

India-Israel Bilateral Relations

Overview of political relations

1. India and Israel are strategic partners. The bilateral political ties are warm and forward-looking. India announced its recognition of Israel on September 17, 1950. Soon after, the Jewish Agency established an immigration office in Bombay (Mumbai), which was later converted into a trade office and, subsequently, a consulate. Regular embassies opened in 1992 when full diplomatic relations were established between the two countries.

2. The civilizational relations between the countries date back to more than two millennia. India has welcomed Jews for several centuries, and their contribution, in turn, has enriched Indian culture. India is known in Israel as an ancient nation with strong cultural traditions and as an attractive tourist destination.

High-level visits and interactions

3. Prime Minister Narendra Modi (PM Modi) made a historic visit to Israel on July 4-6, 2017, upgrading ties to a strategic partnership; Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (PM Netanyahu) reciprocated in India on January 14-19, 2018, with joint statements issued both times. President Pranab Mukherjee visited Israel in October 2015, and President Reuven Rivlin visited India in November 2016. At COP 28 in Dubai on December 1, 2023, PM Modi met Israeli President Isaac Herzog to discuss regional conflicts and bilateral issues.

4. On April 24, 2025, PM Netanyahu called PM Modi to offer his condolences on the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack. Following the outbreak of the Israel-Iran conflict on June 13, 2025, PM Netanyahu and PM Modi spoke over phone wherein PM Netanyahu briefed PM Modi on the prevailing situation. On October 9, 2025, PM Modi called PM Netanyahu to congratulate him on the progress made under President Trump's Gaza peace plan. The Prime Ministers also spoke on December 10, 2025, regarding the situation in the region as well as on January 7, 2026, wherein they exchanged New Year greetings and discussed the regional situation.

Ministerial visits to India

5. In November 2025, Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar (FM Sa'ar) paid a two-day visit to India during which he met the External Affairs Minister Dr S. Jaishankar (EAM) and the NSA. Both foreign ministers had detailed discussions on the entire spectrum of the India-Israel Strategic Partnership and witnessed the signing of the MOU between the Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Israel. Both ministers has also met on February 15, 2025, on the sidelines of the Munich Security Conference.

6. On September 8-10, 2025, Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich led a delegation to India. During the visit, both countries signed a Bilateral Investment Agreement. The Israeli Minister of Agriculture and Food Security, Avi Dichter, visited India on April 7-10, 2025. The Israeli Minister for Economy and Industry, Nir Barkat, visited India on February 11-13, 2025, along with a delegation of Israeli CEOs and businesspersons, for the India-Israel CEO Forum and Business Forum. During the visit, the Minister of Commerce and Industry, Piyush Goyal,(CIM) and Minister Barkat jointly released the India-Israel Joint Postage Stamp on Holi and Purim. CIM and Minister Barkat also met each other on the margins of the OECD WTO Mini Ministerial Meeting in Paris on June 3, 2025. The

Israeli Minister for Tourism, Haim Katz, visited India on January 22-30, 2025. He met India's Minister of Tourism and inaugurated the Israeli pavilion in the OTM India travel fair in Mumbai.

Ministerial Visits from India to Israel

7. On the invitation of FM Sa'ar, EAM visited Israel on December 16-17, 2025, during which the Joint Work Plan for 2026 was adopted by both sides. EAM also called on the President of Israel, Isaac Herzog, and PM Netanyahu, and met Nir Barkat, Minister of Economy and Industry.

8. CIM visited Israel on November 20-22, 2025, during which the Terms of Reference for the India-Israel Free Trade Agreement were signed. CIM called on the President of Israel and PM Netanyahu. He also met Israel's Minister of Economy and Industry, Minister of Finance, and Minister of Agriculture and Food Security. He also participated in the 4th India-Israel Business Forum and CEOs Forum.

9. Minister of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying Rajiv Ranjan Singh visited Israel on January 13-15, 2026, to participate in the Second Global Summit on "Blue Food Security: Sea the Future 2026" in Eilat. He met Minister of Agriculture and Food Security. A Joint Ministerial Declaration of Intent on cooperation in the field of fisheries and aquaculture was signed during the visit.

Other visits

10. The Director General of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Eden Bar-Tal, visited India on March 17-20, 2025, for the Raisina Dialogue. The Deputy NSA, Joseph Draznin, also visited India on February 11-14, 2025. The Chief Economist of Israeli Ministry of Finance visited India on May 28-29 2025. The Director General of the Israeli Ministry of Defence Major General (Res) Amir Baram visited India in July, 2025 and met India's Defence Secretary.

