

# **GROWING SAUDI-INDIA RELATIONS: ANALYSING THE IMPACTS ON KASHMIR DISPUTE**



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## FINAL APPROVAL

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# **Dedication**

**To my parents for their love, support and encouragement throughout my pursuit for education.**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) has long maintained strong strategic, security and economic relations with India. In 21st century, especially after the 9/11 incident, the geo-political and economic shift in the South Asian and the Gulf regions has made KSA's relations with India more complex and challenging, leading to a new emerging dynamic equilibrium in Saudi-Pakistan and Saudi-India relations. The KSA's growing economic and security relations with India have become the cause of concern and irritant for Pakistan, which thinks that it would change the Saudi position on Kashmir issue. However, the KSA has been supportive of Pakistan's stance on Kashmir and preserves its official stance particularly after India's revocation of Article 370 from its constitution. Although Saudi Arabia has been following a "balanced strategy" in dealing with Pakistan and India, however, the rivalry between India and Pakistan, particularly on Kashmir, is one of the major challenges in the KSA-Pakistan relations. The ideal situation for the Riyadh is a 'dual engagement' and 'balancing situation' with both Islamabad and New Delhi without irritating the former. Against this background, the proposed research analyzes the KSA's growing economic interests in India and its impact on Kashmir dispute between Pakistan and India.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Context of the Study**

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's (KSA) strategic goals have long placed a high priority on maintaining a strong presence in South Asia (KSA). Because of its geographical proximity to the Arabian Peninsula as well as its historical and commercial relations with the Arabian Peninsula dating back to even before the beginning of Islam in Makkah in the 7th century, the importance of the South Asian region for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has further increased. Since the beginning of the modern period, in August 1947, when both India and Pakistan became independent nations, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) has been enjoying cordial and amicable ties with both of these countries. The bilateral socio-cultural and economic links that have existed between the KSA and India for millennia are reflected in their interactions with one another. It is interesting to note that in recent years, the relations between the two countries have begun to assume a certain degree of vitality.

This is due to the increasing cooperation not only in the oil-energy field, but also in other areas, such as defence, maritime security, counterterrorism, science and technology, strategic oil reserves, investments, tourism, etc., in addition to the fact that both countries are currently home to millions of Indian expatriates. However, the shift in geopolitical and economic power in South Asia and the Gulf regions has made Saudi Arabia's relations with India more complicated and difficult. This has led to the emergence of a new dynamic equilibrium in Saudi-Indian and Saudi-Pakistani relations, particularly with regard to the impact on the Kashmir dispute. The reality of the issue is that Saudi Arabia is making

efforts to play an active role in the multipolar global order, the key players of which are the developing economies of South Asia, in particular India.

Despite the fact that Saudi Arabia has shown support for Pakistan on the Kashmir problem, the most significant obstacle for Riyadh is to maintain a "balanced approach" in the fight that is taking place between Islamabad and New Delhi. In the wake of the attack in Pulwama, the then-Saudi Minister of Foreign Affairs, Adel Al-Jubeir, gave an interview to an Indian television channel called NDTV. During the course of the interview, he stated that "it pains us to see conflict between two countries that we believe to be friendly countries to Saudi Arabia." Al-Jubeir said the same thing in a different interview in the same year, stating that "the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's relationships with Pakistan do not come at the expense of its connections with India".

It is a well-known truth that the most favourable circumstance for Riyadh would be a "dual engagement" and "balanced position" with both Islamabad and New Delhi, without causing the former to get irritated. In light of this context, the proposed research investigates the strengthening of relations between Saudi Arabia and India, as well as their influence on the Kashmir conflict, while also taking into account the shifting geopolitical and economic dynamics of the south Asian region, with particular focus on India.

### **Problem Statement**

Since the conclusion of the Cold War, and much more so following the events of September 11, 2001, there has been a shift in the geopolitical dynamics of both the South Asian area as well as the Gulf region. In the current dynamic, Saudi Arabia is looking to create economic and political ties with India, but at the same time it would want to keep its connections with Pakistan. Both of these goals are in conflict with one another. As a result,

the purpose of this research is to investigate Saudi Arabia's political and economic interests in South Asia, with a special focus on India, as well as the influence these interests have on the Kashmir issue.

### **The Importance of the Investigation:**

Since I am now serving as a member of the Saudi diplomatic mission in Pakistan, I aim to carry out this study, which holds a great deal of relevance. The research investigates not only the strategic, political, and economic interests of Saudi Arabia in South Asia as well as the impact these interests have on the Kashmir dispute, but it also makes recommendations on how to address Pakistan's concerns in light of the growing relations between Saudi Arabia and India in the context of shifting regional and global dynamics. In addition, the study will provide the groundwork for further research on Saudi Arabia's political, economic, and strategic interests in India, and it will make it easier for future social scientists who want to undertake research on this particular topic.

### **Aims and Purposes of the Research**

The following are some of the goals that the study hopes to accomplish:

1. To conduct an investigation into the political and economic concerns that Saudi Arabia has towards India in particular and the South Asian area as a whole.
2. To investigate the economic and political interests that Saudi Arabia has in India.
3. To investigate how the connection between Saudi Arabia and India affects the Kashmir conflict.
4. The purpose of this study is to examine Pakistan's and Saudi Arabia's relationship in light of the latter's expanding ties with India.

## **Research Questions**

1. What are the dynamics of Saudi Arabia's economic interests in India, and why have these connections substantially improved in the 21st century? Why have these ties greatly improved?
2. What kind of an effect do you think Saudi Arabia's connections with India will have on the Kashmir conflict?
3. How does the deepening of Saudi Arabia's relationship with India influence the kingdom's relations with Pakistan?
4. How will Saudi Arabia handle its relations with Pakistan now that it has closer ties with India? Those ties are only expected to increase.

## **Some Restrictions Placed on the Study:**

Relationships spanning the economic, political, and sociocultural spheres are maintained between Saudi Arabia and the nations of South Asia. This research is restricted to the economic and political interests of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in relation to India since it is very difficult to provide a comprehensive account of Saudi Arabia's long-standing ties to the South Asian area in sufficient depth. Another limitation of the study is that it only examines the impact of Saudi Arabia's expanding economic and political interests in India on the Kashmir dispute. It does not investigate the impact of these interests on other contentious issues, such as water, which is also a source of contention between Pakistan and India.

## **Literature Review**

The review of the relevant literature, which includes books, research articles, important newspapers, and blogs, has been investigated. This literature is connected to the topic of the study. Unhappily, there is a paucity of literature, particularly on the impact of Saudi strategic interests on the shifting geopolitical and economic scenario in the aftermath of India's action in August 2019 to revoke Articles 370 and 35-A of the Indian Constitution. This is particularly problematic given the importance of these topics to Saudi Arabia.

The nations of the Persian Gulf and Arab Peninsula have a long history of maintaining strong political and economic ties with the nations of South Asia, in particular India and Pakistan. KSA-India ties have also remained gloomier, largely owing to New Delhi's neutrality in most of the global crises. Despite the fact that Saudi Arabia and Pakistan have enjoyed warm and amicable relations due to similar religious affiliations since 1947, KSA-India relations have remained gloomier. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's interests in the South Asian region have grown to an unprecedented level in recent years. In accordance with its strategic pivot policy, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia intends to align itself with the Asian powers such as India and China in order to take advantage of the economic opportunities presented by these alliances. Both the Saudi Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman and the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi have worked to revitalise the warm relations that exist between their two countries by placing a priority on key areas that are beneficial to both parties. These areas include defence and security, energy, trade and investment.

The influence that Saudi Arabia's rising political and economic interests in India have on Pakistan and India's conflict over Kashmir is the most important component of



these interests. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), in recent years especially after India's revocation of article 370 in August 2019, has adopted a neutral posture in India-Pakistan disputes. Despite the fact that Saudi Arabia and Pakistan have strong bilateral friendly relations and that the former has been supportive of the latter's stance on Kashmir, one should not underestimate the growing Saudi-India economic and political interests and their impact on the Kashmir dispute. Despite the fact that the former has been supportive of the latter's stance on Kashmir.

It is a known fact that Saudi Arabia has just begun implementing a new South Asia strategy. As part of this new policy, Saudi Arabia is re-orienting its "South Asian involvement beyond the concerns of oil and expatriates," with the goal of "securing better security and economic relationship". There is a high degree of collaboration between Riyadh and New Delhi, as shown by the fact that India has signed oil deals with Saudi Arabia and that Saudi Arabia has made it possible for India to employ its biggest work force. It indicates that Saudi Arabia's influence in the South Asian area is mostly economic, and the country does not want to see the investment it has made in the region eroded as a result of the disputes that occur between India and Pakistan. To put it another way, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia would have a larger sphere of influence in South Asia as a result of its comparative economic advantages.

Despite the fact that Saudi Arabia intends to seek a balanced relationship between its longtime ally Pakistan and the region's economic giant India, which offers lucrative economic opportunities, and believes that there is no contradiction in pursuing strong economic relations to both of the South Asian countries, Riyadh has the potential to make positive interventions in the bilateral dispute, which is Kashmir, between the two South

Asian states. Despite the fact that Saudi Arabia intends to seek a balanced relationship between its longtime ally Pakistan and the region's.

### **Deficit(s) in Research**

In spite of the abundance of work that has been done on the links between Saudi Arabia and India, there is a paucity of published material on the influence that Saudi Arabia's economic interests in India have on the Kashmir conflict. While conducting a review of the Saudi Arabian government's economic interests in South Asia, with a focus on how those interests have influenced the Kashmir conflict, it became apparent that the previous research on the topic did not provide a satisfactory answer to the questions that were posed in this study. As a result, the purpose of this investigation is to address the concerns raised in the "Research Question" section in an effort to close the existing knowledge gaps.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Under the framework of the Rational Choice Theory, one may make sense of the development of Saudi Arabia's foreign policy in the context of the shifting geostrategic environment of the South Asian area as a whole. The idea illustrates how nations may use cost-benefit analysis to advance their national interests in the context of international politics. It is presumed that the primary purpose of the states is to maximise their national interests while minimising the costs associated with doing so. Given that the primary component of the theory is the existence of a number of options that are available to the actor, or state, and the preferences that it expresses within the set of those options, the outcome of the decision is contingent upon the degree to which the applicable state has acted rationally in light of the circumstances that are present. In the case of Saudi Arabia,

in particular with reference to the changing geopolitical scenario of the Gulf and South Asian regions, the rationality requires the country to strengthen its economic and political relations with India, while at the same time, maintaining balanced relations with Pakistan, particularly measuring the cost of assuming its neutrality on the Kashmir dispute. This is because of the fact that Saudi Arabia is located in the region that is most affected by the changing geopolitical scenario.

The “logic of consequence” is the guiding principle of the Rational Choice decision making model. This principle states that it is presumable that the state will select the method that will allow it to achieve its goals in the most effective and economical manner by making use of cost-benefit analyses. (Faron, 2002). It is a well-established truth that the national interests of a state serve as the guiding principles in the process of making decisions on its foreign policy. However, at the same time, the acknowledgement of the validity of the national interests of other nations, including competitors and foes, is equally crucial. This makes the possible advantages more substantial and long-lasting, while simultaneously decreasing the potential losses.

The application of the Rational Choice Theoretical framework is helpful in gaining an understanding of Saudi Arabia's political, economic, and strategic interests in the South Asian region with reference to the impact of the Kashmir conflict. According to this framework, for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), maintaining strong economic relations with India in the context of an ever-shifting regional and global geo-strategic scenario is the guiding principle for pursuing its national interests. KSA's relations with India have dramatically improved since the late 1990s and more particularly after the incident of 9/11, especially in the areas of energy partnership, trade, and security. Despite

the fact that strategic and security relations between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan have been established on a very firm footing, KSA's relations with India have dramatically improved. Pakistan is concerned about the expanding ties between Saudi Arabia and India because it believes that this will damage its relationship with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. This assumption is based on Riyadh's silence in response to India's decision to revoke Articles 370 and 35-A, which altered the nature of the Kashmir conflict.

Riyadh, on the other hand, may not want its potential gains to be squandered as a result of the competition between Islamabad and New Delhi. Saudi Arabia believes that the new geopolitical and economic realities are the guiding principles of a change in its foreign policy towards India and Pakistan. This is because Riyadh believes that the new realities are the guiding principles of a change in Saudi Arabia's foreign policy towards India and Pakistan. Therefore, in order for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to maximise its potential advantages while incurring the fewest possible expenses, it would be in its best interest to adopt a balanced approach to its ties with Pakistan and India.

### **Research Methodology**

The qualitative technique was used to conduct the study, and both secondary and primary sources were looked at as the major focus of the investigation. The primary sources include interviews and discussions with diplomats, academicians, researchers, and retired military officials who are experts in foreign relations, particularly the Kashmir conflict, as well as on the foreign policy of Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and India. These individuals were interviewed and discussed with by the researchers. In addition, the examination of official papers made public by the governments of Pakistan, India, and Saudi Arabia, as well as the resolutions passed by the United Nations, counts as one of the main sources. Books,

research papers, and studies published by a variety of think tanks are some examples of secondary sources, and they are all linked to the topic of this study. The interpretative school serves as the primary source of inspiration for this research project's essential methodological approach. The following study design will clarify the primary components of this methodological technique.

### **The Plan of the Research**

A research design offers a framework that connects research questions with the actual process of doing research. In light of the fact that this study is both descriptive and analytical in nature, the shifting nature of the KSA's economic interests in India and their impact on the Kashmir dispute will be analysed, and ethnographic tools, more specifically observational methods, will be utilised in order to reach a conclusion.

### **Definitions of Common Operations:**

Listed below are the two most important critical variables: Since the partition of the Indian Subcontinent in August 1947, the conflict in Kashmir has been an unresolved territorial dispute between Pakistan and India over the region of Kashmir. Both Pakistan and India lay claim to the land that makes up Kashmir, and as a result, they have engaged in both big and minor conflicts over the region.

Saudi Arabia has maintained strategic and commercial interests in South Asia for a very long time, notably with both India and Pakistan, who are the two key players in the area. Saudi Arabia's interests in India fall under the category of "strategic." However, the changing geopolitical scenario in South Asia, especially after the Indian government's revocation of articles 370 and 35-A in its constitution, has created a challenging situation for Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia would like to establish economic and security relations with

India, while at the same time, it likes to maintain its historical and strategic relations with Pakistan. This presents a challenge for Saudi Arabia because it cannot do both at the same time.

### **Step-by-step Guide (Collection of Data)**

An examination of both primary and secondary data is the fundamental technique for data collecting. The major data came from the semi-structured interviews and the focus group discussions that were held (fgds). Consent to share information has been sought for and recorded. In addition, parliamentary proceedings and resolutions passed by the United Nations are considered to be primary sources, along with a variety of reports published by a range of local and international organisations. On the other hand, sources such as books, monographs, research journals, newspapers, and internet sources have been used in order to gather secondary data and conduct analysis on them via the use of a literature review.

### **Analyzing Data**

There are many different approaches that may be used while analysing data. In order to get the phenomena and the content, phenomenological and content studies have been carried out. We have used an iterative approach for the analysis, which consists of coding, classifying, analysing, and synthesising the data.

### **Ethical Consideration**

The principles of responsible research have been rigorously adhered to in this work. In order to collect the main data, consent both in writing and verbally had to be obtained from each participant. In addition, the respondent's confidentiality and anonymity have been maintained throughout this process. In the case of secondary data, the authors of the

publications that have been mentioned are given credit and the appropriate citations are provided for their contributions.

### **The Structure of the Research**

The research report has five sections. In the first chapter, "Overview," the study's context is laid out, the problem is stated, the study's impact is explained, the study's aims are outlined, research problem are posed, the study's boundaries are defined, a review of literature is presented, a theoretical foundation is established, a research methodology is described, and the study's structure is laid out.

In the second chapter, we conduct an investigation into a historical analysis of Saudi Arabia and India's relations since 1947. Specifically, we investigate the dynamics of these relations, focusing on the ways in which regional and international politics have shaped and been impacted by these connections.

The topic of discussion in the third chapter is the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's expanding economic interests in South Asia, notably in the post-Cold War period and after the attacks of the 9/11 on the United States. In addition to this, an examination of the present state of economic ties between Saudi Arabia and India is provided below.

The fourth chapter provides an analysis of the impact that expanding Saudi interests in India have had on the Kashmir issue among Pakistan and India, where both of the arch-rivals have their own respective claims on the disputed territory, as well as how the shifting regional scenario in South Asia and the Gulf region shapes and impacts the dynamics of Riyadh's relations with Islamabad and New Delhi.

The last chapter offers an assessment of the potential developments in diplomatic relations among Saudi Arabia and India. Additionally, a final analysis of the research

together with exhaustive information on the results and recommendations is included in this chapter.



## **CHAPTER 2**

### **Historical analysis of Saudi Arabia and India's relations since 1947; The Dynamics**

India is the non-Muslim country that has supported the Palestinian cause more than it has supported Israel's position on the subject. Since before India achieved its independence, the Indian National Congress has been vocal in its opposition to Zionism's expansion into the Arab world. Nehru's India was compelled to harbour distrust for a state built on a specific religion after the horrific events of 1947, when India was torn in two. In addition to this, Nehru was concerned about the formation of a Muslim coalition, which would most likely side with Pakistan's rival in the Kashmir issue. In order to compete with Pakistan's influence in the Middle East, he avoided dealing with Israel and instead courted the Arab states. Although Nehru and his successors were successful in cultivating robust relations with Egypt, they were unable to win the favour of the significant Saudi Kingdom during their time in power. After a speedy and pragmatic process of reconciliation, there was a little improvement in ties between India and Saudi Arabia between the middle of the 1950s and 1973 and 1974.

### **Struggle from 1947 to 1954**

In the years immediately after India's attainment of its independence, Jawaharlal Nehru, the nation's first Prime Minister, made significant efforts to cultivate strong ties with the Arab-Muslim governments. His decision to begin a vigorous pro-Arab policy was motivated by a number of factors, including India's longstanding links to the inhabitants of West Asia, Indian concerns in regional security, oil and commerce, etc. His decision to begin the policy was motivated by a number of factors, including India's longstanding links to the inhabitants of West Asia. On the other hand, the partition of 1947 was almost

certainly the most important factor. The conflict between India and Pakistan had an impact on both sides of India's policies toward the Arab-Muslim world. In addition to his intention to provide Indian Muslims a feeling of safety, Nehru was captivated by the fear of "Islamic encirclement." He believed that this fear would help him achieve his goal.

At the time of India's partition in 1947, a dilemma arose that would later have a considerable influence on India's overall foreign policy and, in particular, its approach to the West Asian region. During the time when Great Britain ruled the region, princely kingdoms that benefited from a protectorate system were given the choice to become a part of either India or Pakistan. The mostly Muslim region of Jammu and Kashmir was administered by a Hindu rajah who was reluctant to join any of the surrounding countries. This area is situated in the northwest corner of the subcontinent, and it shares its borders with both Pakistan and India. Due to the fact that it is located at a crossroads where China, Afghanistan, and the Soviet Union all converge, it is often considered to be one of the most strategically significant regions on the whole planet. India insisted that Kashmir was an integral part of India, whereas Pakistan argued that Kashmir should become a part of Pakistan because of its mostly Muslim population. India asserted that Kashmir was an organic part of India. India asserts that democratic India has an inalienable right to sovereignty over Kashmir. In October of 1947, the first confrontation between India and Pakistan broke out. Since the first of the year 1949, Kashmir has been divided by a ceasefire line that was established by the United Nations.

As a result of the growing attention that the Kashmir conflict received throughout the globe, India's position towards Arab and Muslim countries started to shift. Delhi exerted a substantial amount of diplomatic effort in the nations of Afghanistan, Iran, and the Arab

world in an attempt to disprove Pakistan's claim that there is one unified pan-Islamic community. According to the Indian government, the relentless defamation of India in the Middle East by the Pakistani government and its intention to build a Pan-Islamic coalition needed to be halted. In addition, the Pakistani government needed to abandon its goal.

### **The advantage that Pakistan enjoys**

India and Pakistan have been involved in a strong political war for support from Arab nations about the Kashmir issue ever since 1948. Pakistan gained the upper hand over India in Saudi Arabia. It was in the month of August 1948 that India and Pakistan first engaged in open hostility against one another on the diplomatic front. Both Shah Jehan Amir Kebir, a former deputy of Pakistan, and Professor Abdul Magid Khan, the consulate of India, sponsored dinners in Jeddah on the 14th and 15th of August, respectively, to honour the anniversaries of the independence of their respective nations. At the event to welcome Pakistan, there were representatives from the Saudi Arabian government as well as the heads of diplomatic staff from other countries who were stationed in Jeddah. Abdul Magid Khan, who had just been appointed as India's newly appointed consul general in Jeddah, was also there. According to the information from the British Embassy, the address was, According to the British Embassy, Shah Jehan Amir Kebir's speech was as follows: According to the author, the address was "in really awful taste" and "unquestionably displayed an attitude of unremitting contempt and loathing towards the Indian Dominion." The next day, an Indian festival was conducted in honour of the occasion. It was the intention of the Indian Consul to hold it in Mecca, but Pakistani residents voiced their vehement opposition to this proposal, citing the fact that "no political assembly of any type was authorised in the Holy City," which led the Indian Consul to change his mind. In the

end, the Saudi administration was successful in persuading Abdul Magid Khan to have his welcoming ceremony in Jeddah. Nehru's perspective on Saudi Arabia and the rest of West Asia at the time of India's independence was heavily influenced by the conflict in India and Pakistan as well as the region's mostly Muslim population.

At the reception were present Shah Jehan Amir Kebir and his crew, in addition to a significant percentage of the same group that had been present at the Pakistan event the day before. In contrast to the statement made by the Vice-Consul of Pakistan, the statement made by the Indian Consul was "of exceptional tact and judgement" and bemoaned the animosity between different communities. This speech was the only one that was criticised, and the only person who did so was the Pakistan Vice-Consul. He said that Abdul Magid Khan "mentioned Pakistan too extensively in the course of his comments". This dishonest attitude revealed Pakistan's determination to criticise India at any available opportunity.

