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India Oman Joint Statement during visit of Prime Minister to Oman

February 12, 2018

1. In recognition of the growing strategic relations between the Sultanate of Oman and the Republic of India, and at the invitation of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said, Sultan of Oman, Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi, paid a State visit to the Sultanate of Oman from 11-12 February.
2. His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said received Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi on 11 February at Bait al Barakah. His Majesty hosted a dinner in honour of the Indian Prime Minister and the accompanying delegation.
3. His Majesty the Sultan and the Indian Prime Minister exchanged views on bilateral, regional and global issues of common interest. The discussions were held in cordial and friendly atmosphere. The two sides stressed that India and Oman, as maritime neighbours across the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea, have enjoyed close, deeply rooted historical relations. They noted that the historically close bilateral ties, involving vibrant maritime trade and cultural exchanges, have expanded into strategic partnership based on trust and mutual respect.
4. The Indian Prime Minister also received HH Sayyid Fahd bin Mahmoud al-Said, Deputy Prime Minister for the Council of Ministers and HH Sayyid Asa'ad bin Tariq Al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for International Relations and Cooperation Affairs and Special Representative of H.M. Sultan Qaboos.
5. The two sides expressed satisfaction over the current state of bilateral relations, especially the robust security and defence cooperation, and agreed to further expand their cooperation to new areas of mutual interest, including inter-alia, space, cyber security, energy security, renewable energy and food security etc., with a view to take the strategic partnership to a higher level. The two sides welcomed the signing of various agreements and MoUs during the visit, which would further consolidate and expand the ongoing bilateral cooperation between the two countries.
6. The two sides reiterated the importance of regular bilateral dialogue through exchange of visits, at the level of senior officials. They expressed appreciation for the well-functioning bilateral institutional mechanisms in the fields of defence, security, trade and investment, agriculture, education, culture, manpower etc., already in place with a view to tap the existing potential for cooperation in these areas. They noted that new and potential areas of cooperation identified during the meetings held under these mechanisms have contributed in expanding bilateral ties and called for effective implementation of the decisions made under the framework of these mechanisms.

Regional Security and combatting Terrorism

7. The two sides exchanged views on regional and international issues of common interest, including the security situation in West Asia, Middle East and South Asia. The fruitful and productive discussions enabled the two sides to better understand and appreciate each other's concerns and perspectives, recognizing the close inter-linkage of the stability and security of the Gulf region with the Indian subcontinent.
8. The two sides acknowledged the common threat posed by terrorism to peace and security and agreed to continue working together bilaterally, regionally and globally to counter this menace. They reiterated their strong condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, wherever committed and by whomever, and declared that there could be no justification for any act of terrorism anywhere.
9. The two sides also emphasized upon the need to isolate the sponsors and supporters of terrorism and agreed that the international community should take urgent action against all such entities, which support terrorism and use it as an instrument of policy. The two sides agreed to coordinate efforts to counter extremism and radicalization and misuse of religion by groups and countries for inciting hatred and perpetrating acts of terrorism. They reiterated that the experiences of India and Oman in building inclusive societies should be promoted as effective models in countering extremism and radicalization.
10. The two sides underlined the importance of coordinated efforts to disrupt terrorist networks, their financing and movement, in accordance with the relevant principles and purposes of the UN Charter and international laws. In this regard, the two sides called for early conclusion of negotiations on the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism in the United Nations.

Security, Defence and Space Cooperation

11. Recognizing their common responsibility towards promoting regional peace and security, the two sides underlined the importance of further cementing bilateral strategic engagement, especially in the areas of security and defence.
12. The two sides expressed satisfaction at the ongoing bilateral security collaboration in the fields of counterterrorism, information-sharing and capacity-building. The Indian Prime Minister appreciated the support extended by Omani security agencies on specific issues of security concern to India.
13. The two sides agreed to enhance cooperation in the fields of law enforcement, anti-money laundering and prevention of smuggling of currency, drug trafficking, human trafficking, illegal migration and other transnational organized crimes.
14. Expressing serious concerns at the misuse of cyber space as a medium to promote subversive and extremist ideologies, the two sides acknowledged the importance of enhancing cooperation in field of cyber security and mandated the concerned officials to hold discussions to identify avenues for cooperation.