11. On August 28, 2024, the 17th India-Israel Foreign Service Consultations were held in New Delhi. On November 12, 2024, the 3rd India-Israel Consular Dialogue was held in Jerusalem. The 1st India-Israel Cyber Policy Dialogue was held at Jerusalem on March 27, 2025. On October 27 -28, 2025, the 2nd India-Israel Export Control Dialogue was held in Tel Aviv.

Earlier high-level visits and interactions

12. Israeli Economy Minister Nir Barkat visited India on December 2-3, 2024, meeting EAM, CIM, and MoS Science & Technology. Israeli Transport Minister Miri Regev visited India on February 12-13, 2024, and earlier on September 2-6, 2023. A Knesset delegation led by Speaker Amir Ohana visited India on March 31-April 4, 2023, signing an MoU on parliamentary cooperation—his first foreign trip and the first by an Israeli Speaker to India. Israeli Economy Minister visited with a business delegation on April 16-20, 2023.

13. Then-Israeli FM Eli Cohen visited India on May 9, 2023, with a business delegation, meeting PM Modi, EAM, and co-chairing a business forum with Jal Shakti Minister. EAM and FM Cohen held phone talks on January 5, November 4, and December 12, 2023, including post-October 7 attacks.

14. PM Modi met then-Israeli PM Naftali Bennett at COP26 in Glasgow on November 2, 2021. Israeli Defence Minister Benjamin Gantz visited India on June 1-3, 2022; India's Agriculture Minister visited Israel on May 9-11,

2022; Jal Shakti Minister visited in November 2019. EAM visited Israel on October 17-21, 2021, at FM Yair Lapid's invitation, during which Israel ratified the International Solar Alliance. NSA Ajit Doval visited Israel on March 11-12, 2024, meeting PM Netanyahu and the-then counterpart Tzachi Hanegbi.

15. Indian External Affairs Ministers Jaswant Singh, S.M. Krishna, and Sushma Swaraj also visited Israel in the years 2000, 2012, and 2016, respectively. From the Israeli side, the then-President Ezer Weizman visited India in December 1996, while Prime Minister Ariel Sharon visited India in September 2003, during which the *Delhi Statement on Friendship and Cooperation* was signed. Shimon Peres visited India as Foreign Minister in 1993 and Minister for Regional Cooperation in 2000.

I2U2

16. On July 14, 2022, the Prime Minister participated (virtually) in the first leaders' summit of I2U2 along with the then-Prime Minister of Israel, Mr. Yair Lapid, President of the UAE Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, and then-President of the US Joseph R. Biden.

Economic and Commercial relations

17. Since diplomatic relations began in 1992, India-Israel trade and economic ties have grown rapidly. In FY 2024-2025, bilateral trade fell to US\$ 3.75 billion due to regional security issues and trade disruptions, with India's exports at USD 2.1 billion and imports at USD 1.6 billion. India ranks as Israel's second-largest Asian trading partner in merchandise, dominated by diamonds, petroleum, and chemicals, but expanding into electronics, high-tech products, communications, and medical equipment. Indian ODI to Israel (April 2000–April 2025) totaled ~US\$ 443 million, including a 2022 Adani-led acquisition of Haifa Port for USD 1.18 billion. Israeli FDI in India (April 2000–March 2025) was USD 334.26 million.

Agriculture

18. An agricultural cooperation agreement between India and Israel was signed in 1993 and renewed in April 2025. A comprehensive work plan signed in 2006 implements bilateral projects via Israel' MASHAV (Israel's Agency for International Development Cooperation in MFA) and Center for International Agricultural Development Cooperation. Cooperation is formalized through 3-Year Work Plans, with the 6th (2024-2026) currently underway. Under these plans, 43 Centres of Excellence (CoE) have been approved in flowers, vegetables, fruits (e.g., mango, citrus, litchi, date palm, pomegranate), and beekeeping, of which 35 are functional. In May 2023, ICAR and MASHAV signed a Declaration of Intent for the India-Israel Innovation Centre for Agriculture.

Water

19. Ongoing cooperation between the two countries in this sector was formalized through an MOU on Water Resources Management and Development Cooperation signed in November 2016. During the visit of the Prime Minister to Israel in July 2017, both sides signed MoUs on (i) the National Campaign for Water Conservation in India and (ii) the Reforms of UP Jal Nigam. MASHAV has signed joint declarations with the States of Haryana (June 2022) and Rajasthan (December 2024) for cooperation in the field of integrated water resource management and capacity building. In May 2023, both countries signed a Letter of Intent to establish Centres of Excellence in Water Technology Indian Institute of Technology Madras and Indian Institute of Technology Roorkee respectively.