As a kind of vengeance for Pakistan's strike, India attempted to develop its own propaganda of its own. In a memorandum dated July 23, 1948, Nehru emphasised how important it was to reorganise the information and instructions that were provided for external exposure as a direct outcome of the situation. According to him, "for the Arab or Muslim nations, [India's] strategy [could] be bit better, emphasising the Pakistan or Hyderabad or Kashmir problem, and particularly presenting data about the substantial Muslim population [that is] currently in India." [This] would be accomplished by highlighting the fact that Pakistan or Hyderabad or Kashmir is a problem.

### **The Possibility of Establishing Bilateral Relations**

According to a second note from the Indian Prime Minister dated November 16, 1948, the Hajj pilgrimage was an excellent opportunity for spreading lies and publicising

between many Muslims of all countries. The note also stated that it was “Ideally, [the Indians] would dispatch a few of capable individuals along with the pilgrims, or just before beginning this endeavours”. In the meanwhile, Indian influence was falling more and further behind in Saudi Arabia. On November 25, 1951, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia came to an agreement to work together and form a cooperative alliance. Three years later, on a visit to Pakistan that began on April 20, 1954, King Saud reiterated Riyadh's support for Pakistan over the Kashmir issue. This occurred during the king's ten-day stay in the country. During the years 1952–1954, the Indian Ministry of External Affairs grappled with the question of whether or not India should maintain a presence in Saudi Arabia. Since 1948, the city of Jeddah has served as the location of India's General Consulate. M.K. Kidwai, the Indian consul, made many requests to have the consulate general refurbished. He did so by pointing out that nations who were much smaller than India were better treated in country.

In 1947, only Cairo, Tehran, and Istanbul were home to Indian diplomatic missions in that region! Cash related concerns looked to be the primary reason of India's lacklustre presence in the Middle East! Both K.M. Panikkar, the ambassador to Egypt, and Maulana A.K. Azad, the educational minister and the most important Muslim member of the Indian Ministry, agreed with Kidwai and emphasised the growing influence of Saudi Arabia on some other Middle Eastern countries. K.M. Panikkar served as the ambassador to Egypt, and Maulana A.K. Azad serves as the most important Muslim member of the Indian Ministry. Panikkar contended that he should also be simultaneously accredited to Jeddah, although Azad felt confident that it would be better to have an independent presence there. Hejaz would interpret the fact that the Indian Consul general there would become a

subsidiary branch of the Indian Embassy in Egypt as evidence that the Indian Government was unconcerned about Hejaz's significance, he asserts. Hejaz would view this as proof that the Indian Government was unconcerned about Hejaz's significance. Following a lengthy debate, Azad was successful in persuading Nehru to agree with his recommendation that the Indian Legation in Jeddah be placed under the direction of a separate Minister.

Between the years 1948 and 1954, Pakistan worked to strengthen its connections with Saudi Arabia. India established diplomatic ties with Afghanistan, Iran, Syria, Iraq, and Egypt in addition to Iraq and Syria. This accomplishment was made possible in part as a result of its unflinching support for the Palestinian cause. However, New Delhi's diplomatic presence in Saudi Arabia was not up to pace, which made it difficult for the nation to effectively counter Pakistan's propaganda in the kingdom. When the topic was brought up for discussion, Kidwai eventually came to the conclusion that "the name was not such that the other side could acquiesce to," despite the fact that the Saudi ambassador had been the one to propose the name of an Indian. It is difficult to ascertain how much of this concept was correct.

However, a good step was evidenced by the establishment of diplomatic connections between Saudi Arabia and India at the level of the legation as well as the Saudi appeal to the government of India.

#### **A Letter from the KSA to Prime Minister Nehru**

This tendency was further bolstered by a letter that the Saudi Minister of Commerce and Industry, Mohamed A. Alireza, addressed to Nehru on October 7, 1954, after the creation of the Indo-Arab Society in Bombay. The letter was sent in response to the Indo-

Arab Society being established in Bombay. Ali reza proposed setting up joint ventures so that Saudi Arabian riches may be invested in India, with the caveat that these endeavours should be carried out with the objectives of the newly founded Indo-Arab Society in mind. In his response, Nehru stated that he "welcomed" the Saudi government's connection with India's large businesses and that he "welcomed any greater relationship between the Government and People of Saudi Arabia and the Government and People of India" (Nehru welcomed any greater relationship between the Government and People of Saudi Arabia and the Government and People of India).

### **The first step in a phase of evolutionary development**

The year 1954 ended with much better relations between India and Saudi Arabia. The Indian Consulate General in Jeddah was upgraded to the rank of Legation on October 1, 1954, and Kidwai was appointed as the new Ambassador. This happened in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The Saudi foreign minister recently invited Kidwai to the Saudi foreign office to inform him of an absolute necessity from the Indian government. Theresa May and King Salman of Saudi Arabia agreed to have their disagreement over the Buraimi Oasis heard by an arbitration panel. The committee would include five members, two selected by the UK and two by the Saudi Government. The two electors would choose one of the three nonpartisan candidates. For the formation of the panel, the Saudi minister informed Kidwai, "Saudi Government would want to put forward the name of some renowned Indian having expertise in International arbitrations on boundary disputes." The friendly relations between the two countries, as well as India's staunch independence on the global stage, are contributing factors. He requested a list of three to five Indians in order to emphasise that the names provided have to be suitable for representing the United Kingdom in accordance

with the terms of the deal. Considering the close ties that have recently developed between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, Kidwai said that it was obvious that the British government would have difficulty accepting a Pakistani member.

The Saudis then became worrying about India... However, the Indian ambassador felt that "if an Indian citizen [was] nominated on this highly important tribunal], it would contribute to [the] Indian prestige in Saudi Arabia in specific and the Middle East generally." That prompted the Indian Ministry of External Affairs to quickly send along a list of three names. On the other side, the Egyptian embassy in New Delhi told India on November 13 that the three impartial arbitrators would include not just a Saudi and a Brit, but also a Belgian, a Cuban, and... a Pakistani! The Foreign Affairs Ministry was so displeased that they sent Kidwai a secret mission to find out whether the Saudis were against the appointment of an Indian who would have been acceptable to the British. The aim of these probes was to find out whether the Saudis were against the British bringing in an Indian who could be suitable for the position.

### **An Indo-Saudi honeymoon in 1955–1956?**

The formation of the Baghdad Pact in 1955 heralded the beginning of a new era in the relationship between India and Saudi Arabia. The Middle East suffered as a direct result of the existence of the Cold War. Pakistan's attempt to establish a Pan-Islamic coalition that would support its Kashmiri ambitions was certainly a failure by the end of the year 1952. This was partly due to Arab hostility to having a non-Muslim state as their leader<sup>33</sup>. Pakistan's efforts were unsuccessful. After it, Pakistan began to go in a more pro-Western direction. On September 8th, 1954, Pakistan became a member of the South East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO). The next year, it became a member of the Baghdad Pact, a



military alliance that also included Iran and Turkey and was supported by the West. India, which had elected to maintain its neutral stance, instantly voiced its opposition to Pakistan's decision to join the group and saw Pakistan's turn toward the West as a potential danger. The Arab world, which adheres to the principle of non-intervention, did not warm up to the Baghdad Pact when it was first proposed. Iraq was the only nation to put its name on the list.

The president of Egypt at the time, Nasser, was a staunch opponent of the Baghdad Pact. Within the confines of the non-alignment framework, India and Egypt were successful in harmonising their respective beliefs. Between the years 1936 and 1955, Nehru and Nasser built a strong relationship and were in regular contact. During this period, Saudi Arabia was Egypt's ally and friend. The Saudis considered the Hashemite rulers of Jordan and Iraq to be their most sworn enemies, and as a result, they made an attempt to frustrate their objectives by providing assistance to a nation that is not connected with any one bloc. The Saudi government did not agree with Pakistan's membership in the Baghdad Pact and so did not accept it. According to a report in the Saudi publication *Al-Awsat*, the Saudi capital of Riyadh was "surprised to find that the Islamic state of Pakistan should bow to those who have joined forces with the Zionist Jews." As a direct consequence of this, Saudi Arabia and India became politically closer to one another as a result of the Baghdad Pact and the improvement in ties between India and Egypt.

### **Important visits**

During the Asian-African Conference that took place in Bandung in April 1955, Nehru had the perfect opportunity to criticise the military pacts and forge personal ties with the Arab leaders, particularly Amir Faisal, the Crown Prince and Foreign Minister of Saudi

Arabia. This was especially important for Nehru because Amir Faisal was the Saudi Arabian Foreign Minister at the time. On his way back to Saudi Arabia, Faisal spent three nights and three days in New Delhi, beginning on May 2 and ending on May 5. During his time as the Indian guest, Faisal maintained a level of decorum in all of his meetings with Nehru. He stated that "other persons" had informed him about India's strategy that "India was facilitating the growth of communism," in contrast to religious Arab countries, who did not approve of communist atheism". He said that "other persons" had informed him about India's strategy that "India was facilitating the growth of communism. "The Saudi Arabian Crown Prince adds",It [was] asserted that India was hostile against the Arabs and their interests." 40. In light of the fact that Pakistani propaganda continued to focus on Saudi Arabia, it is reasonable to assume that some of these "other persons" represented Pakistan. Nehru, on the other hand, came away favourably from his meeting with Faisal, and the Indian media looked forward eagerly to his arrival. For instance, this trip was described as "politically helpful" by The Hindustan Times.

### **The visit of King Saud to India**

During his official visit to India between November 26 and December 12, 1955, King Saud underlined the new friendship that had been established between India and Saudi Arabia. Later on, the Saudi Ruler made it known that he was eager to personally observe how the Muslims in the democratic Indian state were being handled, and the Indian authorities did what was sensible to get him a chance to do so 43. Later on, the Saudi Ruler made it known that he was eager to personally observe how the Muslims in the democratic Indian state were being handled. Maulana Mohammad Faruqi, a Muslim member of the Indian Parliament, and Syed Mahmud, a Minister in the Ministry of External Affairs, were

both assigned to him for sections of his travel as interpreters of the Indian scene. They accompanied him for a portion of his trip.

Saud's talk to the Indo-Arab Society was a big return for India's efforts, notwithstanding the fact that the King changed his mind and decided not to visit Kashmir in an attempt to make Pakistan 45 laugh. This was a setback for Pakistan, which had previously launched an offensive against India over the treatment of Muslims on that country's territory. Both public and media opinion in Pakistan was profoundly shaken up as a direct result of the Saudi King's words.

"It is my sincere intention to reassure my Muslim brothers located in different parts of the globe that the future of the Muslim community in India is in good hands. As the caretaker of Muslim sacred sites, I would want to use this opportunity to extend my thanks to the great Indian leader, Mr. Nehru, as well as to all of his lieutenants, who are responsible for carrying out this policy of equality and equity on his behalf".

Indian efforts to push its diplomatic agenda were undeniably successful as a direct result of Saud's visit. Indian officials and journalists found common ground with their Saudi counterparts on most global problems, but they couldn't disguise their shock at "the proof of the patriarchal and dictatorial structure of Saudi society which the character and behaviour of the delegation itself offered them. "It was nonetheless obvious that they were taken aback by "the evidence of the feudal and dictatorial nature of Saudi society". Over time, 48 Nehru came to see the vast chasms that separated India and Saudi Arabia at the time. The Indian leadership was livid when the Saudis made demands like having an Indian warship escort the Saudi King from Jeddah to Bombay and sending a delegation from India to Saudi Arabia. The Indian government refused both of these demands. This newfound

peace between India and Saudi Arabia dates back to 1955, and it seems to have been motivated solely by external reasons like global politics and domestic priorities in both nations. They did not have much in common, yet the rational choice model led them to each other anyhow.

### **The difficult situation that arose as a result of the cold war in the Middle East**

Saudi Arabia, unlike any other Arab nation outside of Baghdad Pact, captured Pakistan's particular attention, and the country's diplomatic presence in Jeddah was widely regarded as among the most effective in the region. Pakistan's diplomatic influence in Jeddah was also largely viewed as among the most effective in the region. The Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mohammad Ali, and the Chief of General Staff of Pakistan, Major-General Nawabzada Sher Ali Khan, travelled to Saudi Arabia in July 1956 as a direct reaction to the defeat that was sustained in December 1955. The British Embassy in Jeddah saw this short trip as a fruitful endeavour at its conclusion. According to Mohammad Ali, it was a "notable achievement" for him to "extract from the King Saud, who [was] vehemently opposed to the Baghdad Pact, a statement under oath that he recognised Pakistan's attitude in the Pact." Mohammad Ali described this as "extracting from the King Saud, who [was] vehemently opposed to the Baghdad Pact." King Saud was a steadfast opponent of the Baghdad Pact throughout his reign. Naturally, the King's promise that Pakistan will get full assistance in its battle with Kashmir, which has been going on for quite some time, was reassuring to Mohammad Ali. This conflict has been going on for quite some time. Last but not least, the Pakistani Prime Minister spoke with the King about Pakistan's armed forces and described the many educational options that are available to those living in Pakistan.

This Pakistani endeavour received the support of the British government because the British government held the belief that Pakistan “could convince the Saudis towards a more responsible Middle East policy and eradicate the numerous Egyptian experts already in the country.” The British government also believed that Pakistan could eradicate the numerous Egyptian experts already in the country”. As the conflict continued, the relationship between the conflict between India and Pakistan and Western policies toward the Middle East grew more connected.

The decision made by the Egyptian government on July 26, 1956 to nationalise the Suez Canal generated major worry for the King of Saudi Arabia. Saud was an ardent opponent of communism, and as such, he viewed Egypt's expanding ties to the Soviet Union with scepticism due to the fact that they offered a number of possible risks. In direct retaliation to the Baghdad Alliance, Egypt, Syria, and Saudi Arabia got together in October of 1955 to form a military pact in order to counteract its influence. He was uncertain as to whether or not it would truly serve him well to choose that course of action. Due to the present state of affairs, Saud strongly suggests that Nehru make a visit to Saudi Arabia as soon as it is physically possible to do so. When it was announced that Nasser would be travelling to Saudi Arabia, rumours started to circulate in Jeddah suggesting that he would meet with King Saud and Nehru during his time there. This occurred before the trip was announced in any formal manner to the general public. There have been a great deal of articles written on these rumours that have been published in the printed media in both Egypt and India. On the other side, Nehru did not have the slightest interest in travelling to Jeddah "for a tripartite deal."

On September 24, only a few hours after Nasser had left Jeddah, he landed there to begin an official goodwill tour that would last for four days. The 24th of September was the day he arrived. The situation that is surrounding the Suez Canal was the principal subject of discussion during Nehru's talks with King Saud and Prince Faisal, despite the fact that the Indian government has said that this trip does not have anything to do with the issue surrounding the Suez Canal.

The King of Saudi Arabia also brought up the problem of Muslims being mistreated in India, which was another topic of conversation at this meeting. Members of the Pakistan Awami Muslim Leagues had made an appeal to Saud in the days leading up to Nehru's visit, pleading with him to intervene on their behalf and persuade the Indian Prime Minister to put an end to what they perceived to be the mistreatment of Indian Muslims. Nehru was scheduled to visit Pakistan. When Nehru decided to go on this enjoyable trip at a time that was not very convenient for him, it is highly likely that he was largely motivated by a desire to nullify the impact of Mohammad Ali's visit two months earlier. This is because Nehru wanted to neutralise the effect of Mohammad Ali's visit. This was the situation due to the fact that there is no doubt that Nehru desired to accomplish this goal. India has expressed concern about Pakistan's domination in the Hejaz area of the Arabian Peninsula.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **The expanding economic interests of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) in South Asia; the present degree of commercial interactions between Saudi Arabia and India**

Both Saudi Arabia and India are important powers within the context of their respective regional environments. Both of them have specific amounts of power and influence that go beyond the region in where they are located directly, in addition to sharing the same interests. However, during the course of their existence, they have been confronted with many obstacles. They had previously experienced what is often referred to as a "gap in communication," which was caused by the unique regional and global situations that were intrinsic to the cold war. But in the recent years, there has been a marked improvement in the bilateral connections, and they are currently at their highest point of quality since they were first established. The early Arab engagement with India is said to have been driven primarily by economic and cultural interests. Hajj pilgrims have become an annual point of engagement between the two groups of people since the Indian subcontinent is home to a sizeable Muslim population in addition to regular commerce (in spices, silk, textiles, etc.). However, Saudi Arabia's standing among other Islamic nations has improved since the country first began to demonstrate its political influence and significance, particularly after the annexation of the Hijaz region in 1925. This has occurred as Saudi Arabia has begun to represent its own political influence and importance.

While simultaneously recognising the benefits of forming a strategic partnership, the two nations maintain their efforts to promote economic growth and stability in the surrounding area. In recent years, Indo-Saudi relations have started to take on a more strategic nature as a result of a growing awareness of the security threats posed by Islamist

terrorists, a desire to achieve the enormous economic possibility of considerable capital investments, and India's need for power generation.

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A Chilly History Following India's independence in 1947, diplomatic ties were swiftly established between India and Saudi Arabia. These ties built upon a lengthy history of Indo-Arab relationships and positive relations that dated back to the establishment of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1932. India and Saudi Arabia are both located in South Asia. Its leadership started to solidify the country's status as the Custodian of the Two Holy Places, a duty that requires acceptance from a variety of Muslim communities and nations located all over the globe in addition to aid from those communities and states. After then, there was a shift toward the incorporation of ideological attachment into the process of formulating foreign policy, particularly for Saudi Arabia. India won its independence from British colonial rule in 1947, and two years later, in 1948, it established diplomatic relations with Saudi Arabia. These ties were further strengthened in 1954. Pakistan's efforts to gain support from the Islamic community for its position on the subject soon began to negatively affect India's relations with Saudi Arabia. The bitter rivalry between India and Pakistan over the Kashmir dispute also began to negatively affect India's relations with Saudi Arabia. Consequently, on his trip to Pakistan in 1953, King Saud communicated his nation's political support for Pakistan in reference to the Kashmir issue. In addition, Pakistan had sought to depict India as having betrayed the principal concern of Arab countries, which was Palestine, by using India's recognition of Israel in 1950 as a leverage point. The formation of the Baghdad Pact in 1955, which Pakistan was a member of together with Iraq, Turkey, and Iran, did not go down very well with the Arab world. Both Saudi Arabia and Egypt voiced harsh criticism of the Western military alliance and actively



encouraged other nations to withdraw from it. Specifically, the leadership of Saudi Arabia was taken aback when Pakistan joined it, and it encouraged Islamabad to withdraw from it because it saw Pakistan's membership as a "stab in the heart of Arab and Muslim states." The relationship between India and Saudi Arabia remained cold for the majority of the Cold War, with the exception of a short period that took place in the middle of the 1950s. The early amiability between the two nations and their cultures was founded on mutual appreciation; nevertheless, in subsequent years, differences in decisions about foreign policy and the development of regional affairs created a chasm between them that required decades to bridge.

A number of factors, including India's policy of non-alignment and its close ties with Egypt, as well as Saudi Arabia's affiliation with the United States and its identity with Pakistan, have contributed to the deterioration of India's and Saudi Arabia's relations over the past thirty and a half years and more. Is the one that matters the most. India's global orientation toward the Middle East, which looked at Muslim nations from Pakistan's viewpoint — specifically, security concerns in the Gulf and South Asia — was a contributing factor in the development of this crisis. For instance, Foreign Minister Saud bin Faisal bin Abdulaziz Al Saud visited New Delhi during his trip in April 1981, while Prime Minister Indira Gandhi travelled to Riyadh a year later. Both of these trips took place in Saudi Arabia. The visit did not have the effect of further strengthening the bilateral ties; yet, there was some understanding on both sides.

### **The Indian and Saudi Relationships Are Just Getting Started.**

A Fresh Point of Initiation Before the 1990s, there was little sign of any improvement in the condition. India and Saudi Arabia could no longer neglect one another

in light of the new global realities that emerged after the Cold War. As a direct reaction to the upheaval in the established order of the world, India initiated a reorientation of its foreign policy and began to implement a new domestic economic strategy that emphasised liberalisation and privatisation. For these reforms to take place, there must be communication between New Delhi and the Gulf States. As a result of India's economy being more open, the country's energy security has become more dependent on petroleum imports, and India has looked to the Persian Gulf in order to satisfy its expanding energy requirements. The Gulf States concurrently looked to India in their search for markets for its crude oil as well as foreign labour for the building of infrastructure and economic advancement. During the 1990s, this emerging market was the primary factor responsible for the improvement in ties between India and Saudi Arabia.

Despite this, the dynamics of the situation have shifted, and political forces have played a role in this development. It was hailed as the beginning of a unipolar world when the Soviet Union collapsed, but India, which had close ties to Moscow, found itself in a difficult position as a result of these events. India was under the obligation to investigate other options and cultivate partnerships with its surrounding countries. The economic ties with the Gulf were far stronger than the political ties that existed between the two. Up until quite recently, India was unable to reach out to the Gulf region because of its long-standing commitment to anti-imperialism and its leading role in the nonalignment movement.

A significant barrier was posed by India's neutral stance on the Kuwait problem, which leaders from Gulf states saw as a hostile stance. It is imperative that India strengthen its connections with the Gulf States and reiterate its support for the sovereignty of those states. Another significant obstacle was Pakistan, which had previously been one of the

most significant obstacles in the way of Indo-Gulf relations. As a result, India needed to reorient its policy and separate Pakistan from the tactics it would use in the Middle East. In the end, these actions created an atmosphere that was conducive to the growth of relationships between India and Saudi Arabia, which resulted in the relations between the two countries taking off. The decade of the 1990s marked a new beginning for India and Saudi Arabia, which led to a gradual development in the two countries' bilateral relations. An infusion of Indian labour into the kingdom first resulted in the flourishing of commercial linkages and the development of people-to-people ties; subsequent to this, diplomatic and political ties between the two nations expanded. In the year 2000, it was estimated that there were 1.5 million Indians working in Saudi Arabia, and there was a rising "desire to deepen bilateral collaboration" on both sides.

