

Pakistan-Saudi Arabia: A bond forged in faith & brotherhood



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WHEN the crescent and star flag of Pakistan was first raised in 1947, among the earliest nations to embrace the new state was the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Bound by faith, geography and destiny, the two countries wove a relationship that was never merely diplomatic, but fraternal—rooted in Islam and nurtured by trust.

From the first days of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah to the present premiership of Shehbaz Sharif, the ties have weathered storms, celebrated triumphs and stood resilient as a beacon of Muslim solidarity.

In the annals of this relationship, the role of King Faisal bin Abdulaziz al Saud shines with particular radiance. It was under his patronage, alongside Prime Minister Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, that the second Islamic Summit Conference was held in Lahore on 22-24 February 1974. The gathering of Muslim leaders from across the world, hosted with grandeur by Pakistan, marked a turning point in Islamic unity. King Faisal's stirring address in Lahore called upon the Muslim world to rise above division and reclaim dignity through collective strength. His vision became a cornerstone of Pakistan–Saudi friendship and his memory endures in Islamabad through the Shah Faisal Mosque, whose construction was a gift of Saudi Arabia and remains one of the largest mosques in the world, a symbol of faith and fraternity.

That trust between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan was further enhanced in November 1979, when extremists seized the Grand Mosque in Makkah. At Riyadh's request, Pakistan dispatched commandos who joined Saudi forces in the delicate and dangerous operation to liberate the holiest mosque of Islam. The courage of Pakistani soldiers cemented the Kingdom's confidence that Pakistan stood as guardian not only of its own borders, but of the spiritual heart of the Muslim world.



Mr. Gauhar Zahid Malik, President, Pakistan Observer meeting with the His Royal Highness Crown Prince Mohammad Bin Salman of the Kingdom of Saudi on the occasion of Hajj.

The partnership grew deeper during General Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq's era. In 1982, a protocol agreement established the Saudi-Pakistan Armed Forces Organization and authorized the large-scale deployment of Pakistani forces in Saudi Arabia. At its peak, more than 20,000 Pakistani troops, including divisions and brigades, were stationed in sensitive regions such as Tabuk and the Eastern Province, performing both training and operational roles, while also reassuring Saudi Arabia against any threats.

Economically too, Saudi Arabia proved a steadfast benefactor in Pakistan's hours of need. From 1970s to more recent crises, Riyadh extended generous facilities, often deferring payments or granting oil on favorable terms. During the balance-of-payment crises of the 1990s and again in the 2010s, Saudi Arabia's loans and oil concessions helped Pakistan avoid collapse. Following the devastating 2005 earthquake, Saudi aid flowed generously, funding rehabilitation projects and shelters. Again, when floods submerged Pakistan in 2010 and in later years, Saudi relief agencies were among the first to arrive, sending medicines, tents, food supplies and financial assistance.

The bond was personal as well as political. When Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and his family faced exile after the events of 12 October 1999, it was Saudi Arabia that extended sanctuary. The Sharif family resided at Saroor Palace in Jeddah, hosted with royal courtesy. This gesture of brotherhood went beyond diplomacy—it was family extending refuge to family.

The Kingdom has also invested in Pakistan's development. Saudi capital has supported refineries, petrochemical ventures and infrastructure projects. The Pak-Saudi Oil Refinery project, agreements in Gwadar and various energy sector investments are testament to a relationship that is not merely sentimental but strategic.

On the security front, ties reached a new dimension in 2015 when Pakistan's former Chief of Army Staff, General Raheel Sharif, was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Islamic Military Counter Terrorism Coalition based in Riyadh. The coalition, comprising over forty Muslim nations, symbolized Saudi recognition of Pakistan's military professionalism and leadership in defending the Muslim world against extremism.

The present era has seen the friendship elevated further. In June 2024 and again in early 2025, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Army Chief, Field Marshal General Asim Munir, worked closely with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman to forge new agreements. The Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia was signed on September 17, 2025, in Riyadh. This pact formalizes a long-standing security partnership and includes a key clause stating that "any aggression against either country shall be considered an aggression against both". This agreement represents continuity of the pledge first made in Zia's time for the protection of Harmain Sharifain, but with broader scope for regional stability.

The friendship between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia has endured over seventy-five years, marked by shared prayers at Makkah and Madinah, common stands in international forums and unwavering assistance in calamities. It is a relationship sanctified by faith, fortified by trust and dignified by sacrifice. From King Faisal's immortal presence in Lahore in 1974 to Prince Mohammed bin Salman's vision of modern partnership, from the construction of Shah Faisal Mosque to the signing of the 2025 mutual security pact, the two nations have walked together through history. As Pakistan continues to navigate challenges of economy and security and as Saudi Arabia pursues its ambitious Vision 2030, their destinies remain intertwined. In the corridors of Islamabad and Riyadh alike, the conviction endures: Pakistan and Saudi Arabia are not merely allies, but brothers bound by the eternal covenant of Islam, standing shoulder to shoulder today as they did in 1947 and as they shall tomorrow in the unfolding chapters of Muslim unity.

