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Indo-Israel Relations: The Sky is the Limit for Cooperation

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ABSTRACT

Beginning with the advent of Jews in India in 562 BCE, both India and Israel share a long and prosperous history of civilization. Under the British Imperium, both nations were subject to colonial power. There is a unique bond between the two countries because of their shared experiences after the traumatic partition, their commitment to democratic ideals, their struggle against hostile neighbours, and the increasing threat of cross-border terrorism. The objective of this paper is to explore the evolution of India's stance towards Israel. The two nations have witnessed an era of convergence in recent times. Strategically, the two nations have worked together in many fields, including counterterrorism, defence, intelligence sharing, science and technology, etc. More and more fields, such as agriculture, water management, commerce, tourism, and culture, are included in the bilateral partnership, making it stronger and more comprehensive. As a result, the strategic and defensive ties between these countries have strengthened to unprecedented heights. The larger strategic collaboration may be considered beneficial to both countries. As right-wing administrations have taken power in both nations, efforts are being made to broaden the scope of this partnership beyond the defence industry. Each country is working to improve collaboration so that it is mutually beneficial and practical in a variety of ways. India has shifted its policy towards Israel from hostility to pragmatism, as seen by the increasing scope of its collaboration with the Jewish state in areas such as defence, agriculture, water management, tourism, culture, and the economy. Therefore, this article aims to focus on the evolution of Israel and India's strategic partnership from divergence to gradual convergence and to examine the elements that have contributed to this transformation.

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INTRODUCTION

In 562 BCE, King Chandragupta gave Jews the right to live anywhere in India, build synagogues, and own land. This was the start of India's relationship with Jews. People also say that the first Jews came to Kerala when Nebuchadnezzar II's Babylonians took Jerusalem and destroyed their first temple in 597 BC. As they arrived on the west coast of India, they were named Cochin Jews. A few decades later, a shipwreck south of Bombay left seven Jewish families trapped in Alibag. These families, which are now called Bene Israel, grew and mixed with the native Maharashtrians, learning their language and ways of life. Historical cognations between India and Israel were established during the First Temple period when Jewish groups commenced, and established roots throughout the subcontinent. The Bible makes mention of India, one of the modern and archaic countries. For many years, the Indian Jewish community lived in peace and harmony, without any anti-Semitism getting in the way of their way of life. This adheres to the time-honouredpractise of mutual respect and integration, which has been an intrinsic and essential part of Indian culture and civilization. Almost all of the world's major faiths, including Judaism, have enhanced India's rich legacy. The Jewish community in India contributed to contemporary India's development and enrichment of Indian culture and ethos. In the last few decades, many people from the community have emigrated to Israel. This has helped to create a dynamic cultural and emotional bond between the two countries. Between the 11th and 16th centuries, the Ghaznavids, Ghauris, and Mughals brought many Persian-speaking Jews from Afghanistan and Iran to India. Some of them were traders and Mughal courtiers. Akbar's liberal religious views were heavily influenced by his Jewish advisers. Aurangzeb killed both the Mughal crown prince, Dara Shikoh, and his Jewish teacher as soon as he took power. The Mughal Empire allowed Jews to trade freely in Kashmir, Punjab, and outside. Around 250 years ago, Jewish families from Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Syria, and Yemen arrived in Bombay, India, and finally migrated to Calcutta and Burma. Eventually, they created industrial and commercial enterprises in Bombay and Calcutta, becoming one of the highest-earning groups in both cities. Some of them contributed their fortunes to the construction of public buildings. In Bombay, David Sassoon constructed the David Sassoon Docks and the Sassoon Library, while Abraham Erulkar constructed a prayer hall in Ahmadabad. Ezra Mansions and the Ezra Hospital in Calcutta are among the Jewish-built structures, along with other schools and cemeteries around India. In the 1970s, several individuals in the northeastern regions of Mizoram and Manipur began adopting Judaism while claiming descent from the Tribe of Manasseh. They were eventually acknowledged as a lost tribe by Israel and are now officially known as Bene Menashe. In India, Jews have lived without encountering anti-Semitism from the native populace. Jews have generally been treated with great tolerance by Indians throughout history. When the Portuguese landed on India's western coasts after 1498, they started bothering Jews and Hindus and trying to convert them against their will. This was the first time Jews were hurt because they were Jews. Jews were otherwise thoroughly integrated into Indian culture and ethics. They have made major contributions to India's public life. The Indian Jewish community has engendered many eminent individuals, including the physician Abraham Solomon Erulkar, the general who negotiated the terms of the Pakistani army's capitulation in Dhaka in December 1971 during the Indo-Pak War (J.F.R. Jacob), the recipient of the Padma Bhushan (Maj. Gen. Samson), the poet Nissim Ezekiel, the cartoonist Abu Abraham, and the acclaimed Hindi cinema actors David and Sulochana (Queen

