

## **International Relation of India and the Gulf**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **Historical Glimpse and the Notion of India:**

In the case of India, history explains a good deal of its foreign policy, not just in the immediate post-independence period, but even today. Although fragmented through most of the last three millennia into many smaller polities, the subcontinent did witness the rise and decline for brief periods of powerful empires covering most of present-day South Asia; for example, under the Maurya (322–185 BCE), Gupta (320–550 CE), and the Mughal (1526–1857ce) dynasties. In the modern period, India gradually became a unified territorial entity under the British Raj. Its location at Asia's crossroads and its peninsular projection into the Indian Ocean made it a natural transit point, and destination, of international trade across its vast overland frontiers and along both its Arabian Sea and Indian Ocean coasts.

Some archaeological evidence shows that Indian subcontinent traded far and wide. Connection with the reachable world was a constant for India from very early on. Influence and invasions tended to flow into India from the west (or north transiting through the west), while India's cultural and wider influence largely travelled east, inter alia through the spread of Buddhism, Hinduism, and Indian trading communities, leaving stupendous remains from a thousand or so years ago in countries as far afield as modern-day Indonesia.

India's capacity to absorb foreign visitors, invaders, travellers and influence is evidenced in many ways. Like, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Ethiopian warrior slaves were adopted into the Deccan plateau's hierarchy of power. The great Mughal dynasty, one of

several to sweep into the Gangetic plain from the east, itself sought to adjust to India while India adjusted to it. For a time, it must have seemed to the British colonists in India as of the eighteenth century that they too had been accepted into India's natural order, albeit as the country's overlords, but they were wrong, as the mutiny of 1857 and the subsequent emergence of political resistance to their rule demonstrate. While the British Raj tends to be remembered with a touch of nostalgia in the West, its legacy in India was far from an unalloyed blessing. The Raj laid the institutional bases of a modern state and sought to integrate India with the global economy, but its economic record was at best mixed, its administrative performance frequently feckless, and its political stance deeply and permanently divisive.

Some political scientist believes that India's relations with the Gulf states is of crucial and growing importance at the present time given the expanding role that both parties play on the regional and international fronts. As an emerging global power, India is anticipated to exercise much influence on the international scene in the foreseeable future. Similarly, the Arab Gulf region is of key geostrategic and economic significance to international powers due to the important waterways in the region, its energy stores and its economic weight in the wider Arab region and Middle East.

Some important source published by Al Jazeera Centre for Studies, *Economic Relations between India and the Gulf States: Reality, Challenges and Opportunities*, tracing the evolution of Gulf-Indian relations reveals its ancient roots and also the major significance of these ties. India was a centre for sorting and marketing pearls from Gulf countries, and as evidenced by the Silk Road,

an extensive network of trade relations existed. The impact of these ties on the Gulf economy was clear, with the Indian rupee being a unit of currency in several Gulf states. Ties were strengthened and diversified starting in the early 21st century, particularly in economic affairs, after India liberalised its economy and encouraged foreign trade, including with Gulf countries. At the same time, the geostrategic and economic importance of Gulf states gave them an economic edge in the Arab region and the larger Middle East.

Although Indian labour began to flow to the Gulf states in 1935, the increase in oil prices in the 1970s boosted flows substantially, particularly semi- and non-skilled labour. In the 1980s, skilled labourers began heading to Gulf states that saw improved economic conditions, first and foremost the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia. In turn, this drew the Indian government's attention to Gulf states, prompting it to invigorate its relations with these countries. India views Indian migrants as a source of economic strength, and since 2011 has been the single largest recipient of remittances, valued at more than \$64 billion.

Gulf-Indian economic cooperation – the two parties generally adopted a strategy of “summits” and the establishment of cooperation forums, both regional and bilateral. This allowed both sides to become acquainted with areas of cooperation that could advance economic relations between them, giving greater priority to trade, investment, energy and joint projects as well as other secondary fields.

Researcher like Muhannad Abdel Wahid al-Nadawi in his “Economic Relations between India and the Gulf States: Reality, Challenges and Opportunities” found that cooperation in energy, particularly oil, is still the most important factor in economic relations given India's rapid economic growth and its concomitant high demand for oil.

J. E. Peterson, *The Emergence of the Gulf States: Studies in Modern History* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2017): claims that ‘much of our understanding of the Gulf in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and even the eighteenth centuries derives from the accounts of European travellers, because most of the population was not literate’. While British archives are detailed and easily accessible given the historical imperial interest in the Gulf from both London and Bombay, one must acknowledge that other European powers had their own designs and intrigues in the Gulf, even when the region fully fell into

the British sphere of interest.

As one of the most significant dimensions of international relations in the 21st century, economics and economic considerations have a direct impact on national policies and strategic plans. The Arab region, and the Middle East in general, was one area with which India worked to improve ties, particularly economic ties, in light of its geographic position and its role in the non-aligned movement (NAM) throughout the Cold War.

The emergence of the six Gulf states, known as Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries – Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, UAE and Oman – is subject to controversial debate among historians. At first glance, one may argue that beyond nineteenth century British imperial designs and twentieth century oil, there is little historical common ground between Kuwait and the interior of Arabia for example, or between the first Wahhabi state and the Omani sultanates of bygone eras. Not to mention how Yemen is often excluded from this regional history. Oman and Yemen may indeed have more in common than Oman and Saudi Arabia. Yet, for political, economic and security reasons, since the 1980s knowledge about the Arabian Peninsula is segmented. In it, the GCC is constructed as a separate regional enclave for historical and comparative economic and political studies, leaving aside the southern corner of the Arabian Peninsula and the northern territories of Jordan and beyond.

After independence, India's Middle East policy had remained Cairo- and Baghdad-centric until the end of Cold War. A variety of factors including India's overall foreign policy orientation, contingent geopolitical factors and Pakistan's influence were responsible for the lack of any particular warmth in Indo-Gulf relations, despite the occasional exchange of political visits. However, the situation started to change in the 1990s. At this time, India was seeking to safeguard its energy security to accelerate economic growth. To this end, it started to look towards the Gulf countries. These were also looking for new markets, following signs of stagnation or at least self-sufficiency in the US and European markets. As economic relations started to improve, the respective governments became more confident of Indo-Gulf relations, and frequent political contacts followed. Over the two decades, trade, energy imports to India, migration of manpower to the Gulf, and remittances emerged as the most important aspects of bilateral relations between India and the Gulf countries.

