

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA**

**MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**

**LOK SABHA**

**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO-4812**

**ANSWERED ON- 28/03/2025**

**ENHANCEMENT OF REGIONAL STRATEGIC COOPERATION**

**4812 SHRI MUKESHKUMAR CHANDRAKAANT DALAL**

**Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :-**

**(a) the initiatives undertaken by the Government to enhance regional strategic cooperation particularly in the Gulf and Middle East and North Africa (MENA) regions;**

**(b) the manner in which the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) is expected to improve connectivity and trade relations between India and other countries;**

**(c) the measures being implemented to address security challenges in the region and ensure maritime safety;**

**(d) the manner in which the Government plans to leverage its diplomatic efforts to strengthen ties with countries in the Mediterranean and beyond;**

**and**

**(e) the details of the role played by the Indian diaspora in fostering economic and cultural connections between India and the regions discussed?**

**ANSWER**

**THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**

**(SHRI PABITRA MARGHERITA)**

**(a) & (d) With the objective to further strengthen ties with countries in Gulf, MENA and Mediterranean region, India has leveraged its diplomatic efforts and entered into multifaceted strategic partnerships with the several countries *inter-alia* aimed at enhancing political ties, furthering diplomatic interests, strengthening national security, foster greater economic and investments growth, securing energy resources, deepening people-to-people ties, expanding cooperation in technology & innovation, infrastructure development and increased global influence. The details of India's strategic partnerships with these countries is at annexure-I.**

**India is part of I2U2 (India, Israel, the UAE and the USA) initiative which is aimed to encourage joint investments in six mutually identified areas such as water, energy, transportation space, health and food security. It intends to mobilize private sector capital and expertise to help modernize the infrastructure, decarbonise industries, improve public**

**health and promote the development of critical, emerging and green technologies**

**(b) On the sidelines of the G20 Leaders' Summit in New Delhi, the leaders of India, European Union, France, Germany, Italy, Saudi Arabia, UAE and US announced an MoU on 9 September 2023, committing to work together to develop a new India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEEC). The IMEEC will comprise two separate corridors, the east corridor connecting India to the Gulf and the northern corridor connecting the Gulf to Europe. These corridors intend to enhance connectivity, increase efficiency, reduce costs, secure regional supply chains, increase trade accessibility, generate jobs and lower greenhouse gas emissions, resulting in a transformative integration of Asia, Europe and Middle East.**

**An Intergovernmental Framework Agreement (IGFA) between India and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) concerning cooperation for operation of the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEEC) was signed on 13 February 2024. The main elements of the Framework include development and management of a logistics platform, including a digital ecosystem, and provision of supply chain services to handle all types of general cargo, bulk, containers and liquid bulk in order to enable IMEEC.**

**The implementation of the IMEEC involves multiple stakeholders and is at an initial stage.**

**c) The Government has a multi-pronged approach to address security challenges in the region and ensure maritime safety. These, *inter-alia*, include Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions (MAHASAGAR) initiative, (an extension of SAGAR doctrine "Security and Growth for All in the Region"), Indian Ocean Naval Symposium initiative, Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), Colombo Security Conclave (CSC) and signing defence, security and strategic agreements. India's commitment to the well-being and progress of nations of the Indian Ocean, including as first responder and a net security provider, is based on the MAHASAGAR outlook, among others. India's objective is to promote greater prosperity in the region and of ensuring the Indian Ocean a free and open space, respecting the UN Convention on the Law of the Seas (UNCLOS).**

**e) Among the world's largest overseas diaspora, we have brought about a transformational change in its engagement with them. The 35.4 million strong Overseas Indian community (15.9 million NRIs and 19.5 million PIOs) is an invaluable partner in the progress of the nation. The Indian**

**diaspora bolsters economic and cultural connections, among others, by significantly contributing through remittance, trade, investment, cultural exchanges, transfer of expertise and knowledge thereby act as a bridge to further India's national interest. A successful, prosperous, and influential diaspora is an asset. India stands to gain a lot from tapping its diaspora networks and productive utilization of the soft power that comes from having such a flourishing diaspora. The Government's efforts are also aimed at harnessing the diaspora potential to its fullest.**