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of Indian Cinema). There were around 25,000 Jews residing in India at the time of independence. Most of them arrived in Israel after 1948. The Central Organization of Indian Jews in Israel, the Cochin Jews in Israel, the Indian Jewish Community Center in Israel, the Indian Jewish Community, and the Indian Cultural Association of Eilat are just some of the groups that have flourished as a result of their tenacity to maintain their ties to India.

From Estrangement to Corporation

Israel was founded on May 14, 1948, one year after India attained independence on August 15, 1947. Despite India's recognition of Israel in 1950, there weren't a lot of diplomatic exchanges between the two nations in the 1950s and 1960s. The reason for this was that India's political elites opposed the establishment of Israel in its current form. In the crucial years following independence, India, and Israel both benefited from the leadership of visionary bellwethers like Jawaharlal Nehru and Ben Gurion, who laid the substructure for the institutions that would later make up their modern, resilient, and democratic societies. The Indian government recognised Israel on September 17, 1950. Early communications included letters between Israeli President Chaim Weizman and President Rajendra Prasad of India. First Israeli Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion revered Gandhiji greatly and visually perceived him as a role model in the struggle for liberation. He declared that Mahatma Gandhi's life and instructions would serve as a beacon for all men of goodwill to follow in order to find goodness and value in all people. Despite its limited relations with Israel, India has consistently backed Arab nationalism and the cause of Palestine. Under the direction of Rameshwar Nath Kao, R&AW (Research and Analysis Wing) was established in 1968 as India's main intelligence agency, ushering in a period of intensified strategic ties between the two nations. Indira Gandhi, who was the prime minister at the time, supervised Kao's efforts to establish ties with Mossad. India also came to the pragmatic realisation at the beginning of the 1970s that it was unauthentic to optically discern Israel as a component of West Asia in isolation. This was made simpler by the fact that Israel provided India with expeditious distributions of armaments, guns, mortars, and ammunition in 1971 when India and Pakistan were at war. India and Israel began exchanging information on Pakistan during this time due to shared concerns. The Jewish and Indian Diaspora communities in America collaborated to address quandaries and problems that were linked to those in their home countries. Geopolitical factors are considered one of the driving forces behind this.

Since the end of the Cold War and the fall of the Soviet Union, India has been endeavouring to decipher where it fits in the new international order and how to set its priorities. Following the terminus of the Cold War, it vacillated between emerging security uncertainties and old friendships for a while. Since then, India has opened up its market economy and gotten more proximate to the West, especially Israel. India's Congress Party, which had eschewed being convivial with Israel since 1950, redefined diplomatic ties with Israel in 1992 so that the country might improve economically, develop expeditiously, and slake its security concerns after the fall of the Soviet Union. India and Israel concluded five major trade and economic agreements between 1993 and 1996. The relationship flourished throughout H.D. Deve Gowda's (June 1996–April 1997) and I.K. Gujral's (April 1997–March 1998) premierships. In December 1996, President Ezer Weizman led a 24-person business delegation to India, making him the first Israeli president to do so. Therefore, India ceased letting its past moral posturing restrain it and commenced probing for ways to