**India- Saudi Arabia:**

India and Saudi Arabia enjoy cordial and friendly relations reflecting the centuries old economic and socio-cultural ties. The establishment of diplomatic relations in 1947 was followed by high-level visits from both sides. King Saud visited India in 1955 and the Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru visited the Kingdom in 1956. The visit of the Prime Minister Indira Gandhi to Saudi Arabia in 1982 further boosted the bilateral relations. In the recent times, the historic visit of King Abdullah to India in 2006 resulted in signing of 'Delhi Declaration' imparting a fresh momentum to the bilateral relationship. The visit provided the framework for cooperation in all fields of mutual interest. The reciprocal visit by Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh to Saudi Arabia in 2010 raised the level of bilateral engagement to 'Strategic Partnership' and the 'Riyadh Declaration' signed during the visit captured the spirit of enhanced cooperation in political, economic, security and defence realms. The visit of the then Crown Prince, His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (now King) to India in 2014 has further deepened the relations between our two countries.

**Joint Statements:**

1. Signing of 'Delhi Declaration' in 2006 during the visit of King Abdullah; it laid the roadmap for bilateral cooperation;
2. Signing of 'Riyadh Declaration' in 2010 during Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh's visit to Riyadh. It raised the level of interaction to 'Strategic Partnership' in the political, economy, security and defence realms;
3. Joint Statement during the visit of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Salman bin Abdulaziz AlSaud, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to India in February 2014;
4. Joint Statement during the visit of the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in April 2016.

**Agreements/MoUs:**

1. MoU for Foreign Office Consultations;
2. MoU on the Establishment of Joint Business Council between Council of Saudi Chambers of Commerce and Industry (CSCCI) and Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI);
3. Bilateral Promotion and Protection of Investments (BIPA);

4. Agreement on Avoidance of Double Taxation and Prevention of Tax Evasion (DTAA);
5. MoU on Combating Crime;
6. Agreement in the field of Youth and Sports;
7. MoU of Scientific and Educational Co-operation between the Ministry of HRD, India and Ministry of Higher Education, KSA;
8. Extradition Treaty;
9. Agreement on Transfer of Sentenced Persons;
10. MoU for Cooperation in Peaceful Use of Outer Space;
11. Agreement on Scientific and Technological Cooperation;
12. MoU between Centre for Development of Advance Computing (C-DAC) and King Abdulaziz City for Science and Technology (KACST) on cooperation in Information Technology and Services;
13. Agreement on News Cooperation between Saudi Press Agency (SPA) and Press Trust of India (PTI);
14. MoU on Cultural Cooperation;
15. Agreement on Labour Cooperation for Domestic Service Workers Recruitment;
16. MoU on Defence Cooperation;
17. Agreement on Labour Co-operation for Recruitment of General Category Workers;
18. Technical Cooperation Program between the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) and the Saudi Standards, Metrology and Quality Organization (SASO);
19. Cooperation Programme between the Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA), India and Prince Saud Al Faisal Institutes of Diplomatic Studies (PSAIDS), Saudi Arabia;
20. Executive Program for Cooperation in the Field of Handicrafts between the Export Promotion Council for Handicraft (EPCH) in the Republic of India and Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage;
21. MoU between Financial Intelligence Unit - India and the Financial Intelligence Unit-Saudi Arabia concerning Cooperation in the Exchange of Intelligence related to Money Laundering, Terrorism Financing and Related Crimes;
22. Framework for Investment Promotion Cooperation between Invest India and the Saudi Arabian General Investment Authority (SAGIA);

**Cultural ties:**

A cultural troupe from ICCR comprising of a Shehnai and a Qawwali group, performed in Jeddah and

Riyadh from 25-29 January 2012, coinciding with the Republic Day celebrations. A 45- member Saudi youth delegation visited India on 10-day tour from March 22, 2012, to strengthen the cooperation in the information and communications technology (ICT) sector and to step-up efforts to promote understanding and friendship among the youth of the two countries. A 54-member cultural delegation visited the Kingdom to participate in the 'Indian Cultural Week', organized in Riyadh in collaboration with the Saudi Ministry of Culture from November 3-7, 2012. In January-February 2017, an ICCR sponsored 5-member Qawwali troupe performed in Riyadh, Dammam, Jubail and Jeddah.

### Indian Community in Saudi Arabia:

The 2.7 million (as of Dec, 2018) strong Indian community in Saudi Arabia is the largest expatriate community in the Kingdom and is the 'most preferred community' due to their expertise, sense of discipline, law abiding and peace loving nature. The contribution made by Indian community to the development of Saudi Arabia is well acknowledged. In April 2013, His Majesty King Abdullah announced a grace period allowing overstaying expatriates to correct the status, get new jobs or leave the country without facing penal action till the end of the grace period i.e. November 3, 2013. More than 1.4 lakh Indians availed the amnesty and returned back to home without facing penalty. Again, Saudi authorities announced amnesty (April – November, 2017) during which around 70, 000 undocumented Indians were issued travel documents to return back to India. The Hajj pilgrimage is another important component of bilateral relations. The Hajj Quota was increased by 5, 000, enabling 1, 75, 025 Indians performing Hajj in 2018. A large number of Indians also visit the Kingdom to perform Umrah every year (Table 1).

### India - Bahrain:

India and Bahrain enjoy excellent bilateral relations

characterized by cordial political, economic and cultural contacts. Our bilateral Trade and commercial exchanges go back to about 5,000 years ago tracing their origins to the period of Dilmun Civilization in Bahrain to the era of Indus valley civilization in India. Ancient Bahraini traders are believed to have carried out flourishing trade of Bahraini pearls with Indian spices from India. Presence of around 350,000 Indian nationals who comprise a third of Bahrain's total population of 1.2 million is an important anchor of our bilateral relations with Bahrain.

