

India-Israel relations: the Arab perspective

If India joins Arab-Israeli scientific and technological initiatives, it could assume a pivotal role in formulating a new future for the Middle East

[Ofir Winter](#) / Feb 19 2018

Marking 25 years of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Israel and India, the visit of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to India in January 2018 served as a milestone in the burgeoning friendship between these nations. During the visit, Netanyahu and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated iCreate—the International Centre for Entrepreneurship and Technology—in Gujarat that will encourage scientific and technological exchanges between Israeli and Indian technology companies. In a speech at the event, Netanyahu expressed the hope that the partnerships between Israeli and Indian young professionals would flourish into ideas that would “change the world.”

Netanyahu’s arguably successful visit received comprehensive coverage in the Arab media, eliciting a wide array of ambivalent responses. The majority of coverage displayed frustration at Israel’s infiltration into a formerly pro-Arab bastion of the Non-Aligned Movement and fear that close Israeli-Indian relations would come at the expense of Arab interests. On the other hand, some responses highlighted an appreciation that a small state like Israel had successfully positioned itself as a strategic partner to a world power like India. Thus, for instance, Lebanese reporter Haifa Zeiater remarked on Israel’s ability to compete with the US, France and Russia in selling weapons to India.

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