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ameliorate its relationship with Israel. When Hindutva ideology became a major electoral force in Indian politics in the late 1980s and early 1990s, ties with Israel gradually blossomed. Under Atal Bihari Vajpayee's leadership, the Bhartiya Janata Party came to power in India in March 1998. The Bharatiya Jana Sangh, which was the party's predecessor, was commenced by V. D. Savarkar, who fortified Israel's engenderment and continued existence. The anti-terrorism security philosophy has ascended to a central role in Indo-Israeli ties led by the NDA government, which is headed by the Bhartiya Janata Party. It additionally endeavoured to establish a strategic alliance with the centre-right Likud Party in Israel. After a terrorist attack on the Indian Parliament in December 2001 and the start of the Pakistan-backed Kashmiri insurgency in 1989, India and Israel formed a strategic coalition in response to the ascension in military tensions with Pakistan. The emergence of Islamic extremism in the Middle East, Afghanistan, and Pakistan understandably alarmed India and Israel, both of which have been and remain frequent targets of terrorist attacks. India's ties to the U.S. were strengthened in the post-Cold War era, and this served as a trigger for the country's burgeoning relationship with Israel. Once ties were established, the two nations collaborated more often, despite changes in leadership.

The Indian Home Minister, L. K. Advani, and several top officials from India's security agencies (R&AW, the Intelligence Bureau, and central police organisations fighting terrorism) visited Israel in the year 2000. Advani met with Mossad and Israeli weaponry manufacturers as well as intelligence and border control groups to finalise the two countries' agreement to apportion and cooperate in gathering information. Afterwards, Jaswant Singh, minister of external affairs, paid a visit to Israel in 2000 and signed an agreement to create a joint anti-terror commission to increase collaboration in the fight against terrorism and the use of information technology. In 2003, then-Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon visited India for the first time. The visit was momentous as it resulted in various agreements between the two countries to collaborate on issues like drug trafficking, the environment, health care, and education. To further their bilateral cognition, the two countries published the Delhi Statement on Friendship and Cooperation and agreed to establish an institutional structure. However, the visit was vigorously criticised by Muslim and leftist groups in India. Several hundred Muslims and communist party members gathered to show their deprecation at the visit to New Delhi. The students at Aligarh Muslim University called for India to cut all diplomatic relations with Israel. The right-wing Hindu nationalist RashtriyaSwayamsevakSangh (RSS), which guides the Bhartiya Janata Party, has spoken out against the anti-Sharon protests. Given that both Israel and India are fighting terrorism, it was proposed that the two countries should cooperate more closely. Sharon said in his address that Israel considers India a major power and that the two countries should join forces to fight terrorism, which he characterised as a global menace. President K. R. Narayanan, in communication with President Katsav in April 2002, stated that "the development of India and Israel as vibrant democracies and centres of excellence in science and technology have created a natural partnership for bilateral cooperation and friendship." In the last year and a half, particularly since Prime Minister Mr. Ehud Olmert's visit to India as the then Vice PM and Minister of Trade and Industry of Israel in December 2004, the commercial and economic relationship between India and Israel has gained new momentum with a series of decisions and agreements covering cooperation in many areas including economy, trade, science and technology, research, and development. Over the past few months, there have been a lot of

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intense conversations to strengthen the relationship. Our Minister of Science, Technology, and Ocean Development, Mr. Kapil Sibal, visited Israel on May 29–31, 2005. In November 2005, the Indian ministers of commerce and industry, Mr. Kamal Nath, and agriculture, food and civil supplies, consumer affairs, and public distribution, Mr. Sharad Pawar, travelled to Israel. They interacted with high officials of the Israeli government and industry. Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh nominated a senior Indian diplomat, Ambassador C. R. Gharekhan, as his special envoy for the West Asia and Middle East Peace Process in February 2005. India places a high value on the area since they consider it part of an extended neighbourhood. Since then, he has made two trips to Israel, where he has had in-depth discussions with top Israeli officials. Both nations' National Security Councils have established channels of communication with one another. Accordingly, Mr. Giora Eiland, Israel's National Security Adviser, travelled to India from January 31st to February 2nd, 2006.