Bilateral Agreements/Memorandums of Understanding Following agreements/MOUs have been signed between the two countries:-

- Air Service Agreement (April 2000)
- MOU on Cooperation between Ministries of Foreign Affairs (January 2004)
- Agreement on Juridical and judicial Co-operation in Civil and Commercial Matters (January 2004)
- Extradition Treaty (January 2004)
- Agreement on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters (January 2004)
- Agreement on the Promotion and Protection of Bilateral Investment (January 2004)
- Agreement for Media Co-operation between Prasar Bharati and Bahrain Radio and TV Corporation (March 2007)
- MOU on Labour and Manpower Development (June 2009)
- Agreement regarding Exchange of Information with respect to Taxes (May 2012)
- MOU on Cooperation in the field of Information and Communication Technology (May 2012)
- MOU on the establishment of a Joint High Commission (February 2014)
- MOU on cooperation between the Foreign Service Institute, Ministry of External Affairs, India and the Diplomatic Institute, Bahrain (February 2014)
- MOU for cooperation in the field of youth and sports (February, 2014).

Table 1 : India-Saudi Trade (in billion USD)						
Year (April-March)	Imports from Saudi Arabia	Exports to Saudi Arabia	Total trade	% increase in bilateral trade	% increase in India imports	% export in Indian exports
2013-2014	36.40	12.21	48.62	11.05	7.08	24.86
2014-2015	28.10	11.16	39.26	-19.24	-22.79	-8.65
2015-2016	20.32	6.39	26.71	-31.97	-27.70	-42.71
2016-2017	19.94	5.13	25.08	-6.12	-1.85	-19.70
2017-2018	22.06	5.41	27.48	+9.56	+10.50	+5.88

Source : Department of Commerce, GOI (www.dgft.gov.in)

– OIFC signed two Agreements with the Bahrain Economic Development Board and the Bahrain India Society in September 2014.

– MOU on Water Resources Development and Management (February 2015)

– Agreement on Cooperation in combating international terrorism, transnational organized crime and trafficking in illicit drugs, narcotics and psychotropic substances and precursors chemicals (December 2015)

– Agreement on Transfer of Sentenced Persons (January 2016)

Bahrain launched ‘Little India in Bahrain’ project in November 2015 to acknowledge and mark the contribution of Indian community to the history and progress of Bahrain. Under the project, exterior of various buildings were restored and renovated, as well as a small public space for holding regular markets, fashion shows, Indian food stalls, and cultural performances etc. was created so as to give the visitors a feeling of being in India.

#### **Indian investment in Bahrain:**

There are 23 branches of prominent Indian banks/ companies registered in Bahrain and 3,181 Indian joint venture companies are registered in Bahrain. India’s total capital investment into Bahrain between January 2003 and March 2018 has been estimated at approximately US\$ 1.69 billion. Financial Services has highest investment value (40 % of total projects), followed by real estate and hospitality sector (Table 2).

India’s main items of exports to Bahrain are mineral fuels, mineral oils, inorganic chemicals, organic or inorganic compounds of precious metals of rare earth, Elam/radii/isotopes, cereals, nuts, fruits, articles of apparel and clothing accessories etc., while main items of import

from Bahrain are crude oils, mineral fuels, their bituminous substance, distillation, aluminum, fertilizers, ores/slugs/ ashes of aluminum, iron and copper, pulp, salt, printed books, newspapers etc. (Table 3).

#### **India – Kuwait:**

India and Kuwait enjoy traditionally friendly relations, rooted in history and have stood the test of time. Geographic proximity, historical trade links, cultural affinities and presence of large number of Indian nationals in Kuwait continue to sustain and nurture this long standing relationship. India has been a natural trading partner of Kuwait and until 1961 Indian Rupee was the legal tender in Kuwait. Till the discovery and development of oil, Kuwait’s economy revolved around its fine harbour and maritime activities which included ship building, pearl diving, fishing and voyages to India on wooden dhows carrying dates, Arabian horses and pearls that were traded for wood, cereals, clothes and spices.

#### **Commercial Relations:**

Historically, Indo-Kuwaiti relations have always had an important trade dimension. India has consistently been among the top ten trading partners of Kuwait. Total bilateral trade with Kuwait during 2016-17 was US\$ 5.95 billion. While India’s imports from Kuwait were US\$ 4.45 billion (POL accounted for US\$ 3.46 billion) which plummeted largely due to drop in oil prices coupled with cut down in volume of oil import from Kuwait. India’s exports to Kuwait grew by 19.79% (US\$ 1.49 billion) in 2016-17 *vis-a-vis* 2015-16. India’s exports to Kuwait included food items, cereals, textiles, garments, electrical and engineering equipment, ceramics, machinery and mechanical appliances, cars, trucks, buses, tyres, chemicals, jewellery, handicrafts, metal products, iron and

**Table 2 : Bahraini Investments in India : Values in US\$ million**

Financial Year	December 2013	December 2014	December 2015	December 2016	December 2017
Cumulative FDI inflow from Bahrain	31.55	48.93	53.30	140.73	163.66

Source : DIPP/RBI

**Table 3 : Bilateral Trade India-Bahrain : Values in US\$ million**

Year	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-18 (*Up to February 18)
Indian Export	603.47	639.36	472.98	654.10	471.32	499.23
Indian Import	664.66	563.24	446.25	356.90	290.69	376.24
Total Trade	12.68.13	1202.6	919.23	1011.00	762.01	875.47

Source : Foreign Trade Performance Analysis, Deptt. Of Commerce, M/o Commerce & Industry

steel, etc. The Embassy organized “Made in India Exhibition” in Kuwait on 18 February 2017. A wide variety of Indian products ranging from tyres, motorbikes, trucks, buses, security solutions, batteries, air compressors, fans, mixies, tableware, cookware, televisions, refrigerators, etc., were displayed in the Exhibition. The Embassy organized “Indian Handicrafts and Handloom Exhibition” at Holiday Inn Hotel, Salmiya on 23 Oct 2016. Several varieties of handmade carpets, brass show pieces, marble pieces carved and designed with organic colours, handloom sarees, kurthas, ladies hand-bags, purses, antique pieces in wood and brass, jewellery with semi-precious stones, handmade furniture, table covers, cushion stools, cushion covers, framed paintings, etc., were displayed during the exhibition.

