

India, UAE to deepen strategic ties, counter terror

Diaspora's arena: Prime Minister Narendra Modi greets the Indian community at Dubai Opera in Abu Dhabi on Saturday. PTI

India and the UAE will hold a bilateral naval exercise, the External Affairs Ministry announced on Sunday.

The declaration came during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's discussion with the leadership of the Gulf country with both sides agreeing to deepen the strategic partnership and counter terrorism in "all forms".

"The two leaders welcomed the decision taken during the latest round of JDCC [Joint Defence Cooperation Committee] held in New Delhi in December 2017 to conduct the first bilateral Naval Exercise during 2018," a press statement from the Ministry said. It explained that maritime security would be a crucial domain of India-UAE cooperation focussing on the Indian Ocean and the Gulf region.

The Hindu had earlier reported that the naval exercise, is likely to take place in March off the coast of Abu Dhabi. Apart from the announcement for joint maritime cooperation, Prime Minister Modi and the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, expressed joint commitment against tackling terrorism and threats to stability in the region.

Double standards

Making common cause against international terrorism, a joint statement issued at the end of Mr. Modi's discussions with the hosts said, "The two sides deplored the adoption of double standards in addressing the menace of international terrorism and agreed to strengthen cooperation in combating terrorism both at the bilateral level and within the multilateral system. The two sides resolved to continue working together towards the adoption of India's proposed Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism in the United Nations."

Apart from a common intent to fight terrorism, both sides affirmed partnership on the cyber front and declared that joint research and development centres of excellence to fight cyber threats will be expedited.

Both sides also reviewed contribution from UAE's sovereign wealth fund ADIA (Abu Dhabi Investment Authority). "Prime Minister Modi welcomed ADIA's participation in India's National Infrastructure Investment Fund as an anchor investor and welcomed DP World's agreement with NIIF to create a joint investment platform for ports, terminals, transportation and logistics businesses in India," the MEA said in its statement on the visit, which also witnessed a landmark concession to an ONGC-led energy consortium by ADMA-OPCO in lower Zakum oil fields of UAE.

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