

**EMBASSY OF INDIA**

RIYADH, KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

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Fri, Dec 14, 2018 at 16:54:12 IST



Fri, Dec 14, 2018 at 14:24:12 AST



Home (/)



Our Location



Contact Us (/contact-us)

India - Saudi Arabia[India-Saudi Bilateral Relations \(/india-saudi-arabia/india-saudi-bilateral-relations\)](/india-saudi-arabia/india-saudi-bilateral-relations)[India-Saudi Business relations \(/india-saudi-arabia/india-saudi-business-relations\)](/india-saudi-arabia/india-saudi-business-relations)[Joint Statement during the visit of Hon'ble Prime Minister of India to Saudi Arabia \(/india-saudi-arabia/joint-statement-during-the-visit-of-hon-ble-prime-minister-of-india-to-saudi-arabia\)](/india-saudi-arabia/joint-statement-during-the-visit-of-hon-ble-prime-minister-of-india-to-saudi-arabia)[Joint Statement on the Occasion of visit of Crown Prince to India \(/india-saudi-arabia/joint-statement-on-the-occasion-of-visit-of-crown-prince-to-india\)](/india-saudi-arabia/joint-statement-on-the-occasion-of-visit-of-crown-prince-to-india)[Delhi Declaration \(/india-saudi-arabia/delhi-declaration\)](/india-saudi-arabia/delhi-declaration)[Riyadh Declaration \(/india-saudi-arabia/riyadh-declaration\)](/india-saudi-arabia/riyadh-declaration)[India-GCC relations \(/india-saudi-arabia/india-gcc-relations\)](/india-saudi-arabia/india-gcc-relations)**Joint Statement on the Occasion of visit of Crown Prince to India**

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[[Print \(/india-saudi-arabia/joint-statement-on-the-occasion-of-visit-of-crown-prince-to-india?tmpl=component&print=1&page=\)](/india-saudi-arabia/joint-statement-on-the-occasion-of-visit-of-crown-prince-to-india?tmpl=component&print=1&page=)]

Joint Statement on the occasion of the Official Visit of Crown Prince, Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to India (26-28 February 2014)

February 28, 2014

At the kind invitation of Hon'ble Vice President of the Republic of India, Shri M. Hamid Ansari, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was on a three-day official visit to India beginning 26/4/1435H, corresponding to 26 February 2014.

During the visit, His Royal Highness called on Hon'ble President of the Republic of India, Shri Pranab Mukherjee. He also held bilateral discussions with Hon'ble Vice President, Shri M. Hamid Ansari and Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Dr. Manmohan Singh.

The discussions were held in the spirit of the strong friendship that binds the two countries. During the talks, the two sides expressed their happiness with the rapid expansion of the friendly relations between the two countries in all fields. They underlined the remarkable growth in bilateral trade as also in fields of energy, scientific and cultural exchanges and security cooperation, since the historic visit of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud to India in 2006, which witnessed the signing of "Delhi Declaration" laying the foundation for establishing a strategic partnership and developing cooperation between the two countries in various fields, and the landmark visit of the Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh to the Kingdom in 2010, during which "Riyadh Declaration" was signed, which further deepened bilateral cooperation in all fields.

Both sides stressed the importance of strengthening the strategic partnership and its further development in all areas, to serve the common interests of the two countries and their peoples. They praised the positive outcome of the 10th meeting of the Saudi-Indian Joint Commission held in Riyadh in January 2014, and its recommendations for enhancing cooperation in economic, commercial, investment, cultural and technological fields.

The two sides agreed upon the importance of encouraging the business communities in the two countries to increase their investments and to take advantage of the existing investment opportunities in Saudi Arabia and India, especially in the fields of infrastructure and technology transfer, as also to further consolidate cooperation in the areas of skilled human resources in information technology, electronics and telecommunications.

The two sides directed the authorities concerned in both countries to finalize the framework agreement between the General Investment Authority in Saudi Arabia (SAGIA) and Invest India, which will facilitate investments by the private sectors in the two countries, especially in the fields of the petrochemical industries, pharmaceuticals, medical equipments, and for the establishment of joint ventures in these fields. The two sides agreed to address the issues hindering the growth and flow of investments and promotion of trade between the two countries.

The two sides expressed their satisfaction over the developing defence cooperation between the two countries, especially in the fields of exchange of expertise and training. In this context, they welcomed the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding on Defence Cooperation between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Republic of India.

Both sides renewed their condemnation of the phenomena of terrorism, extremism and violence, affirming that it is global and threatens all societies and is not linked to any race, colour or belief.

The two sides expressed satisfaction at the growing bilateral trade in the energy sector, with Saudi Arabia being the largest supplier of crude oil to India. The Indian side appreciated the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for being a reliable source of crude oil. On its part, the Saudi side reiterated its commitment to meet any such future requirements of India, as embodied in the Delhi (2006) and Riyadh (2010) declarations. The Indian side also expressed its appreciation for Kingdom's laudable efforts in providing necessary supplies to bring about stability in world oil markets.

As outlined in the Delhi (2006) and Riyadh (2010) declarations, the two sides agreed to explore ways and means to transform the buyer-seller relationship in the energy-sector to one of deeper partnership focusing on investment and joint ventures bilaterally and also in third countries. They agreed to hold further discussions on this during the next meeting of the annual India-Saudi Arabia energy consultations.

The Indian side thanked the Saudi leadership for hosting a large Indian community and for ensuring their continued welfare and wellbeing.

In the field of media and cultural cooperation, the two sides agreed on strengthening cooperation in the area of radio and television, as also in fields of media coverage, exchange of programs and training. They agreed on exchanging expertise in the regulation of audiovisual media between the concerned regulatory bodies of the two countries, as well as on activation of the agreement signed between Saudi Press Agency (SPA) and the Press Trust of India (PTI). The two sides emphasized the importance of continued promotion of cultural cooperation and exchanges between the two countries, in the framework of the Memorandum of Cooperation signed in 2010.

The Saudi side informed that the Kingdom has initiated the necessary steps to transfer a number of Indian prisoners, in implementation of the agreement on the Transfer of Sentenced Persons signed in 2010 in Riyadh.

The two sides discussed a number of regional and international issues of mutual interest, including the developments in Syria, the Iranian nuclear issue and the situation in Afghanistan, in the light of their common interest in the region's stability, peace and security.

Regarding the Palestinian issue, the two sides expressed their hope for achieving a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in accordance with the Arab Peace Initiative and the international legitimacy, in a way that guarantees the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including the establishment of their independent, united and viable state, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

The two sides expressed grave concern over the seriousness of the situation in Syria and emphasised the urgent need to stop the killing of innocent people. The two sides supported full implementation of the Geneva Communiqué of 30 June 2012, which called for negotiations between all parties, leading to the formation of a transitional governing body.

His Royal Highness Crown Prince Salman bin Abdulaziz, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence expressed his thanks and appreciation for the Hon'ble President, Hon'ble Vice President and Hon'ble Prime Minister of the Republic of India for the warm hospitality extended to him and the accompanying delegation.

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