

India's Deepening Love Affair with Israel: New Aspects of Cooperation

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This article explores the transmuting dimensions of India-Israel relations, with a special focus on the efforts and new developments that have taken place under Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's tenure. Given India's internal foreign policy constraints and its commitment to the cause of Palestine, Israel was for some time considered impalpable. Significant cooperation between the Indian government and Israel occurred only during brief periods of non-Congress rule, starting with the governments of Morarji Desai, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, and later Narendra Modi. The relationship between India and Israel is getting closer and closer, especially in the field of Defence, where both countries are working together. The rhetorical level of cooperation is high under the government of Narendra Modi, driven by the idea of fundamentalist nationalism. This article explores various aspects of India-Israel cooperation under the Modi administration. The research paper explains India's long-term strategic aspirations in the Middle East and its bilateral ties with Israel, which are characterized by their cooperative nature.

Key Words: Israel, Palestine, India, Modi, Defense Cooperation, Congress

After gaining independence in May 1948, Israel acknowledged India as a burgeoning power in Asia and a potential leader among neutral and non-aligned states, notwithstanding Israel's recent establishment as a state. Nehru and Gandhi were highly esteemed figures among the leaders of Israel and played a significant role in shaping the perception of the Jewish state. Despite being non-Muslims, both leaders garnered significant esteem from the Arab community. The Jewish state held optimistic expectations that these leaders would be enthusiastic about alleviating Arab animosity and fostering cooperation between these communities. However, they declined to indulge in this prospect during the mid-1950s ¹. The primary objective of the Israeli Foreign Ministry during the initial years of independence was to seek diplomatic acknowledgment from Asian nations diligently. India ranked first on Israel's list of Asian countries for establishing relations, as Israel anticipated that India's recognition would facilitate Israeli political and commercial endeavors in Asia ². Israel sought to forge strong ties with India to join an alliance of non-aligned nations, having India as its primary leader after its independence. Conversely, although paradoxical, Israel did not prioritize its connections with Asian countries, especially India, on an international level. Israel's primary objective was to protect its security, geographical integrity, and national identity on the global level ³. In the Knesset, Prime Minister Ben-Gurion highlighted that we must never forget that we cannot import military hardware from Asia or Africa for the Israeli defense forces ⁴.

In 1948, Israel's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Moshe Sharett, submitted an official plea to Prime Minister Nehru to recognise their nascent state. However, India, despite a formal request for acknowledgment from President Chaim Weizmann, succumbed to the pressure exerted by Arab states, particularly Egypt, and ultimately refused to extend diplomatic recognition to Israel. The decision was primarily driven by India's desire to maintain its non-aligned status and avoid being drawn into the Arab-Israeli conflict, which was perceived as a potential threat to India's regional strategic interests ⁵. According to the report submitted by Israeli Ambassador to Washington Eliyahu Eilat during his visit to the United States in October 1949, India's Muslim minority played a vital role in shaping its stance on the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestinian issue. Eilat's report aligns with the theory of domestic politics, which suggests that domestic factors, such as the interests and opinions of minority groups, can significantly influence a state's foreign policy ⁶.

In the early 1950s, India harboured concerns that extending recognition to Israel could potentially estrange the Arab world, particularly Egypt, from India. India expressed concerns that extending recognition may potentially have adverse effects on its diplomatic relations with Pakistan, a predominantly Islamic country. India was concerned about Pakistan's endeavours to establish a pan-Islamic bloc and amplify Arab nations' opposition to Israel. India recognised the need to assist Arab nations in their conflict with Israel to gain their support and sympathy. The Jewish State of Israel has consistently requested formal recognition from the Indian government as a sovereign Jewish state. Despite this, the Indian government has thus far refrained from granting recognition due to significant pressure from Arab nations. Prime Minister Nehru has acknowledged the requests for recognition from Israel, but we advise against taking action on this matter for now. India cannot actively participate in this conflict through diplomatic channels or otherwise ⁷. India's initial opposition to the admission of the State of Israel to the United Nations in 1949 can be attributed to its foreign policy of non-alignment, which aimed to maintain neutrality and independence in the context of Cold War politics. However, India's eventual recognition of Israel on September 17, 1950, can be seen as a pragmatic decision made after receiving guarantees from Arab states that it would not affect their amicable relations. Despite its deviation from typical diplomatic procedures, this recognition did not form complete diplomatic ties between the two countries, as India continued to maintain its pro-Arab stance in the Middle East ⁸.

