



Israel Aerospace Industries' Barak-ER (Extended Range) performs a successful ballistic missile intercept. An Indian company has been known to make solid propellants — a significant part of the rocket motors — for these missiles.
● ISRAEL AEROSPACE INDUSTRIES

formal position when it comes to the Ukraine War and Israel's war on Gaza.

"But reports that it is supplying Israel with weapons could disrupt that narrative," Nicolas Blarel, the author of *The Evolution of India's Israel Policy*, told Al Jazeera.

Al Jazeera sought comments from India's Ministry of External Affairs and Ministry of Defence on June 17 and then again on June 21, but has not received a response.

India recognised the state of Israel in 1950, only two years after its formation, but established formal diplomatic relations in 1992 after decades of non-aligned and pro-Arab policy. In 1974, it became the first non-Arab country to accept the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and recognised the State of Palestine in 1988.

PLO leader Yasser Arafat used to famously describe former Indian prime minister Indira Gandhi as his "sister".

In the 1990s, as the Cold War ended and Arafat engaged with then-Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Rabin in a series of talks that culminated in the Oslo Accords, India also opened up to collaboration with Israel.

"That accelerated in 1999, with the war between India and Pakistan," Blarel, who lectures in International Relations at Leiden University in the Netherlands, said. "Most countries refused to sell weapons to both countries, except most notably Israel."

Since then, Israel has been willing to engage India on technology trans-

fer to an extent that no other partner has, providing know-how on drones, electric sensors for border control, and other surveillance systems that are crucial to India along its tense borders with Pakistan and China, Blarel added.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, of the Hindu majoritarian Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), veered further from the country's historic pro-Palestinian stance after he was elected in 2014.

Modi adopted a more public embrace of Israel, becoming the first prime minister to travel to the country in 2017. The strategic partnership that resulted from the visit, which included areas such as space and technology, softened India's stance on Israel to a "case-by-case approach," where India's position was no longer guaranteed to support that of Palestinians," Blarel said.

Modi has since repeatedly referred to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu as his "friend".

The same approach continues to this day. On October 26, weeks after the Hamas attack and the beginning of Israel's reprisal in Gaza, India abstained from a UN General Assembly (UNGA) vote on a resolution calling for an "immediate, durable, and sustained humanitarian truce".

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said Indians were "big victims of terrorism" and were therefore sympathetic to Israel. The resolution, Jaishankar argued echoing Israel's position, lacked an "explicit condemnation" of the Hamas attack that killed 1,139 Israelis.

India later voted in favour of a UNGA

resolution for an immediate cease-fire in Gaza but in April abstained from voting for a resolution adopted by the UN Human Rights Council that called for an arms embargo on Israel in addition to an immediate cease-fire in Gaza.

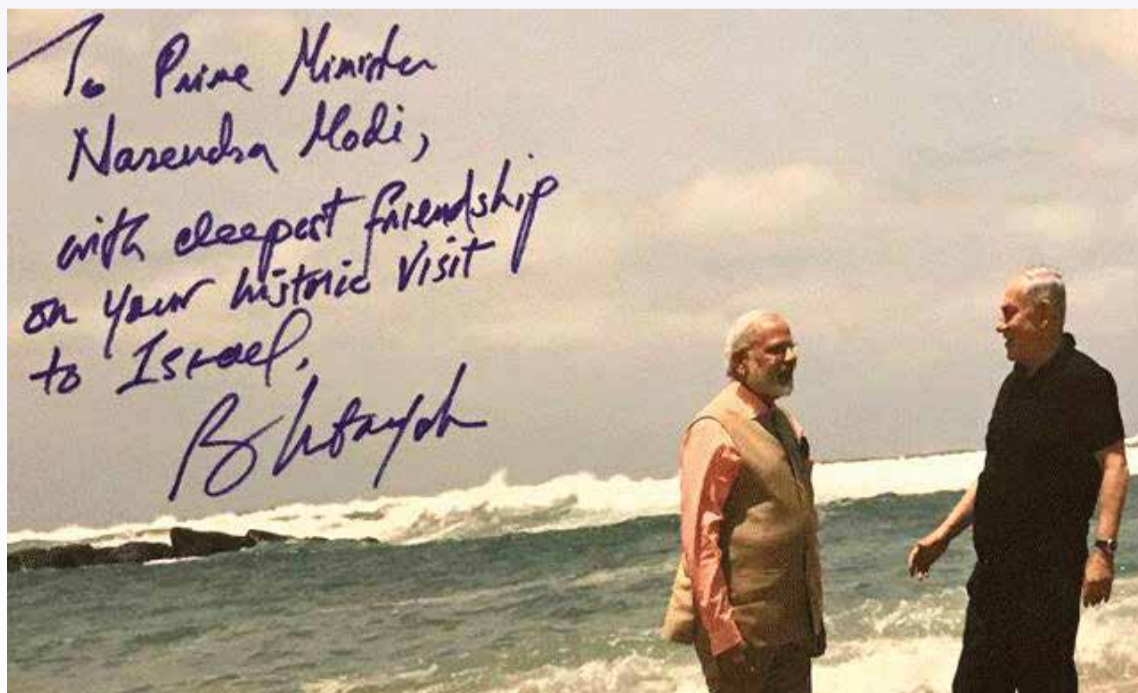
Earlier last month, India joined other members of the BRICS grouping — Brazil, Russia, China, South Africa, Iran, Egypt, Ethiopia, and the United Arab Emirates — in issuing a statement expressing "grave concern" at the escalation of violence in the Gaza Strip and calling for an immediate cease-fire.

