

PM addresses Indian Community in Israel

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The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, on Wednesday addressed the Indian Community in Israel, at a function in Tel Aviv.

He began by noting that this was the first time that an Indian Prime Minister had come to Israel, and it had taken a long period of 70 years after independence.

He thanked Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for the warm welcome and respect accorded to him throughout his visit.

He said that though diplomatic relations between the two countries are only 25 years old, yet ties between India and Israel go back several centuries. He said that he has been told that in the 13th century, the Indian Sufi Saint Baba Farid had come to Jerusalem, and meditated in a cave.

The Prime Minister described the relationship between India and Israel as one of traditions, culture, trust and friendship. He noted the similarity in festivals between India and Israel. In this context, he mentioned Holi and Purim; and Diwali and Hanukkah.

The Prime Minister noted the impressive technological progress made by Israel, and its long traditions of bravery and martyrdom. He recalled that Indian soldiers had played a key role in the liberation of Haifa during the first world war. He noted the great contributions of the Indian Jewish community, both in India and Israel.

The Prime Minister praised the spirit of innovation in Israel, and noted that Israel had made great progress in areas such as geo-thermal power, solar panels, agro-biotechnology and security.

The Prime Minister gave an overview of reforms undertaken in India in the recent past. He mentioned the roll-out of GST, auctioning of natural resources, insurance and banking sector reforms, and skill development, among others. He said the Government aims to double income of farmers by 2022. He said the partnership with Israel is key to ushering the second green revolution in India. He said science, innovation and research would be the foundation of ties between India and Israel in the future.

He recalled his meeting with Moshe Holtzberg, survivor of the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks, earlier in the day.

He assured the Indian community in Israel that OCI cards would be given to them, even if they had done compulsory army service in Israel. He said an Indian Cultural Centre would be set up in Israel. He also said direct air connectivity would soon be established between Delhi, Mumbai and Tel Aviv.

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