15. The two sides noted that the MOU on Military Cooperation signed in 2005 and renewed in 2016 has provided the general framework to strengthen bilateral defence ties. They further noted that the MoUs on cooperation in maritime security and between Coast Guards of the two countries signed in May 2016 have provided a firm foundation for deepening institutional interactions. Both sides expressed satisfaction at the signing of an annexure to the existing MOU on Military Cooperation between the Defence Ministries.
16. The two sides agreed to provide further impetus to the robust defence relations, including through regular holding of joint exercises by the three defence forces, training of navy, air and army officials, as also cooperation in the area of coastal defence and through participation in defence exhibitions etc.
17. Expressing satisfaction at the progress achieved in the ninth round of bilateral Joint Military Cooperation Committee talks held in New Delhi in April 2017, the two sides agreed to hold the next meeting in 2018 in Muscat.
18. The Omani side acknowledged the opportunities offered under the 'Make in India' initiative for joint production of defence equipment in India and also for the procurement of defence material from India. The two sides agreed to explore further opportunities in these areas of common interest.
19. The Indian side thanked Omani side for facilitating operational visits by Indian naval ships and aircraft as well as Indian Air Force aircraft to various Omani ports and airports. The Omani side expressed appreciation of the training facilities provided to the Omani Royal Armed Forces personnel by India. The two sides expressed happiness at signing of an MoU on cooperation between Omani National Defence College and Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses of India, during the visit.
20. The two sides agreed to enhance cooperation to strengthen maritime security in the Gulf and the Indian Ocean regions, vital for the security and prosperity of both countries. They further agreed to promote bilateral collaboration for humanitarian assistance and evacuation in natural disasters and conflict situations. The Indian Prime Minister thanked His Majesty The Sultan for the Omani assistance during "Operation Rahat" conducted by India to evacuate Indian and foreign nationals from Yemen in March- April 2015.

Trade and Investment

21. Both sides underlined the on-going transformation of the economies of India and Oman and emphasized the importance of expanding trade and investment ties to drive the strategic engagement forward. The two leaders directed their Finance and Trade Ministers to work together to find ways and means to substantially increase the flow of bilateral investments and trade.
22. The two sides expressed satisfaction at the growing presence of Indian and Omani companies in each other's market and agreed to further encourage trade promotion measures and participation in fairs and exhibitions.
23. The Indian Prime Minister expressed his admiration at the ongoing efforts and plans the Sultanate of Oman is making to diversify its economy and welcomed the invitation to Indian companies to invest in various sectors in the special economic zones of Oman, including SEZs in Duqm, Sohar and Salalah.

The Indian Prime Minister offered India's partnership and cooperation in areas of priority, such as minerals and mining, manufacturing, logistics, infrastructure, tourism, agriculture and fisheries, IT and IT enabled-services, skills development, innovation etc.

24. The Indian Prime Minister apprised His Majesty The Sultan of various key initiatives of the Government, including "Start Up India", "Make in India", "Smart City", "Digital India" and "Clean India", highlighting their strong potential to provide Indian economy a positive thrust for sustained growth. The Indian Prime Minister highlighted the major initiatives taken by his Government, including for improving the ease of doing business and invited Omani Sovereign Wealth Funds, including State General Reserve Fund, and private businesses to invest in India. The two sides expressed their commitment to encourage mutual investments and agreed that India-Oman Joint Investment Fund could be an important mechanism to raise funds for two-way investments.
25. To provide a legal framework for promotion and protection of bilateral investments, the two sides directed their respective Ministries to conclude the ongoing negotiations on the Bilateral Investment Treaty for early finalization.

Energy

26. The Omani side congratulated the Indian Prime Minister on his initiative on launching International Solar Alliance (ISA) and conveyed Oman's decision to join the Alliance. The Indian Prime Minister thanked His Majesty the Sultan for joining the ISA, stressing that the ISA provides a useful platform for countries with rich potential of solar energy to work together to tap their full potential. He reiterated India's offer to share India's experience and capabilities with Oman in development of its renewable sources of energy, such as solar and wind power etc.
27. The Indian Prime Minister reiterated India's invitation to Oman to participate in building the strategic oil reserves in India. HM The Sultan briefed the Indian Prime Minister on Oman's own initiative to create its strategic oil reserves in Ras Markaz near Duqm. The two sides agreed that there is broad scope for mutual cooperation in building their strategic oil reserves.