"India sometimes sees the UN resolutions as being too strict because it has a good relationship with Israel but sometimes sides with Palestinians" as it seeks to cast itself as a champion of developing nations amid stiff competition with China for that role, Blarel said.

While "Modi would support a more public embrace of Israel," the analyst said, he has also invested in cultivating strategic relations with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), India's largest regional-bloc trading partner.

Modi's governing BJP lost its majority in the lower house of India's parliament earlier this month, leaving it dependent on coalition allies to stay in power for the first time since coming to power a decade ago. Now, more than ever, Blarel said, the BJP will have "to consider having good diplomatic relationships with all actors in the Middle East as one of its priorities".

The article first appeared on Al Jazeera.



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (R) gifted his Indian counterpart this signed picture of them strolling barefoot together at Olga beach in Northern Israel on July 6, 2017. It reads, "Prime Minister Narendra Modi, with deepest friendship on your historic visit to Israel."
● @narendramodi/X

Arab firms still trading kosher-certified food products to Israel

By Heba Nasser and Simon Hooper
Journalists

INVESTIGATION

Hundreds of food products made by companies in Arab states have been certified as kosher and many are still being sold in Israel, according to the findings of an investigation published jointly by Middle East Eye (MEE) and Arabic Post. The investigation highlights enduring trade links between Israel and a number of regional countries, including the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Jordan, and Morocco since the start of the war in Gaza, even as Israel has faced international condemnation and calls for a trade boycott over accusations of genocide and the killing of more than 37,000 Palestinians.

tended for Palestinian markets, although kosher certification is not required for products marketed only to Palestinians in Israel or the occupied territories.

Under Israeli food import laws, the responsibility for obtaining kosher certifications lies with the importer.

While the certifications are not necessarily indicative of recent trade, the volume of certificates approved for Arab products is indicative that the infrastructure for trade between Israel and regional countries remains in place.

The latest data published by Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics also provides insight into the extent of continuing trade between Israel and a number of Arab countries.

Imports from Egypt to Israel in May 2024 were valued at \$25m — double the figure for the same month in 2023, though total imports for the first five months of the year were down slightly at \$85.6m compared with \$90.7m for the equivalent period a year previously.

Imports from the UAE for the first five months of the year were valued at nearly \$1.2b,



Kosher-certified dates produced in the UAE are seen on sale in a supermarket in the northern Israeli city of Acre.
● MIDDLE EAST EYE

According to a database of kosher-certified products published by the Chief Rabbinate of Israel, new certificates have been approved for dozens of products manufactured in these countries since October last year.

MEE also found examples of kosher-certified products imported from Arab countries on sale on shelves in Israeli supermarkets and online.

The Chief Rabbinate of Israel is a religious institution that issues kosher certificates, indicating compliance with Jewish law, which are necessary for food products intended for sale in most Israeli shops and supermarkets.

Some companies contacted by MEE and Arabic Post denied exporting goods to Israel but said their products may have found their way into Israeli markets via companies and distributors in third countries.

Others said their products were in-

down from \$988m, while imports from Jordan were valued at \$129.1m, down from \$184m. The value of both countries' imports in May was higher than in May 2023. Imports from Morocco for the first five months of the year were valued at \$7.4m, down from \$8.6m.

Mahmoud Nawaja, national committee general coordinator for the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement, told MEE: "The trade growth between these Arab countries and Israel can only be considered as their involvement and complicity in Israeli crimes against Palestinians, and the genocide in Gaza, specifically. It does not reflect the position of the Arab people, who have been calling for a complete boycott. These states are sustaining the Israeli colonial regime under the direction of the US."

The full article first appeared on Middle East Eye.