At the end of the 1990s, the state of bilateral ties had improved to the point that corporate delegations from both sides had begun making regular excursions to study the possible economic benefits of the relationship. In 1999, Saudi Arabia was India's single largest supplier of imported oil, accounting for around 23 percent of India's total oil requirements. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has emerged as India's most important supply of crude oil. The amount of money exchanged between the two countries in 1999 and 2000 had also skyrocketed, reaching \$2.6 billion. A crucial conversation took place in January 2001 in Riyadh between External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh and King Fahd bin Abdulaziz al-Saud, which marked a turning point in the relationship between the two countries. He had one-on-one conversations with Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Abdullah and Foreign Minister Saud al-Faisal on a variety of topics that were of importance to all

parties involved, and they all signed an agreement to consult with each other's foreign offices.

This visit laid the groundwork for the establishment of strong bilateral ties in the context of expanding business ties, increased oil imports from India, and a growing influx of Indian labourers into the kingdom. The visit also took place against the backdrop of expanding business ties between the two countries. This was the first high-level political engagement between the two countries in a significant amount of time, and it was followed by a series of ministerial travels to study the possibilities for trade and economic growth. India and Saudi Arabia came to the conclusion that establishing the India–Saudi Arabia Joint Commission would be beneficial to their respective commercial and economic sectors. P. M. Sayeed, minister of power in the cabinet of Manmohan Singh, led the Indian delegation to King Fahd's funeral after India declared a time of mourning after the death of King Fahd in August of 2005.

### **The Change in Perspective**

The new era in Indo-Saudi ties began in 2006 when King Abdullah attended Republic Day celebrations in India. This marked the beginning of a shift in the nature of the bilateral relationship between the two nations. Since King Saud's tour to New Delhi and other cities in India in 1955, this was the first visit by a Saudi king to India, ushering in a new era in the bilateral relationship between the two nations. It was also the highest-level bilateral exchange between the two countries since Prime Minister Gandhi's visit to Riyadh in 1982. That same year, Gandhi visited Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia. We have been friends for a long time, and with the grace of God, I hope that this visit will renew the friendship between India and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Following his

opening comments, the monarch went on to declare, "The bond between India and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is a historic one." In order to lay the groundwork for future collaboration, King Abdullah signed the Delhi Declaration during his visit. In doing so, the way was paved for the development of robust bilateral relationships, which were made feasible as a direct consequence of the visit.

### **New beginnings for ties between India and Saudi Arabia**

The decree states that the visit “marks a watershed moment in India-Saudi Arabia relations, marking a turning point in the forging of a mutually beneficial alliance between the two nations. It highlighted the four key sectors (political relations, trade and investment, energy, and information technology) where the two sides had pledged to enhance their cooperation: The report recommended boosting” exchanges of high-level bilateral visits and dialogues to provide momentum to and widen the scope of bilateral cooperation and understanding. It was disclosed that India and Saudi Arabia were unable to fully realise their economic and commercial potential owing to a deterioration in bilateral ties due to a dearth of political links. Since this happened, communication between the two nations slowed to a crawl. Specifically, the declaration noted that “Saudi Arabia is considered as a trustworthy and dependable source of oil supplies to international markets and the Indian market in particular”. With this comment, Saudi Arabia's importance to India's energy security was highlighted.

The agreement said, “Both nations will create a strategic energy partnership based on complementarity and interdependence” reiterating the Indo-Saudi alliance in the energy business. Both sides also reaffirmed their shared commitment to combating terrorism and

organised crime. The proclamation's call for further “bilateral, regional, and international cooperation to confront and eliminate terrorism” stood out.

In point of fact, the visit of King Abdullah and the signing of the Delhi Declaration both served to deepen political relations and boost economic cooperation between the two countries. Following the signing of the document, representatives from the cabinet and junior ministers travelled extensively. The trips that are most memorable were those taken by Arjun Singh, India's Minister for Human Resource Development, in May and June of 2006, and Khalid al-Anqari, Saudi Arabia's Minister for Higher Education, in November of the same year. In May of the following year, India's Minister of Petroleum, Murli Deora, travelled to Riyadh for a visit of two days in order to take part in a roundtable discussion with other oil ministers from Asian countries and to have bilateral talks with the Saudi leadership.

In 2008, the foreign ministers of the two countries met each other on a reciprocal basis in order to discuss the development of their bilateral relations and examine the progress that had been made on issues of mutual concern. M. K. Narayanan, India's national security adviser, visited in April 2006, and C. R. Garekhan, India's special envoy for West Asia, went in September 2007, both with the intention of reiterating India's commitment to the battle against organised crime. In addition, during this time period, the two countries began sharing information with one another in order to counteract the rise in criminal activities. Significant growth in commercial ties between the two countries was seen in the years after King Abdullah's visit. The value of two-way trade between India and Saudi Arabia had already topped \$3 billion by the late 1990s, and it had reached \$3.4 billion in the year before to Abdullah's visit to India. The entire volume of business conducted

between the two countries reached a record high of \$15.9 billion in the fiscal year 2006–2007, thanks in part to the rise in global oil prices and in part to the expansion of the volume of trade.

As a result of the visit of King Abdullah, there was a huge rise in the amount of energy that was imported from Saudi Arabia, and the two countries decided to build a strategic energy cooperation. In the years 2006–2007, Saudi Arabia overtook Iraq as India's primary oil supplier, and it has maintained its position as India's primary oil supplier ever since. In the years 2005–2006, India made a purchase of oil from Saudi Arabia worth \$790 million, and in the year that followed, soon after the visit, India made a purchase of oil worth \$12.2 billion from the same nation. The visit, without a doubt, heralded the beginning of a brand-new era in the bilateral relations. The reciprocal visit of Prime Minister Singh in February–March 2010, which took place in India, delivered a boost to the already strengthening relations between the two countries. The visit resulted in the signing of the Riyadh Declaration, which envisioned the development of bilateral ties between the two states into a "strategic partnership." This declaration was the direct result of the visit. The visit took place at a convenient moment and served to reaffirm India's commitment to cooperating with Saudi Arabia, not only on issues pertaining to the two countries' bilateral relationship but also on issues pertaining to larger regional and strategic problems. The conversations between King Abdullah and Prime Minister Singh were on problems that were bilateral, regional, and global in scope. They took place in a *“environment of extreme warmth, cordiality, friendliness, and transparency, according to the press release. As a direct consequence of this, the two heads of state agreed to raise*

*their collaboration to a strategic partnership spanning security, economic, defence, and political spheres”.*

*“Both King Abdullah and Prime Minister Singh paid official trips to their respective countries, which resulted in a strengthening of political and diplomatic ties as well as a boost to bilateral relations”.*

The two countries' relationship grew, which led to increasing cooperation in a number of domains that were of importance to both countries. During his travels, Singh was instrumental in the creation of a number of accords and memorandums of understanding, the most notable of which were the extradition treaty and the agreement on the transfer of convicted criminals. In April of 2010, Prince Salman, who had been serving as the governor of Riyadh at the time, went on an official visit to India with the intention of expanding the amount of business and trade that took place between the two countries. While Saudi Arabia's Minister of Economy and Planning Khalid al-Qusaibi was in New Delhi for the Delhi Sustainable Developments Summit in the same month that Petroleum Minister Jaipal Reddy was in Riyadh for the International Energy Forum in February 2011, Petroleum Minister Jaipal Reddy was in Riyadh for the International Energy Forum. Other noteworthy visits were that of the Indian defence Minister A. K. Anthony in January 2012, Princess Adelah in September 2012, the Saudi labour minister Adel Fakieh in November 2012, and the Indian foreign minister Salman Khurshid in December 2012. (May 2013).

Both countries sent several more high-level delegations to each other in order to examine the progress that had been made on major issues. In March 2011, Prince Bandar bin Sultan bin Abdulaziz al-Saud, secretary-general of the Saudi National Security Council, travelled to India in his capacity as a special messenger of the monarch. While there, he



met with Prime Minister Singh and other Indian officials in the midst of growing unrest in the region and on Arab streets. The visit enlightened India on the Saudi perspective on the regional mass movements and provided it with reassurance over the security of the Gulf area. Emerging Dynamic Changes the deepening of political ties not only bred an environment of growing trust amongst the parties involved, but also changed the nature of their mostly transactional business connections. The exchange of visits between King Abdullah and Prime Minister Singh, as well as the signing of declarations in both Delhi and Riyadh, laid the framework for improving the degree of cooperation that exists between the two countries.

Even if the flow of investments in both directions remained much below their potential, it continued to increase. In addition, the basic foundations for collaboration in the domains of security and defence were built, but progress toward enhanced cooperation was still moving at a snail's pace. After the National Democratic Alliance, which was led by the Bharatiya Janata Party, was victorious in India's general elections in May 2014 and formed the new government under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India's foreign policy received a fresh impetus from this change in administration. The case that Modi has made for India to play a more significant role in international affairs and to accelerate its efforts toward enhancing interactions with the neighbourhood and key regional and global actors, including a reenergized strategy toward the Gulf, is a compelling one. Modi has made a compelling case for India to play a larger role in international affairs. Because India recognises the crucial importance of its interests in the Gulf area, it has increased the level of political interaction it has with the nations of the Gulf. Since taking office, Modi has travelled to a number of countries, including the United

Arab Emirates (in August 2015 and again in February 2018), Saudi Arabia (in April 2016), Iran (in May 2016), Qatar (in June 2016), Israel (in July 2017), and Palestine (in February 2018). He has also travelled to Oman (February 2018). In addition, the minister of external affairs, Sushma Swaraj, as well as the minister of state for external affairs, M. J. Akbar, have been to the region on many times.

As can be observed from the increased number of political and diplomatic engagements to and from the region, this region has been a prominent priority for the government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. 38 The warmth of India and Saudi Arabia's bilateral relationship was on full display during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent trip to the kingdom of Saudi Arabia. India considers Saudi Arabia as a valuable partner and an essential player in regional affairs. When Prime Minister Modi arrived in Riyadh, he was given a cordial welcome by the Saudi leadership. During his time there, he engaged in conversations with the Saudi leadership over the changing realities in the Gulf and Middle East and conveyed India's concerns about the emergence of terrorism. The opportunities for two-way investments and the advancement of security and military cooperation have emerged as the two areas of mutual interest, and the leadership of both India and Saudi Arabia has committed to strengthening bilateral relations in these areas. As a consequence of this, if one were to summarise the focus of the Modi government immediately after gaining office, they placed a strong emphasis on Saudi Arabia as India's key partner in the Middle East, as seen by the flurry of bilateral visits that took place during this time period. For example, in October 2014, the minister responsible for petroleum and natural gas, Dharmendra Pradhan, travelled to Riyadh in order to take part in a meeting between the two countries' ministers of energy. 39 Tawfiq al-Rabiah,

### **The interplay between Indian and Arab interests in the 21st century**

The India-Arab Partnership Conference was held in New Delhi in November, and the Saudi Arabian minister of commerce and trade was there to represent his country. In January of 2015, the India–Saudi Arabia Joint Commission Meeting took place in New Delhi. The Saudi delegation was led by Abdullah al-Obeid, who is the deputy minister of international commerce. Upon the passing of King Abdullah in January 2015, India declared a day of mourning, and Vice President Hamid Ansari led an Indian delegation to the condolence sessions on behalf of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Pranab Mukherjee. The Minister of Foreign Affairs expressed their gratitude to him for his contribution to the peace and security of the area. The Indian media paid tribute to the departed leader and emphasised the role he played in reestablishing relations between India and Saudi Arabia. Before the visit, Modi started the push for a strong engagement with Saudi Arabia and prioritised that country above other countries in the area. He also gave Saudi Arabia priority over other nations in the region. He met Salman twice on the periphery of G-20 summits (Brisbane in November 2014 and Antalya in 2015), and New Delhi welcomed Adel al-Jubeir, Saudi Arabia's foreign minister, in March 2016 to prepare for the prime minister's visit. Both of these meetings took place in preparation for the visit of the Saudi prime minister. When Modi arrived in the kingdom, he was given a hearty welcome, and when he was there, he spoke with the people there about a number of issues that are of concern to everyone. In the joint statement that was produced during the visit, the necessity of maintaining peace and security in the Gulf and on the Indian subcontinent was highlighted, as was the close relationship that exists between the two nations.

## **The Saudi – India close choices**

The two countries came to an accord and signed a number of agreements and memorandums of understanding, including pacts relating to the collaboration of their labour forces and an investment framework. In addition to bolstering existing connections between the two countries, the primary focuses of Modi's visit were on expanding areas of bilateral collaboration. As a result, the expanding dynamics in Indo-Saudi interactions are centred on two primary domains: security and the military, as well as business, oil, and investments. Since 2006, bilateral trade between India and Saudi Arabia has been gradually increasing, eventually hitting a high point of \$48 billion in the 2013–2014 fiscal year. Investments, Energy, and Commerce Because of the drop in the price of oil throughout the globe and the general slowdown in international trade, the amount of money exchanged between the two countries fell to 26 billion dollars in 2015 and 2016. India's top three economic partners were the United States, China, and the United Arab Emirates. Saudi Arabia remained India's fourth largest commercial partner. Additionally, India's eighth largest export market is located in this country. On the flip hand, India is also one of Saudi Arabia's significant commercial partners, being its third biggest export market and ninth largest import source. Energy is the primary driver of trade between the two countries, with crude oil accounting for up to three-fourths of Saudi Arabia's imports and petroleum products making up around one-sixth of India's exports to the Saudi Arabian monarchy. Cereals, organic and inorganic chemicals, iron and steel, automobiles and parts, meat, and fruits are among Saudi Arabia's top exports, while natural and cultured pearls, aluminium, copper, and other minerals are among the country's top imports. Other top imports include fertilisers and organic chemicals.

## **India–Saudi Arabia Business Council**

The India–Saudi Arabia Business Council was established in December 2015, and its first meeting took place in New Delhi. The purpose of the council was to further improve economic links between the two countries. Energy is the primary driver of trade between the two countries, and India's most reliable and biggest source of oil and supplies is Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia is responsible for around 20 percent of India's total oil imports. Even though Iran briefly took over as India's primary oil supplier toward the end of 2016, Saudi Arabia continued to be India's primary source for total annual crude oil imports in 2016–2017, with shipments totaling US\$ 15.58 billion. This is despite the fact that Iran briefly took over as India's primary oil supplier. Because India is so reliant on foreign oil suppliers to meet its demand, Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf states are likely to see a rise in their share of India's total oil imports.

## **Delegation exchanges**

There have been frequent official-level conversations and delegation exchanges to explore increasing cooperation in the energy business. The energy sector in India is one where India has a big interest in luring investments from Saudi Arabia. Discussions have been place between Saudi Arabia and India over the expansion of India's strategic oil reserves; however, no agreement has been achieved as of yet. India and Saudi Arabia may be able to expand their ties by transitioning their current buyer-seller relationships in the energy industry into strategic partnerships. This would be possible if Saudi investors were confident that the Indian energy market would provide them with high returns on their investments.

## **Cooperative business endeavours**

There is potential for joint ventures between the two countries in both the upstream sector of Saudi Arabia's economy and the downstream sector of India's economy. It is possible that this would expand to the petrochemical and fertiliser sectors and will entail the transfer of technology as well as production cooperation. The proposed ministerial energy conversation between India and Saudi Arabia may contribute in boosting cooperation in this critical issue. Investments in the energy industry that go both ways have the potential to do wonders for advancing the strategic cooperation between the two countries, given that Indian demand is still rising and that predictions indicate that it will continue to rise, and Saudi Arabia's position as the largest oil producer in the world. The focus is not just on commercial activities and energy production, but also on financial investments.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi places a high priority on luring Saudi businesses to participate in the Indian market by offering them investment opportunities. India is dedicated to increasing the size of its infrastructure and is keen to attract investments from the Gulf region. Between April 2000 and March 2017, Saudi corporations invested a total of \$76 million in the Indian economy. This spending took place over the course of 17 years. Attracting foreign investment is a big goal for the government of Prime Minister Modi, and as such, it was one of the topics that he planned to discuss during his recent trip to Riyadh. The joint statement highlighted measures "to increase the ease of doing business in the nation and India's important steps to simplify and rationalise current laws and loosen foreign direct investment criteria in key sectors," such as railroads, the military, and

insurance. The statement also highlighted measures "to increase the ease of doing business in the nation and India's important steps to simplify and rationalise current laws."

In addition, Modi emphasised India's desire to attract investments from Saudi Arabia and called on "Saudi Aramco, SABIC, and other Saudi companies to invest in India's infrastructure sector and participate in projects creating mega industrial manufacturing corridors [and] smart cities, as well as the Digital India and Start-up India programmes" (Saudi Aramco, SABIC, and other Saudi companies to invest in India's infrastructure sector and invest in India's infrastructure sector and participate in projects creating mega industrial manufacturing

In the past five years, there has been an increase in the number of Indian companies that are active in Saudi Arabia. Many of these companies have formed joint ventures with Saudi companies in the fields of healthcare, pharmaceuticals, education, real estate and construction, retail, manufacturing, export-import, and information technology. Tata Consultancy Service established a female-run office in Riyadh, while Larsen & Toubro was awarded contracts for the construction of the Riyadh Metro. In 2013, the Saudi petrochemical corporation SABIC spent one hundred billion dollars in the construction of a research and development centre in the Indian city of Bangalore.

### **Organised Economies for future**

There is a significant opportunity to increase the two-way flow of investments in a variety of industries, including energy, education, aviation, pharmaceuticals, agriculture, information and communications technology (ICT), and manufacturing, and most importantly, infrastructure development, which is a priority for the government of India. This is due to the fact that both of these G-20 countries want to continue their economic

expansion while also building knowledge-based economies. Defense and Safety the relationship between India and Saudi Arabia has always been marked by key components like security cooperation and military co-operation in addition to economic linkages. Even while efforts to improve security cooperation have been ongoing for a very long time, the administration of Prime Minister Narendra Modi has made it a priority to keep those efforts going in the same direction. In light of the worsening security situation in the Middle East and parts of South Asia, as well as the growing threat posed by the rise of jihadist threats to peace and stability in both regions, India and Saudi Arabia have decided to strengthen their security cooperation and collaborate on counterterrorism and the fight against radicalism. This decision was made in light of the fact that the threat posed by the rise of jihadist threats to peace and stability in both regions is growing. This decision was taken in light of the fact that both areas confront a rising danger as a result of the growth in the number of threats posed by jihadists. Since 2008, there has been a rise in the degree of security and military cooperation between India and Saudi Arabia. This rise coincides with the expansion of India's military capabilities.

### **Improving the coordination and collaboration of intelligence gathering efforts**

Even though there was some level of cooperation between India and Gulf nations before the attacks in Mumbai on November 26, 2008, those attacks had a significant impact and compelled India to seek improved information sharing with Gulf nations in order to prevent terrorist attacks and funding for terrorism. Even though there was some level of cooperation between India and Gulf nations before the attacks in Mumbai on November 26, 2008, those attacks had a significant impact and compelled India to seek improved information sharing with The year 2010 saw the signing of an extradition agreement



between the countries of India and Saudi Arabia. The chief of the Saudi Arabian Intelligence Service, Prince Muqrin bin Abdulaziz al-Saud, travelled to New Delhi in January 2009 with the goal of exploring methods to increase intelligence coordination and cooperation in areas that are related to security. A. K. Anthony, the Indian Minister of Defense, made history in January 2012 when he travelled to Saudi Arabia. This was the very first time that an Indian Minister of Defense had ever visited Saudi Arabia. During this tour, he looked into the possibilities of elevating the degree of military cooperation that the two nations have with one another to a higher level. This was a noteworthy event that took place throughout history. In February of 2014, Crown Prince Salman, who is now the King of Saudi Arabia, returned to the country for a second time. During this trip, the two countries inked a memorandum of understanding about their joint military efforts. The defence ministers of India and Saudi Arabia met and had these conversations, which demonstrated a desire on all fronts to strengthen the already existing military and security cooperation between the two countries.

### **Cooperation on military and security matters**

The Modi administration has redirected its attention to put a higher importance on enhancing military and security cooperation. The selection of Ahmed Javed to the position of ambassador in Riyadh made this plainly clear to everyone. Javed has previously held the position of head of the police department in Mumbai. In addition, Syed Asif Ibrahim, a former head of the Intelligence Bureau who is now the special envoy on counterterrorism for the Prime Minister of India, has made many trips to the Saudi capital city of Riyadh. Syed Asif Ibrahim and Ajit Doval, who are both members of the national security advisory staff, have been the ones to perform these journeys. The joint statement that was issued

during the visit of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the Saudi capital of Riyadh gives some insight into the importance that the two nations currently place on enhancing the degree of security and military cooperation between them. Recognizing their responsibility for promoting peace, stability, and security in the region and throughout the world, the two leaders emphasised the significance of further consolidating bilateral strategic engagement, including in the areas of security and defence cooperation, in order to serve the common interests of the two countries and their peoples. This was done in order to serve the interests of both countries as well as the interests of the people in both countries. This action was taken in order to better serve the shared interests of the two nations and the people in each of those nations.

“During the visit, it was also decided that the two countries would "intensify bilateral defence cooperation by the exchange of visits by military personnel and experts, the conduct of joint military exercises, the exchange of visits of ships and aircrafts, and the supply of arms and ammunition and their joint development”. All of these activities would take place during the visit. These were the particulars of the working relationship that were going to be established.