In order to show that Indian Muslims were not opposed to the developing ties between India and Israel, the government sent a group of the All-India Organization of Imams and Mosques, headed by Maulana Jamil Ilyas, to Israel in August 2007. This visit by the imams was orchestrated by the American Jewish Council as a dialogue about democracy. New Delhi hosted a Jewish-Hindu Leadership Summit from February 5–7, 2007 to strengthen ties between the two faiths. Israel's Chief Rabbi Yona Metzger and India's spiritual leader, Swami Dayanand Saraswathi, engaged in vivacious discussion. They discussed the need to build bridges of collaboration between the two faiths, noting that both Jewish and Hindu people are dedicated to their own historic traditions of Judaism and Hindu dharma, and that both have experienced the anguish of discrimination, repression, and extirpation throughout history. Israel's administration sponsored the second summit, which took place in the holy city of Jerusalem from February 17–20, 2008. In addition to the whole Rabbinate and Jewish intellectuals, this gathering included members of the Hindu Dharma Acharya Sabha and representatives of Shankaracharya. The Indian Minister of Commerce and Industry, Jyotiraditya Scindia, travelled to Israel in February 2010 to negotiate a free trade agreement (FTA). Israeli President Shimon Peres has verbally expressed that "India's security is as essential to Israel as its own," describing the connection between India and Israel as "a link between two souls." Minister of External Affairs SM Krishna visited Israel in January 2012 and emphasised the need for increased cooperation between the two nations in the areas of security, counterterrorism, and information sharing. By elongating the scope of their collaboration, India intended to get access to Israeli technology, particularly in the fields of weaponry, information collection, and counterinsurgency. Israel optically discerns India as a prime investment destination and a massive market for its military and security products. Israel hopes to get the political support of a powerful country as well. Besides the constant terrorist attacks sponsored by Pakistan, the Islamic standpoint on the Indian-Pakistani issue is another factor that has led to closer ties between India and Israel. Several other factors may have contributed to the warming of relations between the two countries, including fewer visits by Arab leaders to New Delhi, enhanced diplomatic ties between India and Israel, and the OIC's decision to reject India's (a country with 120 million Muslim citizens) bid for membership, allegedly at the behest of Pakistan. To balance China's ascending influence in the Indian Ocean area and for political and economic reasons, India became more proximate to the United States after the Cold War ended. The United States has urged Israel to join forces with India

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in the fight against piracy and international terrorism by taking on a larger share of security duties in the Indian Ocean and Gulf region.

Tourism and Cultural Relations

India and Israel have close cultural ties. Many visits by cultural delegations took place between these two nations. In April 1958, Indian dancer Shanta Rao and her band were invited to Israel to perform by the Israeli dance group Imbak. In 1968, the Jawaharlal Nehru Prize for International Understanding was given to Yehudi Menuhin, an Israeli violinist who is very well known in India. Cooperation agreements in the fields of education and tourism were signed during Peres' visit in May 1993, followed by the finalisation of the detailed Cultural Exchange Program (CEP) in September 1993. The second CEP was signed during President Weizman's visit to Israel in December 1996. In Israel, India is known as an archaic country with vigorous cultural traditions. According to a popular perception among Israelis, India is a congenial alternative tourist destination. Young Israelis are especially magnetised to India, and more than 40,000 Israeli tourists visit India every year. A place like Kaslo in Himachal Pradesh has become a miniature Israel in India. They go to Ladakh and Kashmir for mountain climbing and exploration. The Chabad movement accommodates these travellers by operating four centres across India. Seven other Jewish outreach centres in India welcome Israeli visitors. The number of Indian pilgrims and tourists visiting Israel overall reached 20,000 in 2007, a number that has been steadily increasing. More than 20 volumes of Indian poetry have been translated into Hebrew. In Israel, there is a growing understanding and erudition of India as a growing economic power and a paramount high-tech hub. Due to this coalescence of Indian and Israeli cultures, the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra (IPO) hired the famous Indian composer Zubin Mehta as music advisor in 1969, music director in 1977, and lifetime music director in 1981. People-to-people contact is a paramount aspect of this relationship. The top priority given by the two nations to the continued fortification of these ties goes hand in hand with the deep affection and mutual reverence that the two peoples have for each other. The Indian diaspora in Israel is a perennial link between our two countries and contributes to the rich mix of cultures in Israel. Israelis visit India in large numbers and for extended stays. It is also interesting to note that Shimon Peres is a Bombay-born Jew. Ben-Gurion, Israel's founder, had three highly regarded world figures on his desk: Moses, Socrates, and Gandhi. Likewise, famous Indians like Nehru, Tagore, and R.K. Narayan are also famous in Israel, and some streets are also named after them. In India, there are three different Jewish communities: Cochin Jews, Beni Israel, and Arabic-speaking Jews. Cochin is an important Jewish centre with a 400-year-old synagogue. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi went to Cochin to celebrate the city's 100th anniversary. While there, she praised the Jewish community for producing many successful men in business, industry, government, and the military. Jews have lived in India for hundreds of years, and Israel is happy that most Indians do not demoralise them or seek to harm them. Israelis, especially young Israelis, flocked to India after serving in the army. Many stay for months before returning to Israel, bringing with them great stories and great memories. Now their parents, who have heard a lot about India, are also visiting them in high-budget tourist groups. Last year, Air India started flying from Delhi to Tel Aviv three times a week. It has the right to fly from Oman, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan to Israel in seven hours and ten minutes. Israel's national airline, ElAl, flies from Mumbai to Israel, following the route around the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden at the same time.

