**Strengthening Pak-Saudi Relations**

**It is imperative for the top leadership of both countries to maintain the prevailing momentum, leveraging their respective strengths for mutual benefit and regional stability.**

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The decades-old, trouble-free, brotherly relations between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan are commendably maintaining an upward trajectory. There has been a marked acceleration in their bilateral relations following the exchange of highlevel delegations. These exchanges aim to promote and strengthen existing relations, with a focus on Saudi investment in various sectors of Pakistan, thereby assisting in overcoming its prevailing economic and financial challenges at the earliest opportunity.

The welcomed acceleration in relations seemingly began when Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif visited Saudi Arabia for the first time after assuming office, following the general elections, to perform Umrah. Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Muhammad bin Salman notably traveled to Makkah from Riyadh to meet him. During these meetings, they reached an understanding on increasing Saudi cooperation through investment in sectors like energy, agriculture, investment, and Information Technology.

It’s worth mentioning that shortly afterward, a high-level Saudi delegation headed by Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan, accompanied by ministers, deputy ministers, and senior officials, visited Pakistan on special instructions from the Saudi Crown Prince, engaging in fruitful deliberations.

PM Shehbaz Sharif made his second official visit to Saudi Arabia at the invitation of Saudi Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman to attend a special meeting of the World Economic Forum on “Global Collaboration, Growth, and Energy for Development” in Riyadh. During his visit, he also had another important meeting with the Saudi Crown Prince, expressing gratitude for the high-level delegation sent to Islamabad. He informed him of bringing along a couple of federal ministers for follow-up meetings resulting from the Saudi delegation’s visit to Pakistan.

Again, within the next few days, a high-level Saudi delegation of investors and businessmen arrived in Islamabad to explore further possibilities for Saudi investment in various sectors in Pakistan. The 50-member delegation, including 30 leading Saudi investors and businessmen, held discussions with 70 Pakistani businessmen and others, participating in a two-day specially organized Pak-Saudi Investment Conference in Islamabad.

It’s noteworthy that these frequent exchanges of delegations, including PM Shehbaz Sharif’s two visits within a month, meetings with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman, and hosting of the Pak-Saudi Investment Conference, tangibly reflect the desire on both sides to foster a robust partnership serving the interests of both countries.

Saudi Arabia’s Deputy Investment Minister, Ibrahim Almubarak, while addressing the conference, emphatically pledged his country’s desire for a strategic economic partnership with Pakistan. He underscored the Kingdom’s keen interest in Pakistan’s economic potential, acknowledging Pakistan as a major strategic partner due to its demographic dividend, strategic location, and abundant natural resources. Such remarks affirm a shared vision of bilateral cooperation extending beyond mere economic transactions to a broader strategic partnership.

The conference highlighted several sectors ripe for collaboration and joint ventures between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. The interaction between Saudi Ministers and host Pakistani Ministers bodes well for further strengthening the bilateral brotherly relations between these two important members of the Islamic Ummah. Such interactions at the highest level hold the promise of materializing investment projects and exploring new avenues of mutually beneficial cooperation.

This envisioned collaboration also has the potential to attract investment not only from Saudi Arabia but also possibly from other Gulf countries. Such expected capital inflows will hopefully bolster industries, agriculture, IT, mines, minerals, and other crucial sectors for Pakistan’s economic development.

As Pakistan and Saudi Arabia continue to engage at the highest level in constructive dialogue and pursue possible joint ventures in different sectors, it can be safely concluded that the trajectory of their valuable economic partnership will usher in a new era of growth and prosperity. It is imperative for the top leadership of both countries to maintain the prevailing momentum, leveraging their respective strengths for mutual benefit and regional stability. The high-level contacts between the top leadership of both countries bode well for the people of Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, who are brothers in religion.

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