#### ***Kuwaiti Investment in India:***

Kuwaiti investment in India has been largely indirect through portfolio managers. Much of it has gone to India through international investment companies or through Mauritius, Singapore or other countries providing tax breaks. So far, investments in India are over US\$ 3.5 billion, of which US\$ 3 billion is by Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA). In December 2015, KIA announced an investment of US\$ 300 million in GMR Infrastructure Ltd., while in October 2015, KIA made a substantial investment in the Interglobe Aviation’s (Indigo Airlines) IPO and about US\$ 2.7 million in Bombay Stock Exchange’s anchor investment in January 2017. In 2013, KIA had made an investment of US\$ 5.37 million in the Power Grid Corporation of India Ltd.

#### ***Hydrocarbon Sector:***

Kuwait remains a reliable supplier of crude oil and LPG to India, meeting our crucial energy needs. To discuss and expand co-operation in the hydrocarbon sector, the 4th meeting of the India-Kuwait JWG on Hydrocarbon was held in New Delhi on 15-16 September 2015.

#### ***Science and Technology:***

India and Kuwait have signed an S&T Agreement in April 2009. A delegation from Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) visited India from 18-22 November 2013 and signed a Programme of Cooperation with Department of Science and Technology and an MOU with CSIR.

#### ***Medical cooperation:***

India and Kuwait have signed an MOU on Medical Cooperation on April 23, 2012 at New Delhi. A Joint Working Group on Medical Cooperation was set up and its first meeting was held in Kuwait in November 2013.

#### ***Education:***

There are 21 Indian schools in Kuwait which are providing education to nearly 47,000 Indian and foreign students. All these schools are affiliated to Central Board of Second Education (CBSE) and follow CBSE curriculum. Besides, there are around 70 Indians students who are pursuing their higher studies in different universities in Kuwait. In addition, many Indian and foreign students are enrolled in Distance Education Programmes of Indian universities to study graduate/post graduate courses.

#### ***Cultural Relations:***

There is interest in Indian Culture and there have been regular exchanges in these fields. A “Festival of India in Kuwait” was held in Kuwait in 2009. Kuwaiti Embassy in cooperation with ICCR organized the “Kuwait Cultural Week” from 15 - 19 May 2012 at New Delhi and Jaipur, which included joint arts and crafts exhibition, lectures at Jamia Milia Islamia University and folklore performance by Kuwait Television Troupe. There are approx. 250 Indian associations registered with the Embassy. These associations organize regularly socio-cultural programmes for the benefit of their members.

#### ***India-Qatar:***

India-Qatar cooperation in diverse sectors has been steadily growing in an excellent framework provided by historically close ties and regular and substantive engagement, including at the highest levels of the two Governments. The large, diverse, accomplished and highly regarded Indian community is making an important contribution to Qatar’s growth and development and in nurturing the bonds of deep-rooted friendship and multi-faceted cooperation between the two countries.

The two leaders also emphasized the need to take practical steps to build on the framework provided by the Agreement on ‘Defence Cooperation’ by enhancing cooperation in the fields of specialized training, exchange of information and joint production of defence equipment. Both sides agreed to increase the level of participation in infrastructure development projects on either side and

undertook to exchange information on available investment opportunities. The visit provided another opportunity for the two sides to exchange views on regional and international issues of mutual interest, with particular reference to the security situation in West Asia, Middle East and South Asia. The two sides resolved to work closely to combat terrorism and radicalization and noted the importance of consolidating the values of tolerance and preventing the spread of sectarianism. They discussed cooperation on counter-terrorism, intelligence sharing and countering terror-financing and money laundering, apart from other transnational crimes.

The following seven MOUs/Agreements were signed.

- (1) MOU for investment in National Investment and Infrastructure Fund of India;
- (2) MOU on Financial Intelligence Unit – India (FIU-IND) and the Qatar Financial Information Unit (QFIU);
- (3) MOU for Cooperation in Skill Development and Recognition of Qualifications;
- (4) MOU for Cooperation in the field of Health;
- (5) Agreement on Cooperation and Mutual Assistance in Custom Matters;
- (6) MOU on Tourism Cooperation; and
- (7) First Executive Program for MOU in the field of Youth and Sports.

Both countries have a Joint Working Group on Labour and Manpower Development, The Fourth Meeting of the Joint Working Group [JWG] on Labour and Manpower Development between India and Qatar was held in New Delhi on 24 and 25 November, 2016.

Fath Al Khair [meaning ‘the Victory of the Good’] Dhow undertook a voyage from Doha to Mumbai, via Oman during 5 October - 17 November 2015. This unique initiative was launched in 2013 under the patronage of HH Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, the Father Emir of Qatar, as a commemoration by Qataris of the historical pearl trade route that existed between Qatar and India. It is significant that on its second voyage, Fath Al Khair sailed to Mumbai, whereas its first voyage was to neighbouring Gulf countries.

Qatar was a co-sponsor to the Resolution at the UNGA adopted unanimously with a record 177 co-sponsors, declaring 21 June as the International Day of Yoga (IDY).

Cultural ties between India and Qatar are deep rooted and actively nurtured by both sides. Qataris admire India’s cultural diversity. There is a regular flow of Indian

artistes performing in Qatar at events organised by community organizations affiliated to the Indian Cultural Centre (ICC), apex body of associations of the Indian community functioning under the aegis of Embassy of India, Doha, and private sponsors. With the Embassy’s cooperation and support, ICC organized a large scale Community Festival titled ‘A Passage to India’ in November, 2013; March, 2015 and April, 2016, aimed at presenting India in a composite manner, i.e. showcasing India’s rich cultural diversity as well as strengths and achievements in different spheres. The 3rd edition of this Festival was organized in celebration of the 125th Birth Anniversary of Late Bharat Ratna Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, the architect of India’s Constitution.

With an annual import of 7.5 million metric tons (MMT) of LNG under a long term contract between Petronet of India and RasGas of Qatar, and some spot purchases by Indian companies from time to time, Qatar is the largest supplier of LNG to India, accounting for over 65% of India’s global import and 15% of Qatar’s export of LNG. On 31 December, 2015, Petronet LNG, India’s largest natural gas importer, and Qatar’s RasGas Co. Ltd. signed an agreement for an additional supply of 1.0 mn tons of LNG annually from the RasGas through the remainder of the 25-year contract, ending in 2028. Besides, LNG, India also imports ethylene, propylene, ammonia, urea and polyethylene from Qatar.

