



## India-Israel Relations

**For Prelims:** Location of Israel

**For Mains:** India and Israel Relations, related issues and way ahead

### Why in News?

Recently, Israel's Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister visited India and held bilateral Meetings and agreed to deepen defence ties.

### What are the Key Highlights of the Visit?

- **Joint Declaration:**
  - The two Ministers presented a joint declaration marking 30 years of Israel-India relations.
  - The declaration reiterated the commitment of both the countries to deepen defence ties.
- **India-Israel Vision on Defense Cooperation:**
  - Both sides adopted the **India-Israel Vision on Defense Cooperation** to further strengthen the existing framework of the Indo-Israeli defense cooperation architecture.
- **A Letter of Intent was Exchanged:**
  - A Letter of Intent on enhancing cooperation in the field of futuristic defence technologies was exchanged.
  - Bilateral Cooperation will be in line with Prime Minister Modi's Make in India vision.
- **Military-To-Military Activities:**
  - Both countries reviewed the existing military-to-military activities which have increased despite the challenges due to [Covid-19 pandemic](#).
  - They discussed ways to increase cooperation in all domains with a focus on Research & Development in future technologies and defence co-production.
- **Acknowledgement of Mutual Security Challenges:**
  - Both the Ministers acknowledged mutual security challenges and their convergences on a number of strategic and defence issues.
  - They expressed commitment to work together to enhance cooperation in all forums.



## How has the India-Israel Relations been So Far?

### ▪ Diplomatic Ties:

- Though India officially recognised Israel in 1950, the two countries established full diplomatic ties only on 29th January 1992. As of December 2020, **India was among 164 United Nations (UN)** member states to have diplomatic ties with Israel.

### ▪ Economic and Commercial Relations:

- From USD 200 million in 1992, bilateral merchandise trade stood at USD 4.14 billion (excluding defence) during the period **April 2020 - February 2021 with the balance of trade being in India's favour.**
  - Trade in diamonds constitutes about 50% of bilateral trade..
- India is **Israel's third-largest trade partner in Asia** and seventh largest globally.
  - Israeli companies have invested in India in energy, renewable energy, telecom, real estate, water technologies, and are focusing on setting up R&D centers or production units in India.
- India is also in dialogue with Israel for concluding **a Free Trade Agreement (FTA).**

### ▪ Defence:

- India **is the largest buyer of military equipment from Israel**, which, in turn, is the second-largest defence supplier to India, after Russia.
- The Indian armed forces have inducted a wide array of Israeli weapon systems over the years, which range from Phalcon AWACS (Airborne Warning And Control Systems) and Heron, **Searcher-II** and Harop drones to Barak anti-missile defence systems and Spyder quick-reaction anti-aircraft missile systems.
- The acquisitions also include a host of Israeli missiles and precision-guided munitions, from Python and Derby air-to-air missiles to Crystal Maze and Spice-2000 bombs.
- At the **15<sup>th</sup> Joint Working Group (JWG 2021)** meeting on Bilateral Defence Cooperation, countries agreed to form a Task Force to formulate a comprehensive Ten-Year Roadmap to identify new areas of cooperation.

### ▪ Cooperation in Agriculture:

- In May 2021, **"a three-year work program agreement"** for development in agriculture

cooperation, was signed.

- The programme aims to grow existing Centres of Excellence (CoE), establish new centers, increase CoE's value chain, bring the Centres of Excellence into the self-sufficient mode, and encourage private sector companies and collaboration.

▪ **Science & Technology:**

- Recently, experts from India and Israel deliberated on widening the scope of India-Israel Industrial R&D and Technological Innovation Fund (I4F) at its 8th Governing Body meeting.
- They approved 3 joint R&D projects worth 5.5 million USD and suggested measures to create a broader India-Israel collaborative ecosystem.
  - I4F is a cooperation between the two countries to promote, facilitate and support joint industrial R&D projects between companies from India and Israel to address the challenges in the agreed 'Focus Sectors'.

▪ **Others:**

- Israel is also joining the India-led [International Solar Alliance \(ISA\)](#), which aligns very well with the objectives of both countries to scale up their cooperation in [renewable energy](#) and partner in clean energy.

## Way Forward

- The ties between the two nations have flourished since 1992, primarily due to common strategic interests and security threats.
- Indians are sympathetic towards Israel and the government is balancing and recalibrating its [West Asia policy](#) on the premise of its own national interest.
- India and Israel need to overcome the vulnerability of their religious extremist neighbours and work productively on global issues like climate change, water scarcity, population explosion and food scarcity.
- A more aggressive and proactive Middle Eastern policy is the need of the hour for India to reap the maximum benefit of the geopolitical realignments gradually being brought in by the [Abraham Accords](#).

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