### **Improving the Safety of Marine Life in the Indian Ocean.**

The matter of enhancing the degree of marine safety in the the Indian Ocean was also brought up for discussion, and it was decided that the level of collaboration between the two nations in this sphere should be increased. Terrorism, extremism, and radicalization have arisen as a shared threat between India and Saudi Arabia. As a result, there is a need for conversation between the two nations about these issues. India and Saudi Arabia have expressed interest in collaborating against radicalization and extremism in light of the rise

of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and the destruction it has wreaked throughout the Middle East and parts of South Asia. This interest comes in light of the fact that ISIS is responsible for much of the devastation. According to reports, a number of persons from India have already travelled to Iraq and Syria to join ISIS. As a result, the government of India and its security apparatus have made it a priority to handle this problem. Reports suggest that several people from India have already travelled to Iraq and Syria to join ISIS, and a number of young people from India have been arrested in recent years for attempting to join ISIS. These arrests come after a number of young people from India have been arrested for attempting to join ISIS. ISIS has been responsible for a series of strikes against Saudi Arabia, a country that it has singled out as a target as part of its campaign to combat the scourge of terrorism. The government of Saudi Arabia has initiated a sweeping crackdown on ISIS networks operating within the country and has imprisoned a considerable number of young people who have been radicalised as a result of this campaign.

“The Saudi Ministry of the Interior has begun implementing a deradicalization programme in order to provide assistance to those who may one day be reintegrated into normal society. At the same time, individuals who have not shown any regret for their actions and are responsible for assaults on innocent people are being subjected to severe punishment. The joint declaration made the assertion that extremism and terrorism are a menace to all countries and society, taking into consideration the risks presented by terrorism as well as the common interest in combating it. In addition, the two world leaders angrily rejected any effort to assign this worldwide phenomena to a specific ethnic group, religious heritage, or cultural tradition. They said that such an attribution would be absurd.

They urged all nations to disavow the use of terrorism against other nations, eliminate terrorist infrastructures wherever they are found, cut off any form of support and financing to terrorists operating and perpetrating terrorism from their territories against other nations, and bring terrorists to justice. They also urged all nations to bring terrorists operating and perpetrating terrorism from their territories against other nations to justice. In addition to this, they strongly encouraged all countries to prosecute terrorists”.

During the course of the visit, India and Saudi Arabia came to an agreement that they would work together to combat terrorism in a more robust manner. This involves the dissemination of intelligence, the enforcement of laws, and the prevention of the funding of terrorist actions. The two countries have reached a consensus to “expand cooperation in cyber security”, which includes the prohibition of the use of online platforms for the purposes of terrorism, radicalization, and the disturbance of social harmony. During the meeting between the two countries, another item that was covered was the possibility of radicalization occurring via the use of cyberspace and the internet. In addition, it was decided that India and Saudi Arabia would work together to combat radicalization by engaging in “exchanges and dialogue between religious scholars and intellectuals of both countries and the organisation of conferences and seminars to promote values inherent to all religions, such as peace, tolerance, inclusiveness, and welfare”. This decision was made after India and Saudi Arabia met and discussed the issue. This partnership would focus on countering the radicalization of individuals. When one considers the modern dynamics of Indo-Saudi relations, it is impossible to deny that security and military cooperation have emerged as a crucial aspect in the relationship between the two countries. This is because

security and military cooperation have emerged as an important aspect in the relationship between the two countries.

Both parties are committed to working together in the fight against terrorism and extremism, and there is a shared interest in strengthening military cooperation through the conduct of joint exercises, the training of people, and the trading of officers. In addition, both parties have a common goal of reducing the number of people who serve in each other's armed forces.

### **Saudi Arabia has issued a statement condemning the terrorist attack in Uri**

The fact that Saudi Arabia denounced the terrorist assault in Uri that took place in September 2016 and resulted in the deaths of 18 Indian troops is indicative of the increasing understanding between the two nations on the subject of terrorism. This momentous occasion underscored the growing relevance of military and security cooperation between India and Saudi Arabia. It was a milestone event. This was a significant occurrence because of the long history of tense ties that have existed between the two countries. Indian Muslims and Saudi Arabia There is a third factor that is essential to comprehending the Indo-Saudi bilateral ties, and that is the Indian Hajis who go to the region. In addition to the two essential components of the rising dynamics in bilateral relations, namely trade and commerce as well as defence and security, there is a fourth factor that is essential to comprehending the Indo-Saudi bilateral ties. It is crucial that you comprehend these connections. Some of these families decided to make their homes in the city of Jeddah after the foundation of the kingdom. Over time, they were gradually accepted into the society and awarded citizenship in Saudi Arabia.

## **The Cooperative Strategic Effort**

The Collaborative Effort in Strategic Cooperation between India and Saudi Arabia since the Cold War, when India and Saudi Arabia pursued different foreign policy goals and rarely crossed paths, there has been a tremendous improvement in the level of cooperation and understanding that exists between the two countries. This has led to an increase in the amount of trade and investment that takes place between the two countries. As a result of global upheavals that needed changes to new realities following the conclusion of the Cold War, India and Saudi Arabia began to gradually create profound contacts with one another. These connections have been becoming stronger over time. In the beginning, for the purpose of developing confidence between both parties, they sidestepped potentially sensitive subjects, such as the presence of Muslims in India and Pakistan, and instead focused their attention on monetary problems. This was done in order to avoid any miscommunications. India and Saudi Arabia were able to build strong linkages while avoiding substantial political hurdles as a direct result of the possibilities and prospects provided in the sectors of commerce, trade, and energy. The fields of business, international trade, and energy all had a part in making this a reality. Increased trade and economic links as well as a thriving service sector in Saudi Arabia gave chances for Indian labourers, who subsequently immigrated to the kingdom in search of a better living due to the availability of these opportunities. Another element that contributed to the growth in confidence was the presence of a growing number of Indians working and living outside of the country. Both nations immediately began working to deepen their political connections as soon as contentious issues were resolved and were no longer an issue. This resulted in a spectacular turnaround in the nations' bilateral ties in the middle of the 2000s,

particularly following the visit of Royal Abdullah in 2006, which was the first visit by a Saudi monarch since 1955. This was notably the case after the visit of Royal Abdullah in 2006. India and Saudi Arabia began conversations to strengthen their security and military relations as their commercial and financial interactions became more frequent. Saudi Arabia proved to be a willing partner for India in the latter nation's attempts to fight illicit activities such as organised crime, sponsorship for terrorist organisations, and radicalisation. Both internal extremist groups and international terrorist organisations posed a danger to India's national security, and Saudi Arabia was eager to collaborate with India to combat both threats.

### **Cooperation in military defence**

An extradition pact and a memorandum of understanding on defence cooperation were signed by the two nations, which led to the extradition and deportation of a number of Indian citizens who were accused by the Saudis of participation in unlawful activities and the funding of terrorism. The Saudis alleged that these individuals received money from terrorist organisations. This served as the impetus for increasing cooperation in the fields of security and defence, where there had previously been a dearth of such activity. India and Saudi Arabia are looking to strengthen their security and defence ties through cooperation in counterterrorism, combating radicalization, and sharing intelligence in order to deal with the shifting geopolitical situation and the rise of global terrorist networks that pose a threat to the peace and stability in the Middle East and South Asia. These networks pose a threat to the peace and stability in both regions. India and Saudi Arabia are looking to strengthen their security and defence ties. In recent years, concerns over these problems have been more widespread. This is a very important area of focus, and it provides the

foundation for the strategic collaboration. This is certainly essential owing to the fact that transnational terrorist organisations pose a risk to both India and Saudi Arabia. These organisations have been responsible for assaults on innocent people and civilian targets all over the globe, including in India and Saudi Arabia.

The purpose of the strategic collaboration is to strengthen information sharing and coordination in the fight against online radicalization, as well as to combat terrorism and promote peace and stability in both of these areas. In the next years, both India and Saudi Arabia have shown an interest in expanding their collaboration in the sector of bilateral investment and hope to do so. In order to entice foreign direct investments (FDI) and reduce the number of bureaucratic roadblocks that exist, India has made a large amount of effort. In particular, the country has targeted Saudi Arabian FDI. India is a market that is quickly growing and provides great prospects across a range of different sectors, including but not limited to those linked to infrastructure, building, construction, transportation, education, healthcare, and the service sector. In point of fact, India is fast becoming one of the most sought-after places for foreign direct investments (FDIs), and the total amount of FDI received has almost quadrupled since 2014: Foreign direct investment (FDI) in India reached 36 billion US dollars annually in 2013–2014, 45 billion US dollars annually in 2014–2015, 55 billion US dollars annually in 2015–2016, and 60 billion US dollars annually in 2016–2017, respectively.

### **The significance of maintaining strong connections between India and Saudi Arabia**

This rapid development is evidence that the general market is growing more confident in India, and with the execution of additional initiatives to expedite the process of founding companies and making investments, it is projected that the annual FDI will



expand even further than it has already expanded. The government of Saudi Arabia, which is in possession of enormous stocks of sovereign cash, is in a position to make investments in the rising Indian market since it is able to do so because of its wealth. This market has a built-in system for absorbing shocks and is able to provide the requisite trained employees for worldwide firms. Additionally, this market is able to supply people with the necessary skills. In addition to that, this sector offers opportunities for investments with a longer time horizon. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is in a position to make the most of this opportunity, and it is strongly recommended that they do so. Despite the fact that there are still some lingering issues that the current government is working to resolve, cost-benefit analyses indicate that India is now in a favourable state. This is the case despite the fact that there are some lingering concerns. As a direct result of this development, Saudi companies will begin to see India as a potentially lucrative location in which to do business. Those companies who are successful in penetrating the vast Indian market should anticipate significant improvements to their bottom lines as a direct consequence of their efforts. In the meanwhile, the efforts that are being made in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to diversify the economy are opening up opportunities for businesses that are established in India. These opportunities will contribute to the expansion of bilateral relations, and in fact, the number of Indian businesses and personnel who are engaged in the Saudi market is increasing. This growth will benefit the bilateral relations. This is a promising development for the long-term prospects of the two countries' ties. Not only do more people of Indian origin live outside of India than of any other nationality, but people of Indian origin also have a well-deserved reputation for being a successful and cooperative community. This

reputation is due to the fact that people of Indian origin live outside of India in greater numbers than people of any other nationality.

### **Obstacles for India and Saudi Arabia to Confront**

The growth of India and Saudi Arabia's strategic alliance is hindered in a number of additional domains, despite the fact that these domains present a number of hurdles. It's possible that these obstacles will prohibit the collaboration from growing any further. Both the government of India and the government of Saudi Arabia are dedicated to avoiding and resolving minor internal challenges, such as the infrequent cases of exploitation of Indian labourers in Saudi Arabia (primarily workers who are lured and deceived by spurious agents and manpower agencies). The two challenges that India and Saudi Arabia must surmount are those associated with the management of their separate ties with Iran and Pakistan. Iran and India have friendly connections; however, Saudi Arabia and Iran are experiencing a difficult patch in their relationship at the moment, which is causing tension between Iran and India. India and Iran have friendly connections; however, Saudi Arabia and Iran are experiencing a difficult patch in their relationship at the moment. In a similar vein, ties between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan are robust. On the other hand, India and Pakistan have been long-standing adversaries who have not been able to get past the religious animosity that was planted during the split of the subcontinent. India and Pakistan have not been able to get past the religious animosity that was planted during the split of the subcontinent. To put it another way, India and Pakistan have been unable to overcome the religious hostility that was sown during the division of the subcontinent. Even though both India and Saudi Arabia have been successful in keeping their relations entirely bilateral and in putting difficult external issues that could impede their progression out of

their minds, the two countries will still need to make an effort to find a balance between their conflicting interests in order to move forward with their relationship. At the same time, when it comes to issues of transnational terrorism and state-sponsored terrorism, the two have spoken with a unified voice in denouncing all forms of terrorism and have made it clear that it will not be accepted under any circumstances. This is in contrast to the situation that existed prior to September 11, 2001, when the United States was the only country in the world to have a nuclear arsenal. This is in conjunction with the fact that they have made it quite plain that they would under no circumstances condone acts of terrorism. However, in order to fully realise the potential of a strategic relationship, India and Saudi Arabia will need to find a middle ground in their interactions with the countries that pose a threat to the other country. This will be necessary in order to fully realise the potential of a strategic relationship. In order to fully realise the potential of a strategic partnership, this will be essential.

## **CHAPTER 4:**

### **Changing regional scenarios in South Asia and the Gulf**

The fourth chapter provides an analysis of the impact that growing Saudi interests in India have had on the Kashmir dispute between Pakistan and India, where both of the arch-rivals have their own claims on the disputed territory, as well as how the shifting regional scenario in South Asia and the Gulf region shapes and impacts the dynamics of Riyadh's relations with Islamabad and New Delhi. The fourth chapter provides an analysis of the impact that growing Saudi interests in India have had on the Kashmir dispute between Pakistan and India, where both the shifting nature of Riyadh's relationships with Islamabad and New Delhi in respect to India and Pakistan.

The ties that bind Saudi Arabia and Pakistan trace back to the time before the partition of India, when Saudi Arabia responded to a plea from the Muslim League for assistance by providing assistance to Bengali Muslims. After the partition, the relations between the two countries took on a new character despite the fact that both countries were historically and culturally Muslim. His Majesty King Ibn Abdul Aziz, who succeeded to the throne after the passing of his father in 1953, was the first monarch to go to Pakistan after the establishment of the nation. The establishment of a settlement close to Karachi that was given the name "Saudabad" in honour of the travelling figure was the first tangible sign that the two countries were interacting with one another. The anxiety that Saudi authorities had over the post-partition condition of Pakistan, which was characterised by enormous migration, was expressed in the formation of the colony with the support of Saudi Arabia. During the 1965 war, Pakistan received both moral and financial support from Saudi Arabia. Additionally, King Faisal has communicated his unwavering support for Pakistan's Kashmir stance. On August 7, 1967, Prince Sultan bin Abdul Aziz, who was

the defence minister of Saudi Arabia at the time, and Vice-Admiral A.R. Khan, who was the defence minister of Pakistan at the time, signed a military agreement that increased Saudi Arabia's ability to defend itself. As a direct consequence of this, some 15,000 Pakistani troops were sent to the kingdom. In 1969, Pakistani pilots served as co-pilots on Royal Saudi Air Force planes in an effort to thwart an invasion by South Yemeni forces over the border. During the month of December in 1982, the Organisation of Saudi-Pakistani Armed Forces was established, which served to greatly improve the military ties that existed between the two countries. Since that time, Pakistani troops have been garrisoned in the Saudi Arabian cities of Tabuk and Khamis Mushahid as part of a brigade. Pakistan sent a regiment to Saudi Arabia in the beginning of the 1990s in response to Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait.

In point of fact, these missions established a one-of-a-kind friendship between the Saudi royal family and the Pakistani security professionals. Over the course of many decades, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have maintained strong political, economic, and security connections between the two countries. "Because of the significant interpersonal relationships that exist between them, Saudi royals and Pakistani civil-military elites have expanded their existing contacts with one another. During the Indo-Pak war of 1971, the level of goodwill that existed between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan reached its pinnacle. There is no other explanation for India's attack other than "India's aim to dismember Pakistan and taint its Islamic religion", according to contemporary accounts. "Saudi Arabia condemned India's actions as "treacherous and antithetical to all international treaties and human principles," and the country saw no other motivation for India's attack. It was without a doubt one of the most trying times in Pakistan's history. It has been reported that

Saudi Arabia has lent Pakistan a total of 75 aeroplanes in addition to providing bombs and other equipment to Pakistan. It provided Pakistan with moral support, material aid, and diplomatic help at both the regional and international levels in order to assist Pakistan in restoring its image, which had been harmed as a result of Pakistan's use of military action against its East Wing (now Bangladesh).

Because Saudi Arabia supplied the necessary funding, Pakistan was able to purchase F-16s and Harpoon missiles that had been built in the United States in 1977. The total value of these purchases was close to one million dollars.

Pakistan was able to recover from the loss of its East Wing with the financial aid it received from Saudi Arabia. Reports indicate that Saudi Arabia did not recognise Bangladesh until it was given permission to do so by Pakistan. Following the conclusion of the war in 1971, Saudi Arabia gave Pakistan a significant amount of support in its attempts to resume dialogue with India.

## **Relations between the Two Countries**

### **President Asif Ali Zardari Era**

Since 2001, the events that have taken place in Afghanistan have shown how the geopolitical ambitions of Pakistan and Saudi Arabia are intertwined. Both countries placed a high priority on determining the outcome of the insurgency led by the Taliban, as well as the fate of Al Qaeda and the stability of the surrounding area. The majority of Pakistanis believe that their country has a strong relationship with Saudi Arabia; nonetheless, the kingdom has never been defined to Pakistanis as a "friend in any weather," in contrast to China. Up until fairly recently, the relationship between the two countries was marked by its share of highs and lows. During the great majority of Pakistan's military and civilian

regimes, relations between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan have been reasonably cordial, which has contributed to a positive atmosphere in both countries. When something is rotten in the brain, it spreads to the rest of the body.

The Saudis, on the other hand, did not put their full faith in the government of Pakistan that was led by the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) during the years 2008–2013. This was owing to the PPP's supposed anti-security and secular image, as well as President Asif Ali Zardari's Shia heritage. According to papers that were published by Wikileaks, Saudi Arabian King Abdullah called Pakistan's President Asif Ali Zardari "the largest impediment" to the country's prosperity. In one of the files pertaining to Zardari, Abdullah was quoted as saying, "When the head is decaying, it affects the entire body." On January 31, 2013, Zardari made the decision to execute a gas pipeline deal with Iran, which heightened Saudi Arabia's level of mistrust in the political leadership of the party that was now in power. Throughout this time period, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan continued to have important defence and military links with one another. General Kayani, who was serving as Pakistan's chief of army staff at the time, referred to Saudi Arabia as "Pakistan's most significant country" in the year 2011. One year after Osama bin Laden was killed, NATO air attacks on the Salala border post in Pakistan's tribal lands have strained Pakistan's relations with the United States.

#### **Nawaz Sharif's administration's relations**

In Pakistan, the Zardari administration was replaced by the government of Muhammad Nawaz Sharif (2013- 2018). During the time that he was forced to live in exile due to his political beliefs, he and his family did so in Saudi Arabia. He attempted to forge personal connections throughout the nation, which piqued his interest. Nawaz Sharif's

government was successful in beginning Saudi-Pakistani relations during his tenure as prime minister. Saudi Royalty considered him as “Saudi's man in Pakistan”. The relationship between the two countries has been difficult due to the policies, decisions, and tendencies of the PPP administration toward Iran. On May 22, 2013, the government of Saudi Arabia improved its ties with the government of Pakistan's ally and suggested a rescue package with a budget of \$15 billion to help relieve the energy crisis in Pakistan. In 1998, when the Nawaz administration in Pakistan was struggling under the weight of economic sanctions, Saudi Arabia provided Pakistan with a rescue package somewhat similar to this one. As a direct result of this, the Nawaz administration began reviewing previous government policies and overturned a number of choices made during the PPP period.

### **Relations in PM Imran Khan Tenure**

Following his victory in the general elections held in Pakistan in 2018, incumbent Prime Minister Imran Khan delivered his first speech as Pakistan's leader in Saudi Arabia on the evening of September 23, 2019, the day before Pakistan's National Day. He said that the Pakistani government and people are aware that Saudi Arabia has always supported Pakistan in times of crisis and stood with Pakistan. Additionally, Imran Khan upheld the Saudi Arabia-first policy and often travelled to the nation. After taking the oath of office on September 18, 2018, as Pakistan's Prime Minister (PM), he made his first official visit to Saudi Arabia, where he met with Saudi Prince Mohammad Bin Salman in Jeddah. This was his first meeting with a foreign leader since assuming office. When Prince Mohammed bin Salman of Saudi Arabia travelled to Pakistan in 2019, Prime Minister Imran Khan personally greeted him at the airport and took him to his hotel. During the tour, he oversaw



the investment of twenty billion dollars in Pakistan and announced the release of over two thousand Pakistani convicts who had been languishing in Saudi jails. Both of these accomplishments took place in Pakistan.

By supplying Pakistan's energy demands and premium, which together provide a major contribution to Pakistan's national GDP, Saudi Arabia has been a very important contributor to the country's political and economic stability. The total amount of money sent back to the United States from Saudi Arabia in 2013 was \$3.8 billion, representing a compound annual growth rate of 24 percent over the previous decade. On the list of countries that contribute money to Pakistan, Saudi Arabia tops the list with an annual total of 4.5 billion dollars, followed by the United Arab Emirates. Over the last several years, Pakistan has been working to lessen its economic, diplomatic, and political reliance on Saudi Arabia by increasing its relationships across the Muslim world. Specifically, this has been done in an effort to lessen Pakistan's dependence on Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia has been handling Pakistan's foreign policy for decades and has created major interests in the country's local politics. Because of Pakistan's weakness, Saudi Arabia was given the opportunity to manage Pakistan's affairs, and it took advantage of this opportunity. Locally, this has primarily been the result of lobbying efforts to acquire pockets of control in political-party squads and securing the support of Islamists for Riyadh's brand of Islam as a pillar of the Muslim World. Moreover, this has been the case as a result of Riyadh's position as a leader in the Muslim World.

Pakistan felt a link to Saudi Arabia since it is the only country in the world that was founded for religious purposes and has a majority population that adheres to the Sunni branch of Islam. In Pakistan's domestic affairs, Saudi Arabia's reputation has improved as

a result of the country's goodwill gestures, which have taken the shape of loans, remittances, contributions, agreements, and treaties. 39 Saudi Arabia finances Pakistan's madrasas in part because of its anti-Iran agenda and its desire to exert influence on the main form of Sunni Islam that is taught and practised in that country. Two big occurrences happened in 1979, the first being the Islamic revolution in Iran, and the second being the invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union. The level of influence held by Saudi Arabia in Pakistan rose significantly. While the Iranian revolution increased Saudi motivations to impose control over Sunnism in Pakistan, the conflict between the Soviet Union and Afghanistan provided the Saudis with the means to accomplish this goal via the sponsorship of madrasas. A document from WikiLeaks provides a summary of the level of involvement that Saudi Arabia has in the political affairs of Pakistan. "Saudi Arabia is not a simple spectator in Pakistan; rather, it is an active participant," stated the Saudi ambassador to Pakistan. "Saudi Arabia is not a mere spectator in Pakistan".

