

PM Narendra Modi's Visit to Palestine, UAE & Oman

The outset of 2018 is proving to be significant in reorienting India's relations with countries in West Asia. While Prime Minister Narendra Modi is on his four-day visit to Palestine, UAE and Oman, External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj was attending the Janadriyah festival in Saudi Arabia as the guest of honour.

Last month, Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu visited India and now Iranian President Hasan Rouhani is all set to visit the country at the end of this week.

With a shift in India's approach from non-alignment to multi-alignment, India has been making attempts to strengthen relationship with the Arab world. Ahead of his visit, PM Modi emphasised the importance of this region and called it a "key priority in our external engagement".

Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Raveesh Kumar said the visit to the four countries was aimed at deepening "our multifaceted ties with the Gulf and West Asian region".

Palestine

Capital: Ramallah (Narendra Modi visited this city as a Capital)

Currency:

- Israeli new shekel
- Egyptian pound
- Jordanian dinar

Head: President Mahmoud Abbas

MoUs signed during Palestine Visit:

- MOU between India and Palestine for setting up India-Palestine Super-specialty hospital at Beit Sahour in Bethelhem Governorate at a cost of USD 30 million.
- MOU between India and Palestine for construction of India Palestine Centre for Empowering women 'Turathi' at a cost of USD 5 million.
- MOU between India and Palestine for setting up of new National Printing Press at Ramallah at a cost of USD 5 million.
- MOU between India and Palestine for construction of school in Muthalth Al Shuhada Village at a cost of USD 1 million.
- MOU between India and Palestine on construction of school in Tamoon village in Tubas Governorate in Palestine at a cost of USD 1.1 million.
- MOU between India and Palestine for assistance of USD 0.25 million for construction of additional floor to Jawahar Lal Nehru School for Boys at Abu Dees.

The first stop of the four-day visit was Jordan where PM Modi was received by the Jordan PM Hani Al-Mulki in Amman and then met King Abdullah II of Jordan who facilitated his transit to Palestine.

When he reached **Ramallah**, the de facto capital of the Palestine Authority, **Modi became the first Indian Prime Minister to visit Palestine.**

PM Modi was also conferred **The Grand Collar of the State of Palestine, the highest Palestinian honour for foreign dignitaries, by Palestine President Mahmoud Abbas.**

United Arab Emirates

Capital: Abu Dhabi

Currency: United Arab Emirates dirham

Head: Sheikh Mohammed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan

MoUs Signed during UAE Visit:

MoU between Indian Consortium (OVL, BPRL & IOCL) and ADNOC

- An MOU was signed between Indian Consortium (OVL, BPRL & IOCL) and Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) for acquisition of 10 per cent participating interest in the offshore Lower Zakum Concession. The concession will be for 40 years from 2018 to 2057.
- Under the MoU, 60 per cent of the participating interest will be retained by ADNOC and remaining 30 per cent will be awarded to other International oil companies. This is the first Indian Investment in upstream oil sector of UAE.

MoU in the field of Manpower

- Indian Government and Government of UAE signed an MoU in the field of Manpower with an aim to institutionalise the collaborative administration of contractual employment of Indian workers in UAE.
- Under the MoU, both the sides will work together to integrate their labour related e-platforms for ending the existing malpractices, combat trafficking and organize programs for education of workers.

MoU for Technical Cooperation

- An MoU was signed between Railways Ministry of India and Federal Transport Authority - Land & Maritime of UAE for technical cooperation in Rail Sector. The MoU aims at cooperation in Infrastructure sector especially Railways.
- It will facilitate development of joint projects, knowledge sharing, joint research and technology transfer. It also envisages formation of a Joint Working Group for institutionalising the cooperation mechanism.

MoU for bilateral cooperation in the field of finance

- With an aim to extend the bilateral cooperation in the field of finance, an MoU was signed between Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) and Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange (ADX). It aims to enhance cooperation between both the countries in financial services industry.
- It will facilitate investment in financial markets by investors from both the countries.

MoU between Jammu and Kashmir and DP World

- An MoU between Jammu and Kashmir Government and DP World, UAE was signed to establish multi-modal logistics park and hub in Jammu comprising warehouses and specialized storage solutions.

The second leg of PM Modi began upon his arrival at Abu Dhabi where he held talks with Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Commander of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Armed Forces Sheikh Mohammed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

This was Modi's second visit to the UAE, after the first one in 2015.

PM Modi also witnessed the foundation stone laying ceremony of a temple in the UAE via video-conferencing. According to India's Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Navdeep Suri, **this first Hindu temple in Abu Dhabi will come up on 55,000 sq m of land and construction will be completed by 2020.**

Modi met Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) corporate leaders and spoke about the changes that raised India's ranking in the World Bank Ease of Doing Business index.

Oman

Capital: Muscat

Currency: Omani rial

Head: Sultan Qaboos bin Said al Said

Following MoUs were signed during the meet:

1. Agreement on legal and judicial cooperation in civil and commercial matters.
2. Agreement on mutual visa exemption for holders of diplomatic, special, service and official passports.
3. MoU on cooperation in the field of Health.
4. MoU for cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space.
5. MoU on cooperation between Foreign Service Institute, Ministry of External Affairs, India and Oman Diplomatic Institute.
6. MoU on academic and scholarly cooperation sectors between National Defence College, Sultanate of Oman and the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses.
7. MoU in the field of Tourism Cooperation between India and Oman.
8. Annexure to the MoU on Military Cooperation.

During the last leg of his four-day tour, PM Modi landed in Oman on Sunday evening and led delegation-level talks yesterday with Sultan Qaboos bin Said al Said.

PM Modi addressing the Indian diaspora at the **Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex in Muscat, Oman's capital**, said that India-Oman ties have always remained strong despite the ups and downs in the political environment in both the countries.

He used this opportunity to promote the new **National Health Protection Scheme called Ayushman Bharat** which Modi said was labelled as 'Modicare' by the Indian media.