

80th Independence Day: Progress, people and partnership

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As India celebrates its 80th Independence Day, we remember with gratitude the countless men and women whose courage and sacrifice secured our freedom.

We also pay tribute to the generations of Indians who have, since 1947, strengthened our democracy, built our institutions and contributed to the country's remarkable journey of development.

Independence Day is not only an occasion to look back with pride but also to look ahead with confidence. India today is working toward the vision of "Viksit Bharat" (Developed India) by 2047. The economy recorded real gross domestic product growth of 7.7 percent in 2025-26, while the country continues to expand its manufacturing base, modernize infrastructure and invest in new technologies.

The idea of "Make in India, Make for the World" captures an important part of this transformation. India is building capabilities in areas ranging from electronics, pharmaceuticals and advanced manufacturing to semiconductors and clean technologies. PM GatiShakti is supporting more integrated planning of roads, railways, ports, airports and logistics networks. India has also deepened its engagement with major trading partners, with new economic agreements with the UK and Oman entering into force this year and trade negotiations with the EU and New Zealand having concluded.

Technology remains a major driver of change. India's digital public infrastructure

has demonstrated the possibilities of using technology to widen access to financial and public services. Building on this experience, the country is investing in artificial intelligence, semiconductor manufacturing, quantum technologies and advanced computing.

India's space sector is also entering a new phase. Building on Chandrayaan-3 and Aditya-L1, work continues on the Gagan-yaan human spaceflight program. Vikram-I, developed by Indian startup Skyroot Aerospace, last month became the first orbital rocket launched by a private Indian company from Indian soil. Also in July, India's first indigenous hydrogen fuel cell-powered train made its inaugural journey between Jind and Sonapat. This, together with the expansion of renewable energy and the National Green Hydrogen Mission, reflects India's growing focus on cleaner technologies and sustainable development.

These developments are diverse but the direction is clear: India is building capabilities at home while increasingly contributing products, technologies and solutions to the wider world.

Alongside India's remarkable journey of growth and transformation, its partnership with Saudi Arabia has continued to gather strength. The India-Saudi Arabia strategic partnership today encompasses political, economic, energy, defense, technology, cultural and people-to-people cooperation, underpinned by long-standing goodwill and mutual trust.

For us in Jeddah, this partnership is perhaps most immediately felt through

people. About 2.7 million Indians live and work in Saudi Arabia, contributing across healthcare, engineering, education, technology, business, industry, construction and many other sectors. Many have spent years, even decades, in the Kingdom. Through their professionalism, hard work and respect for the laws and traditions of Saudi Arabia, they have earned considerable goodwill and remain an enduring bridge between our two countries.

Serving this large and diverse community remains a central responsibility of the Consulate General of India in Jeddah. Our endeavor is to make consular and community welfare services increasingly accessible and responsive through outreach, open houses and round-the-clock assistance in emergencies. We deeply value the cooperation extended by the Saudi authorities in supporting the welfare of Indian nationals.

Jeddah also occupies a special place in our engagement because of the Hajj. For Indian pilgrims, Hajj is the fulfillment of a deeply cherished spiritual aspiration. Hajj 2026 once again involved extensive preparations and close coordination between the Indian and Saudi authorities to facilitate the pilgrimage and provide the necessary support to Indian pilgrims. We remain deeply appreciative of the Saudi government, particularly the Ministry of Hajj and Umrah and other concerned authorities, for their cooperation and for the continuing improvements being made in services and facilities for pilgrims.

Over the past year, the consulate has sought to bring our peoples closer through

cultural festivals, Indian art and music, yoga and wellness programs, literary and educational initiatives, films, and cuisine, working closely with community organizations and local partners. We have also sought to take this engagement beyond Jeddah, reaching out to communities, universities, chambers of commerce and local authorities across western Saudi Arabia. Particular emphasis has been placed on young people, through educational, cultural and technology-oriented programs that encourage greater interaction and understanding.

These connections are strengthened by the growing familiarity between our societies. Yoga, Indian cinema, music and cuisine have found an appreciative audience in the Kingdom, while travel and tourism are creating new opportunities for Saudis and Indians to discover each other's cultures first-hand. These everyday interactions give bilateral relations depth and durability. As consul general, I see this human connection as one of the enduring strengths of the India-Saudi Arabia partnership.

As India enters its 80th year as an independent nation, we look to the future with confidence and with a determination to build an India that is prosperous, innovative and sustainable, while remaining a dependable partner to the world.

We convey our sincere gratitude to King Salman, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the government and the people of the Kingdom for their friendship toward India, their support to Indian pilgrims and the warmth extended to the Indian community.