

Indian Delegation to Israel Explores Opportunities for Enhanced Cooperation

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An Indian delegation, including policymakers, influencers, and journalists, embarked on a five-day visit to Israel this week, aiming to strengthen bilateral ties and explore avenues for enhanced cooperation. The visit, sponsored by the NGO Sharaka, comes amidst growing interest in expanding the Abraham Accords and fostering closer relations between India and Israel.

The delegation's visit coincided with International Holocaust Remembrance Day, during which they visited a Holocaust museum, underscoring the importance of historical understanding and remembrance. The delegation also met with Israeli officials, toured key sites, and engaged in discussions on various aspects of bilateral cooperation, including trade, technology, and regional security.

Swapan Dasgupta, a fellow at the India Foundation and former parliamentarian, emphasized the civilizational nature of the India-Israel relationship, stating, "The ties that bind India and Israel are much more than a commercial relationship; it is a civilizational relationship." He further emphasized the potential benefits of expanding the Abraham Accords, stating, "The Abraham Accords can be a useful starting point for building an even stronger Indian-Israel relationship because the opportunities for partnership are almost limitless."

Makarand Paranjape, an Indian educator and author, echoed these sentiments, highlighting the significance of the Abraham Accords in fostering regional stability and cooperation. "Indian foreign policy over the last decade has undergone a significant shift, with a growing recognition of the importance of the India-Israel relationship," he stated.

Dan Feferman, Executive Director of Sharaka, emphasized the importance of building deeper understanding between the two societies. “Although Indians have a general affinity for Israel and vice versa, our societies are not deeply familiar with each other,” he said. “This presents an opportunity to build on this relationship with the largest democracy, home to one of the largest Muslim communities in the world.”

The delegation’s visit also coincided with ongoing discussions regarding a proposed rail and shipping link connecting India to the Middle East and Europe. This ambitious project, if realized, has the potential to significantly enhance regional connectivity and promote economic growth.

Lt. Gen. Satish Dua, a veteran of the Indian Army, highlighted the strategic importance of this initiative, stating, “This rail initiative should happen because if we are all linked, it will reduce and minimize any potential conflict in the region.” He further emphasized that this project would serve as a significant deterrent to regional instability.

The delegation’s visit to Israel marks a significant step towards strengthening bilateral relations and exploring new avenues for cooperation between the two countries.