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**Annexure-I**

<b>S. No</b>	<b>Name of Country</b>	<b>India's strategic partnership with other countries since 2014</b>	<b>Objectives behind declaration of such strategic partnerships</b>
<b>GULF</b>			
<b>1</b>	<b>Kuwait</b>	<b>Strategic Partnership</b>	<b>During Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Kuwait in December 2024, India-Kuwait bilateral relationship was elevated to Strategic Partnership. To further strengthen bilateral partnership through comprehensive and structured cooperation in key areas, including political, trade, investment, defence, security, energy, culture, education, technology and people-to-people ties.</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Qatar</b>	<b>Strategic Partnership</b>	<b>During the State Visit of visit of the Amir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani to India, an Agreement on the Establishment of Bilateral</b>

			<p><b>Strategic Partnership was signed on 18 February 2025, in New Delhi.</b></p> <p><b>The Agreement will deepen cooperation with Qatar in various fields including political, trade, energy, investment, security, culture and people-to-people ties.</b></p>
<b>3</b>	<b>Saudi Arabia</b>	<b>Strategic Partnership Council (SPC) Agreement</b>	<p><b>During Hon'ble Prime Minister's visit to Riyadh, on 29 October 2019, strategic Partnership Council (SPC) Agreement was signed between India and Saudi Arabia, which established a high-level council to steer the India-Saudi relationship.</b></p> <p><b>The SPC Agreement aims to enhance the level of exchange of information between the two countries at the strategic level and deepening of mutual political trust. It harnesses synergies between the development strategies of the two countries and calls for enhancing cooperation between them in the political, economic, commercial, security, military</b></p>

			<b>and cultural area.</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>UAE</b>	<b>Comprehensive Strategic Partnership - 2017</b>	<b>During the state visit of the then Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, H.H. Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, to India as Chief Guest at India's 68<sup>th</sup> Republic Day Celebration, India and UAE signed the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership to further deepen, widen and strength the bilateral relationship and people – to – people ties between two countires.</b>
<b>MENA Region</b>			
<b>1</b>	<b>Egypt</b>	<b>Strategic Partnership</b>	<b>During the State Visit of President of the Arab Republic of Egypt, His Excellency Mr. Abdel Fattah El-Sisi to India in January 2023, India and Egypt upgraded relations to Strategic Partnership.</b>  <b>It was to institutionalize a long-term commitment to the expanding, mutually beneficial and multifaceted bilateral relations between India and Egypt including in political, development, economic, trade, scientific,</b>



			<b>technological, defence, security &amp; counter-terrorism.</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Israel</b>	<b>Strategic partnership</b>	<b>During Prime Minister's visit to Israel in July 2017, the two countries raised the bilateral relationship to that of a strategic partnership. To build a broad based relationship to realise the full potential of partnership in areas of development, technology, innovation, cyber security entrepreneurship, defence and security.</b>
<b>MEDITERRANEAN</b>			
<b>1</b>	<b>Greece</b>	<b>Strategic Partnership</b>	<b>India and Greece elevated the bilateral relations to the level of a Strategic Partnership in August 2023 during the official visit of Hon'ble Prime Minister to Greece.</b>  <b>Building on the foundation of the long-standing warm and close relationship between their countries and peoples, the Prime Ministers decided to upgrade India-Greece bilateral ties to the level of a "Strategic Partnership" to strengthen bilateral cooperation across various areas,</b>

			<b>including political, security and economic spheres.</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Italy</b>	<b>Strategic Partnership</b>	<p><b>India and Italy relations were elevated to a strategic partnership in March 2023.</b></p> <p><b>India considers Italy an important partner in Europe and the Mediterranean region. Italy is focusing on the Indo-Pacific and considers India a key player in the region. The strategic partnership will infuse depth and momentum across all domains of bilateral cooperation and strengthen our joint efforts to address global issues.</b></p>

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