown Prince and Minister of Defence His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud; Foreign Minister H.E. Mr. Adel Al Jubeir; Minister of Energy, Industry and Mineral Resources then Minister of Health and Chairman of the Executive Board of Saudi Aramco H.E. Mr. Khalid Al Falih, and interaction with top Saudi business leaders at the Council of Saudi Chambers. The visit further cemented our strategic partnership and gave fresh momentum to make this partnership an upward and forward looking one. Agreements on cooperation in new areas of defence, security and counter-terrorism were concluded. The two countries agreed to enhance our cooperation in the intelligence sharing operations and combating the menace of terrorism.

4. Government of India's people-centric initiatives such as 'Make in India', 'Digital India', 'Smart Cities', 'Skilled India Mission' etc. focus on transforming the country into a highly empowered economy and to take the nation to newer heights. These initiatives offer great potential for engagements with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and other GCC members.

5. Indo-Saudi economic relations have registered remarkable growth over the years. Today, Saudi Arabia is our 4th largest trade partner as well as our largest supplier of crude oil. We are partners in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's growth. A number of Indian projects are active in diverse sectors of Saudi Arabia, such as management, consultancy services, construction & infrastructure development, telecommunication & information technology, pharmaceuticals etc. Several Indian companies, in collaboration with Saudi companies are working in the areas of designing, consultancy, financial services and software development.

6. The presence of a vibrant Indian community of over 3 million in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is a solid pillar of our bilateral engagements. I am proud to mention that the significant contribution of our Indian brothers and sisters to the progress and development of the host country has been well-acknowledged and appreciated by the leadership as well as the people of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. I take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and his government for their continued support and cooperation for hosting a large Indian community in the Kingdom and ensuring their welfare and security. I would also like to mention that in order to protect the interests of the a larger section of the Indian workers here, an 'Agreement on Labour Co-operation for Recruitment of General Category Workers' has also been concluded between our two friendly countries during the recent visit of the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India.

7. I am supremely confident that the India-Saudi relations will continue to grow and contribute to peace, stability and prosperity in the region and beyond. Once again, I would like to greet my fellow citizens in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on this occasion of our Independence Day.

Jai Hind