According to Medzini (1976)⁹, Israel's primary objective was establishing diplomatic and formal relations with India. This strategic move was crucial to Israel's larger scheme of gaining greater global recognition and support from other Asian nations. Furthermore, Israel sought to address its lingering border disputes with Arab countries, which had been a source of significant political tension in the region. The establishment of diplomatic ties with India was envisioned as a means to integrate with other Asian nations, thereby countering the growing political hostility and economic boycotts imposed on it by neighbouring Arab nations. This strategic maneuver can be seen as a calculated attempt by Israel to expand and consolidate its diplomatic leverage on a global scale ¹⁰.

The 1956 Suez Canal Military Operation marked a significant turning point in relations between India and Israel. The operation, which was not communicated to Israeli diplomat Sharett before he met with Prime Minister Nehru in New Delhi, resulted in a strong condemnation of Israel's aggressive military tactics and

overreaching policies by Nehru. Sudha Rao's analysis of the aftermath of the operation highlights the erosion of India's support for Israel, which had previously been closely aligned with the ideology and values of the Indian National Congress Party and Indian intellectuals. Israel's socialist and egalitarian principles, which formed the basis of its establishment, were highly compatible with those of the Indian National Congress. However, the Suez Canal Crisis marked the beginning of a growing distance between the two nations. Despite the many factors supporting friendly relations between the two, including shared values and ideologies, geopolitical circumstances forced them to drift apart. The failure of Indian foreign policy to show greater flexibility and creativity during pivotal moments ultimately contributed to this unfortunate outcome, which deprived India of an opportunity to play a role in resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict. Nonetheless, the enduring courage and humanist ideology of the Jewish people, which embody Gandhi's values, remain a source of inspiration and admiration for many in India ¹¹.

During Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's second term, the Indian government took a hardline and antagonistic approach towards Israel. This was evident when the Israeli Consul in Bombay was declared *persona non grata* in July 1982, following his criticism of India's policies. The India-Israel relationship deteriorated due to several factors, including Israel's annexation of the Golan Heights in December 1981, the destruction of Iran's nuclear reactor in June 1981, and the adverse global reaction to its military operation in Lebanon in 1982. India's historical ties with the Arab world, its desire to maintain its Non-Aligned Movement credentials, and its strategic interests in West Asia were all factors that motivated this shift in orientation ¹². In August of 1988, the American Jewish community and Congressman Stephen Solarz pressured Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi to elevate the Israeli Vice-Consul in Bombay to the diplomatic position of Consul. This resulted in Israel and India establishing indirect contact in Washington and New York in December of the same year. Yossef Hadas, Israel's Director General of Foreign Affairs, visited India that same month and met with the Minister of External Affairs, Narasimha Rao. Despite this, Indian officials labeled the visit as a tourist visit, and the meeting concluded without any positive diplomatic outcomes ¹³.

