



# India–Oman Bilateral Relations

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India's relationship with Oman is one of its most **strategic and historically deep-rooted** partnerships in the Gulf region.

## Pillars of the Relationship

- **Strategic & Defence Cooperation:** This is the cornerstone of the relationship.
- **Defence Exchanges:** India has access to the **Port of Duqm** for military and logistical support, which is critical for India's strategic maritime presence in the western Indian Ocean.
- **Joint Military Exercises:** Regular exercises like **Al Nagah** (Army), **Naseem Al Bahr** (Navy), and **Eastern Bridge** (Air Force) underscore the robust cooperation.
- **Economic & Commercial Ties:**
  - Oman is a key source of **energy** for India.
  - Bilateral trade is significant, and the finalisation of the **India-Oman Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)** is a major ongoing goal to open a new chapter in trade and commercial ties.
  - Indian investments in Oman are substantial, particularly in the infrastructure sector (e.g., Duqm Special Economic Zone).
- **Cultural & Diaspora:**
  - An estimated **600,000+** strong **Indian diaspora** forms the largest expatriate community in Oman, contributing significantly to its economy and strengthening cultural links.
  - Historical maritime trade links between the Gujarat and Malabar coasts and Oman predate modern diplomatic ties.
- **Regional Role:** Oman has traditionally maintained a **balanced foreign policy**, making it an important interlocutor for India in navigating the complex politics of the Gulf region and the wider West Asia.
- **Geopolitical Significance:** Oman's location at the mouth of the **Strait of Hormuz** makes it strategically vital for India's energy security and maritime trade routes.
- **Role in India's Foreign Policy:** The relationship is a key component of India's "**Look West**" policy (now extended as "Act West") and its expanding engagement with the Global South.
- **Focus on CEPA:** The ongoing efforts to sign CEPA are a current affairs focal point, signaling deeper economic integration.