In the same way that the United States has dabbled in Pakistan's business on occasion, Saudi Arabia has done the same thing, mostly acting as advocates and brokers in Pakistan's internal political difficulties. In addition to charitable and religious organisations, Saudi Arabians have provided financial help to a wide range of Pakistani institutions and organisations, including influential members of Pakistan's political and military establishments. On the other hand, Pakistan is intent on progressively reducing its dependence on Saudi Arabia and, as a result, the influence that Saudi Arabia has on Pakistan's internal politics and foreign policy. As a result, it has endeavoured to undertake a radical reorganisation of its foreign policy in order to realise its objectives without taking into account the preferences of Saudi Arabia. 43 Iran has always played a significant role

in the political competition that takes place in the Middle East. Iran is seen by Saudi Arabia as the most significant threat in the West Asian region.

### **Balance between Iran and Saudi Arabia**

The hostility between Saudi Arabia and Iran can be felt over the whole of West Asia, from Syria to Yemen. Since the early 1970s, the officials of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan have worked hard to strike a cautious balance between Iran and Saudi Arabia. They do this in order to steer clear of any potential intra-Arab confrontations. Both the Iranian and Saudi sides anticipated that Pakistan would join an alliance, but Pakistan decided to maintain its neutrality instead. Because Saudi Arabia is a crucial ally, and Iran is a neighbour, maintaining neutrality was a necessary. This was owing to the fact that "Saudi Arabia is a neighbor". Pakistan has always done a masterful job of managing its connections with all involved parties, whether it be during the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the Iraq-Iran War, the invasion of Kuwait, the Iranian nuclear programme, or the current competition between Iran and Saudi Arabia. The following comment by Omar Aslan may be taken as a summary of the whole conversation: "The 'Islamic Alliance' will continue to meet in the future, but Pakistan will not allow its military be used against Iran or any other entity outside the kingdom." Although Pakistan is aware of the danger, the country does not intend to withdraw its ambassador from Damascus and intends to keep its relations with Iran strong. Despite this, Pakistan will continue to buy liquefied natural gas (LNG) from Qatar and will work to develop its commercial ties with Iran. Because Pakistan is a very valuable country, it has never been in Pakistan's best interest to transfer power to "Kings and Ayatollahs." And this unchanging truth has always worked to Pakistan's favour. Saudi Arabia and Pakistan's bilateral relations have taken on a new facet as a result of

- - Pakistan's decision to refuse a request to send troops to Yemen. Despite its strong military links with countries that routinely help Saudi Arabia with personnel and military training, Pakistan has decided to maintain its neutrality in the battle that is taking place in Yemen. Saudi Arabia and eight other mostly Sunni Arab states were responsible for starting the civil war that broke out in Yemen in 2012.

They initiated an air campaign with the goals of destroying the Houthi rebels, who were supported by Iran, removing Iran's influence from Yemen, and restoring Hadi's administration. There are two likely arguments for why Pakistan did not send troops to Yemen. The first factor was the development of a consensus among the political, military, and civil institutions of Pakistan, which in turn influenced the view of the people and the media. Second, the overflow of sectarian violence inside the state, which has led to an increase in both actions and concerns about the state's internal security. Particularly those that were taken after the deadly attack on a school in Peshawar on December 16, 2014; regional activities, along with China, which called for the development of cordial relations with Pakistan's close neighbours, including Iran; and Pakistan's commitment to neutrality and non-interference in its Middle East foreign policy all helped pave the way for the consensus.

### **The Yemen Issue**

In addition to the conflict in Yemen, Saudi Arabia's fear was heightened by Pakistan's cooperation with regional genomic states including as Turkey and Iran. Both Pakistan and Iran are attempting to bring the territorially linked and defiant Baloch people under control, which gives both countries an incentive to keep the peace in their bilateral relations with one another. Turko-Persian culture, which is distinct from Arab culture, is

the primary influence on the ways of life practised by the people who live in this region. As a consequence, other than Islam, they share a number of other characteristics. The deepening of connections between Pakistan and Iran is one of the primary factors contributing to Saudi Arabia's dissatisfaction with Islamabad. In contrast, Pakistan's relationship with Iran is not just a reaction to the growing relationships that Saudi Arabia has established with India. Iran and Pakistan are bordering countries, and due to the large Shia community in Pakistan, Shia pilgrims often go over the border to visit significant holy sites in Iran.

Since 2012, Pakistan has also depended on the power (electricity) supplied by Iran. This is due to the fact that Iran distributes power to rural districts that border Pakistan but are not connected to the country's main electrical infrastructure. Iran, unlike Saudi Arabia, criticised India over Kashmir. Iran has become Pakistan's partner now that the United States' war in Afghanistan has come to an end. Both countries want a stable Afghanistan and want Kabul to see Islamabad and Tehran favourably. This has led to Iran being Pakistan's partner. Saudi Arabia, in opposition to the necessities and desires of Pakistan, engages in behaviours that are detrimental to the country's bilateral relations.

### **Saudi Arabia's Hyper-Nationalism**

**The Growing Extremism of Saudi Arabia's Nationalist Movement** The concept of nationalism as an ideology is experiencing a renaissance all over the globe and is now being developed into a contemporary political philosophy. It is accurate in the majority of the world's regions, including Saudi Arabia, for example. In Saudi Arabia, where religion plays a significant role in daily life, the notion of nationalism has been seen as incompatible with the country's culture for many years. Through the sermons of the priests, who emphasised

fealty to the monarch, the religious identity helped the realm develop a feeling of unity and legitimise the king's rule. This was accomplished with the assistance of the religious identity. Previous regimes' leaders were concerned that fostering nationalism would lead to an increase in citizens' anxieties over political representation and responsibility. They considered it to be the polar antithesis of an absolute monarch's rule. The circumstances have evolved since we last spoke. The religious identity does not now shape the unity of the kingdom; instead, it stands in the way of the purpose set by the government.

The monarchy has painstakingly built a new brand of nationalism with the goals of elevating younger individuals to prominent positions and reinvigorating reforms. This patriotic rhetoric has been utilised in an effort to win over the favour of the younger generation, which will ultimately lead to a reduction in the dominance of the religious establishment. This discussion helped to further establish the kingdom's position as the dominant political power. In the Middle East, performances from Saudi Arabia are given a stronger patriotic edge because to this brand. The rise to power of Prince Mohammad Bin Salman (also known as MBS) is also connected to this nationalism, which has as its rallying cry "put Saudi Arabia first." This nationalism is now the driving force behind Riyadh's behaviour and policies toward the rest of the world. In order for Saudi Arabia to achieve preeminence, Prince Mohammad Bin Salman seizes every feasible opportunity that will assist the country in expanding its sphere of influence, both strategically and economically. Vision 2030" for the purpose of expanding the economy's range of products and services. In this context, we see a number of steps that differ from the traditional policy of the monarchy, such as lessening the conflict between Arabs and Israelis and keeping a more neutral attitude regarding the crisis in Kashmir. Other examples include the following:

reducing the conflict between Arabs and Israelis and reducing the conflict between Arabs and Israelis. These are only two of the many instances that may be given. During his trip to India in 2018, MBS made a commitment to make investments in the country, noting the increasing economy of the country as a fantastic opportunity for business. As a result, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia need to steer clear of adopting a position that would be detrimental to its economic interests. Both Mohammed Bin Salman of Saudi Arabia and Mohammed Bin Ziyad (MBZ) of the United Arab Emirates believe they have the ability to usher in a new era in their countries. This pragmatic position irritates a number of other allies of Saudi Arabia, Pakistan being one of them. All of these various policies have their origin in MBS's "Vision 2030" plan for the diversification of the economy, which served as the drive for the plan. "To ensure the progressive future of the country, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has formed a vision based on three pillars: a vibrant society, a flourishing economy, and an ambitious nation that capitalises on the country's unique competitive advantages", it says on the website of the government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia is able to play a leading role as the "heart" of Arab and Islamic nations because of its regional status and stature; the kingdom will leverage its investment power to build an economy that is more diversified and sustainable; and the kingdom will leverage its strategic location to link Africa, Asia, and Europe.

### **The Legacy of Saudi Arabia within Kashmir**

According to Pandya, the Salafi Islamic movement, also known as Ahl-i-Hadith, has been "overwhelmingly funded" by Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia has been a significant player in the history of Kashmir and the surrounding area throughout the majority of its existence. This movement has witnessed a huge degree of growth over the last 15–20 years,

according to him, and the Ahl-i-Hadith clerics in Kashmir are said to be devoted to the Saudi royal family. There are around one thousand mosques in the world that practise the Salafi religion. They teach an exceedingly fundamentalist version of Islam, which, according to Pandya, the author of "Radicalization in India: An Exploration," radicalises locals along the lines of pan-Islamist organisations.

Because of Kashmir's syncretic Sufi traditions, puritanical Wahhabism, on the other hand, was unable to make significant headway in the area and spread its influence. Beginning in the late 1990s, Wahhabism went through a period of great expansion," he added, stressing that Pakistan had a part in promoting the rise of the doctrine in Kashmir.

The relationship between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan has always been a positive one. Significant amounts of money sent by the Saudi government have gone toward supporting the Wahhabi movement in Pakistan. Pakistan supported it because they believed that it would be simpler to radicalise more local young along religious lines if Kashmir's Sufi interpretation of Islam was replaced with the rigid Salafist understanding of Islam. This is one of the main reasons why Pakistan supported it. After the upheavals of the Arab Spring, ideologies held by Salafists started to have an increasingly significant impact on Kashmir.

Indian security authorities have taken a hard stance against Salafi clerics in Kashmir in order to combat this radicalization. They have also investigated the petrodollar financing that was developing a "pan-Islamist mentality closely aligned with the ideology of al-Qaeda and ISIS-like transnational terror organisations". Salafism is a type of Islam that is often preached by local clerics in Kashmir. As a consequence of this, the Salafi clergy chose to concentrate on theological concerns and neglect political issues like militancy,



according to Pandya, whose next book will investigate the funding of terrorist activity in Kashmir. As a direct result of this, the Salafi clergy decided to steer clear of political concerns and militant activity. In point of fact, a number of Salafi preachers collaborated with the government in an attempt to dissuade young men from joining violent organisations. This was done in an effort to prevent young men from being involved in extremist activities. Maulvi Shaukat Ahmad was taken from us in 2011 by terrorists who were responsible for his killing. It is believed that the terrorist organisation Lashkar-i-Taiba, which subscribes to the Ahl-i-hadith worldview or the Salafist worldview, was the one responsible for his assassination.

The connection between the government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has been on the rise ever since Modi came to office in 2014. According to what Pandya said, the situation in Kashmir has improved to the point that there are no longer any Salafi preachers who are affiliated with terrorist organisations. It is permitted for Salafi Ahl-i-hadith to operate freely in Kashmir; but, Jamaat-i-Islami, which is supported financially by Pakistan, is not permitted to do so due to the fact that it offers help to terrorist organisations. He made this comment while focusing on the intricate geopolitical processes that are now taking place in Kashmir. These processes are currently being influenced by several countries. “Today, Salafis are in a manner India's supporters in Kashmir”, he added. “This has been the case for quite some time”

Kashmir has continued to play a crucial part in Pakistan's diplomatic efforts, even after India's statement in August 2019 that it would abolish Article 370 from Jammu and Kashmir. However, despite Pakistan's strenuous attempts to rally the world community against India, the country's credibility issue, which is in part attributable to the fact that it

offers safe havens for terrorists, has meant that the country's narrative has a relatively small number of adherents. Despite the fact that there was a lot of anger in the calls, this is still the case.

This time, Pakistan's focus on the Kashmir problem has angered Saudi Arabia, which is Pakistan's most significant friend in the Islamic world. During the trip that Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad Bin Salman (also known as MBS) took to Pakistan in February 2019, Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan made the executive decision to drive MBS himself. As a direct consequence of this, Imran Khan provided MBS the assurance that he could win an election in Pakistan based on his own popularity. The history of the connection between the two nations spans across a considerable amount of time. The deterioration of ties between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan has been compounded by India's emergence as a viable strategic and economic partner. In contrast, the friendship between India and Saudi Arabia has blossomed as a result of India's rise to prominence in these arenas. This phenomena takes place at the same time as geopolitical realignments and the growing of rifts in the Islamic world are taking place.

### **The Importance of India in Saudi Arabia's Grand Strategy**

The attitude that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia takes toward its foreign affairs is influenced in some way by the aims that MBS has established for diversifying and increasing the economy of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia so that it is less dependent on the oil and gas industry. In order to accomplish this goal of economic diversification, MBS has made significant legislative changes. The transformation of the Kingdom into a "global hub" of transportation between Europe, Asia, and Africa is one of these reforms. Other reforms include the privatisation of state assets, the establishment of sovereign funds, plans

to manufacture defence equipment, and the transformation of the Kingdom into a "global hub" of manufacturing. Recent years have seen the implementation of these various changes. The COVID-19 outbreak has led to a reduction in price, and as a consequence, the global oil market has grown more competitive as a result of increasing production of shale oil in the United States. These economic realities, along with Western anti-Saudi sentiment in the wake of the murder of writer Jamal Khashoggi and the humanitarian situation in Yemen, have contributed to Saudi Arabia's lean towards Asia. Also contributing to this lean is the fact that Yemen is in a dire humanitarian situation.

In contrast to the link that exists between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, the relationship that exists between Saudi Arabia and India is thriving. Pakistan is a neighbouring country to both of these countries. Because of the pressure from the United States, India has been forced to look for alternatives to the oil supplied by Iran, and Saudi Arabia is helping to fill the void by delivering approximately 800,000 barrels of petroleum per day. India has been forced to look for alternatives because of the pressure from the United States. In addition to oil, the government of Saudi Arabia has made substantial financial investments in the mining, petrochemical, and infrastructural sectors of India. The planned purchase by Saudi Aramco of a twenty percent ownership in the oil-to-chemicals business of Reliance Industries is one of the most significant transactions involving foreign direct investment to ever take place in India. It is also one of the biggest agreements to ever take place in India. The Saudi Vision asks for the diversification of Aramco's portfolio in order to develop the state-owned firm into a global industrial behemoth and export leader. These investments in India are in line with the Saudi Vision and are in accordance with the goals of the Saudi Vision. Even in the realm of security, the alliance is flourishing, as

enhanced counterterrorism cooperation and the first joint naval exercise are both set to take place in December 2019, respectively. This will mark the beginning of the partnership's second year.

As of the year 2019, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of India was seven times more than that of Pakistan's economy. India's massive consumer market of 1.3 billion people and rapidly growing energy requirements will undoubtedly ensure that it remains an attractive location. This is in spite of the fact that the epidemic had devastating effects on India, as shown by a record 23.9 percent GDP loss in the quarter that spanned April to June. The amount of money that is traded between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia is just \$3.6 billion, however the amount that is traded between India and Saudi Arabia is a whopping \$27 billion. This disparity is due to the fact that commerce between India and Saudi Arabia takes place on a yearly basis. As a direct and immediate result of this, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has selected India as one of its eight partner countries for its Vision 2030 initiative. India is a viable economic partner, whilst Pakistan continues to rely on Saudi Arabia for economic support. The contrast could not be any more obvious. Neither nation has any other economic partners that are even somewhat feasible.

The fruition of Prime Minister Modi's cordial connections with other Gulf leaders has been a contributor to the flowering of Indo-Saudi ties, which has been made possible thanks to the accomplishments of effective diplomacy. Following the beginning of hostilities between Indian and Pakistani soldiers over Balakot in February 2019, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) invited India's Former Foreign Minister Sushma Swaraj to attend a conference on March 1 as their guest of honour. Because of this, Pakistan voiced its disapproval of the situation. Over the course of the last several years,

Saudi Arabia, along with its allies Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates, has bestowed its highest civilian honours onto Modi. These honours have been handed to Modi. Modi also gave the keynote address at the Future Investment Initiative Summit, which was held in Riyadh and served as the occasion for the founding of the India-Saudi Strategic Partnership Council. Both of these events took place in Saudi Arabia.

Even more significant are the timing and symbolism of these overtures; the majority of them occurred in the context of India's revocation of Kashmir's autonomous status and Pakistan's appeals for international assistance. This is significant because the timing and symbolism of these overtures are even more significant. It is important to note that the timing and symbolism of these overtures are much more crucial, which is why this is essential. This has led to an increase in the level of unease that is felt by the leadership of Pakistan, and it has given the rest of the world the impression that Saudi Arabia and its Gulf allies have chosen the side of India in the Kashmir dispute. The result of this has been an increase in the level of unease that is felt by Pakistan.

### **Pakistan's primary Ally**

Relations between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia may continue to be strengthened by security connections, notwithstanding times of instability in the relationship. Because of concerns over the Taliban and Iranian influence in Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia's strategic considerations may continue to involve Pakistan even in the event that the United States withdraws from Afghanistan or leaves the country in some other capacity. In addition, the significance of Saudi Arabia joining CPEC as a third partner and investing \$20 billion in Pakistan's energy and infrastructure cannot be emphasised. Saudi Arabia is expected to make these investments in the near future.

However, Khan's emphasis on Pakistan's future being "linked with China" and Qureshi's travel to China after Bajwa's visit to the Kingdom suggest that Pakistan is acutely aware of its problem with Saudi Arabia and is increasingly leaning towards China. Bajwa's visit to the Kingdom was immediately followed by Qureshi's travel to China. As a direct consequence of China stepping in to fill the economic hole, the future of Pakistan will undoubtedly be impacted by the expanding influence of China. It is possible that the moment has come for Pakistan to turn its focus away from India, which is weakening its historically strong international links, and toward the dragon that is now residing inside its borders. On the other hand, energy-dependent India may be able to take satisfaction in the fact that its active diplomacy toward the Gulf region, coupled with genuine economic engagement, is paying advantages and positioned it to become the chosen South Asian partner of the Gulf region.

### **The Conflict between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan: India's Gains and Losses**

The Narendra Modi government of the Bharatiya Janata Party, which came into office in 2014, is mostly credited for the significant expansion of India's West Asian Policy. As significant power centres in West Asia, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Israel, and Iran have been at the top of India's priority list since 2014. The excursions taken by the Prime Minister paved the way for deeper links to be made with the surrounding region. Between the years 2018 and 2019, a number of West Asian countries, including Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, and Palestine, honoured him with the highest civilian honours that they bestowed upon a civilian. Prime Minister Narendra Modi delivered a speech at the Future Development Initiative (FII) in Riyadh on October 29, 2019, during his recent trip to Saudi Arabia. The event took place on October 29, 2019.

During this visit, the Saudi Kingdom revealed that they would be making an investment of one hundred billion dollars. During the visit, a number of Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) were signed in a variety of fields, including civil aviation, energy, defence, security cooperation, the introduction of rupee, and the regulation of medical products, among others. These memorandums will help promote cooperation across different industries. The trip was significant because it took place at a time when the autonomy of Jammu and Kashmir was being revoked, which caused Pakistan to be shocked and force it to ask for assistance from other countries.

In February of 2014, a military cooperation accord was signed between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Republic of India in New Delhi. "The exchange of defense-related information" and "military education" as well as "cooperation in hydrography, security, and logistics" are all made possible thanks to the agreement. It frightened Pakistani politicians and strategists, who believe that closer connections between Saudi Arabia and India might help India gain strategic parity with the Muslim and Arab countries compared to Pakistan. Pakistani politicians and strategists believed that closer connections between Saudi Arabia and India might help India gain strategic parity with Saudi Arabia. While India has strengthened its counterterrorism cooperation with Gulf nations, Saudi Arabia has made significant investments in various energy and infrastructure projects in India. In addition to valuing its relations with India, Saudi Arabia is working to diversify its economy away from its reliance on oil by investing in areas such as tourism, manufacturing, and technology.

## **Reforms**

In the kingdom, there have been rumblings for some time now about the need for modifications to take place in the areas of both the economy and the culture. Reforms are centred on encouraging tourism, enabling Foreign Direct Investment by removing impediments, expanding the entertainment industry, decreasing subsidies for electricity and water, and initiating an anti-corruption effort. These goals will be accomplished through cutting subsidies for power and water. It is now ranked 62nd in the global rankings of the "Ease of Doing Business," with a score that is better than in 2018. Saudi Arabia's position has improved from 2018. The traditional sectors of energy and oil business no longer constitute the only focus of relations between Saudi Arabia and India. Cooperation between the two countries' top leaders has allowed for its expansion into hitherto unexplored domains and spheres, such as the fight against terrorism, maritime security, the military, key oil reserves, science and technology, and other fields. Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid a visit to Riyadh on the 28th and 29th of October, 2019, at the invitation of His Majesty King Salman. During this trip, he signed the Strategic Partnership Council Agreement, recognising India as one of the Kingdom's Strategic Partner Countries under "Vision 2030" with a high-level partnership council. This visit was in response to the invitation of His Majesty King Salman.

## **Memorandums**

Eleven Memorandums of Understanding and Agreements were signed during the visit. These included agreements on the training of diplomats, the launch of the Rupay card, the training of small and medium-sized enterprises, and partnership in the stock market. The Prime Minister gave a speech at the Third Future Investment Initiative Summit while



he was in town. 78 Terrorism across borders is still the primary worry for the governments of India and Saudi Arabia, respectively, while Riyadh is concerned mostly about missile attacks on oil sites. This was an important topic that was addressed and agreed upon during MBS's trip to India in February 2019, which was when the Comprehensive Security Dialogue and Joint Working Group on Counterterrorism were created at the national security advisor level. Both countries' national security is vulnerable to danger on several fronts, including the air, the land, the sea, and cyberspace. It's possible that having regular interactions at the NSA level might assist both countries in exploring new areas of cooperation in addition to ones that are already flourishing. It is unable to confront challenges coming from numerous fronts, such as the well-trained Houthi rebels, despite being a prominent military force in the Middle East and spending billions of riyals each year on the purchase of weaponry. This is due to the fact that it spends billions of riyals on weaponry purchases.