Therefore, the balance of trade continues to be heavily in Qatar’s favour. India’s exports to Qatar have stabilized in the range of US\$900 million to US\$1,000 million. However, imports in value terms have declined sharply in the last 1-2 years due to the decrease in international oil and gas prices. Bilateral trade touched a high of US\$ 16.68 billion in 2013-14 and dropped to US\$ 9.93 billion in last fiscal 2015- 16. The balance of trade is heavily in favour of Qatar.

Major items of Indian exports are machinery and equipment, transport equipment, articles of iron or steel, plastic and articles thereof, construction material, electrical and electronic items, textiles and garments, chemicals, precious stones, rubber, spices and cereals. India is the third largest export destination for Qatar (behind Japan and South Korea) and ranks at 10th position for Qatar’s imports. Both countries are keen to expand collaborations for mutual benefit in the fields of energy; trade, finance and investments; infrastructure; education and research; sports; travel and tourism; and other areas. Besides official interactions, people-to-people contacts

and initiatives by private sector are energising dialogue and cooperation in various sectors. India's corporate sector is increasingly pursuing business opportunities in Qatar. A number of reputed Indian companies, particularly in construction/infrastructure and IT, have operations in Qatar, including L&T; Punj Lloyd; Shapoorji Pallonji; Voltas; Simplex; TCS; Wipro; MahindraTech; HCL; etc. SBI, ICICI and other Indian banks have limited operations under the Qatar Financial Centre or private exchange houses in Qatar.

There has also been encouraging participation from Qatar at major business conferences in India – the 4th India-Arab Partnership Conference in New Delhi on 26-27 November, 2014; Vibrant Gujarat Summit in Gandhinagar, Gujarat from 11-13 January, 2015; the Partnership Summit 2015 in Jaipur, Rajasthan from 15-17 January, 2015; BlackRock India Investor Summit in New Delhi on 3 February, 2015 (at which former PM of Qatar, Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jabor Al Thani was among the attendees) and Aero India in Bengaluru from 18-22 February, 2015.

On 29 August, 2016 Qatar National Bank (QNB), Qatar's largest bank, received RBI approval for retail operations and opened a branch in India in order to provide comprehensive banking services. QNB (India) had hitherto provided investment and finance consultancy and advisory services for Middle East companies establishing businesses and investing in India.

While the current volume of Qatar's FDI in India is modest, Qatar's Sovereign Wealth Fund [Qatar Investment Authority (QIA)] and other State-owned entities, as well as private investors in Qatar are keenly looking at attractive investment options in infrastructural sectors in India in various sectors, including real estate/construction, roads/highways, airports/airlines, ports; LNG, petrochemicals and fertilizers; and tourism/hospitality. There is vast potential for QIA to substantially increase its investments in India, keeping in view India's huge investment needs (\$1 trillion in next five years in infrastructural sectors alone) and investment friendly policies, as also QIA's keenness to diversify its global portfolio. Mission has been actively engaged with QIA and other State-owned and private entities in Qatar, highlighting the new initiatives and policies of the current Government, such as 'Make in India' and the distinctive advantages of India as an investment destination.

### **India-Oman:**

India and Oman, maritime neighbors linked by geography, history and culture, enjoy close and friendly relations. Inspired by civilisational and historical links spanning over 5000 years, India and Oman have expanded their bilateral cooperation and exchanges since establishment of diplomatic relations in 1955, forging a mutually beneficial Strategic Partnership. India-Oman bilateral relations are anchored in their shared interests, mutual understanding and respect for each other's priorities, concerns and sensitivities. Regular high-level visits and exchanges have been a key feature of this relationship.

Agreements and Bilateral Cooperation mechanisms: Key bilateral agreements/MoUs between India and Oman cover cooperation in Health; Tourism; Defence; peaceful uses of Outer Space; Visa Exemption for holders of diplomatic/official/special passports; 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; Joint Investment Fund; and Cultural Cooperation. There are also Institution to Institution cooperation between the two countries.

India and Oman conduct regular biennial bilateral exercises between all three services. The 3rd Army exercise 'Al Najah' is scheduled in March 2019 in Jabel Akdhar, Oman. The Air Force exercise 'Eastern Bridge' culminated in Jan 2017 and will see the next edition in the second half of 2019 in Oman. The bilateral naval exercise 'Naseem al Bahr' is scheduled in December 2019. Since 2008, Oman has been extending its support to Indian Navy's antipiracy missions and Indian Naval Ships are regularly welcomed by Oman for Over Seas Deployments. A sailing vessel 'Zeenat al Bihaar' from the Royal Yachts participated with INS Tarangini and INS Sudarshini in the joint sailing voyage from Kochi to Muscat in November 2019. The joint sailing formed part of the celebrations commemorating the 10th anniversary of IONS. The Ships retraced the ancient maritime trade routes from the Malabar Coast to the Gulf. Indian Air Force and Indian Navy aircraft regularly utilize Omani Airports and Air bases for refueling and operational turnaround.

Bilateral trade and investment between India and Oman remain robust and buoyant. Bilateral trade rose by 67 per cent to reach US\$ 6.7 billion in 2017-18 from

US\$ 4 billion in 2016-17. Major items of India's exports to Oman include mineral fuels, mineral oils and products of their distillation; boilers, machinery and mechanical appliances; articles of iron or steel; electrical machinery and equipment, textiles and garments, chemicals, tea, coffee, spices, cereals and meat products and seafood. Main items of India's imports from Oman are include fertilizers; mineral fuels, mineral oils and products of their distillation; bituminous substances; mineral waxes; aluminum and articles thereof; organic chemicals; salt; sulphur; earths and stone; plastering materials, lime and cement.