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About 40,000 Israelis, many of whom have recently consummated their military service, come to India. Many Israelis living in India go to one of the many Jewish community centres run by Chabad, where they can celebrate Jewish holidays and follow Jewish customs. Israelis love to travel to destinations like Goa, the Himalayas, Manali, Kasol, and villages near Dharamsala. Signs inscribed in Hebrew are commonly found in shops and on public transportation in many of these areas. In 2000, 15,900 Indians came to Israel as tourists. More than 43,000 people visited the country in 2010. The number of Indians visiting Israel in 2014 was 34,900. Jerusalem is a must-see destination for many Indians when visiting Israel. Indian tourists spent the most money per visit to Israel in 2010, averaging $1,364 per person, compared with an average of $1,091 spent by all visitors. At a meeting in Delhi in 2011, representatives of the two countries discussed ways to improve tourism through joint efforts in destination management, marketing, and workforce development. Furthermore, agreements have been negotiated to facilitate cooperation between the two countries' tour operators and travel agents. During the 2015 annual conference of the Federation of Indian travel Agents, held in Israel, 600 Indian tourist agents converged to explore measures to minimize barriers to the peregrinate industry. Arkia has flights between Tel Aviv and Kochi and between Tel Aviv and Goa. El Al has flights between Tel Aviv and Mumbai. Air India provides accommodation between Delhi and Tel Aviv.

In March of 2018, Air India's flight AI139 broke a 70-year overflight ban on flights to Israel by becoming the first airline to fly non-stop between New Delhi and Tel Aviv, over the airspace of Saudi Arabia. Air India is the only airline in the world to have been granted such a sanction, suggesting that ties between Israel and the Arab world have been slowly warming. The new trip between India and Israel only takes around 7 hours, which is 2 hours and 10 minutes less than the time it takes for ELAL to fly from Mumbai to Tel Aviv. Recently, the route's popularity has forced the airline to double the number of flights to Circadian. The number of Indians visiting Israel has been rising steadily in recent months. To encourage more Indians to travel, the Israeli government has simplified the visa process for Indians who have visited Canada, Australia, the United States, or Israel and returned home. Adscititiously, the $1700 visa application price for Indian citizens has been decremented to $1100. The number of Indians visiting Israel increased by 31% in 2017, with over 60,000 people making the peregrination. A total of over 100,000 Indian visitors are expected to visit Israel this year.

