**Pakistan Saudi ties**

**[Masud Ahmad Khan](https://nation.com.pk/Columnist/masud-ahmad-khan)**

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The foundation of bilateral relations was laid down in 1951 when a treaty of friendship was signed between two countries; Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. Shah Saud visited Pakistan in 1954, followed by Shah Faisal, Shah Khalid, Shah Fahad, Shah Abdullah and recently Muhammad Bin Salman, the crown prince. In 1967, a defence cooperation pact was signed between the two counties to impart training to Saudi military forces. During the 1965 and 1971 wars, Saudi Arabia supported Pakistan through financial and material assistance. The Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC), now Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, was founded in 1969 in Rabat and Morocco, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan were the founding members. During the Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia supported Pakistan. Pakistani troops were sent to Saudi Arabia to protect the Holy Kaaba in 1979 which had been besieged by radicals.

In the 1970s and 1980s, Pakistan had close military ties with Saudi Arabia when 15,000 Pakistani troops were stationed in Saudi Arabia. In 1979, Pakistan renamed the city of Lyallpur and called it Faisalabad in the honor of Shah Faisal. Saudi Arab also gave Pakistan generous donations to help Afghan refugees living in the country. During Kuwait’s occupation by Iraq, Pakistan sent its troops to defend the holy cities of Mecca and Medina. Saudi Arabia also supported Pakistan during its nuclear explosion in 1998 when it was facing global sanctions. It welcomed Pakistan to the nuclear club and supplied 50,000 barrels of oil per day. The post 9/11 situation also brought two countries closer as both allied with the US.

[Intizar murder case: ATC gives death sentence to 2 cops for planned killing](https://nation.com.pk/25-Oct-2021/intizar-murder-case-atc-gives-death-sentence-to-2-cops-for-planned-killing)

Pakistan is a strategically important country to Saudi Arabia. First, its location in relation with Iran and Afghanistan is prime. Second, Pakistan has the largest group of immigrants in Saudi Arabia. It hosts some 2.5 million Pakistani who send a large amount of foreign exchange back home. Pakistan is the 5th largest country of the world and also the only Muslim nuclear power. India tried to take advantage of a misunderstanding between Pakistan and the Kingdom when the Indian Army Chief visited Saudi Arabia to meet his counterpart to strengthen Indian ties. India imports 18 percent of its crude oil from Saudi Arabia. The Gulf region hosts around 8.5 million Indian workers, with more than 2.7 million in Saudi Arabia alone. 30 percent of UAE’s population comprises of Indians.

Pakistan-Saudi trade relations totaled to more than 1.7 billion dollars of which, 74 percent oil imports and 30 percent of all remittances come from Saudi Arabia. Imran Khan visited the country in May this year to strengthen bilateral relations and discussed opportunities for Pakistan expatriates’ Saudi investment in Pakistan and the possibility of the Kingdom joining CPEC. During the visit of the crown prince in 2019, a huge investment package of 20 billion dollars was signed between the two countries for the construction of energy and other projects in Gwadar.

[Govt will fulfil commitments made with TLP: Sheikh Rasheed](https://nation.com.pk/25-Oct-2021/govt-will-fulfil-commitments-made-with-tlp-sheikh-rasheed)

In the past, Saudi Arabia has also offered to create an oil refinery and partner up with Pakistan through CPEC. Under the Saudi vision of 2030, it intends to grow employment that would also open important opportunities for Pakistani nationals. Saudi Arabia needs at least 10 million workers for the next ten years and a large chunk will be provided by Pakistan.

Both countries agreed to the resolution of Jammu and Kashmir dispute through a dialogue. The Saudis also offered to mediate between Pakistan and India on the issue. Pakistan also supports the Organisation of Islamic Military Alliance, a 34-state alliance known as Islamic Military Counter Terrorism Coalition (IMCTC). Former Chief of Army Staff, General Raheel Shareef, is the commander in chief of this military alliance. According to Saudi foreign minister, “The visit of Imran Khan is extremely important in the history of the brotherly relations.”

The Saudi Foreign Minister prince Faisal visited Pakistan this July and met Pakistani officials along with PM Imran Khan. They reviewed ties between the two countries and agreed to enhance relations through the Saudi-Pakistan Coordination Council. This was the second state visit of the Saudi Foreign Minister to Pakistan. The general masses in Pakistan pay special respect towards Saudi Arabia because of the Holy Kaaba and Masjid-e-Nabvi. Imran Khan is in Saudi Arab on a three-day visit, his second in the year, which conveys the message that Saudi Arab is going to remain a priority for Pakistan’s foreign policy. The Saudi understand that Pakistan is a strategic partner and an important player in the region and no other country can fill its place.