**Table 4 : India-Oman Bilateral Trade in US\$ Millions**

Financial Year	India's Export to Oman	India's Import from Oman	Total Trade
2013-14	2,812.27	2,951.18	5,763.45
2014-15	2,379.44	1,752.24	4,131.69
2015-16	2,190.89	1,673.00	3,863.86
2016-17	2,731.48	1,275.11	4,006.59
2017-18	2,439.46	4,264.29	6,703.76

(Source : <http://commerce-app.gov.in/eidb/>)

Indian firms have invested heavily Oman in various sectors like iron and steel, cement, fertilizers, textile, cables, chemicals, automotive, etc. In Sohar, with an estimated total Indian investment of over US\$2 billion, Indian entities comprise the largest foreign investors. In Salalah, Indian investments are in manufacturing of automotive parts, textiles, cables, guar gum, etc. In Duqm SEZ, an Indo-Oman JV Sebacic Oman is undertaking a US\$ 1.2 billion project for setting up the largest Sebacic acid plant in Middle-East. A 'Little India' integrated tourism complex project in Duqm, worth US\$ 748 million on completion, has been signed. In addition, L&T, Jindal, EPIL, Shapoorji Pallonji, Shriram, Aditya Birla Group, Nagarjuna Construction Company, KEC International, etc. have been executing various projects in Oman. Indian financial institutions like SBI, Bank of Baroda, HDFC Ltd and ICICI Securities as well as Indian PSUs like Air India, Air India Express, LIC, New India Assurance Co., TCIL, EIL, EPIL and NBCC have presence in Oman.

There are 20 Indian schools offering CBSE syllabus catering to the educational needs of over 46,000 Indian children. Indian community in Oman is organized under Indian Social Club Oman with branches in Muscat, Salalah, Sur and Sohar. These clubs have a number of sub-groups called linguistic Wings which cater to cultural and social needs of their members.

### India-UAE:

India and United Arab Emirates (UAE) established diplomatic relations in 1972; the UAE Embassy in India was opened in 1972 while Indian Embassy in UAE was opened in 1973.

In addition to bilateral meetings with the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and the Ruler of Dubai, INDIA also delivered the key note address on the theme - "Technology for Development"- at the sixth World Government Summit in Dubai. On the side-lines of the World Government Summit, Prime Minister Modi met with a select group of senior GCC CEOs and Business Leaders. He also addressed the Indian community at Dubai Opera House, and unveiled a model of the first Hindu Temple in Abu Dhabi. Following MoUs / Agreements were signed during the visit:

- Agreement between Indian Consortium (OVL, BPRL and IOCL) and ADNOC for acquisition of 10% participating interest in the offshore Lower Zakhum Concession;

- MoU between Government of India and Government of UAE for cooperation in the field of Manpower;

- MoU between Ministry of Railways, India and Federal Transport Authority - Land and Maritime of UAE for Technical Cooperation in Rail Sector;

- MoU between Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) and Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange (ADX); and

- MoU between Government of Jammu and Kashmir and DP World FZE for development of Multi modal logistics hub in J&K.

Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas Shri Dharmendra Pradhan visited UAE on 12-14 May 2018. During his visit he flagged off the first consignment of crude oil from ADNOC for Strategic Petroleum Reserve at Mangalore along with Dr. Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber, Minister of State and CEO of ADNOC.

On 10-11 November 2018 in Abu Dhabi International Petroleum Exhibition and Conference (ADIPEC), an MoU was signed between Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) with Indian Strategic Petroleum Reserves (ISPRL), to explore the possibility of storing ADNOC crude oil at ISPRL's underground oil storage facility at Padur in Karnataka.

India and UAE have following institutional mechanisms in place for addressing sector-specific issues.

- i. Joint Commission Meeting (JCM) – JCM deals with issues related to trade and commerce.

- MEA Ms. Sushma Swaraj visited UAE in 3-5 December 2018 for the 12th session of the India-UAE Joint Commission Meeting for Technical and Economic Cooperation held in Abu Dhabi. The meeting was co-chaired by UAE Foreign Minister and during the meeting both sides discussed issues related to Bilateral Cooperation; Consular Field; Economic, Trade, Investments and Banking and Finance Cooperation; Civil Aviation; Space; Education; Agriculture and Livestock and Humanitarian Aid, Development and Triangular Cooperation.
- ii. Joint Defence Coordination Committee - With signing of a Memorandum of Understanding on Defence Cooperation in 2003, a Joint Defence Cooperation Committee (JDCC) was established. JDCC provides a platform for a regular exchange of dialogue in defence sector. The latest (9th) round of JDCC was held in New Delhi on 7-8 December, 2017.
  - iii. Joint Security Committee (JSC) - The JSC addresses issues being dealt with under various security related agreements signed between the two countries. The JSC will also be mandated to look into expeditious processing of these pending cases. The first meeting of the India-UAE JSC was held on March 18, 2013 in Abu Dhabi. Second meeting of the India-UAE JSC was held in New Delhi on 11 December 2014. Since then no meeting has been held.
  - iv. Joint Business Council - A Joint Business Council consisting of Federation of UAE Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FUCCI) and FICCI is in place. However, after the first meeting of the JBC in Abu Dhabi on 8 March 2004, with the availability of other specific platforms, there has not been any meetings subsequently. FUCCI of UAE hosted the India Arab Economic Conclave in Abu Dhabi in May 2012
  - v. Joint Working Group on Skill Development - Under the provisions of the MoU for Cooperation in Skill Development and Recognition of Qualifications signed with UAE in February 2016, a JWG was formed to establish and implement framework of activities. The JWG held its first meeting in New Delhi on 29 April 2016, which was co-chaired by Secretary, MSDE and DG of National Qualifications Authority, UAE.
  - vi. In the energy sector, UAE accounts for 8 per cent of India's oil imports and is the fifth largest supplier of crude oil to India. Both the countries have speeded up the relationship to transform from what used to be a buyer-seller relationship into strategic partnership. An MoU between Indian Consortium (OVL, BPRL and IOCL) and ADNOC was signed for acquisition of 10 per cent participating interest in the offshore Lower Zakum Concession during the visit of Prime Minister to UAE in February 2018 making it the first Indian Investment in upstream oil sector of UAE.
  - vii. Deepening energy cooperation, the Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas (MoPN&G) and Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (SD&E) in May 2018 and flagged off first consignment of ADNOC crude oil for Indian Strategic Petroleum Reserves Limited (ISPRL) along with Group CEO of ADNOC. ADNOC supplied two million barrels of crude oil for India's Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) in Mangalore. The ADNOC and ISPRL are actively discussing cooperation in second SPR at Padur facility and an agreement to explore the possibility of storing ADNOC crude oil at Padur SPR was signed between both the countries during the Abu Dhabi International Petroleum Exhibition and Conference (ADIPEC 2018).
  - viii. In his landmark visit to India in June 2018, Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, UAE Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MoFA& IC), oversaw a trilateral energy cooperation framework agreement signed by ADNOC and Saudi Aramco to invest in the development of \$44 billion Ratnagiri refinery and petrochemicals complex (RRPCL) that is coming up in the western Indian state of Maharashtra. ADNOC and Aramco will use their own oil for the refinery and will jointly own 50% stake in the new joint venture.
  - ix. The bilateral energy cooperation is not just limited to petroleum. Spearheading climate change mitigation efforts as part of International Solar Alliance (ISA), India and UAE pledged