The strategic, commercial, and military relationship between India and Israel has grown significantly in recent years. In recent years, India has seen an increase in the number of its citizens coming to Israel for a variety of reasons. Although trade between the two countries has flourished, few Indians understand Israeli culture. However, the idea of India has been ingrained in the Israeli psyche for a long time. As a foreigner, I was surprised to learn that Bollywood is very popular in Israel, and Zee TV is a fixture in many Israeli and Arab families. In Israel, Bollywood and its dance styles, as well as Israeli versions of those styles, are popular. A large number of people attend a Bollywood performance in Tel Aviv every year. Eighty actors, singers, and dancers from India and the UK performed at Bollywood 4Ever in RishonLezion Live Park in October. This included Akshay Kumar, Kareena Kapoor, Madhuri Dixit, and Shilpa Shetty. In 2018, India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Israel's Benjamin Netanyahu signed an agreement designating all films produced under the agreement as national productions, making them eligible for financial incentives

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in both countries. The upcoming action film Drive, directed by Tarun Mansukhani and produced by Karan Johar, has its first scene shot in Israel by a team of Hindi filmmakers. Musician and current member of Dana International, Sharon Cohen, hit it off with the song "Seret Hodi (Indian Film)". Dana sang a song about love and being loved in the style of an Indian movie, with Hindi dialogue and Bollywood dance moves and expressions. "What's the point of all this love?" like in a Bollywood movie! Dana International was born a guy, despite being of Yemeni and Romanian descent. She was only 18 when she became Israel's first drag queen. She was able to support herself after being founded and debuting in the music industry by a top Israeli DJ. She went on to represent Israel in the Eurovision Song Contest, where her song "Diva" won first prize and was presented to an international audience. Liora Itzhak's songs sound more natural because she is of Indian and Jewish descent and speaks both Hebrew and Hindi. When she was a child, her parents and siblings left Bombay for Israel. Ever since she was a little girl, she dreamed of being successful in Bollywood, and at the age of 15, she finally left Israel to pursue her goal. In Pune, she studied classical Indian music. Her first major Bollywood role was in DilKa Doctor (1995), starring Anupam Kher and Ashish Chaudhary. She has shared the stage with legends like Kumar Sanu and Sonu Nigam. At the age of 23, unhappy and lonely, she returned to Israel, where she made a name for herself in the Indian dance and music traditions she had learned in India. Over a million people listened to her house track "Mala Mala," which she released as a single. At a party to celebrate Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Israel, singer Liora played the national anthems of both countries. In recent years, Indian weddings have taken the place of the henna ceremony, which used to be a big part of traditional Jewish-Moroccan weddings. This is because Bollywood has become so popular among young people from both communities. Bollywood music and Indian dance styles dominate the celebration.

On the Jewish holiday of Purim, people remember how brave Queen Esther was when she stood up for her people. Her Persian husband, King Ahasuerus, was advised by Haman, who advocated the genocide of the Jews. After hearing about her plan, Esther Mordechai's uncle begged her to intervene. On Purim Day, Jews celebrate the day Haman was executed and their people were spared by dressing up and partying. Nowadays, Bollywood clothes are more popular than Queen Esther's clothes. Since so many family members and friends have been to India, it's not unusual for whole schools to dress like Bollywood movies. Shye Ben Tzur, a Qawwali composer in Hebrew, has a large following in India. In addition to instrumental singing and devotion in Hebrew, Urdu, and Hindi, Shye also has a background in Indian classical music. She has played at Madison Square Garden and other places around the world, including India. She has also worked with folk artists from Rajasthan and Shubha Mudgal. Israel has become a centre for the performance and appreciation of folk music from various Indian cultures, including Hebrew, Hindi, Urdu, and Rajasthani. Here we see Israel's rich linguistic heritage in action. Unique Israeli fashion is a fusion of Jewish tastes in the Middle East, North Africa, Europe, and North America. The addition of India has enriched this mix of cultures.

Agriculture and Water Collaboration

India and Israel's bilateral ties have flourished and improved since the two countries established full diplomatic relations in 1992. Both nations face similar challenges in areas like food and energy security, and they share many of the same values and objectives. There has been a lot of

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recent progress, and the two nations now collaborate in a vast variety of fields and sectors, including politics, commerce, research, education, development, culture, tourism, agriculture, water, and more. Since 2017, India and Israel have been working together in innovative ways to improve both water management and agricultural production. To combat an anticipated water crisis, the Indian government has partnered with Mashav, an Israeli international development organisation, due to Israel's proven track record of recycling 90% of its wastewater. In India, around 30 Israeli projects are now exploring issues such as water distribution and management, leak detection, wastewater treatment, desalinization, and water security.

