

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**

**LOK SABHA  
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.1897  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 07.03.2018**

**RELATIONS WITH MIDDLE EAST COUNTRIES**

1897. SHRI MANOJ TIWARI:  
SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR:  
DR. RATNA DE (NAG):  
SHRI HARI OM PANDAY:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has any plan to rejuvenate its relations with Middle-East countries in the near future;
- (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) if not, the reasons therefor?

**ANSWER**

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
[GEN. (DR) V. K. SINGH (RETD)]

**(a) to (c)** India has historically maintained a close and friendly relations with the countries in the Middle-East Region, which has been further strengthened with several high level exchanges including recent visit of our Prime Minister to Jordan, Palestine, UAE and Oman from February 9-12, 2018.

Beginning with the visit of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi to the UAE in August, 2015, a visit that came 34 years after the last visit by an Indian Prime Minister to the UAE in 1981, a new thrust was provided for rejuvenating our relations with the Middle-East countries. Prime Minister visited Saudi Arabia in April, 2016. During the visit, Saudi King conferred on him the highest civilian award- "Sash of King Abdulaziz" on him. As a testimony of our growing relationship, India has been invited and accorded the status of 'Guest of Honour' country in the Janadriya festival, the National Heritage and Cultural Festival of Saudi Arabia. The festival was attended by Minister of External Affairs in February 2018.

Prime Minister visited Qatar during June, 2016. Recently, on the invitation of the President of the UAE, Prime Minister revisited the UAE in February, 2018. He also delivered keynote address at the 6<sup>th</sup> World Government Summit in Dubai where India was accorded the status of Guest of Honour country. Prime Minister also visited Sultanate of Oman, another important country for us in the Region which hosts a large Indian community. In October 2015, Rashtrapatiji visited Palestine and Jordan. PM also undertook a historic first ever visit to Palestine on 10<sup>th</sup> February, 2018. During this visit, the PM was awarded the highest civilian award the 'Grand Collar of State of Palestine' in appreciation of his efforts to promote the

historic relations between India and Palestine. PM also visited Jordan, the first ever visit in 30 Years.

There have also been several visits at the highest-level from the Middle East countries. Emir of Qatar visited India during March, 2015 and Prime Minister of Qatar visited India during December, 2016. The President of Egypt visited India in September, 2016 and the President of Palestine Mahmoud Abbas visited India in May, 2017. Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi visited India during February, 2016 and again during January, 2017 as Chief Guest at the Republic Day celebrations.

With the regular exchange of these high level visits, the new thrust in our relationship with the countries of the Middle East, which host a large Indian community and also our traditional partners in our energy and food security strategy witnessed a major upswing particularly in political, economic, defence and security cooperation in the last four years.

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