commitment to historical Paris Agreement. Sheikh Hamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Chief of the Abu Dhabi Page 9 of 20 Crown Prince's Court, participated in the ISA conference held in New Delhi in March 2018.

- x. India-UAE trade which was valued at US\$ 180 million per annum in the 1970s, is today around US\$ 50 billion (exports from India US\$ 28 billion and imports to India US\$ 22 billion in the year 2017) making India the second largest trading partner of UAE, while UAE is India's third largest trading partner (after China and US). Moreover, UAE is the second largest export destination of India of over US\$ 31 billion for the year 2016-17.

India's exports to the UAE are well diversified with a large basket. India's major export items to the UAE are: Petroleum Products, Precious Metals, Stones, Gems and Jewellery, Minerals, Food Items (Cereals, Sugar, Fruits and Vegetables, Tea, Meat, and Seafood), Textiles (Garments, Apparel, Synthetic fiber, Cotton, Yarn) and Engineering and Machinery Products and Chemicals. India's major import items from the UAE are: Petroleum and Petroleum Products, Precious Metals, Stones, Gems and Jewellery, Minerals, Chemicals, Wood and Wood Products.

- xi. There is an estimated US\$ 8 billion UAE investments in India of which US\$ 5.33 billion (Dec. 2017) is in the form of Foreign Direct Investment, while the remaining is portfolio investment. UAE is the tenth biggest investor in India in terms of FDI. UAE's investments in India are concentrated mainly in five sectors: Services Sector (9.44%), Power (8.97%), Construction Development: Townships, Housing, Built-Up Infrastructure and Construction-Development Projects (8.81%), Air Transport (Including Air Freight) (7.42%), Hotel and Tourism (7.29%). [Source: [https://mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/uae\\_december\\_2018.pdf](https://mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/uae_december_2018.pdf)]
- xii. Several prominent private and public sector Indian companies and banks are also operating in the UAE. Major Indian companies such as L&T, ESSAR, Dodsai, Punj Lloyd, Engineers India Ltd., TCIL etc. have been able to obtain

significant number of contracts in UAE. Data released by UAE Federal Competitiveness and Statistics Authority indicates that at the end of 2015, total FDI from India to UAE amounted to AED 23 billion (US\$ 6.5 billion approx) (third largest source of FDI into UAE after UK and US). In addition, the NRIs in UAE have significant portfolio investment and have investments in real estate sector. Data released by Dubai Land Development Department indicated that Indians were the largest foreign investor in Dubai real estate with investment of AED 20.4 billion in 2016-17 (US\$ 5.5 billion approx, 13% of total). Taking all these into consideration, a ballpark figure of US\$ 55 billion is mentioned for total Indian investments in the UAE.

- xiii. Both sides discussed a number of potential investment projects in India in various sectors and also deliberated on India-UAE agro exports potential and projects in food processing. The two sides also explored opportunities in India's logistics sector during 6th HLTFI meeting. To facilitate investments and resolve issues relating to UAE Investments in India, a special UAE desk 'UAE PLUS' is being established in Invest India. Also a Fast Track Mechanism at the level of Secretary, Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion now [DIPP renames as Department For Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)], Government of India and Ambassador of UAE to India to continuously monitor and resolve issues has been set up.

#### **Cultural Binding Force:**

4<sup>th</sup> International Day of Yoga was celebrated on 21 June 2018 in Abu Dhabi in which more 5000 people including prominent members of Indian community and diplomats participated with great enthusiasm. Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak Al Nahyan, UAE Minister of Tolerance graced the event as chief guest and gave keynote address quoting several ancient Indian scriptures.

Second National Tolerance Festival was organized in the month of November 2018, by UAE Ministry of Tolerance, in which India also participated. India and UAE announced to set up a digital museum in Abu Dhabi on the life and message of love, tolerance and humanity of

Mahatma Gandhi and Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, former President and founding father of UAE.

New data from the International Organization of Migration showed that the Indian population in UAE has grown to 3.3 million, making it the largest concentration of Indian nationals outside India. Professionally qualified personnel constitute about 15 and 20 per cent of the community, followed by 20 per cent white-collar non-professionals (clerical staff, shop assistants, sales men, accountants etc.) and the remainder 65% comprises blue-collar workers. There is a significant business community from India. The Indian community has played a major role in the economic development of the UAE. Remittances rose to \$13.8 billion and major NRI-owned business groups like Lulu, NMC, Aster, Landmark, Sobha and others made significant investments into the healthcare, retail, hospitality, real estate, construction and other sectors of the Indian economy.