Collaborations between universities and government agencies have also shown promise in the past three to four years, particularly in the fields of drip irrigation and desalination. Amrita University in Kerala is collaborating with Tel Aviv University to monitor water quality, Thapar University in Punjab is managing sewage pond wastewater treatment, and IIT Madras is creating new water purification technologies. Israel's embassy in New Delhi employs a water resources expert, known as the "Water Attaché," who leads the country's involvement in water issues across agriculture, industry, nature, and urban consumption. This is the only country where such a position exists. With the goal of achieving a trickle-down effect in this field, it is also implementing capacity-building programmes for government employees via cooperative water technology institutes.

The "India-Israel Villages of Excellence" is an innovative plan to establish 75 villages and 13 Centers of Excellence as exemplar agricultural ecosystems across eight states. The program's goal is to help farmers boost their incomes and improve their living conditions. As a result, a comprehensive value chain approach based on IIAP standards will be implemented, incorporating novel technologies and methodologies from Israel and adapting to local conditions. India has decided to make Israel a significant partner in the field of agriculture. In 2006, the Indian and Israeli ministers of agriculture signed a memorandum of understanding formalising their cooperation, which later developed into the Indo-Israel Agricultural Project (IIAP) under the Indo-Israel Action Plan. The collaboration's stated goals are the introduction of crop diversity, increased productivity, and more efficient water use. After a bilateral agreement was signed by the Indian and Israeli ministers of agriculture in 2006, IIAP was officially launched in 2009. Centers of Excellence (CoE) are set up as part of IIAP to disseminate Israeli technologies and expertise adapted to the specific needs of the Indian market. So far, three phases of the IIAP have been channelled. IIAP has three distinct phases, each of which lasts for three years (2009–2012, 2012–2015, and 2015–2018). Currently, 22 CoEs are in the operational phase within the 16 states that have been invited to participate in the IIAP.

In acknowledgement of the achievements of the MIDH MASHAV IIAP Program over the previous decade, the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmer's Welfare of the Republic of India and MASHAV, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Israel, negotiated on a three-year work programme in agriculture for the years 2018–2020. The purpose of this initiative is to introduce additional components, such as the Indo-Israeli Center of Excellence for Agricultural Innovation, that will contribute to the value chain already established by the fully operational Indo-Israel Center of Excellence. Their goal at the Center of Excellence (CoE) is to facilitate communication and the dissemination of Israeli agricultural technology. The COE's mission is to aid farmers through the

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cultivation of one or more strategically significant crops. Each COE consists of nursery management, cultivating techniques, and irrigation and fertilisation systems. Similarly, in 2008, Israel and India finalised an agricultural plan to introduce Mediterranean and Middle Eastern products to India. The olive industry was singled out for special attention in this endeavour. About 112,000 olive trees were subsequently planted in the barren landscape of Rajasthan. Throughout 2014, Rajasthan harvested more than 100 metric tonnes of olives. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a statement supporting the "ever-growing bilateral collaboration" between the two countries, acknowledging the "centrality of agricultural and water sectors in the bilateral relationship," and reporting that the two governments had agreed to increase their cooperation in agriculture and signed a three-year work programme agreement for growth in agriculture cooperation. "Centers of Excellence in the India-Israel Agricultural Project and India-Israel Villages of Excellence in Agriculture are being implemented in both nations."

According to Shlein, "India is a strong, strategic partner of Israel." When I was in India, we focused primarily on strengthening our already strong ties through increased cooperation in the agricultural and water sectors. Mashav has six resident experts located all over the world, and two of them work in India because of the significance of these two fields. She went on to say, "We are keen to continue and expand our cooperation with all our partners in India as we continue enhancing the strategic partnership between our two nations." Currently, there are 29 fully operational Indo-Israeli Centers of Excellence located across India, helping millions of Indian farmers every day. There are plans for an additional 13 facilities of this kind. These hubs will eventually become Villages of Excellence in collaboration with state governments, providing even more assistance to more people.