### **Combined military exercises**

By participating in combined military exercises with Saudi Arabia, India is in a position to provide assistance to Saudi Arabia in the fight against these challenges. In addition, Saudi Arabia has interests in the region around the Indian Ocean; as a result, strengthening collaboration between the two countries in the field of marine security would benefit both countries. The growing ties that India has with Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries make it difficult for Pakistan to pursue its goal of raising the Kashmir Question in a number of international forums, notably within the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). Both Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have gradually become more moderate in their stance on Kashmir as a result of expanding strategic ties

and sensitivity to Indian concerns. India has made significant headway in bolstering its links with the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), as shown by the fact that it has been invited to attend the 46th OIC Foreign Ministers' Meeting in the United Arab Emirates as the "guest of honour" in February 2019. The response that Pakistan gave to India's invitation generated a commotion. In spite of this, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, who over the last several years have emerged as India's most significant regional allies in the Gulf area, have chosen to dismiss Pakistan's concerns. Because Pakistan and China use diverse tactical techniques in their conflict with India, the Indian government must exercise extreme caution and be prepared for any contingency.

#### **Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi visit to Iran**

The trip that Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi took to Iran in 2016 paved the way for the growth of relations between the two countries, which ultimately resulted in the two countries agreeing to fund the construction and operation of Chabahar as well as the creation of a rail connection from there to Zahedan. The Chabahar project, the agreement for which was signed in 2003, served as a representation of the deep historical links that exist between India and Iran. It has provided India with an alternative route to get to Afghanistan. As a direct consequence of cutting down on oil imports from Iran, India was unable to secure this project and is now most likely considering shifting its focus to Saudi Arabia. A golden opportunity has been lost by India. It was considered a pathway to both Afghanistan and the Middle East at the time. On the other side, it is a situation in which both parties may emerge victorious. It is quite encouraging to hear that Saudi Arabia is looking at the possibility of making significant investments in India. In addition to financial inputs, the growth of the Indian diaspora will be sped up by increased interpersonal

connections. Iran claims that it is funding the Chabahar-Zahedan project with its own resources, but it appears to be proceeding with confidence in light of an imminent deal with China for a 25-year, \$400 billion strategic partnership on infrastructure, connectivity, and energy projects. Iran is asserting that it is funding the Chabahar-Zahedan project with its own resources. "India's loss might be China's gain in a world where connectivity is considered as the new currency," and "New Delhi must carefully watch the gap left by India's leave," according to a report from The Economic Times. The connection between Saudi Arabia and India is developing in a positive direction.

The connection between Saudi Arabia and India is developing in a positive direction. As a result of sanctions imposed by the United States, Saudi Arabia has taken over from Iran as India's primary source of oil supply. The country now provides eight lakh barrels a day. In addition, as a result of the partnership, Saudi investment has been encouraged in a variety of economic subsectors in India, such as the mining, petrochemical, and infrastructure subsectors; these subsectors are quite different from the traditional oil business. One of the largest deals ever involving foreign direct investment took place in India when Saudi Aramco made a bid to purchase a twenty percent part in the oil-to-chemicals sector of Reliance Industries.<sup>90</sup> Because India has a sizable consumer base in addition to a wealth of resources that are necessary for the development of any country, relations between the two countries have been improving. In 2019, the Gross Domestic Product of India was seven times bigger than that of Pakistan. India's large market of 1.3 billion people and rising energy demands are expected to continue to make it an appealing destination. This is despite the fact that India has experienced disastrous impacts as a result

of the epidemic, including a drop in its GDP of a record 23.9 percent during the April-June quarter.

The statistics speak for themselves, as follows: While commerce between India and Saudi Arabia totals \$27 billion each year, just \$3.6 billion is exchanged between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.<sup>92</sup> As a direct result of this, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has chosen India to be one of its eight partner countries for its Vision 2030 initiative. In spite of the fact that India is a trustworthy economic partner, Pakistan continues to get financial assistance from Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia is unable to fathom the idea of losing such a sizable market since doing so would hinder its efforts to diversify its economy.

### **Analyzation**

Connections that have existed for a very long time between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan have not been severed, and it is not anticipated that they will be severed in the near future. Despite the fact that the dynamics of the relationship have shifted over the last several years. Pakistan, on the one hand, aspires to reduce its reliance on Saudi Arabia's oil, while Saudi Arabia's "Vision 2030" intends to diversify its economy, making it necessary for it to take a pragmatic approach to its foreign policy. Both of these goals require Pakistan to take a realistic approach to its foreign policy. Because it does not want to jeopardise its relationships with Iran and Turkey, Pakistan does not actively engage in the regional hegemonic policy being pursued by Saudi Arabia. These two longtime friends are finding that their competing priorities are putting a strain on their relationship. In spite of this, both countries are reliant on one another, and breaking relations between them would result in losses for both countries. Pakistan is well aware that it stands to lose a greater amount than Saudi Arabia does. On May 7, 2021, the Chief of Army Staff and

Prime Minister Imran Khan travelled to Saudi Arabia under the guise of this pretext in an effort to return the relationship to its previous state of normalcy. The strained relationships that exist between the sister countries are inappropriate for the Muslim world. In order for Pakistan to be successful in bringing attention to the Kashmir issue, it is necessary for Pakistan to get the support of other Muslim countries. It is an opportunity for India to deepen its ties with Saudi Arabia, while at the same time isolating Pakistan in the Muslim community at large via participation in international organisations. Both historically and economically, India has a significant presence in the Middle East. Because this is such an important subject for India, now is the time for it to grab the opportunity that has been presented to it. India is in a position to capitalise on geopolitical opportunities in the Middle East, such as the deterioration of relations between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia and a shift in the perceptions of India's stature held by actors in the Middle East, in order to press for a resumption of Indian engagement with the region. This opportunity presents itself as India has the opportunity to capitalise on geopolitical opportunities in the Middle East.

India is aiming to capitalise on these shaky connections by presenting itself as a trustworthy alternative to Saudi Arabia's growing number of security requirements. As a result of the evolving geopolitical situations in the region, a split between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan has emerged. This provides India with an opportunity to display its military strength by providing technical assistance to GCC members. To lessen their reliance on western powers, which is being displaced by the United States' declining presence in the area, the GCC nations are considering India as a contingent force as part of their diversification efforts. This is part of the GCC nations' effort to lessen their dependence on western powers. The relationship between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan is now fraught with

difficulties. It is up to India at this point to make the best of a challenging situation that it finds itself in. India is the primary beneficiary of the relationship. In addition to resolving the Kashmir problem, this offers a number of benefits on several fronts, including the political, cultural, economic, and diplomatic fronts.

The recently surfaced viewpoint of the Taliban has the ability to impede India's upward movement. In this conflict, the fact that Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and China have not united into a single entity provides India with a significant edge. How well India seizes this opportunity will determine the course of events for the rest of the region.

The liberalisation of social norms and the development of government services are both components of Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 plan. The development of megaprojects is predicted to encourage foreign investment, involve small and medium-sized firms in the economy, generate job opportunities, and drive domestic consumption. The petrochemical industry, the transportation industry, the entertainment industry, the healthcare industry, and the renewable energy industry are all expected to see expansion in the near future. These internal changes will assist the deepening of the strategic alliance between Saudi Arabia and India, allowing for greater cooperation in the growth of both nations. This will be made possible as a result of the strengthening of the alliance between the two countries. In light of this, the following study examines the growing strategic component of Saudi-Indian relations in the context of their developing bilateral connections and the security concerns faced in their respective regions, namely the Middle East and South Asia. The focus of this study will be on significant shifts in the economic, geopolitical, security and defence, and sociocultural cooperation between the two countries.

**Saudi-India Bilateral Relations** Before the early 1990s, Saudi Arabia and India did not have particularly robust links; nevertheless, due to the economic prospects in the region, they were obligated to investigate the possibility of increasing their level of cooperation. Since then, Saudi Arabia and India have developed powerful trade and economic links, setting the framework for deeper political linkages. This has resulted in the relations between the two countries gradually gaining strategic dimensions. The historic trip that King Abdullah took to India in 2006, which resulted in the signing of the "Delhi Declaration," significantly contributed to the improvement of the bilateral ties between the two countries.

The bilateral relationship between India and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was upgraded to the level of a strategic alliance in 2010 as a result of Dr. Manmohan Singh's reciprocal visit to Saudi Arabia and the signing of the Riyadh Declaration. In addition to the establishment of an official bilateral defence cooperation between India and Saudi Arabia, the collaboration covers a wide range of spheres, including security, economics, military affairs, and politics.

As a direct result of this, India and Saudi Arabia's bilateral relations were significantly reinforced in 2019 as a result of two successful high-level visits. Following the trips that Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi took to one another's countries, the relationship between the two countries was elevated to that of a strategic partnership.

The possibility for Saudi Arabia to spend more than one hundred billion dollars in India over the next several years has helped to enhance ties between the two countries.

- An increase in India's Hajj quota from 170,000 to 200,000 - the biggest operation project managed by the Indian government outside of its boundaries and a crucial component of the bilateral relationship.
- Confirmation that India is one of the Kingdom's key partner nations under Vision 2030.
- The release of 850 Indian inmates who were incarcerated in Saudi jails for minor charges.
- An increase in India's Hajj quota from 170,000 to 200,000.
- A suggestion to create a cooperation council at the highest possible level.

In 2019, Prime Minister Modi of India and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman of Saudi Arabia signed an agreement to establish a joint Strategic Partnership Council, which they agreed to take turns chairing. It will provide the structure in accordance with which bilateral cooperation may be organised across all areas of activity. Eleven other agreements were signed in a variety of fields during Modi's visit to Saudi Arabia in 2019, including security cooperation, collaboration in the defence industry, civil aviation, renewable energy, diplomatic institutions, anti-drug trafficking, strategic petroleum reserves, small and medium-sized enterprises, stock exchanges, and the launch of a digital payment system for the Indian diaspora and visiting pilgrims. All of these efforts demonstrate the deepening of political and economic connections between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Republic of India.

### **Economic Ties**

In terms of their economic relations, Saudi Arabia and India have successfully reconciled their differences thanks to the following three main global macroeconomic



factors, which have been important in both the past and the present: 1) the decline in oil prices since the late 2000s, which propelled India to prominence as a buyer; 2) the fall of the Soviet Union in the 1990s, which created a void in trade partners; and 3) the recent push by Saudi Arabia to diversify its economy, which has led it to seek out investment hubs such as India. One of India's most important trading partners before it collapsed, the Soviet Union was responsible for 16% of India's total exports and imports before it ceased to exist. As a result of the economic downturn that was brought on by the country's destabilisation, India was forced to make a request for financial assistance from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). As a direct result of this, India started to investigate the possibility of exporting various goods to the Gulf nations, which ultimately led to increased economic links. After the fall of the Soviet Union, Saudi Arabia emerged as one of India's most significant West Asian allies, joining the ranks of Iran and Israel in this regard.

As a result, India expanded its dependence on the Gulf nations for both its economic and energy needs, notably after Iraq's collapse in the years after its invasion of Kuwait in 1990 and the ensuing Gulf War. In addition, India has become an important customer for Gulf nations as a result of falling oil prices and a turbulent market since the late 2000s. In view of the fact that Iran is willing to sell oil to India, Saudi Arabia has to make the most of the fact that India has transformed from an oil consumer dependent on the Gulf to a customer with increased bargaining power. In conclusion, and in the context of these declining oil prices, the rising demand for economic diversification of the Gulf economies has led to India becoming an opportunity for the Gulf more generally, and Saudi in

particular, to accomplish their economic goals. This has occurred as a result of India becoming an economic powerhouse in recent years.

In this sense, more recent statistics pertaining to economic connections between Saudi Arabia and India include the following:

- China, the United States of America, and Japan are India's three most important commercial partners, while Saudi Arabia is India's fourth largest trading partner, with bilateral trade reaching \$27.48 billion in 2017-2018.
- The value of two-way commerce between Saudi Arabia and India in 2019 was estimated to reach 33.07 billion dollars US. The overall value of India's exports to Saudi Arabia was 6.24 billion dollars, while the value of India's imports from Saudi Arabia was 26.84 billion dollars.
- After Iraq, Saudi Arabia is India's second-largest supplier of oil after India's own domestic production.

According to the Saudi Arabian General Investment Authority (SAGIA), as of March 2020, there are 476 Indian companies registered in Saudi Arabia as either joint ventures or 100% Indian-owned businesses, with a combined worth of \$1.5 billion. These licences are for projects that will be carried out in a variety of sectors, including management and consultancy, construction, telecommunications, information technology, financial services, software development, and pharmaceuticals.

- Saudi Arabia has \$315 million worth of interests in India, making it the 39th largest investor in the country. ARAMCO, SABIC, ZAMIL, E-holidays, and the Al Batterjee Group are among the most important investment organisations in the region Quamar, Muddassir. *Indo-Saudi Relations: Emerging Strategic*

*Dimensions*. Vol. 32. King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies (KFCRIS), 2018.

- SABIC invested more over one hundred million dollars when it opened its research and development centre in Bangalore in November of 2013.
- In Raigad, Maharashtra, Saudi Aramco and ADNOC of the United Arab Emirates are collaborating on the development of the US\$44 billion "West Coast Refinery & Petrochemicals Project Limited."
- The Saudi company Al-Fanar is now working on a power facility in Kutch that will have a capacity of 300 megawatts.
- In 2018, Saudi Aramco and gumpro, which is located in Mumbai, signed a memorandum of understanding to develop a drilling facility.
- Saudi Arabia is considering making a \$15 billion offer to buy a 20% stake in the oil-to-chemicals division of India's Reliance Chemicals, which has a market value of \$75 billion.

Jio Platforms, the most successful telecoms and digital firm in India, has received an investment commitment of \$1.5 billion from the Public Investment Fund (PIF), the sovereign wealth fund of Saudi Arabia. PIF will end up owning a part in Jio Platforms equal to 2.32 percent of the company. As a result, the Saudi economy is becoming more receptive to Indian investors, enterprises, labour force, and trained professionals, which is luring them to engage the expanding sectors of hospitality, tourism, housing, and information technology, etc., as outlined in Vision 2030. This is attracting Indian workers as well. In a similar vein, India's development programmes, such as "Skill India", "Digital India", and "Smart Cities", are projected efforts within the framework of Saudi Arabia's

vision plan, which intends to encourage economic growth via the promotion of development. The growing importance of economic ties puts into perspective the significance of geopolitical contacts and concerns in the process of the building of the Saudi and Indian strategic alliance.

### **Petroleum Politics**

In spite of their shared need on oil, Saudi Arabia and India have run into difficulties in recent years due to the political climate surrounding the oil industry. For instance, as a direct result of the decision made by OPEC to reject New Delhi's requests for greater production to boost the global economy, Indian state refiners have announced their intention to reduce oil imports from Saudi Arabia by almost a quarter in the month of May. This has resulted in increased tensions between India and Saudi Arabia. After China, Japan, and South Korea, India has surpassed South Korea to become the fourth most important market for Saudi Arabia's oil exports and trade surplus. The nation's state refineries, which account for around 60 percent of India's total refining capacity of 5 million barrels per day (BPD), bring in an average of 14.7-14.8 million barrels of Saudi oil every single month. More than eighty percent of India's oil needs are met by imports, making it the third-largest oil consumer and importer in the world. In February, the United States overtook Iraq to become India's second-largest supplier, after China. Saudi Arabia, which has for many years been one of the top two suppliers to India, is presently in fourth position, which is its lowest ranking since January 2006 when it was in fifth place. Managing political and economic relations with Western Europe and the United States used to be a key priority for Saudi Arabia and OPEC. However, these connections have become less important in recent years.

While more developed economies in North America, Europe, and Northeast Asia are predicted to fall or remain stable over the next few years, India and China are forecasted to contribute a little rise to the overall level of oil consumption in the globe. In the preceding two decades, a decline in oil consumption as a percentage of GDP, rising fuel taxes, and the shale revolution in the United States have all contributed to a reduction in Europe's and the United States' vulnerability to price changes in the Middle East. As a direct result of this, India will become an increasingly important market for oil exporters. Saudi Arabia has been eager to develop strategic deals with Indian refiners and gasoline distributors in order to secure exclusive access to one of the world's largest and fastest-growing international markets. This access would allow Saudi Arabia to compete more effectively with other countries. As a consequence of this, pricing shifts have the biggest influence in Asia, and more specifically in India and China. As a consequence of this, these relationships will need greater economic, diplomatic, and political attention.

### **Geopolitical Stance**

The peace and safety of the subcontinent of India has a significant impact on the stability and safety of the Middle East region. From the vantage point of India, the continuing civil war in Syria, Iranian aggression, the conflict in Palestine, and the crisis in Yemen all present substantial threats to the peace in the area. South Asia is also coping with huge challenges, some of which include terrorism and extremism, as well as cyber and marine security. The Kingdom's position and influence in West Asia, on the one hand, and India's centrality in South Asian geopolitics, on the other, have made it possible for Saudi Arabia and India to develop a productive working relationship via the sharing of expertise and best practises.

## **Anti-Terrorism**

The two countries are becoming closer to one another for a number of reasons, one of which being the growing worry about extremism and terrorism. In 2006, Saudi Arabia and India took their collaboration in the fight against terrorism to the level of a bilateral agreement by signing a memorandum of understanding. The leaders of the two countries' criticism of terrorism, extremism, and aggression only served to reaffirm that terrorism is a global threat that affects societies, whether it occurred during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's historic visit to Saudi Arabia in 2016 or the 2019 Riyadh Declaration or Crown Prince 5 Mohammed bin Salman's last visit to India. This greatly boosted the actions of counterterrorism, the exchange of information, and the coordination between law enforcement agencies.

## **Pulwama Attack and Saudi Stance**

Following the recent terrorist attack on a CRPF convoy in Pulwama, which was carried out by the Pakistani organisation Jaish-e-Mohammed and resulted in the deaths of over 40 Indian soldiers, King Salman's recent journey to India in 2019 took place at a particularly dangerous time. One of the most important things I learned from his trip was the need of working together with the rest of the international community to condemn terrorist organisations and the states that harbour or fund them. At the level of national security advisers, India and Saudi Arabia are attempting to form a "Comprehensive Security Dialogue" and a "Joint Working Group on Counterterrorism". Both of these groups will focus on counterterrorism. In the past, India was also endangered by the presence of IS, especially after the 2019 declaration made by members of IS that they would expand their Indian Wilayah. In particular, this remark caused India to feel

particularly vulnerable. As a response to this threat, the government of India established a separate agency with the responsibility of monitoring the organisation. It is essential to bring attention to the fact that many Indian IS members have engaged in operations outside of India, including a number of individuals who have their headquarters in Gulf nations like Iraq. In terms of security cooperation, India and the United States adopted a similar approach to combat Al Qaeda in the 2000s. Additionally, the evolving perspectives of India and Gulf states regarding the Taliban are an example of the two countries' collaboration in the field of security.

It is crucial to acknowledge that the strain in ties between India and Pakistan is a direct effect of these changes in how people interact with one another. The proximity of Pakistan to the Gulf States has made it easier for India to establish relationships with those countries. Pakistan has broken out of this cycle, which culminated in the country's achievement of independence. • In 2019, the two countries came to an agreement to form a joint working group on counterterrorism and a comprehensive security discourse in order to more effectively fight terrorism. The importance of this lies in the promotion of strategies that will protect the safety and security of waterways in the regions around the Indian Ocean and the Gulf from dangers that might have an adverse effect on the interests of the two countries.

Pressure from Iran Concerns Regarding Security Despite the fact that oil, business, and expatriates are the foundations on which Saudi-Indian relations are built, they also provide a framework for "strategic" participation in both of their respective conflict-prone regions, South Asia and the Middle East. Within the context of this discussion, the impact of other countries, most notably Pakistan and Iran, is crucial. In an interview that took place

during Modi's trip to Riyadh in 2019, the Indian prime minister said that India and Saudi Arabia have comparable worries over the safety of the region. 2015 was a difficult year for ties between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan owing to Islamabad's unwillingness to join the Saudi-led war in Yemen and subsequent reluctance to join the Islamic coalition against terrorism, which is comprised of 34 countries. Despite this, they continue to have a connection.

### **The country's links with India are not severed as a result of its relationships with Pakistan**

In 2016, Saudi Arabia's Minister of Foreign Affairs Adel Al-Jubeir made the statement that his country's "relationships with Pakistan do not come at the price of its links with India." In contrast to Malaysia and Turkey, Saudi Arabia has maintained a neutral stance in the wake of India's decision to repeal Article 370 of its constitution, which resulted in Kashmir's integration with the rest of the region. This was done in order to ease tensions between India and its neighbouring countries. Iran serves as an important gateway to Afghanistan and Central Asia since Pakistan blocks India's access to Afghanistan. Afghanistan and Central Asia may all be reached via Iran. In addition, before the United States tightened its sanctions, around 15% of India's oil supply came from Iran. This has now changed. India has given its support to the Arab idea for a nuclear weapons-free zone in the Middle East. This is because India is aware that Iran's nuclear programme might potentially destabilise the area.

### **Iran an Important ally for India's strategic interests**

The conflict between Saudi Arabia and Iran is considered as a difficult political issue in the region that has an effect on the connections between a numbers of different



countries. The Chabahar port in Iran is considered a natural entry to Afghanistan and the other Central Asian nations. As a result, Iran is an extremely important strategic ally for India. India has continued to construct facilities at the Chabahar port, which is located in Balochistan near to the Chinese-Pakistani port of Gwadar, despite the fact that the United States has imposed sanctions on the country. India has been using this port to transport goods for Kabul's growth to and from the city. In addition to this, the port is used to facilitate the growth of commercial linkages between India and Afghanistan and Iran by exporting items from those countries. The Chabahar port not only gives India economic access to Uzbekistan but also makes it possible to create a resource-rich Central Asian region. India and Iran both have an interest in Afghanistan for many reasons, including its energy resources and the port of Chabahar.

Regarding the Doha agreement reached between the United States and the Taliban, India and Iran have been in contact with one another. Iran will benefit from increased stability in its neighbouring region and expanded opportunities for its many ethnic groups, an aim that India also seeks to achieve. However, in order for ties between India and Iran to flourish, India will need to invest the same kind of diplomatic support and influence as it has in its growing relations with Saudi Arabia. As a consequence of the rising diplomatic assaults on Turkey, India is put in a difficult geostrategic position as a result of its political and economic preference for Saudi Arabia. This preference comes as a direct result of the escalating attacks. As a result of the change in political purpose between India and Saudi Arabia, Pakistan no longer has a substantial influence on the working relationship between Saudi Arabia and India.

