

Defence Pact between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan

About the Defence Pact

- Saudi Arabia and Pakistan signed the Strategic Mutual Defense Agreement (SMDA) on September 17, 2025, pledging to protect each other if either one is attacked. The pact was signed by Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Saudi Arabia Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.
- The pact states that **any attack on one country will be considered an attack on both**, ensuring joint defence and stronger deterrence against any aggression. **This is the first clear military agreement between them.**
- The pact is the strongest upgrade in their military relations, with Pakistan's nuclear capability possibly protecting Saudi Arabia from future threats.
- The agreement was signed just after an emergency summit of nearly 60 Arab and Muslim countries following Israeli military actions in the region.
- The **aim of the agreement** is to deepen defence cooperation between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan and to promote peace and stability in the region.

Reason of the Pakistan- Saudi Defence Pact

- **Pakistan's dependence on Saudi economic assistance** is one of the causes of this defence pact. Islamabad seeks solid foreign allies in the midst of poor relations with the West.
- **Israel's military actions** in West Asia have increased tensions and security concerns in the region. At the same time, Pakistan faces challenges due to **rising instability in Afghanistan** and ongoing threats of cross border militancy.
- Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman is focused on **strengthening Saudi Arabia's leadership role in the Islamic world while balancing its relationships with powerful countries like nuclear armed Pakistan, Israel and India.**

Major geopolitical implication

- It is Pakistan's most consequential defence pact in decades, also offering both strategic and economic benefits to it.

- **Pakistan can access US weapons using Saudi funding** as Washington seems willing to sell.
- **For Saudi Arabia** the pact strengthens **defences against Iran, Houthi militias and instability triggered by Israel's actions.**
- **Riyadh has made it clear that the agreement is not targeted at India and will not affect its independent ties with India.** Nevertheless, New Delhi is cautious in respect of any combined security efforts between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.
- The agreement raises questions about **possible sharing of Pakistan's nuclear weapons with Saudi Arabia**, but the actual transfer is highly unlikely because of strong opposition from Israel and strict international red lines.
- **Pakistan and Saudi Arabia are both close partners of China which adds a China driven angle to their relationship.**

India's response to the Pact & Impact on India

- India reacted carefully to the Saudi Arabia-Pakistan mutual defence agreement, with the **Ministry of External Affairs** spokesperson noting that the government was aware of the long standing arrangement.
- The Ministry of External Affairs said it will study its implications for national security as well as for regional and global stability. The government remains committed to protecting India's national interests and ensuring comprehensive national security in all domains.
- The pact creates strategic concerns for India during a time of strong Saudi-India relations, including energy trade, political visits and joint military exercises. India fears that Saudi Arabia's closer ties with Pakistan may reduce India's influence as Saudi Arabia's key Asian partner.
- The **India-Middle East-Europe Corridor (IMEC) aimed at linking India to Europe via Saudi Arabia and the UAE** could **lose momentum** if Saudi Arabia shifts focus toward Pakistan. Political trust between India and Saudi Arabia might weaken, creating uncertainty over a corridor meant to counter China's Belt and Road Initiative.

- India is worried that the pact might encourage Pakistan in its rivalry against India. Although Saudi Arabia says the pact is not against India, the formal defense agreement with Pakistan sends a strong message.
- Indian analysts believe this may push India to strengthen its defense partnership with Israel with whom it already shares intelligence and advanced weapons cooperation. India may respond by quietly deepening ties with Israel, US and European countries while maintaining diplomatic relations with Saudi Arabia.
- Overall, the pact increases uncertainty in regional security and challenges India's strategic position.

