



Press Statement by Prime Minister during his visit to Israel (July 05, 2017)

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**Your Excellency Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu
Members of the media,**

Thank you, Excellency, for your warm words of welcome. And, for the exceptional generosity with your time and friendship. I will truly cherish the most wonderful dinner that you and Mrs Netanyahu hosted for me yesterday. Our conversation last night, meeting Mrs Netanyahu, learning about your family especially what you told me about your father has taken my experience of your beautiful country to a whole new level. India admires the success of your people in overcoming adversity to advance, innovate and flourish against all odds. I am honoured to be in Israel on this extra-ordinary visit. In our modern journey, our paths have been different, but our belief in democratic values and economic progress has been a shared pursuit.

Friends,

This visit is an occasion:

- to rejuvenate the bonds of our friendship;
- to compose a new chapter in our ties; and
- to jointly venture towards new horizons of engagement.

Prime Minister Netanyahu and I have had productive discussions covering an extensive menu of issues. Not just on areas of bilateral opportunities. But, also how our cooperation can help the cause of global peace and stability. Our goal is to build a relationship that reflects our shared priorities and draws on enduring bonds between our peoples.

Friends,

Israel is among the leading nations in the field of innovation, water and agricultural technology. These are also among my priority areas in India's development. We agreed that efficiency of water and resource use; water conservation and its purification; productivity increases in agriculture are key areas in deepening our bilateral cooperation. We are of one view that together our scientists and researchers would develop, build and implement mutually beneficial solutions in the field. Our decision to establish a bilateral Technology Innovation Fund worth US\$ 40 million for research in industrial development will help us in achieving this goal. We regard thriving two-way trade and investment flows as the bedrock of a strong partnership. Prime Minister Netanyahu and I agreed on the need to do more in this direction. Businesses on both sides should take primary lead in such efforts. This would also be our message to the CEO Forum tomorrow.

Friends,

India and Israel live in complex geographies. We are aware of strategic threats to regional peace and stability. India has suffered firsthand the violence and hatred spread by terror. So has Israel. Prime Minister Netanyahu and I agreed to do much more together to protect our strategic interests and also cooperate to combat growing radicalization and terrorism, including in cyber space. We also discussed the situation in West Asia and wider region. It is India's hope that peace, dialogue, and restraint will prevail.

Friends,

Our people hold natural affinity and warmth for each other. The Indian-origin Jewish community reminds us of these bonds. It also serves as a bridge to a shared future. In recent years, we have been receiving a large number of Israeli tourists in India. At the same time, more and more Indian students are choosing to pursue advance academics and research in your best universities. I am confident that the strength of these links, old and new, will hold us in good stead as we forge a partnership for the 21st century.

Friends,

Around 150 kilometers from here, there is a slice of history in the city of Haifa in Israel that is very dear to my country. This is the final resting place for forty-four of the Indian soldiers who sacrificed their lives during World War 1 to liberate that city. Tomorrow, I will travel to Haifa to pay homage to our brave Indian soldiers.

Excellency Netanyahu,

It has been a productive and memorable twenty-four hours in Israel. I am sure that the rest of my stay would be equally exciting. Let me also take this chance to invite you and Mrs. Netanyahu and your family to visit India. I again thank you for your warm welcome and hospitality.

Thank you.

Thank you very much. Shalom!

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