

PM Modi's Saudi trip | Nations to ink 6 pacts, PM to discuss Hajj quota with Crown Prince

Mr. Modi is on a two-day trip to Saudi Arabia at the invitation of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, and it will mark the first visit by an Indian Prime Minister in 40 years to Jeddah.

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PTI



File picture of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud | Photo Credit: Shiv Kumar Pushpakar

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday (April 22, 2025) left for Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, on two-day visit to the kingdom on the invitation of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. India and Saudi Arabia are set to sign at least six memoranda of understanding (MoUs) on Tuesday during Mr. Modi's visit to Jeddah, with talks ongoing late Monday to finalise a few more agreements, according to sources.

PM Modi in Saudi Arabia LIVE

In his departure statement, Mr. Modi said both countries have developed a mutually beneficial and substantive partnership, including in the domains of defence, trade, investment, energy and people-to-people ties.

“We have shared interest and commitment to promote regional peace, prosperity, security and stability,” Mr. Modi said, noting that it will be his third visit to the country and the first one to the historic city of Jeddah.

Mr. said he looked forward to participating in the second meeting of the Strategic Partnership Council and building upon the highly successful state visit of Mohammed bin Salman to India in 2023.

Mr. Modi described the crown prince as “my brother”.

He said he is also eager to connect with the “vibrant” Indian community in Saudi Arabia that continues to serve as the living bridge between the two nations and makes an immense contribution to strengthening the cultural and human ties.

Agreements to be signed

Highly placed sources told *PTI* that Mr. Modi will also discuss issues relating to Hajj, including the quota for Indian pilgrims, during his meeting with the Crown Prince in the evening.

Among the deliverables, the two sides are expected to sign agreements in the fields of space, energy, health, science and scientific research, culture and advanced technology.

"Meetings in Riyadh continued late Monday to finalise details, with over a dozen MoUs under discussion, some to be signed at the official level," an official told *PTI*.

Sources added that efforts were underway 24 hours before Mr. Modi's arrival to conclude additional trade, investment, and defence agreements.

First in 40 years

Mr. Modi will arrive on Tuesday afternoon at the invitation of Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, marking the first visit by an Indian prime minister in 40 years to Jeddah.

"Jeddah is a very, very significant city in terms of connectivity between India and Saudi Arabia because for centuries, Jeddah was the port for the trade between the two countries, and it is also a gateway to Mecca. So anyone who is coming for Umrah and Hajj lands up in Jeddah and then goes to Mecca," Indian ambassador to Saudi Arabia Suhel Ajaz Khan told *PTI* ahead of the Prime Minister's visit.

"Hajj is a very important activity and the Government of India gives it a lot of importance. Ministry of Minority Affairs has been arranging this activity... There are various issues

discussed in the bilateral talks. There has always been a great coordination between the Saudi government and India on Hajj," the ambassador said.

Hajj quota

India's Hajj quota for 2025 has risen to 175,025 from 136,020 in 2014, with arrangements for 122,518 pilgrims finalised. However, due to delays by Combined Hajj Group Operators in contract agreements, approximately 42,000 Indians are unlikely to perform the sacred pilgrimage this year.

What went wrong with the Hajj pilgrimage in 2024

Mr. Modi and the Crown Prince will co-chair the second meeting of the Strategic Partnership Council, established during the Prime Minister's 2019 visit to strengthen bilateral ties.

On Wednesday, the Prime Minister, who received Saudi Arabia's highest civilian honour in 2016, will also visit a factory employing Indian workers.

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