On January 22, 1992, the Israeli Consul in Bombay was extended a courteous invitation for a meeting with J.N. Dixit, the distinguished Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of External Affairs of India, in New Delhi. During the meeting, Dixit conveyed the Indian government's intent to augment the quality of its relations with the State of Israel. In response, the Israeli Consul expressed gratitude for India's interest and emphasised that Israel would be honoured to establish full diplomatic relations with India. Such a diplomatic overture would enable India to participate in the working groups of the multilateral channel of the peace process in the Middle East, which would undoubtedly serve the interests of both our great nations. This is a testimony to both nations' diplomatic maturity, sagacity, and commitment to a peaceful resolution of the conflict in the region. India recognised that to become a consequential stakeholder in the intricate web of the Middle East peace process and negotiations, it had to pave the way for establishing cordial and substantive diplomatic relations with Israel. This move would significantly affect India's foreign policy orientation and regional power dynamics. This move underscores India's strategic calculations to leverage its soft power and diplomatic outreach to expand its influence in the region while also seeking to balance its interests with various

stakeholders and mitigate potential risks and challenges ¹⁴.

Understanding the Shift

The neorealist paradigm, as advanced by the eminent scholar Kenneth Waltz, accentuates the influence of structural constraints on state conduct in the global sphere ¹⁵. By employing this theoretical framework to analyse India's foreign policy towards Israel in the post-Cold War epoch, one can discern valuable insights into the underlying rationales for this strategic shift. A neorealist interpretation of India's engagement with Israel illuminates that it was a calculated response to the region's evolving balance of power dynamics. The dissolution of the Soviet Union left India exposed to external threats, as it lost its primary source of military support. According to neorealism, states are rational actors that operate in an anarchic international system where power and security are the primary motivating factors. In this context, India's alignment with Israel can be viewed as a strategic move aimed at balancing the power dynamics in the region and bolstering its security posture. Furthermore, India's concern with cross-border terrorism aligns well with the neorealist notion that states are driven by their security interests. Thus, India's collaboration with Israel serves as a mechanism to strengthen its security and mitigate the challenges posed by terrorism. During the 1990s, the escalation of militant activity in Kashmir instigated India's apprehension over potential cross-border terrorism, prompting a strategic move to establish diplomatic relations with Israel as a means of mitigating this threat. This decision manifested India's recognition of the importance of cultivating positive and customary bilateral ties with Israel, owing to the latter's geopolitical significance in the region and its military, technological, and strategic capabilities. Such a move aligns with India's foreign policy objectives of preserving national security, expanding its global influence, and maintaining regional stability through strategic partnerships with key regional players. The shifting political landscape of the Middle East, notably the Madrid Conference of 1991, which sought to ameliorate the Arab-Israel conflict through diplomatic negotiations, compelled India to reevaluate and revamp its foreign policy towards Israel ¹⁶. Subsequently, the normalisation of diplomatic ties between China and Israel in January 1992 had a profound impact on India's leadership, prompting a recalibration of their diplomatic relations with the Jewish state. In the post-Cold War era, several nations endeavoured to improve their diplomatic relations with Israel. India perceived Israel as a suitable partner to bolster their strategic and diplomatic ties. This mutual agreement was particularly significant in fulfilling India's defence requirements, which were accentuated by the disintegration of the Soviet Union, thereby creating a void in their military apparatus.

In 1992, Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao strategically manoeuvred towards a more pragmatic and realistic approach to Indian foreign policy by normalising relations with Israel. This decision was guided by the prospects of bolstering security cooperation, arms modernisation, and counterterrorism efforts through diplomatic means ¹⁷. Consequently, India officially recognised Israel as a sovereign nation on 29 January 1992, establishing embassies in each other's territories. The establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Israel marked a significant turning point in Indian foreign policy, reflecting the country's expanding diplomatic horizons and willingness to engage with the international community on a more pragmatic and strategic level. This shift in approach under the Congress-led government headed by