After strengthening their collaboration in agriculture and the military, India and Israel want to broaden their cooperation in water management, recycling, and desalination. Israeli water management and desalination technology will be shown during India's "water week," which kicks off on April 4. The Israeli Ambassador to India, David Carmon, said that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu proposed water conservation and associated concerns as the next focus of collaboration between Israel and India during visits by Indian President Pranab Mukherjee in October and Indian Foreign Minister Sushma Swaraj earlier this year. Prime Minister Netanyahu sent an invitation to President Mukherjee to collaborate on a water project including either water management, water desalination, or water recycling. In an interview with reporters on Wednesday in New Delhi, Carmon said, "We would love to share the water knowledge that Israel possesses; we would want to do this on a government-to-government basis, and we would love to provide through a coalition of Israeli firms; we could urge Israeli enterprises to join the Israeli side of the collaboration." Carmon said, "The next major thing we would want to achieve is in water," referring to the two countries' mutual interest in expanding water infrastructure. He also highlighted the countries' mutually beneficial collaboration in agriculture and the military. We have already begun working in this field, and there is tremendous opportunity there.

Chennai, in southern India, was already supplying its residents with purified water using technology imported from Israel. It is common practise in Indian agriculture to use the same drip irrigation method as in Israel. Despite India's unwavering support for the cause of Palestinian independence, ties between India and Israel significantly improved when the two states established

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diplomatic relations in 1992. In order to diversify and boost the productivity of its fruit and vegetable products, India has asked Israel for assistance via the Indo-Israel Agricultural Project, which Israel announced would cooperate with India back in May 2013. The Israeli government has pledged to set up 28 centres of excellence in India that will focus on different kinds of fruits and vegetables. By the end of March 2014, eleven centres of excellence had opened throughout India to teach farmers free, efficient farming methods employing Israeli technology. The centres provide training on a wide range of topics, such as vertical farming, drip irrigation, and soil solarization. Fruits, including mangoes, tomatoes, pomegranates, and oranges, are the main focus of these farms. Farmers in Israel and India want to expand their businesses into new areas, including dairying, floriculture, and apiculture, in the near future. Mizoram, a state in India's northeast, was the location of the launch of the 23rd joint centre of excellence between Israel and India on March 7, 2022. Israeli agricultural "Centers of Excellence" (CoE) were set up with India's emphasis on food production in mind. Presently, 26 CoEs can be found in 9 different states in India. According to Carmon, the Indian states of Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, and Karnataka profited from Israel's agricultural expertise. As Carmon puts it, "our approach is to deliver practical research that gives answers to the farmers, solving gaps through the use of Israeli technology and know-how adapted to local circumstances."

CONCLUSION

After conducting a comprehensive examination of Indo-Israeli ties, the study has been able to draw some general conclusions that leave a wide range of prospects for further study. The paper has not been strict in describing ties between India and Israel. Rather, it followed a flexible analytical approach in order to better understand the dynamics that have brought these two nations so close to each other since 1992. According to experts, the scope of cooperation between India and Israel has broadened and deepened in recent years, with both countries forging closer links in a variety of hitherto unexplored areas of mutual interest. Recent developments in this partnership have been propelled by defence connections and a shared concern about Islamic terrorism. The right-wing governing parties in both countries have used Islamic fundamentalism to deepen and consolidate their bilateral relationship. There is a significant amount of room for expansion in these nations' military and strategic partnerships. Both countries are making significant efforts to expand their relationship, overcome past obstacles, and accomplish their full potential.

The BJP-led NDA government has dramatically improved bilateral ties with Israel by shifting the country's foreign policy focus from the Middle East to Israel. The foreign policy of the NDA government has always been realistic and pragmatic in its approach to Israel. The right-wing governments of both countries are committed to combating terrorism, collaborating in economic activities of mutual benefit, advancing technology, modernisingdefence sectors, and enhancing agricultural production and water resource management. The trade relations between these two nations have enhanced tremendously since 1992. Both nations are responding positively to each other and are making positive advances towards deeper ties in the areas of culture and tourism. The only way for the people of two nations to really understand and appreciate one another's culture is through direct interaction. Increasing tourism is a necessary part of this. The academic community

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and the general public will profit from this exchange of information and knowledge in many different areas, including tourism, agriculture, commerce, industry, and culture.

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