

**Embassy of India
Riyadh**

Press Release

In a historic first, eight aircraft of Indian Air Force landed at a Royal Saudi Air Force base on 26 February heralding a new chapter in the defence relationship between the two countries. The Indian contingent comprising 145 Air Warriors with its complement of 05 MIRAGE, 02 C17 and 01 IL 78 tanker had an overnight halt in the Kingdom. On its arrival, the Indian contingent was received by senior RSAF officials, Indian Ambassador Dr Suhel Ajaz Khan, Defence Attaché Col G. S. Grewal along with Indian Embassy officials. On 27 February the Contingent left for participating in the forthcoming Cobra Warrior 23 Exercise in the UK.

Ambassador Dr Khan during his address to the Air Warriors highlighted the growing relations between India and Saudi Arabia. He emphasized on the importance of Military diplomacy as an important aspect of bilateral relations and the stellar role played by our Air Warriors in the same.

Ambassador Dr Khan and Contingent Commander also had a formal interaction with the Base Commander of the Royal Saudi Air force which was followed by an exchange of mementos. The Ambassador thanked the Base Commander and his staff for all the support extended to the Indian Contingent. The Base Commander welcomed the Indian Air Warriors and wished them all the best for the forthcoming Cobra Warrior 23 exercise.

The Ambassador also had an informal interaction with the contingent members during a reception organized by the Embassy in the evening. The crew members shared their operational experiences and planning for the forthcoming exercise. Many of the Air Warriors had recently participated in Operation Dost, providing relief and support to earthquake-hit Türkiye and Syria.

Defence relations between India and Saudi Arabia have made significant progress in last few years. Recently a large delegation from the Saudi side also participated in Aero India Show in Bengaluru.
