

**Press Information Bureau
Government of India
Prime Minister's Office**

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Press Statement by Prime Minister on arrival in Tel Aviv (July 04, 2017)

Excellency Prime Minister Netanyahu

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Shalom le kulaam ani semya mayodh lehiyot po (I am delighted to be here in Israel.) It is my singular honour to be the first ever Prime Minister of India to undertake this ground breaking visit to Israel. I want to thank my friend, Prime Minister Netanyahu, for the invitation and for receiving me with so much warmth. My visit celebrates the strength of centuries old links between our societies. Based on these bonds our partnership has maintained a strong and sustained upswing since the establishment of full diplomatic relations 25 years ago.

Friends,

The people of Israel have built a nation on democratic principles. They have nurtured it with hard work, grit and the spirit of innovation. You have marched on regardless of adversity and converted challenges into opportunity. India applauds your achievements.

Today is July 4, exactly 41 years since Operation Entebbe. The day when your Prime Minister, and my friend, Bibi, lost his older brother Yoni, while saving the lives of so many Israeli hostages. Your heroes are an inspiration for the younger generations.

Friends,

India is a very old civilization but a young nation. 800 million people in India fall below 35 years of age. The talented and skilled youth of India are also its driving force. They propel my vision to transform India, its industry, its economy, its way of doing business, and its interface with the world.

Friends,

In our path of sustained high growth and all around development, India counts Israel among its important partners. The need to rely on science, technology, innovation, and higher technical education to overcome our developmental challenges is common to both of us. These domains also bring together the creative energy and ideas of the highly skilled youth and entrepreneurs of the two countries. Alongside building a partnership for shared economic prosperity, we are also cooperating to secure our societies against common threats such as terrorism.

A progressive partnership in all these areas would shape the scope of my conversation with Prime Minister Netanyahu. I am also keen to interact with the Indian diaspora in Israel, including a large number of Jews of Indian origin, who have enriched both our societies.

Excellency and Friends,

My visit marks a path breaking journey of engagement. A journey that we are excited to undertake together for the good of our people and societies. As we march together, a strong and resilient partnership with Israel will be my intent and focus. I thank you once again for this tremendous welcome.

Thank you. Thank you very much.

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