Science & Technology (S&T) and Innovation

20. The Joint Committee on S&T, established under the S&T Cooperation Agreement signed in 1993, oversees India-Israel cooperation in S&T, which promotes joint research programs in select areas of mutual importance through a bilateral mechanism by extending financial support for undertaking joint research activities by Indian and Israeli researchers through various modes. In 2023, the India-Israel Joint Research Programme was launched seeking proposals in the field of artificial intelligence (AI) application in climate change and agriculture for food security. Under a bilateral MoU on Industrial Research and Development Initiative signed in May 2005, the India-Israel Initiative for Industrial R&D (i4RD) was set up to support joint industrial R&D projects. In 2017, during PM Modi's visit, an MoU established the India-Israel Industrial R&D and Innovation Fund (I4F), renewed for 2023-27, between India's Department of Science and Technology and Israel's National Authority for Technological Innovation.

Defense

21. As part of regular goodwill visits by Indian Navy ships, three Indian naval ships from the Western Fleet made a port call in Haifa in May 2017. *INS Tarangini*, a naval training ship, made a port call in Haifa in September 2018. Apart from the naval exercises, the Indian Air Force participated in a multilateral Air Force exercise, *Blue Flag-2021*, held in October 2021 in Israel. On March 3, 2023, India's Minister of Defence spoke with Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant. It was the first talk between the two defense ministers. The 17th meeting of Joint Working Group (JWG) on defence cooperation, co-chaired by Defence Secretary Shri Rajesh Kumar Singh and Director General of Israeli Ministry of Defence Maj Gen (Res) Amir Baram, took place in Tel Aviv on November 4, 2025. An MoU on Defence Cooperation was signed during the visit.

Health

22. On December 21, 2020, India and Israel signed an agreement on cooperation in health and medicine. The agreement envisages the deepening of bilateral strategic partnerships in the health sector, including in R&D in health, between the two countries. India and Israel cooperated in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic and agreed to mutually recognize COVID-19 vaccination certificates.

23. People-to-people relations

(a) There are over 42,000 Indian citizens in Israel, primarily caregivers, as well as construction and agriculture sectors; diamond traders; IT professionals; and students. There are approximately 1000 Indian students in Israel, mainly doing doctoral and post-doctoral studies in STEM areas. Several courses related to India are also taught at Israeli universities.

(b) **Indian Community:** There are over 100,000 Jews of Indian origin in Israel who are Israeli passport holders. The main waves of immigration into Israel from India took place in the 1950s and 1960s. The majority are from Maharashtra (Bene Israelis), and relatively smaller numbers are from Kerala (Cochini Jews) and Kolkata (Baghdadi Jews). In recent years, some Indian Jews from the northeastern states of India (Bnei Menashe) have also been immigrating to Israel.

(c) *Pravasi Bhartiya Samman:* Late Eliyahu Bezalel, hailing from Chennamangalam, Kochi, who distinguished himself as an eminent agriculturalist in Israel, became the first Israeli of Indian origin to receive *Pravasi Bhartiya Samman* in 2005. Late Sheikh Muhammad Munir Nazir Hassan Ansari, the director and trustee of the Indian Hospice in Jerusalem, which represents a unique Indian connection to the Holy City, was honored with the award

in 2011. In 2017, late Dr. Lael A. Best, an Israeli cardio-thoracic surgeon of Indian origin, was conferred this award. In 2023, Reena Vinod Pushkarna, a prominent restaurateur in Israel, was awarded in recognition of her achievements in the fields of business and community welfare.

(d) **National Convention of Indian-Origin Jews:** The Embassy facilitates the National Convention of Indian Jews in Israel. The annual event brings together around 5,000 Indian-origin Jews in Israel. Annual conventions have been held in the cities of Ramla (2013), Yeruham (2014), Ramla (2015), Kiryat Gat (2016), Ashkelon (2017), and Petach Tikvah (2022).

24. **Culture:** India and Israel maintain a Cultural Exchange Programme for bilateral ties in art, culture, and youth exchanges. Yoga and Ayurveda are popular in Israel, with enthusiastic celebrations of International Yoga Day. The Indian Cultural Centre in Tel Aviv, operational since January 2020, organizes events to strengthen cultural links. In December 2025, ICCR and Tel Aviv University signed an agreement creating the first ICCR-TAU India Chair in Israel, allowing TAU to host prominent Indian scholars annually across various disciplines.

25. **Operation Ajay and Operation Sindhu:** To ensure the safety of Indian nationals, following the October 7, 2023, terror attacks and the June 2025 Israel-Iran conflict, the Indian Embassy in Israel established 24-hour control rooms and emergency helplines. Under Operation Ajay over 1,300 Indians were evacuated via six special flights from October 12-22, 2023. Under Operation Sindhu around 818 Indians were evacuated through land routes via Jordan and Egypt, followed by flights from Amman and Sharm el-Sheikh, from June 22-25, 2025, amid Israeli airspace closure.

February, 2026