Space & IT

28. The Omani side noted India's globally recognized capabilities in research and development of space infrastructure, space technologies and space applications and thanked India for its offer to assist in development of Oman's capabilities, including training, human resource development, for use of space technologies and applications for developmental and other purposes. The two sides expressed satisfaction over signing of the MoU on cooperation in space sector and called for its expeditious implementation.
29. Recognising the strength of India in services sector, the two sides underlined the need to strengthen bilateral cooperation in areas of IT and IT-enabled services and financial services, including banking services, insurance and capital markets.

Cultural, Educational and Tourism Exchanges

30. The two sides noted the historical cultural links between the two countries, nurtured by close people to people contacts. The Indian Prime Minister thanked the Government of Oman for the cooperation extended in organizing the first-ever Festival of India in Oman during November 2016 to March 2017. The two sides agreed to expand the cultural cooperation, including through regular exchange of cultural troupes and holding of cultural festivals etc.
31. The two sides underlined the importance of cooperation in education, including higher education, and agreed to take initiatives to encourage students from each other's countries to join their higher educational institutions. The Omani side sought Indian Government's support in encouraging India's engineering, management and IT institutions to collaborate with Omani educational institutions.
32. The two sides expressed satisfaction at the growing tourism exchanges and welcomed the signing of the MoU on Cooperation in Tourism between the two countries, which will contribute in expanding the cooperation between the two countries.
33. The Omani side congratulated the Indian side for the Indian Prime Minister's initiative in declaration of 21 June as International Day of Yoga by the UN General Assembly in 2014 and thanked him for India's efforts in making Yoga popular in the world, including in Oman, which is aimed at creating a healthy and peaceful world. The Indian Prime Minister thanked His Majesty the Sultan for his Government's support to celebration of International Day of Yoga in Oman, which attracts participation of thousands of yoga enthusiasts.

Health and Food Security

34. Both sides agreed to pursue opportunities in the health care industry, including in pharmaceuticals and biotechnology sectors and resolved to encourage their private sectors to explore participation in these areas. The two sides noted with satisfaction the signing of an MoU for cooperation in the field of Health during the visit and called for its expeditious implementation.
35. In the area of food security, the Indian Prime Minister outlined India's ongoing efforts and reiterated its offer of working with Oman for meeting Oman's long-term food security requirements. The Omani side expressed appreciation for India's remarkable achievements in ensuring food security for its people and called for greater bilateral cooperation aimed at developing agriculture and fisheries sectors in Oman.
36. The two sides expressed happiness over the success of the Oman India Fertilizer Company (OMIFCO) joint venture and the contribution it has made in meeting the urea fertiliser demand in India. The Omani side welcomed the proposal for signing of MoU to supply gas beyond 2025 and the extension of Urea off Take Agreement beyond 2020. The two sides also welcomed the proposed addendum to the Urea off-take agreement, which would pave the way for the expansion of the Sur-based Fertilizer plant.

Consular Matters & Indian Community

37. His Majesty the Sultan conveyed his deep appreciation for the role and contribution made by the Indian community in Oman for the progress and development of their host country, noting that Indian citizens in Oman are highly respected for their peaceful and hard-working nature. The Indian Prime Minister thanked him for ensuring continued welfare of the Indian community. He expressed his appreciation of the Sultanate's policy of allowing Indian community in Oman to practice their faith and celebrate their religious and cultural festivals.
38. The two sides welcomed the signing of an Agreement on the mutual exemption of visa requirement for holders of diplomatic, official, special and service passports during the visit.

UN Reforms

39. The two sides stressed the need for the UN reforms, including of the Security Council through expansion in both categories of membership, to make it more representative, credible and effective. The Indian Prime Minister thanked His Majesty The Sultan for Oman's consistent support for India's candidature for permanent membership in a reformed and expanded UN Security Council. He also thanked the Government of Oman for supporting India's candidatures at various UN and other multilateral organisations, including election of India's candidate at the International Court of Justice.

Conclusion

40. The two sides agreed that the visit of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi to Oman helped in further consolidating and deepening the strategic partnership framework and further development of excellent bilateral relations in all spheres, to serve the common interests of the two countries and their peoples.
41. The Indian Prime Minister thanked His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said for the warm welcome and kind hospitality extended to him and his delegation. He invited His Majesty the Sultan to pay an official visit to India at a mutually convenient time.



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