

India-Israel Relations

India-Israel relations refers to the bilateral economic, military and strategic ties between the Republic of India and the State of Israel.

Israel is represented through an embassy in New Delhi, and one consulate each in Mumbai and Bengaluru. India is represented through its embassy in Tel Aviv.

This article will give further details about India-Israel relations for the IAS Exam.

History of the India-Israel Relations

Full diplomatic relations between Israel and India were established in 1992, despite both the nations attaining independence from the United Kingdom a year apart. The reason was the path taken by both countries was different. India helmed the Non-Aligned movement and kept a close relationship with the Arab world and the Soviet Union while Israel maintained close relations between the United States and NATO.

Towards the end of the Cold war in the 1980s, the once frosty-relations between the two nations began to thaw with a flurry of bilateral activities between the two.

Israel provided on-the-ground intelligence and weapons during the Kargil War in 1999 and provided disaster relief following the devastating earthquake of 2001

Since firmly establishing diplomatic ties, both countries have benefited immensely. India has become one of Israel's largest trading partners, many of the world's leading high-tech companies in Israel and India are forging joint ventures that are successfully competing in the tough international marketplace. Trade and cooperation between the countries now centre primarily on security-related deals and aid in areas such as agriculture and water desalination.

Military Collaborations

Israel has sold radar and surveillance equipment for military application and it also gives counter-insurgency training to India's anti-terror forces

India-Israel cooperation increased dramatically in 2014 with the election of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Between Modi's election in May 2014 and November 2014, Israel exported \$662 million worth of Israeli weapons and defence items to India.

This export number is greater than the total Israeli exports to India during the previous three years combined. Israeli Defense Minister Moshe Ya'alon made the first-ever official visit of an Israeli Defense Minister to India in February 2015.

On May 10, 2017, three warships from the Indian navy docked in the port of Haifa, ahead of Indian Prime Minister Modi's scheduled visit during the Summer. The ships, the INS Mumbai, the INS Trisula, and the INS Aditya, participated in a Naval drill with the Israeli navy when they entered the port.

Due to rising tensions with China, India announced plans in July 2020 to purchase additional weapons from Israel. Indian Defense Minister Rajnath Singh and his Israeli counterpart Benny Gantz discussed strengthening bilateral ties and Singh expressed interest in encouraging greater participation of Israeli defence companies in India's defence manufacturing sector.

Collaboration in Agriculture

In 2006, Israeli and Indian ministers of agriculture signed a long-term cooperation and training deal, which has since been supervised by field experts from Mashav, an international development program of Israel's Foreign Ministry. In 2008, the two nations started a \$50 million shared agriculture fund, focusing on dairy, farming technology and micro-irrigation. This constituted the Indo-Israel Agricultural Project. In 2011, India and Israel signed an agreement to foster cooperation on urban water systems, which came after more than a decade of joint research, development and shared investment in the countries' respective water technologies.

By March 2014, 10 centres of excellence operated throughout India offering free training sessions for farmers on efficient agricultural techniques using Israeli technological expertise. Vertical farming, drip irrigation and soil solarization are some of what is taught at the centres. Farming at these centres focuses on mangoes, tomatoes, pomegranates, and citrus fruits.

Latest Developments in India-Israel Relations

The Israeli National Emergency Medical Service, MDA-Magen David Adom (Hebrew for Red Star of David) and the Indian Red Cross Society (IRCS) held a joint training program during July 2017 aimed at improving and upgrading the IRCS first-responder skills.

In 2017, a record 70,000 tourists from India visited Israel. This trend continued into 2018, with 40,000 Indian tourists visiting Israel during just the first six months of the year. Air India began running faster (approximately 7 hours) direct flights between New Delhi and Tel Aviv four times per week in March 2018, so tourism numbers are expected to continue to climb.

The first recipients of grants from the Israel-India Industrial R&D and Technological Innovation Fund (I4F) were announced in July 2018, including companies working to better the lives of Indians and Israelis through efficient water use, improving communications infrastructure, solar energy use, and life-changing surgeries. The fund aims to help Israeli entrepreneurs enter the Indian market.