Prime Minister Narasimha Rao from Nehruvian ideological animosity to a more realist outlook reflected the changing dynamics of the global political order. India's relationship with Israel was no longer seen as a zero-sum game but as part of its broader foreign policy strategy to build strategic partnerships with countries that share common interests and values. The Congress leadership's nuanced approach towards the Israel-Palestine conflict emphasised India's commitment to the principles of non-alignment while at the same time recognising the importance of building close ties with the Jewish state. The establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Israel opened up new avenues for cooperation in various fields, including defence, technology, and trade, and has since become a cornerstone of India's foreign policy in the Middle East. P.R. Kumaraswamy's analysis highlights India's strategic pursuit of a balanced foreign policy approach, characterised by its ability to manage its relations with Israel and the Arab countries concurrently¹⁸. This approach is grounded in the belief that India can pursue strategic partnerships with both Israel and the Arab nations simultaneously, thereby avoiding a zero-sum game in its foreign policy calculus. In doing so, India's foreign policy seeks to navigate the complexities of regional power dynamics while also advancing its national interests in an increasingly multipolar world order.

Indo-Israel relations have gained enormous momentum under the BJP-led NDA-II government headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who expanded the relationship from the defense and security domain to the non-defense sectors encompassing science and technology, agriculture, tourism, water management, etc. With the rise of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in power in 2014, Israel attained greater focus and a spotlight over other West Asian countries in India's diplomatic policy¹⁹. There has been a sturdy strengthening of India's relationship with Israel since 2014 under the Leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who can be accredited with diversifying the bilateral Indo-Israel relations and bringing it "out from under the carpet"²⁰. Modi redressed Israeli grievances and made it clear that India was ready to take on Israel openly and showed that India is more capable and contented to deal with Israel in public without bothering with any pressure or hesitation. In 2014, Indian Home Minister Rajnath Singh visited Israel and kept his visit limited to Tel Aviv. This visit is considered a breakthrough in Indo-Israel ties, as Rajnath Singh broke the tradition of concurrently visiting Palestine²¹. In 2015, Indian President Pranab Mukherjee visited Israel and became the first Indian president to address the Israeli Knesset. In his address, he avowed that his "visit to Israel is taking place at a time when relations between our two governments are taking a very positive trajectory"²². In reciprocity, Israeli President Reuven Rivlin was on a six-day visit to India. Rivlin visited the Center of Excellence in Haryana, saying, "India could learn from Israeli experience and know-how in agriculture and water-cleaning techniques"²³.

Both countries, India and Israel, celebrated 25 years of diplomatic relations in 2017. The Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, personally visited Israel and made it a momentous and historic event. During his meeting with his Israeli counterpart, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Modi covered various issues, from counterterrorism and military cooperation to advances in agriculture and technology²⁴. During a visit to India in January 2018, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu led a team of 130 people. As honorary chairman of the conference, he delivered the keynote speech at the annual India Diplomatic and Strategic Conference.

He advocated strong ties between India and Israel ²⁵. The BJP government, led by Modi, has shifted its stance on Israel and is working to strengthen relations with the Jewish state. New Delhi separates Israel and Palestine into two separate entities, with each of which it is willing to deal individually ²⁶. In recent years, Israel has become an example of the type of strategic partner that the current government in India is trying to cultivate. The BJP leadership has warmly accepted Zionism as a sister philosophy to its Hindutva nationalism and added critical dimensions to its relationship with Israel.

Areas of convergence

The bilateral relationship between India and Israel is multi-dimensional. There are several convergence areas for the evolving India-Israel cooperation. A range of issues exist between these two countries on which the interests converge significantly. Still, the critical areas of convergence are growing defence cooperation, counterterrorism collaboration, and technological and trade relations. Both nations are working very hard to deepen their relations in these areas and diversify them.