Some major implication that we need to focus on:

- (a) According to World Bank estimates, UAE topped the list of Gulf countries from which remittances were received at US\$ 72.30 Billion, followed by Saudi Arabia (US\$ 62.60 billion); Kuwait (US\$ 25.77 Billion); Qatar (US\$ 22.57 billion); Oman (US\$ 18.63 Billion) and Bahrain came last with US\$ 7.19 Billion.
- (b) When compared with the data set on deaths of Indian workers obtained through RTI and parliamentary records, there were more than 187 deaths for every US\$ Billion received from Oman during 2012-17; more than 183 deaths for every US\$ Billion received from Bahrain and 162 deaths for every US\$ Billion received from Saudi Arabia. Qatar accounted for more than 74 deaths for every US\$ Billion received while the lowest figure of 71 deaths for every US\$ Billion received was from UAE.
- (c) Interestingly, while UAE was the source of the highest amount of remittances from Indian workers during 2012-2017 (US\$ 72.3 Billion), it also had the lowest deaths per US\$ Billion remitted to India (a little over 71 deaths). Conversely, Bahrain, which came at the bottom of the list in terms of total remittances during the same period (US\$ 7.19 Billion only), stands at second place in terms of the number of deaths of Indian workers per US\$ Billion remitted (a little over 183 deaths). In other

words, every US\$ Billion earned by Indian Workers remitted from Bahrain cost much more in terms of deaths than a similar amount remitted from UAE.

- (d) A comparison of the remittances data from Gulf countries with the remittances from the Indian diaspora in the advanced countries of the western world, namely, UK, USA and Canada shows some interesting trends. Indian workers in the UAE remitted US\$ 72.3 Billion between 2012-2017 while remittances from Indians in the USA were only US\$ 68.37 Billion during this period. Remittances from the UK at US\$ 23 Billion and a mere US\$ 17.3 Billion from Canada compare poorly with the remittances that Indian workers sent from Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Oman and Kuwait during the same period. However, the Indian diaspora in the developed world seems to wield more political influence in India than the Indian worker community eking out a living in Gulf countries. This phenomenon also needs a deeper examination from researchers and academics.
- (e) Further, remittance from Nepal to India (US\$ 17.37 Billion) was only slightly lower than the remittance from Canada to India (US\$ 17.39 Billion) between 2012-2017. While remittances from Singapore amounted to only US\$ 5.5 Billion during this period, remittances from Bangladesh to India stood at US\$ 4.7 Billion. Remittances from Pakistan and Sri Lanka individually during the same period were higher than the remittance received from Indian workers in Bahrain. Interestingly, remittance data from Pakistan to India is available only for the years 2013-2014 (US\$ 9.46 Billion). The World Bank Migration Reports indicate that similar data was not made available by the authorities in Pakistan for other years covered by this study. Similarly, the Central Government was not able to provide data about the number of persons of Indian origin or NRIs in Pakistan in its reply tabled in the Lok Sabha in April 2018.
- (f) It appears that blue collared workers are contributing more to India's forex kitty than the white-collared workers in the developed

countries. However, as a proportion of the total forex reserves at the end of the calendar year, the share of the remittances seems to be declining in recent years. In 2012, remittances from Gulf countries were equal to 12.57% of the forex reserves (excluding gold and Special Drawing Rights) declared by RBI for the week ending December 29. In 2017, the remittances were only 9.97% of the year-end forex reserves declared by RBI.

- (g) India is dependent on the six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states for 42 per cent of its overall oil imports; three of the top five oil suppliers to India are Gulf states, with Saudi Arabia, the largest, providing 20 per cent of India's total oil imports. Qatar is also India's dominant supplier of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG). Any disruption in energy imports from the Gulf will have serious implications for India's economic growth.
- (h) The GCC is India's largest regional-bloc trading partner, which accounted for \$104 billion of trade in 2017–18, nearly a 7 per cent increase from \$97 billion the previous year. This is higher than both India–ASEAN trade (\$81 billion) and India–EU trade (\$102 billion) in 2017-18. Two of India's top five trading partners, the UAE and Saudi Arabia, are from the Gulf. The GCC also provided over \$37 billion in foreign-exchange remittances from Indian expatriates in 2017, accounting for over 54 per cent of India's total. But, there is still no India–GCC Free Trade Agreement, although a framework agreement on economic cooperation was signed in August 2004. Notably, India and the UAE have recently embarked on an ambitious drive to upgrade their bilateral relations. The UAE was the first Gulf country Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited in August 2015, marking the first visit by an Indian prime minister to the UAE for 34 years.
- (i) These traditional relations are currently diversifying into security and defence cooperation, and India today has a strong and growing stake in Gulf stability. This includes 'strategic partnerships' with Gulf countries on issues such as counter-terrorism, money laundering, cyber security, organised crime,

human trafficking and anti-piracy.

- (j) India's relations with the Gulf have begun, with a fair degree of success, to encompass defence and naval cooperation, including joint exercises, regular Indian ship visits and broad-based MoUs. Gulf armed-forces personnel are also trained in Indian defence and military academies. All the Gulf states are members of the Indian Navy-conceived Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS), which was established in 2008 as a biennial forum for navy chiefs of the Indian Ocean littoral. India's most notable (but equally low-key) defence cooperation has been with Oman. India has also played an active role in enhancing the stability and security of the Gulf's sea lanes through its participation in anti-piracy patrols off the coast of Somalia.
- (k) At the IISS Manama Dialogue in Bahrain in December 2017, India's Minister of State for External Affairs M.J. Akbar, noted the four key parameters of India's relations with the Gulf as being non-descriptive, non-intrusive, non-judgemental and not taking sides in intra-regional disputes. This enables India to simultaneously have close relations with both Iran and Saudi Arabia, Israel and Palestine, and Qatar and Saudi Arabia/UAE/Bahrain.

This phenomenon requires urgent examination. It is hoped that the Indian Government will start this exercise by making more information about deaths of Indian Workers in these countries public. There is an urgent need to commission experts to study the cause of deaths — especially the large number of deaths labelled in Qatar as "natural deaths" and examine the conditions under which Indians work there and identify measures that will prevent avoidable deaths.

### **Concluding Remarks:**

After looking the whole scenario, it is confirm that India and the Gulf relation played important role in world geo-politics and economy. Today, the Gulf is an integral part of India's 'extended neighbourhood', both by way of geographical proximity and as an area of expanded interests and growing Indian influence. Historic maritime and cultural links have developed into strong relationships of 'energy, expatriates and economy'. India and the Gulf now look at each other as strategic partners

who share interests and concerns on various regional and global issues of significance, including the economic prosperity of their people, terrorism and religious radicalism. They have started to work together on a variety of areas including security and defence. The process of developing an India-Gulf strategic partnership took early steps in 2005.

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