

3. India- Saudi Arabia- International Relation

India holds security dialogue with Saudi Arabia after defence pact with UAE

The **3rd India-Saudi Arabia Security Working Group** meeting, recently held in Riyadh, marks a critical step in deepening the strategic and security architecture between the two nations. Operating under the aegis of the Strategic Partnership Council (SPC), this dialogue ensures a structured approach to regional stability and counter-terrorism.

Key Highlights of the Security Dialogue

The recent meeting in Riyadh focused on a multi-dimensional approach to national and regional security-

Counter-Terrorism & Extremism- Intensive cooperation on identifying and neutralizing emerging terrorist threats, with a specific focus on countering radicalization and extremist ideologies.

Financial & Technological Security- * Combatting Terror Financing- Developing joint strategies to choke the flow of funds to terror networks.

Technology Misuse- Addressing the growing concern of digital platforms and advanced technologies being used for recruitment, propaganda, and operational planning.

The Crime-Terror Nexus- Addressing the dangerous intersection between transnational organized crime (smuggling, trafficking) and international terrorism.

Institutional and Political Framework

The relationship has evolved from simple diplomatic ties to a sophisticated high-level partnership.

Foundational Milestones- Diplomatic relations were established in 1947. Key declarations include-

Delhi Declaration (2006)- Set the stage for modern bilateral engagement.

Riyadh Declaration (2010)- Formally elevated the relationship to a Strategic Partnership.

The Strategic Partnership Council (SPC)- Signed in 2019, the SPC serves as the apex governing body to steer the bilateral relationship across functional domains, providing the "Security Working Group" with high-level political backing.

3. Economic and Energy Pillars

The Indo-Saudi bond is anchored by robust trade and critical energy dependencies.

Volume- India is Saudi Arabia's 2nd largest trade partner, while Saudi Arabia is India's 4th largest. In 2023-24, bilateral trade reached \$43.3 billion.

Investments- Saudi direct investments in India reached \$3.15 billion as of March 2022, focusing on diverse sectors beyond oil.

Energy Security-

Crude Oil- Saudi Arabia provided 39.5 MMT (16.7% of India's total imports) in FY23, making it the 3rd largest source.

LPG- India imported 7.85 MMT of LPG, accounting for 11.2% of its total petroleum product imports.

Defense and Diaspora

Security cooperation has moved beyond dialogue into tangible defense procurement and joint military training.

Defense Procurement & Exercises

Category	Details
Major Contracts	Saudi Arabia signed a \$250 million contract for ammunition with Munitions India Limited (MIL).
Hardware	Procurement of the 155mm Advanced Towed Artillery Gun System (ATAGS) from Bharat Forge.
Exercise- Sada Tanseeq	Inaugural bilateral Army exercise held in Rajasthan (January 2024).
Exercise- Al Mohed Al Hindi	Premier bilateral Naval exercise initiated in 2022.

Exercise- Tarang Shakti	Saudi Arabia joined India's largest Air Force exercise as an observer.
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The Indian Diaspora

Demographics- As of 2025, 2.7 million Indians reside in Saudi Arabia.

Significance- This is the second-largest foreign worker community in the Kingdom (after Bangladesh), acting as a vital living bridge for remittances and cultural exchange.

5. Way Ahead- Strengthening the Partnership

To transition from a "buyer-seller" relationship to a deep strategic alliance, both nations are focusing on-

Strategic Autonomy- Maintaining balanced regional engagement. India seeks to engage Saudi Arabia alongside other Gulf partners to ensure regional stability without being drawn into intra-regional rivalries.

Legal Frameworks- Enhancing mechanisms for extradition and Mutual Legal Assistance (MLAT) to facilitate the swift sharing of information regarding organized crime and terror financing.

Addressing Emerging Threats- Utilizing the Security Working Group to tackle "new-age" security challenges, including-

- Cyber-terrorism and infrastructure protection.
- Preventing "lone-wolf" attacks.
- Combating technology-enabled radicalization through shared intelligence.

Source- <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/india-holds-security-dialogue-with-saudi-arabia-after-defence-pact-with-uae/article70562358.ece>