India-Israel Economic Collaboration: The Bud of Relationships

Military and security cooperation or arms sales between India and Israel are often highlighted when discussing relations between the two countries. While promoting cooperation in other sectors was not a priority during the high-level visits, both sides are now paying more attention to it. However, things are beginning to change, and both nations are actively seeking tripartite and multilateral alliances with like-minded nations eager to discover new avenues of increased cooperation in all areas of the bilateral relationship. According to the head of Israel's economic and trade mission, Sagi Itchar, bilateral trade is growing and is expected to reach \$4 billion by 2021 ²⁷. In 2020, bilateral trade between the two countries was valued at around 3.4 billion US dollars. The course of today's economic partnership was set long ago. A Joint Study Group (JSG) was formed in November 2005 during a visit to Israel by Trade and Industry Minister Shri Kamal Nath to increase bilateral trade from \$2 billion to \$5 billion by 2008.

The current relationship between India and Israel encompasses a diverse array of areas. Excluding defence, the bilateral trade between April 2020 and February 2021 amounted to \$4.14 billion ²⁸. There are a growing number of Indian software companies operating in Israel. In 2006, the two nations entered a comprehensive agreement to cooperate in the agricultural sector. The deal is currently in its fifth and final stage of implementation. India and Israel have signed a three-year work programme agreement for development in agricultural cooperation. In 2020, an Israeli team of doctors and other medical officials arrived in India with a multi-pronged mission, codenamed "Operation Breathing Space," to work with Indian doctors on the COVID-19 response. Authorities in India and Israel have teamed up to create COVID-19 rapid test kits during the current outbreak. An oral vaccine against COVID-19 has been developed by teams at Premas Biotech in India and Oramed in Israel and was released in March 2021 ²⁹. In recent years, there has been an increase in travel and other forms of interpersonal interaction, including cultural exchanges.

India and Israel have established a robust bilateral trade relationship, with India

serving as Israel's third-largest trade partner in Asia and seventh-largest partner globally. This partnership is based on essential and mutually beneficial sectors: defence, security, agriculture, and information technology (IT). It is noteworthy that bilateral merchandise trade between the two countries has witnessed significant growth over the years, surging from US\$200 million in 1992 to US\$7.86 billion during the 2021–2022 fiscal year, with India enjoying a trade surplus in this alliance³⁰. Interestingly, the Israeli market is becoming increasingly attractive to Indian IT companies like TCS, Infosys, Tech Mahindra, and Wipro. Many Indian businesses have also acquired a significant stake in their Israeli counterparts, with Jain Irrigation purchasing Naan Dan, a leading irrigation equipment manufacturer in Israel, and Sun Pharma acquiring a controlling stake of 66.7% in Taro Pharmaceutical Industries, an Israeli pharmaceutical firm³¹.

The Indian government released information stating that Israel had invested more than US\$270 million in India through foreign direct investment (FDI) between April 2000 and March 2022³². Israel has focused on high-tech industries and agriculture, making over 300 investments in India, including establishing manufacturing plants, research and development (R&D) centres, subsidiaries, and more. In addition to traditional fields such as agriculture and chemicals, Israeli expertise is increasingly sought in new sectors like water technologies, homeland security, and real estate. Some notable Israeli companies that have invested in India include Netafim, IDE, Teva Pharmaceuticals, and ADAMA. India has also been expanding its economic footprint in Israel, most recently with Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Ltd (APSEZ), a joint venture between India's Adani group and Israel's Gadot Chemicals Tankers and Terminals Ltd, winning the Haifa Port bid for US\$1.18 billion in July 2022³³.

Security and Defense Cooperation: The Foundation of Bilateral Relations

Israel, a nation lacking natural resources such as oil and gas and insufficient drinking water, has focused on achieving several important goals, including security, survival, and economic growth. Becoming technologically advanced and economically independent was one method that could be used to find a solution to this problem. Building political relations with Israel using arms diplomacy has proven to be a successful strategy in recent years. Security and defence cooperation has been and will continue to be an essential part of the relationship between the two countries. Israel sent arms to India during the 1962 Indo-Chinese conflict, which occurred three decades before the formation of official diplomatic relations between the two countries. During the Indo-Pak wars, which took place in 1965 and 1971, India made use of Israeli weapons. In 1968, when the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), India's foreign intelligence agency, was established, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi tasked former spy chief RN Kaw with establishing ties with the Israeli Mossad. Israel has also established itself as India's most reliable arms supplier and is willing to keep a supply line open regardless of political conditions. Although the Pokhran II nuclear tests in 1998 and the Kargil War in 1999 left the Clinton administration facing economic sanctions and an embargo on weapons and military technology, Israel had already developed strategic contacts and provided surveillance equipment.