Saudi National Day, Pakistan-Saudi Relations and Muslim Unity Following Houthi Attacks



Sahibzada Maulana Zahid Mehmood Qasmi
Chairman, Merkazi Ulema Council Pakistan

Saudi Arabia's National Day is an important occasion to recall the Kingdom's unity, national identity and journey of development. Celebrated every year on September 23, this day symbolizes the historic struggle that led to the unification and establishment of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. It is also an opportunity to review the brotherly religious, historical, public, trade and defence relations between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia and to renew the commitment to further strengthen these ties. The relations between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia are not limited to diplomatic necessities rather they are founded on devotion, brotherhood, mutual respect, deep attachment to the Two Holy Mosques and shared interests. The bond of love and respect between the peoples of the two countries has existed for many decades. The tradition of supporting each other in difficult circumstances has further strengthened and made these relations more enduring. Pakistan-Saudi-Turkie Defence Cooperation and Regional Stability Defence cooperation among Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Turkie is an important development amid the changing situation in the region. The historical, religious, political and defence ties that already exist among these three brotherly countries can be further organized and strengthened through mutual cooperation. The fundamental purpose of defence cooperation should not be confrontation against any country but rather the strengthening of mutual security, defence capabilities, cooperation against terrorism and regional peace and stability. Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Turkie can play an important role in promoting peace, stability and mutual cooperation in the region by utilizing their experience, resources and diplomatic influence. The efforts of Saudi Arabia and the Muslim World League to address sectarian differences in the Muslim world through scholarly dialogue, moderation and mutual respect rather than confrontation are also noteworthy. Efforts against extremism and terrorism as well as initiatives promoting moderation and tolerance are important for peace and stability in the Muslim world. Protection of the Two Holy Mosques and Solidarity with Saudi Arabia For the people of Pakistan and their connection with the Two Holy Mosques is not merely an emotional attachment but a matter of faith and



devotion. Makkah and Madinah are the holiest places for the entire Muslim Ummah. The peace, sanctity and security of the Two Holy Mosques are of fundamental importance to every Muslim. Any attempt to harm the peace and security of Saudi Arabia particularly Makkah and Madinah will be regarded as contrary to the sentiments of the Muslim Ummah. We strongly condemn the attacks against Saudi Arabia and express our complete solidarity with the Saudi government and people. The Merkazi Ulema Council Pakistan fully supports the sovereignty and security of Saudi Arabia and the protection of the Two Holy Mosques. The scholars should use their pulpits and religious platforms to promote the sanctity of the Two Holy Mosques the security of Saudi Arabia and the unity of the Muslim Ummah, moderation, tolerance and peaceful coexistence. The Government of Pakistan should also take practical steps to make its longstanding defence and security cooperation with Saudi Arabia more effective within the framework of mutual agreements, national interests and mutual consent. Pakistan-Saudi Trade and Economic Relations Trade, investment, energy, minerals, agriculture, construction, infrastructure, healthcare, education and technology are among the many important areas of relations between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.There are extensive opportunities for economic cooperation between the two countries which can be transformed into practical initiatives through mutual benefit, transparency, continuity and effective planning. The Pakistani workforce has also played an important role in the construction and development of Saudi Arabia. Millions of Pakistanis are working in different sectors in Saudi Arabia and contributing to strengthening the economic and people-to-people ties between the two countries. There is a need to further expand cooperation in trade, investment, employment, education, technology and skilled manpower so that the peoples of both countries can benefit even more from this brotherly relationship.A Joint Voice for PalestineThe issue of Palestine is among the most important concerns of the Muslim world. Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Turkie can utilize their diplomatic, political and moral capabilities to play an effective and peaceful diplomatic role in support of the fundamental rights, peace and security of the Palestinian people and the establishment of an independent and sovereign Palestinian state.The Muslim world needs to raise an effective, united and principled voice at the international level for the rights of the Palestinian people. The mutual trust and brotherly relations between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia provide a strong foundation for joint diplomatic efforts in this regard. Special Message on Saudi National Day On the occasion of Saudi Arabia's National Day, I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, the Saudi leadership, the respected scholars and the brotherly people of Saudi Arabia.The people of Pakistan pray for the security, stability, development and prosperity of Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia will always hold a special place in our hearts because of its association with the Two Holy Mosques. We deeply value our historic, brotherly and religious relations with the people and government of Saudi Arabia. We condemn any aggression against Saudi Arabia and express our complete solidarity with the Saudi people and government. The sanctity of the Two Holy Mosques, the security of Saudi Arabia, the unity of the Muslim Ummah and peace and stability in the Muslim world are of fundamental importance to us.We convey to the Saudi scholars and people that the people of Pakistan hold their historic, brotherly and religious relations with Saudi Arabia in the highest regard.The sanctity of the Two Holy Mosques, unity of the Muslim Ummah, support for the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, Pakistan-Saudi trade and defence cooperation and joint efforts for peace and stability in the Muslim world are our shared responsibilities. May Allah Almighty always bless the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia with peace, security, stability and prosperity; protect the Two Holy Mosques from every kind of evil and mischief further strengthen the brotherly relations between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia and guide the Muslim Ummah towards unity, wisdom, moderation and peace.Ameen.

Pakistan
OBSERVER



Congratulate

The Brotherly People of Saudia Arabia On The

NATIONAL DAY OF THE KINGDOM OF

SAUDI ARABIA