## **The Organization of Islamic Cooperation and Pakistan**

The recent reluctance of Saudi Arabia to back Pakistan's proposal for an early summit of Organization of Islamic Cooperation Foreign Ministers in 2020 to address Kashmir is illustrative of the trajectory of the growing relationship between the two countries. Despite this, Pakistan is said to have turned down Saudi Arabia's offer to organise a joint summit on the issues of Palestine and Kashmir on the grounds that it believed Kashmir would not get enough attention at the meeting. The backing of India for the position taken by Saudi Arabia in multilateral forums would be the last hurdle that must be overcome before a real strategic collaboration can be established between India and Saudi Arabia.

After receiving a snub from Saudi Arabia that Pakistan should not hijack the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) forum, Pakistan Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi acquiesced to a mention of Jammu and Kashmir in the documents adopted at the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) foreign ministers' meeting held in Niger in the last week of November. The meeting was held in the country of Niger.

In the past, Qureshi had asked that the foreign ministers of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation have a special conference to find a solution to the Kashmir issue. If this did not succeed, he had threatened that Pakistan would organise a meeting of Islamic countries outside of the OIC framework. The Saudi reaction was immediate, as Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (MBS) revoked a \$3 billion loan that had already been paid to Pakistan, stopped oil delivery on a delayed debt, and restricted flights from Pakistan (while allowing them from 25 other nations).

**How did a relationship that had existed for so long between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia all of a sudden become so strained?**

The explanation lies in Pakistan's inability to comprehend the new forces changing Middle Eastern politics, with Iran, Turkey, and Malaysia on one side, and Saudi Arabia and Israel on the other, engaging in harsher competition. This competition has resulted in a more hostile environment for Pakistan.

MBS has taken effective control of Saudi Arabia, and he considers the Supreme Leader of Iran, Ayatollah Khamenei, to be "worse than Hitler." MBS sees Iran as his unyielding opponent, and it is Iran's goal to undermine Saudi hegemony and rule the whole Islamic world.

The campaign of "maximum pressure" implemented by the Trump administration has not been successful in altering Iran's behaviour. Iran has moved on to target its competitors by using its network of proxies in Iraq, Syria, Yemen, and Lebanon. You may recall the attack in September 2019 on two Saudi oil sites. Iran has acquired enormous influence in these countries as a result of this strategy. By taking advantage of the United States' departure from the nuclear deal, it was able to cut the 'breakout period' (the amount of time required to reach the nuclear weapons stage) from around one year down to three months.

The composed manner in which the United States responded to the attack on its oil infrastructure made it abundantly clear to Saudi Arabia that it need further external backup in order to adequately defend itself.

Not only does Israel share Saudi Arabia's unyielding animosity towards Iran, but it has also repeatedly demonstrated a willingness to act against Iran. Most recently, on

November 27, Israel is believed to have assassinated an Iranian nuclear scientist named Mohsen Fakhrizadeh after coming to the conclusion that Iran was dangerously close to acquiring the capability to produce nuclear weapons.

This cooperation allows the United States to oppose China and Russia's attempts to increase their influence in the region by keeping Saudi Arabia and other Arab states inside her sphere of influence. With the exception of investigating the potential of restarting a nuclear accord in light of Iran's destabilising behaviour, it is very improbable that President-elect Joe Biden would reverse the major choices made by President Trump.

Today, a number of Arab states, like Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, and others, place a higher priority on restraining the growing influence of Iran in the area than they do on finding a solution to the problem of the Palestinians.

Pakistan's major point of reference for analysing the developing political situation in the Middle East is Kashmir's status. It leans more toward Iran, Turkey, and Malaysia, all of which have openly supported her, as opposed to Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and others who are taking a more balanced posture, respecting India's sensitivities. Malaysia is one among the countries that has publicly supported her. Not only will India become the largest buyer of Saudi crude in the future (given China's slowing economy and decreasing population), but it will also be able to significantly assist Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and other nations (along with Israel and the United States) in achieving their objectives of rapid economic development.

The study of history suggests that countries with an outlook that is more moderate and progressive have progressed more quickly than those countries with an outlook that is more authoritarian and insular. It is unfortunate that Pakistan has not made much progress

in the latter area in recent years. Future infrastructure links through the unlawfully seized area of Gilgit-Baltistan with Central Asian and Gulf nations would require India to carefully evaluate the strategic ramifications of an adversarial Pakistan becoming increasingly dependent on an intransigent China. These links would be necessary for the establishment of these links.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has requested that the international community support Saudi Arabia, particularly in light of the recent attacks that have been carried out on Saudi oil installations, and to take a strong and unequivocal stance against this behaviour that poses a risk to the economy of the entire world. As a direct consequence of this, both India and Saudi Arabia recognise the need of maintaining open lines of communication with one another. In order to protect their respective interests, Saudi Arabia and India will need to devise strategies that strike a healthy balance between working together and competing with other states involved in their respective foreign policies.

### **Power Structure and Hierarchy**

The creation of a new collective security architecture that takes into account the power dynamic existing between China and India highlights the necessity of a Sino-Indian cooperative collaboration in order to maximise the two countries' respective benefits. This alliance will have significant repercussions for the future of the two countries as well as the Gulf in terms of the dynamics of Gulf security in the future. The Gulf region, China, and India need to migrate from a transactional to a strategic collaboration in order to build a vision for the future that goes beyond oil in terms of a buyer-seller relationship. Beijing's approach in the region is to change and maximise its economic and commercial profits

from the existing regional order. This is the attitude that Beijing has toward other countries in the region.

China views the GCC as a vital consumer market that has the potential to contribute to the country's overall economic development. More technologically sophisticated commodities (social media platforms, e-commerce, innovative city management, and surveillance) from companies such as Net Dragon, Tencent, and Huawei have also been a significant source of trade and have been well accepted by the expanding tech sector in all areas. This acceptance can be seen in the fact that the tech sector is growing. As the location of China's first overseas joint-venture drone manufacturing at Al-Kharj, Saudi Arabia has also made purchases of weaponized Chinese military technology. In particular, the country has invested in unmanned aerial vehicles.

In the context of the links that exist between the GCC and China, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) represents an additional key feature. The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) fulfils China's goals in the region by ensuring the safety of important maritime routes and providing the Gulf Cooperation Council with opportunities for economic expansion. However, China's strategy and foreign policy are distinguished by its involvement with regional powers and by its policy of conflict avoidance. This is both an issue of China's national security and a matter of principle. Concentrating on the economic realm as the primary focus of this fundamental approach has the potential to have a significant influence on the growth of political interactions between the GCC and China. India emerges as a significant role in the building of a balanced security framework, while China maintains its strategic position in the region. Whereby both countries commit to adopting a more adaptable way of approaching policy.

Given that China's size and activities already constitute a threat to India's global interests and security, adopting a non-alignment strategy with China would not be in India's best interest. China's size and actions already pose a threat to India's global interests and security. For example, China's alliance with Pakistan and its increasing connections with other South Asian states provide a significant challenge to India's position in the area. In addition, since Beijing is able to provide financial assistance and act as a counterbalance to New Delhi, it may be able to convince India's smaller neighbours to play one power against the other, which will be detrimental to India inside its own boundaries. As a direct result of this, both India and China may have the objective of establishing a variety of strategic relationships in the Gulf region by combining regional ties that are conducive to India's and China's respective goals. This will likely result in a greater degree of influence in this region.

Imports constitute a big part of both India's and Saudi Arabia's defence industries, and both countries are heavily reliant on them. Despite this, there is a rising understanding of the imperative to diversify defence markets and achieve self-sufficiency in their own defence industrial complexes. This is a positive development. In spite of the fact that the two countries have not yet attained their full potential, they continue to progress their cooperative efforts in the realm of defence bilaterally. Security dynamics have encouraged both parties to increase the number of security and defence partnerships. These partnerships include information sharing, military exercises, and military training, among other potential support mechanisms that are listed in both Saudi Vision 2030 and PM Modi's "Make in India" initiative.

Regular conversations on matters of defence are held via channels of cooperation that have been created, and a number of different strategies have been investigated and put into action. The chiefs of defence, expert exchange programmes, training, interactions at the delegation level, and joint exercises have all benefited from high-level visits, which have led to advances being made in these areas. India and Saudi Arabia are shifting their relationship from one based only on buying and selling to one that is more aligned with strategic alignment. The most recent and first naval exercise slated for 2020 between the two countries to ensure the safety and security of waterways in the Indian Ocean and Gulf regions reveals a considerable convergence in the relationship between the two countries. In this context, the joint statement that was made in 2019 in the aftermath of Modi's visit paves the way for the first Saudi-Indian naval exercises, which are slated to take place in 2020. The purpose of these drills was to evaluate the interoperability of the two navies from the Strait of Hormuz to the Strait of Malacca and were scheduled to take place in the waters off the coast of Saudi Arabia.

In view of China's shifting geostrategic stance, the projected engagement of the Indian and Saudi militaries in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) in 2019, which is part of New Delhi's vision for the Indo-Pacific region, is crucial for the maintenance of regional security and order. The alliance is beginning to take shape as a direct result of Riyadh's aim to play a more active role in the region around the Indian Ocean. Saudi Arabia is now India's second-largest Western IOR partner, surpassing France as a consequence of Saudi Arabia's aim to extend its presence along some of Africa's eastern coast ports. This goal has led to Saudi Arabia overtaking France. In 2019, Modi welcomed the Crown Prince to New Delhi, where the two leaders reached an agreement that New Delhi and Riyadh should



“work together with other Indian Ocean Rim Countries to enhance maritime security, which is vital for the security and prosperity of both countries and the safe passage of international trade”. New Delhi and Riyadh should “work together with other Indian Ocean Rim Countries to enhance maritime security”, according to the two leaders. The narrow Strait of Hormuz is an important strategic route for worldwide trade. Through this strait, about one third of the world's liquefied natural gas and over one quarter of the world's oil consumption are transported. These military programmes have brought to light the possibility for the monarchy to examine other kinds of security measures. Additional significant advancements in defence and security include the following:

- The signing of the Memorandum of Understanding for Defense Cooperation in February of 2014
- Joint efforts in the areas of counterterrorism operations, regional maritime security, cybersecurity, and collaborative manufacture of defence goods, as well as an emphasis on shared regional and international security concerns.
- The establishment of a Saudi-Indian "Joint Committee on Defense Cooperation" (JCDC) to facilitate the growth of a defence collaboration between the two nations. As a result of the committee's meetings in 2012, 2016, 2017, and 2019, the two parties have decided to engage in training and capacity building exercises, information sharing, and maritime security, which will ultimately enhance their bilateral security cooperation.
- It may be beneficial for the area if India and the Islamic Military Counter-Terror Coalition, which has its headquarters in Riyadh, decided to form some kind of partnership.

- Saudi armed forces frequently take part in training programmes at Indian military schools such as the National defence College, the College of Defence Management, and the Defence Services and Staff College India.
- The Indian chief of staff committee and director of naval staff, Admiral Sunil Lanba, are frequent visitors to Saudi ports.
- Since the early 2000s, the Royal Saudi naval forces have increased their naval engagements with the Indian Navy and Coast Guard. The Deputy Minister of Defense of Saudi Arabia, Mohammed bin Abdullah alayesh, and the Commanders of the Military Services were among the people he met with.
- Saudi Arabia has been eager to strengthen maritime security cooperation with India in the western Indian Ocean, which includes some of the busiest shipping lanes, such as the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden, the Arabian Sea, and the Gulf of Oman.
- Lanba visited the Naval Operations Centre, the Naval Fire and Rescue School, and the Western Fleet at Jeddah, which included a visit to HMS Dammam.
- As part of "Operation Raahat," Indian planes and ships were given permission by the Saudi Ministry of Defense to evacuate Indian nationals from Sanaa, Aden, and Al-Hodeidah in Yemen in 2015.

This event served to highlight the breadth and depth of the defence cooperation that exists between India and Saudi Arabia. In addition, the Indo-Saudi defence and security relationship may find success with a strategy that involves the provision of services with dual-use potential. Dual-use manufacturing would make it possible for the two countries to develop electronic boards and computers for armoured vehicles, public transportation,

and industrial applications that can be used for both military and civilian purposes. This would be made possible via dual-use manufacturing. A contract between two countries for the development of dual-use technology that is committed to the indigenization of the defence industrial complex would satisfy defence interests while also encouraging collaboration in other sectors, such as agriculture. Both Saudi Arabia and India stand to benefit strategically and internally from the development of their respective defences if such a policy were implemented.

Socio-cultural Ties Interactions between the populations of the two countries, which may take on a variety of forms but serve as the bedrock of relations between Saudi Arabia and India, Due to its proximity to India as well as the fact that it shares many cultural characteristics with India, such as religion, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has become an appealing destination for Indians who are looking for employment opportunities in countries other than India. The largest expatriate community in the Kingdom is made up of the 2.6 million members of the diaspora, the most of whom are employed in the hospitality and mining industries. Reiterating the relevance of maintaining the diaspora as an asset for both nations, the primary focus of cultural exchanges and interactions need to continue to be on strengthening the connection between the two countries. As Saudi Arabia focuses more on the growth of its entertainment and tourism sectors, the Indian diaspora is playing an increasingly important part in the country's economic development. Because of this, the film industry has the potential to serve as a platform for soft power. This is especially true when considering the tremendous growth that the Indian film industry has experienced and the fact that it is the most rapidly emerging multilingual sector in India, targeting Saudi audiences. Similarly, cultural engagement, such as promoting yoga, gives

the bilateral meeting between the countries with much-needed importance by emphasising the welcome inclusion of other cultural activities. This highlights the welcome incorporation of other cultural activities.

### **India is a desirable geographic location**

On the other hand, India is a destination that many people choose to visit for vacations, medical trips, and educational trips. One Indian ambassador said that "the education sector has immense potential for improving ties between the two countries." As an example, Indian colleges have lured Saudi students on scholarship to study in India. The annual pilgrimage known as Hajj is another component of Saudi Arabia and India's relationship. The Hajj Quota was increased by 24,975 in 2019, making it possible for around 200,000 Indians to do the pilgrimage in August 2019. The two countries have been able to enhance their cultural cooperation thanks to the shared religious beliefs that they share, which has resulted in an increase in the number of religious tourists and has made it easier for people to engage with one another. Therefore, the strong sociocultural ties that exist between Saudi Arabia and India act as a bridge between the two countries, creating a community that fosters and develops the connection while also contributing to its growth.

### **Final thoughts and observations**

In general, Saudi and Indian relations have progressed through a number of phases before becoming stable bilateral connections, and they are continuing to develop a strong strategic component. This has occurred prior to the establishment of permanent bilateral relationships. The two nations have a common past, as well as strong economic and commercial links, and both are global economies that are rising and looking for alternate forms of sustainable development and security systems. Indicators of the tight links that

exist between the two countries include the large number of Indians who find employment in Saudi Arabia as well as the ongoing political and diplomatic dialogue that takes place between the two nations. As a direct response to the shifting geopolitical landscape, the two countries have strengthened their strategic relationship and collaboration in the security and defence sectors, as well as their economic and trade connections. In doing so, they are aware of the difficulties that are presented by foreign opponents and have taken measures to address these challenges. It is heartening that there is the potential for progress to be made in bilateral relations, which would give the opportunity to leverage strong cooperation in a number of important strategic areas.

In spite of these possibilities and prospects, the two countries have not been able to make the most of their individual assets to the degree that they might have. The following is a short list of some of the most important subjects that, in order to develop cooperation, need more study as well as fruitful discourse.

## **Energy**

### **(a) Hydrocarbons**

Over the course of many decades, energy has been one of the primary pillars that has supported the development of bilateral relations between India and Saudi Arabia. It is estimated that by the year 2040, India's consumption of oil and LPG would have more than doubled, going from 3.7 million barrels per day (mb/d) to 8.1 million mb/d (EIA). Already more than forty percent of India's total import bill is constituted of POL (petroleum, oil, and lubricants), while fluctuating energy prices on global markets continue to have a rippling influence on both the economy and society as a whole. In light of this circumstance, India is required to not only rein in the rapid growth of its energy expenses

but also enter into new agreements with the Kingdom that have the potential to protect its supply of oil and gas. On the one hand, some policy measures may be implemented to reduce India's growing energy costs; on the other, certain policy initiatives could be done to defend Saudi Arabia's energy interests in the Indian market. These policy actions could provide a win-win situation for both countries:

The current relationship of buyer and seller between the two countries has to be transformed into a partnership. It is possible that Saudi Arabia would provide Indian investors the opportunity to take part in the country's gas business. This would be very beneficial for India, since one of the goals of the Indian government's Strategic Plan 2011-2017 is to make affordable and dependable energy available to all of the country's citizens.

(ii) Both India and Saudi Arabia may think about doing energy business in their respective countries' domestic currencies, that is, the rupee and the riyal. This is not a completely original thought; India has engaged in behaviour quite similar to this in the past with Iraq. Over sixty billion United States dollars are made annually from the sale of petroleum products in India, making it the sixth largest refinery centre in the world. In recent decades, India has maintained its position as the dominant player in the refined petroleum market in Asia, while Saudi Arabia has made strides toward becoming the dominant player in the Asian crude market. As a result, Riyadh is able to synergize its interests with New Delhi and benefit from India's comparative advantage in the refinery business by doing the following:

- (a) Ensuring a relatively stable and uninterrupted supply of oil and LPG to India.
- (b) Encouraging Saudi Arabia's private sector to invest in India's refinery projects.
- (c) Participating in India's upstream sector.

- (d) Assisting in the maintenance of strategic oil reserves and securing their own.
- (e) Resources that Can Be Renewed Solar, wind, and bioenergy are just few of the alternative energy sources that India and Saudi Arabia might potentially work together on.

Wind power is something that India and Saudi Arabia might potentially utilise together. India has built the industrial ability to build wind energy equipment of a quality that is on par with the best that can be found elsewhere in the world. As a result, India has become one of the largest producers of wind energy. Saudi Arabia, which has a massive coastline, would also be interested in forming a partnership with India in this sector. There is a possibility that countries like India and Saudi Arabia would take part in its solar energy sector. The Kingdom has made the collection of solar energy a high priority, thus it has established a separate organisation with the specific mission of doing this. It is possible that India would work with Riyadh and become one of its partners. India is a pioneer in the area of solar energy in Asia. India should organise science and technology exhibitions in major Saudi cities, assist the Kingdom in establishing research and development centres to harness solar energy, and, as a mark of achievement, display its plan targets for incorporating solar energy into the overall energy mix in order to demonstrate its technological prowess and capacity.

For example, it has a goal of producing 100 GW during the next five years. At the institutional level, both countries would want to think about the possibility of working together with their most prominent renewable energy organisations, including solar. The nuclear energy sector by the year 2020, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia intends to have constructed 22 reactors at a total cost of \$80 billion. In the field of nuclear power, Saudi

Arabia and China have formed a strategic partnership. There is a possibility that India would study the chances available in the Saudi market for nuclear power. It is possible that New Delhi will explore the possibility of cooperating with the kingdom in the following areas: • training Saudi personnel to operate reactors; • (ii) assisting Saudi Arabia in the development of fast reactors and the thorium fuel cycle, as India has developed expertise in these two areas; and • (iii) establishing research and development in developing and promoting the use of small nuclear reactors in water desalination plants, especially in remote desert areas. The desalination of water is one of the most significant users of energy in the kingdom; (iv) India is also able to help Saudi Arabia with the management of nuclear waste. Over the course of the preceding five years, the value of trade between India and Saudi Arabia has more than quadrupled, reaching a total of more than \$48.7 billion (2013-14).

At the moment, the kingdom of Saudi Arabia ranks as the fourth most important business partner for India. The overall value of Saudi Arabia's imports and exports is \$12 billion, while the country's exports make up three-quarters of the total trade value (\$36 billion). The primary factors contributing to the widening gap in trade balance are the climbing cost of crude oil on global commodity markets and the rising appetite of the Indian economy for oil products. If trade between the two countries is not able to be maintained and kept in a state of equilibrium, then India would be forced to seek other sources for its oil imports in order to reduce its dependency on Saudi Arabia. At the moment, Saudi Arabia is responsible for supplying India with 25% of its total oil imports. For the long-term viability of bilateral trade, two different policy approaches might be investigated. First, both countries may look at the possibility of trading oil for projects. As



a result of this agreement, both countries will have the opportunity to encourage collaboration between the business sectors of their respective petrochemical and renewable industries.

Additionally, the monarchy may investigate the possibility of providing particular incentives to Indian investors, particularly in the gas business. The energy market in India is the second largest in Asia and the third largest in the world after China and the United States. The moment has come for the two countries to engage into long-term energy accords, which should include the opening of some industries to investment from India. Agreements have previously been reached between Saudi Arabia and China pertaining to downstream sectors in both nations. Second, increasing the amount of money invested in both countries might help minimise the trade gap that exists between India and Saudi Arabia. It is possible that Saudi money would join the sectors that India prioritises in order to help decrease the trade deficit. There is now a global movement toward reducing trade imbalances via the use of investment capital.

Both economies provide significant opportunities for investment in the other. For the expansion of its infrastructure, India will need more than three trillion dollars. Saudi Arabia, which has over \$500 billion in money, including investments from private investors, and is examining sectors with excellent return potential, may be interested in Indian analogues. The economy of India may be able to attract and employ these funds for productive purposes if they are invested there. It is possible for New Delhi to promise Saudi investors and fund depositors that their money would not be stopped or subject to political arm-twisting, as is sometimes the case in markets in the United States and Western countries. Their savings will be put toward the development of India's real estate market,

infrastructure, software industry, service sector, information and communications technology (ICT), higher education, skill training, healthcare services, research and development, science and technology, space, energy, tourism and the hotel and catering industry, consulting, oil and gas, petrochemicals, power, housing, road and rail networks, and especially the construction of metros. It's possible that India and Saudi Arabia would collaborate on certain projects together in crucial areas of mutual interest. It is possible that the building industry in India would investigate the expansive housing market in Saudi Arabia, as well as the desalination of water and the establishment of transit networks and residential cities. Especially in view of the recent windfall it experienced from the sale of oil, Saudi Arabia has launched a new wave of construction and development projects. In addition, Saudi investors can take into consideration becoming sponsors for programmes that are being spearheaded by a number of states in India as well as the central government. This would make it possible for them to not only break into the sizable Indian market but also protect their interests over the long term.