India is now Israel's largest arms purchaser, while Israel is India's second-largest

arms supplier. The import growth rate from 2015 to 2019 was 17.5%, with current annual sales totaling over \$1 billion ³⁴. Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI) and the Indian Defense Research and Development Organization (DRDO) are collaborating to develop surface-to-air missile systems for the Indian Armed Forces. The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (Sipri), which tracks arms sales worldwide, estimates that the two-way trade in military equipment between India and Israel has averaged more than \$1 billion annually for the past five years ³⁵. It has been said that India will soon sign a \$2.5 billion deal with Israel Aerospace Industries to purchase a medium-range surface-to-air missile defence system. This purchase would be made for the Indian Armed Forces. However, Kumaraswamy warns that an overemphasis on military cooperation could lead to the securitization of bilateral relations and uncertainty caused by political pressures or changes. Israeli-Turkish relations have been characterised by close military cooperation ³⁶. However, the coming to power of the Justice and Development Party and Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan led to a change in the political climate and a reduction in the number of military components involved in bilateral exchanges. For events of an exact nature, caution is required in New Delhi. Israel also has bitter rivalries with other countries, particularly France. As a result, it is imperative to coordinate and synchronise one's technological expertise with other companies, which are rapidly becoming significant participants in the Indian defence sector. Tanvi Pate believes that during his official visit to Israel in July 2017, Prime Minister Modi ended a controversial global trend and India's geopolitical identity as a global player through a bilateral partnership between India and Israel³⁷. India has established itself as a significant global player in West Asian politics. It has global aspirations beyond South Asia as a result of India's support for Israel's geopolitical identification as a West Asian nation.

Counterterrorism Collaboration and Military Training: Deepening Buds of Relationship

Another critical and noteworthy area of strategic cooperation between India and Israel is their joint efforts to counter terrorism and share counter-terrorism intelligence. Both India and Israel give top priority to countering terrorist threats. Both countries are democratic and diverse states with large Muslim populations, and both face the problem and scourge of Islamic terrorism, which geographically neighbouring governments support. Both India and Israel are now discussing the common issue of terrorism in various bilateral meetings to find ways to combat it. In a 2003 speech to the American Jewish Committee in Washington, former Indian National Security Advisor Brajesh Mishra offered a plan that proposed the United States of America, India, and Israel work together to address the shared danger of Islamic extremism. He advanced the idea that democratic governments bearing the brunt of global terrorism should come together in a "workable alliance" and experiment with various approaches, strategies, and procedures to combat the threat ³⁸. However, no attempt has been made to build an alliance of democratic governments to fight terrorism. India and Israel have established strong strategic cooperation on terrorism, and India has found it helpful to learn from Israel's experience in dealing with terrorism. This is because Israel has long suffered from cross-border terrorism from neighbouring countries. India has found it helpful to learn from Israel's experience in dealing with terrorism ³⁹. Terrorism is a problem in India and Israel, not only because it emanates from insurgent groups within their respective

governments but also because it is instigated and supported by neighbouring states in the region, most of which are authoritarian. India and Israel have forged strong ties in their joint mission to eliminate acts of global terrorism. Strategic ties between India and Israel are being strengthened to enhance both countries' security and counterterrorism capabilities. As a result, India and Israel have come to the fundamental realization that there can be no space for terrorists, even though the circumstances of each country's experience with terrorism are unique.