There is potential for India and Saudi Arabia to build synergies in the financial industry as well. The country of Saudi Arabia is home to some of the world's largest private capital and sovereign wealth funds. It's possible that Indian organisations may be able to attract this cash after they've made the necessary adjustments to their banking and financial systems to bring them in line with the principles of Islamic banking and Islamic finance. Several countries, including Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, and China, amongst others, are making the necessary changes in order to attract and use these funds in their development operations, as well as guarantee acceptable returns to investors. In addition, these nations are making the necessary modifications to guarantee acceptable

returns to investors. It is permissible under Islamic law, which prohibits the payment of interest, for Saudi money to be put into the stock market in India. On this market, investors have an equal chance of profiting or losing their capital (Riba).

The Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) has launched the first index that is consistent with Sharia, and it is estimated that between 600 and 700 industries are suitable for Sharia-based investment. India has a sizable Arabic-speaking population. They would first need to be trained in both the stock market and computers before being considered for positions that include providing online services to the kingdom's stock market. It is possible that this will make it easier to link the two major stock markets in the area. In addition, both countries have large populations that speak many languages, which may increase the worldwide impact of the countries' financial obligations. Participation in multilateral forums India and Saudi Arabia, both with sizable economies and strong political power, have the potential to play a big role in international forums, therefore enhancing each other's regional and global importance and maximising their respective advantages. There are four different ways that the two countries may work together to maximise their potential for achieving their political and economic goals. It is imperative that India be granted observer status in the GCC.

### **The Future for Riyadh**

It is possible that Riyadh will play a significant role in this respect. India considers the region to be its maritime neighbourhood, and in 2005 it initiated a policy known as "Look West" with the intention of fostering strong relationships with the countries in the region and sharing the advantages of its thriving economy with them. As part of the trade, New Delhi may suggest Riyadh become an observer for the BRICS. This honour rightfully

belongs to Saudi Arabia given its status as the country with the largest GDP in the Arab world and the only Arab representative in the G-20.

Additionally, India should work to cultivate positive relationships with Muslim countries. Therefore, working together with the OIC is really necessary. It is possible that Saudi Arabia, which has a big voice in the forum, may play an important part in the process of India joining this global platform. This will provide India a significant political edge in their efforts to communicate with the two billion Muslims who live throughout the globe. On the other hand, it will assist India in exposing anti-India lies on Kashmir and other politically sensitive subjects to Muslim leaders. This would be a positive development for India.

“The Free Trade Agreement (FTA) dialogue process with the GCC, which was signed in 2006, has to be revitalised, and India needs to engage with Riyadh. Both Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates are opposed to the idea of adding petroleum and goods derived from petroleum to the list of prohibited substances. It is estimated that after the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between India and the GCC is finalised, there would be a tripling of inter-bloc trade, from the present level of \$160 billion to over \$480 billion”. This will build significant backward and forward ties, which will assist the development of many different industries in both countries. Cooperation between the largest economies in their respective regions and organisations, India in South Asia and SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) and Saudi Arabia in the Gulf and GCC, will also contribute to GCC and SAARC becoming one of the largest economic blocs in the world. SAARC is an acronym for the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation.

The countries and regions provide the world one of the largest unexploited markets and resources (hydrocarbons). (iv) Both Riyadh and New Delhi have similar views with regard to the reform of the United Nations. Both parties support enlarging the UN Security Council. It is possible that Riyadh, as a prominent player in the WANA area and in several groupings, will play a significant role in encouraging pro-India attitude over New Delhi's ambition for a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council.

Another area of concern that calls for communication between the two countries is migration. With a population of over three million Indian contract workers, Saudi Arabia has one of the greatest populations of Indian contract workers in the world. These employees send back to India each year billions of dollars, or over \$20 billion. They have made substantial contributions to the establishment of a healthy economy as well as a society in Saudi Arabia, in addition to the contributions they have made to the economy of India. However, there is evidence from the past that suggests that these Indian people living abroad do not have access to a great deal of particular legal and institutional protections and safeguards. In times of crisis, they are fully at the mercy of local agencies and people. They have no control over the situation.

There are many different things that may be done to ensure the health and safety of Indian workers who are employed in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, including the following: India has not signed a manpower agreement with any GCC countries, although Saudi Arabia is the only one among those nations. Both countries have now signed labour agreements that detail topics such as sponsorship (kafala), difficulties linked to Saudisation, the problem of unlawful or overstaying, and the maintenance of reliable

statistics on the number of Indians residing in the Kingdom. Both countries have also agreed to keep accurate statistics on the number of Indians residing in the Kingdom.

It is possible that New Delhi may establish safety and monitoring centres for migrants on a local level across the Kingdom. It's possible that these institutions may sometimes undertake study and provide suggestions to the relevant authorities in India and Saudi Arabia. In addition to this, they could collect information on the working hours, living arrangements, and working conditions of the job, as well as the method and amount of pay given to Indian labourers in the inner desert areas.

The Arabic language presents a severe barrier, particularly for blue-collar workers who must depend only on Saudi translators and the leniency of the courts in order to communicate their needs. Reports indicate that these workers are, for the most part, not given a fair shake in their employment situations. They need aid from institutions as well as the judicial system. For this reason, there should be a mechanism in place whereby Indian lawyers are able to defend Indian labourers in Saudi Arabian courts. Specifically, this should be a possibility. These lawyers may seek authorization to handle such affairs in the host country in person or online, depending on which option is most convenient for them. Concerns about terrorism as well as marine and general security Both India and Saudi Arabia are vulnerable to the dangers posed by extremism and terrorist activity. To effectively counteract this danger, the two countries need to come up with a coordinated plan. Over the last several years, Riyadh has shown some kind of maturity by handing over about twelve wanted persons to New Delhi. However, the dissemination of this information has irritated Riyadh since it is detrimental to the kingdom's standing throughout the Muslim world Sarwar, Isra.

The following are some strategies that any or both of these countries might use to counteract and prevent the probable spread of ideology-based extremism and terrorism:

It is imperative that India maintain strong ties with the intellectual institutions of Saudi Arabia, particularly the religious seminaries. They would be in a better position to deliver an appropriate reaction to the propaganda and brainwashing of susceptible young people who fall for extremist traps if they had a greater understanding of ideology and thinking that is motivated by ideology.

Both countries need a cohesive media strategy as well as constant communication between academics and social activists in order to address the connections that exist between religious fanaticism and extremism. Separation between religion and terrorist activity is essential. It will start a conversation on all facets of terrorism motivated by ideological beliefs. In order for the message to reach the grassroots level, there should be regular cultural and people-to-people programmes and events held between the Indian and Saudi counterparts. The people of both countries will have a better chance of understanding the genuine actors who are operating on the ground to further their own vested interests while also mobilising others via religious means thanks to this method.

This will aid India in reducing ideological animosity, fighting Pakistan, obtaining a better position in the region, notably in Afghanistan, and defeating jihadism. It is possible that India will gain from Saudi Arabia's deradicalization programme, which has shown to be quite successful in changing the hearts and minds of certain terrorists who were previously held at Guantanamo Bay and then released. In addition, Saudi Arabia has developed a comprehensive programme to prevent young people from falling into undesirable hands. In this respect, the government has used the mainstream media as well

as attempts to raise public awareness. India has the potential to gain knowledge from Saudi Arabia's experiences, and the two countries may share information with one another. Safety precautions and marine The maritime domain is another another domain in which the two countries have the potential to work together, cultivate strong links, and ensure mutual commitment. One of them is ensuring the safety of the main marine route of communication (SLOC).

The vast Indian Ocean is responsible for transporting the bulk of the oil that is produced in Saudi Arabia to the economies that are located in the East. India is able to guarantee not just the safety of Saudi oil tankers but also the safety of the whole Sea Line of Communication (SLOC) that runs between the Strait of Hormuz and the Strait of Malacca because of its status as a natural maritime power. India has also shown its interest in taking on the role of Internet security provider for the Indian Ocean region. It's possible that Riyadh may benefit from India sharing intelligence and real-time information with them. A defence cooperation agreement has also been signed between the two countries, and it is possible that it may be expanded to encompass naval activities. India might also urge Riyadh to participate in the several annual naval exercises (Malabar, Milan, etc.) that New Delhi conducts annually with substantial naval forces, including those of its neighbours and regional organisations. These drills take place in the Indian Ocean. Because Saudi Arabia is a member of the IONS, which was started in India, it is much easier to put this into action (Indian Ocean Naval Symposium). One of the most important aspects of India's national interest is the country's position about its policy toward the Gulf. There is a close relationship between it and the expansion and growth of India's economy. In addition, this region supplies the bulk of rock and chemical fertilisers to India, which



contributes to India's increased food security. Nevertheless, this Gulf region is now going through a phase of very high volatility. It is fractured because to a number of differences, including as those between Shia and Sunni Muslims, the competition for regional dominance, tribal and ethnic conflicts, the rewriting of history, and the ongoing problems between Arabs and Israelis.

For its Gulf policy, India needs to draw three concentric circles, each of which represents a different power centre. The first circle should be centred on Riyadh and include the GCC and its allies in the Arab world. The second circle should include Tehran and its allies. The third circle should be centred on Israel and include the United States as an exogenous nonresident power. Each of the three rings has importance for India and is representative of a different aspect of the country's national interests. As a consequence of this, they need unique recommendations for policy. In view of the immense stakes that India has in the region, New Delhi not only has to be cautious, but it also needs to be impartial; it needs to follow a strategy of maintaining an equal distance from all three circles. The significance of this lies in the fact that New Delhi must continue to work toward its long-term aim of winning Arab support for a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council.

There are still other domains in which New Delhi and Riyadh need to work together to increase their level of mutual trust. For example, as part of the United States' rebalancing policy, the nation's capital is shifting its focus to focus on other areas. Both China's and Russia's economic and geostrategic footprints are expected to grow in the Gulf region in the near future. It is imperative for India to protect its interests in the region by cultivating a cooperative relationship with China as opposed to a competitive one with China. Riyadh

may play a major role in balancing China and India's divergent interests since it is the largest source of oil, a highly valued business partner, and a key immigrant-receiving country for both countries. In addition, it is necessary to keep in mind that the centre of power is shifting from the West to the East. This is a very significant development. This will result in the creation of a new environment and provide India with new opportunities and difficulties. India needs a regional ally in order to preserve its interests in the Gulf and in its surrounding area, and Riyadh, which is dependent on foreign assistance for its survival while simultaneously playing an effective role, best suits India's objectives. Therefore, the time has come for New Delhi to go beyond bilateral contacts and address regional and global problems where Riyadh may serve as a beneficial ally. The time has come for New Delhi to move beyond bilateral interactions and confront regional and global issues.

We hold Saudi Arabia in the highest regard, and the principle of solidarity among Muslims worldwide serves as the cornerstone of our ties with other Muslim nations. Pakistan reaffirms its steadfast commitment to defending Saudi Arabia's sovereignty and commits to continue to be the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's trustworthy security partner in the foreseeable future.

### **Diplomacy Gone Awry**

In August, on the occasion of the anniversary of India's decision to revoke Article 370, the foreign minister of Pakistan sent an extraordinary ultimatum to the Saudi government. He stated that he would ask Imran Khan to "call a meeting of the Islamic countries that are willing to stand with us on Kashmir" if the Saudis refused to call a meeting of the 57-nation Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) on the Kashmir issue.

This was in response to Imran Khan's statement that he would ask him to “call a meeting of the Islamic countries that are willing to stand with us on Kashmir”. In response to Qureshi's ultimatum, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia issued a demand for the return of USD \$1 billion of the essential \$3 billion it had supplied Pakistan to help it in handling its balance of payments issues in 2018. This assistance was provided in 2018. In addition, the government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia decided to delay the renewal of a payment deferral that had been placed on shipments of Saudi oil. This reaction did not come as a surprise at all, which may not be a surprise at all. According to Hussain Haqqani, Senior Fellow at the Hudson Institute, a "typical instance of borrowing from Peter to pay Paul," Pakistan borrowed \$1 billion from China in order to refund the Saudis. Haqqani called this a "classic instance of borrowing from Peter to pay Paul." According to Haqqani, this is a "classic example of borrowing from Peter to pay Paul." [Citation needed] Given that Pakistan's financial dependence on China has been expanding, particularly over the course of the last few years, the fact that Pakistan is reliant on China should not come as a surprise to anybody. As a direct result of this, a sizable number of commentators have expressed their concern on the effect that what is being called China's "debt-trap diplomacy" will have on Pakistan.

The Chief of the Pakistani Army, General Qamar Javed Bajwa, travelled to Saudi Arabia in August to meet with his counterparts there to explore "military-to-military cooperation, including training exchanges." The purpose of this journey was to make amends with the other country in an effort to ease the tension that had been growing between them. On the other hand, in what seems to have been a strategic move on the side of the Saudi leadership, MBS declined his request for a meeting with him.

## **Riyadh's Changing Position on Kashmir**

Pakistan and Saudi Arabia's scrupulous collaboration has been essential to the successful running of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. The combination of a comprehensive understanding and mutual interest in international and regional affairs has lent durability and strength to the Saudi-Pakistan equation, which is one of only a handful of such equations found anywhere in the world. This is one of the reasons why the Saudi-Pakistan equation is one of the only handful of such equations worldwide. This has been the case, in particular, with relation to causes like as the battle of Palestinians against Zionism and Al-Quds. The late Shah Faisal, who is generally considered as the founder of modern Saudi Arabia, served as a model for Saudi Arabia, and Saudi Arabia has mostly stuck to the blueprint that he established. It has regularly maintained a stance of caution and moderation on issues that have often generated a furious reaction from some Middle Eastern quarters. This has allowed it to avoid escalating the situation further. For instance, it has chosen to adopt a more moderate approach on the question of whether or not it should be permitted for Iran to get nuclear weapons. The viewpoint about Kashmir that is maintained by the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), which was established in the same year that instability broke out in Jammu and Kashmir (the year 1990). In spite of the fact that the OIC has been issuing remarks ever since the outbreak of violence, India has not been swayed in any way by these pronouncements. In response to the decision to do so, Pakistan, with the assistance of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), has been attempting to raise widespread opposition to the decision to abolish Article 370 in Kashmir. This is being done in reaction to the decision.

When the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia issued remarks, Pakistan was taken aback by the fact that they were less brutally critical of New Delhi than they had been in the past when they made similar declarations. Throughout the course of the last year, Pakistan has undertaken attempts to create discontent among Islamic nations; however, only Malaysia, Iran, and Turkey have risen to publicly criticise India's policies. Pakistan's efforts have been unsuccessful. There was a tangible feeling of annoyance on the part of Pakistani authorities toward Saudi Arabia and the UAE after India's move to modify the status of Jammu and Kashmir. The reason for this was that Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates did not want the platform provided by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation to be used for meaningless agitation against India. After India's revocation of Kashmir's autonomy, Erdogan made an attempt to fish in the stormy seas by remaining true to the character he has developed in his approach to foreign policy. He did this by sticking to the character he has formed in his approach to foreign policy. The proposal by Pakistan to host a special session of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation was turned down by Saudi Arabia in February of 2020, which marked the beginning of a significant decline in the quality of the relationship between the two nations. This occurrence marked the beginning of the present state of things that have developed between the two nations. There was never any intention on Pakistan's part to give up on the goal of exerting pressure on India about the matter of Kashmir by using the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

The demonstration of this idea may be seen in the remark that Shah Mehmood Qureshi made on August 5, 2020. In this fictitious scenario, Saudi Arabia did not provide Pakistan the loan package that was being offered. The Chief of Army Staff of Pakistan's

Armed Forces has been to Saudi Arabia in an effort to improve ties between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia and to repair fences while he is there. The public does not have access to information on the events that took place between him and the Saudi government. As a consequence of India's National Security Advisor Ajit Doval's trip to Saudi Arabia in October 2019 and the kingdom's explanation of its position on India's domestic security concerns, Saudi Arabia is interested in maintaining amicable ties with India. Insinuating that it knows India's attitude on Kashmir and that it regards the issue as one that comes under its administrative authority, Riyadh revealed its opinion on the topic. In doing so, Riyadh provided an indication of its understanding of India's viewpoint. The position taken by the Saudi government toward Kashmir has been gradually shifting in reaction to the various developments that have taken place. Pakistan is irritated by the growing ties between Saudi Arabia and India as a direct result of the humiliation it endured during its confrontation with the Indian Army in February 2019 over the strikes on Balakote and the assault on Pulwama. Both incidents occurred in February. Pakistan's sense of safety is deteriorating as a result of these links. Despite objections from Pakistan, on March 1, 2019, the honour of being the conference's guest of honour was bestowed to Sushma Swaraj, who had been serving as India's foreign minister at the time.

The governments of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Bahrain have each presented the highest civilian honour of their respective countries to Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi over the course of the last several years. At the Future Investment Initiative Summit held in Riyadh, the Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, gave the keynote speech. In addition to this, the India-Saudi Strategic Partnership Council was established as a result of this event. All of this took place against the background of

Pakistan's desire to win the backing of international powers and the relinquishment of Jammu and Kashmir's status as an independent territory. As a consequence of these occurrences, the general public throughout the globe formed the opinion that Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf states supported India's struggle.

### **Pakistan's Value Erodes**

Despite the fact that religious, economic, and security linkages are prevalent between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, the relationship between the two nations is unequal. This is similar to the relationship that exists between Pakistan and China. The most essential aspect is that it is reliant on the Saudis for ongoing economic rescue packages and loans, both of which are vital for sustaining its financial stability. In general, the Pakistani military agrees with Saudi Arabia's stances on most topics relevant to international affairs. In light of this disparity, the scholar Arhama Siddiqa has in the past issued a warning to the Pakistani government on the "terms and circumstances" of Saudi funding. Since a long time ago, the Saudis have been among Pakistan's most ardent proponents on the Kashmir issue. Additionally, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have been significant collaborators in the Afghan struggle. The two nations have maintained strong diplomatic connections in addition to their longstanding economic and security cooperation. In addition, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is Pakistan's primary source of imported oil, accounting for fifty percent of the country's overall consumption.

A partnership that has lasted decades of intimacy and cooperation has developed fissures, and the Saudis' perception of Pakistan's relevance looks to be decreasing as a result. In spite of the declaration made by a spokesperson for the Pakistan Army that "the hearts of the Pakistani people beat with the hearts of the Saudi people," the relationship

between the two nations has gotten increasingly tense in recent years. The relationship is now being put in jeopardy by pressures that originate from outside of India. In 2015, for instance, Pakistan made the decision not to participate in the coalition effort in Yemen that was led by Saudi Arabia. The Kingdom's feathers have been ruffled as a result of recent statements made by Islamabad regarding the possibility of establishing an alternative Islamic club that would include Turkey, Malaysia, and Qatar, amongst other countries, and that would pose a threat to Saudi Arabia's leadership position in the Muslim world.

At a crucial juncture, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and the Chief of Army Staff travelled to the United Arab Emirates and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. It was hoped that the strategic level exchanges that took place during this trip would be of assistance in putting our economy back on track. A new era of multilateralism was ushered in as a result of China's outreach to countries in the Gulf region and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. This is an important fact to keep in mind. It's possible that the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) initiative would help Pakistan, China, and Gulf States usher in a new age of strategic partnership. In order for Pakistan to build an atmosphere that is characterised by peace, prosperity, and progress that is shared, Pakistan need the influence of Saudi Arabia with regard to the administration of the Taliban in Afghanistan.

The relationship between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, as well as their strategic collaboration, has developed to suit the needs of the times; in the contemporary multi-alignment environment, no country can conduct its foreign policy in the global arena using a binary approach. Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have adapted their relationship to meet the demands of the times. In order for nations to effectively traverse the altering international and regional scene, they are needed to protect their fundamental interests while



simultaneously gathering the support of allies behind a common goal. This is necessary for governments to be successful.

There have been many challenges along the route to closer connections between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, but both brothers have been able to persist through these challenges and weather the storms together as a result of having a shared objective. The ties that bind Pakistan and Saudi Arabia are not like those of any other interstate cooperation; rather, they go much beyond those expectations. They are firmly founded and profoundly embedded in a broad number of elements, including history, religion, security, economy, and a common vision of growth, as well as the pursuit of both regional and worldwide peace.

Relations between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia may continue to be strengthened by security connections, notwithstanding times of instability in the relationship. Because of concerns over the Taliban and Iranian influence in Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia's strategic considerations may continue to involve Pakistan even in the event that the United States withdraws from Afghanistan or leaves the country in some other capacity. In addition, the significance of Saudi Arabia joining CPEC as a third partner and investing \$20 billion in Pakistan's energy and infrastructure cannot be emphasised. Saudi Arabia is expected to make these investments in the near future.

However, the emphasis on Pakistan's future being "linked with China" and Qureshi's travel to China after Bajwa's visit to the Kingdom both suggest that Pakistan is acutely aware of its problem with Saudi Arabia and is increasingly leaning towards China. Bajwa's visit to the Kingdom took place after Qureshi's trip to China. As a direct consequence of China stepping in to fill the economic hole, the future of Pakistan will

undoubtedly be impacted by the expanding influence of China. It is possible that the moment has come for Pakistan to turn its focus away from India, which is weakening its historically strong international links, and toward the dragon that is now residing inside its borders. On the other hand, energy-dependent India may be able to take satisfaction in the fact that its active diplomacy toward the Gulf region, coupled with genuine economic engagement, is paying advantages and positioned it to become the chosen South Asian partner of the Gulf region.

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