When it comes to the war on terror, Indian military services are often trained by Israel. After the Mumbai terrorist attacks in 2008, Israeli commandos trained Indian forces in various parts of India, including the jungles, mountains, rivers, and plains, to help them eliminate terrorist targets ⁴⁰. In addition, Israel has provided material assistance to India in the fight against terrorism. Israel has a long history of fighting terrorism in Palestine and has always sought to allow India to benefit from its counterterrorism expertise. Israel has a long history of fighting terrorism in Palestine. It has experience in countering terrorist organisations, training armed forces, and gathering intelligence on potential terrorist targets in Palestine. Israeli counterterrorism activities apply to Indian security forces as they face comparable scenarios in Kashmir and the northeast of the country. From Israel, India learned about ambushes, the use of high-tech weapons by the armed forces, the making of bombs, and how to use dogs for defence detection. Israel supports India in its fight against terrorist activities in Kashmir by providing essential logistical support in the form of surveillance equipment, cooperation in information sharing, participation in joint exercises, and cooperation in stopping the funding of terrorist organisations.

After Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon visited India, both countries concluded they should participate in joint military exercises to strengthen their defence sector relations. This exercise, conducted by the combined force, was a natural move as it allowed both states to learn from the other nation's experience at all levels of the military ⁴¹. India's military establishment thanked Israel for sharing its knowledge and experience in countering transnational terrorist organisations. The Indian Ministry of Home Affairs has received a proposal from the Israeli government to organise joint training sessions. The proposal also included the provision of labels for weapons and ammunition and technology, including equipment for bomb disposal teams. Israeli counterterrorism training methods and strategies have historically focused on transferring technology and equipment. Additionally, India has enhanced the capabilities of its armed forces to better track the insurgency by purchasing Tavor assault weapons, Galil sniper rifles, night vision goggles, laser targeting and search systems, and other associated equipment. Both India and Israel are working together to fight growing radicalization and terrorism, especially cyberterrorism. In addition, India and Israel are working on cooperation in cyber security through training and skills development. Tech Mahindra, an India-based company, and ELTA Systems, an Israel-based company, have teamed up to provide IT solutions to government and commercial companies in India.

Conclusion

The foreign policy shift of the BJP-led NDA government towards Israel signifies a strategic recalibration in India's Middle East diplomacy. Embracing a realpolitik approach, the government has prioritised multifaceted collaboration encompassing counterterrorism efforts, economic interdependence, technological innovation,

defence modernisation, agricultural advancements, and water resource management. Prime Minister Modi's visionary agenda seeks to cultivate robust economic and trade alliances across the Middle East, viewing Arab and non-Arab nations as potential partners. Foreign Minister Subramanian Jaishankar's laudatory remarks during his visit to Israel underscore India's acknowledgment of Israel as a dependable and innovative ally. Ron Malka's assertion that Israel-India relations are a paramount achievement in international diplomacy further underscores the deepening strategic partnership between the two nations. Furthermore, the endorsement by Yuval Steinitz, the former finance minister of Israel, for the finalization of the free trade agreement in Delhi is indicative of the commitment to bolster bilateral economic ties.

The burgeoning relationship between India and Israel holds immense potential for mutually beneficial outcomes for both nations. For India, closer ties with Israel offer access to advanced technologies in areas such as defense, agriculture, and water resource management. Israel's expertise in these fields can significantly benefit India's modernization efforts and contribute to addressing critical challenges such as water scarcity and food security. Additionally, collaboration in counterterrorism efforts can enhance both countries' abilities to address shared security concerns. On the other hand, Israel stands to benefit from India's large and growing market. Strengthening economic ties with India can open up new opportunities for Israeli businesses and industries. Furthermore, Israeli companies and entrepreneurs can leverage India's skilled workforce and burgeoning consumer base to expand their regional presence. Overall, the deepening strategic partnership between India and Israel has the potential to foster mutual growth and progress while also contributing to stability and prosperity in the broader Middle East region.

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