A NEW ERA IN

INDIA-ISRAEL RELATIONSHIPS

On 4 July 2017, Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrived in Israel on a State visit and was received by his Israeli counterpart Benjamin Netanyahu. This has certainly heralded a new era in the political ties between the two nations, exemplified by the manner in which Israel rolled out the red carpet for the Indian Prime Minister. Only a select few world leaders have received such a grand reception at Ben Gurion International Airport, the others being President of the United States and the Pope. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his Cabinet were on the tarmac to greet Modi as he exited his Air India Boeing 747 in Tel Aviv.

As political observers opined, "If diplomacy can generate national catharsis, then Prime Minister Narendra Modi has achieved it with his epic visit to Israel. By treading with aplomb in a country where not one of his 13 predecessors dared set foot, he has simultaneously redefined India's external self, and vindicated Israel's identity. Gone are the diffidence and the gingerliness that previously defined how India interacted with Israel. In their place, Modi has injected

confidence and certitude about wearing India's choices and national interests on its sleeves. Banished are the overcautious, hypocritical and domestically poisoned lenses for approaching Israel, and ushered in are bold, dispassionate and objective ways of handling this key West Asian power."

Prime Minister Modi's crossing of the 'Rubicon'(as it were) by visiting Israel is the finishing touch to a saga of 25 years of

progressively warming bilateral relations. From that day when India's then Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao decided to end the Cold War-era estrangement and launch full diplomatic ties with Israel in 1992, the two countries have never looked back. Steadily over the years, Israel climbed up the ranks as India's most trusted national security partner and defence supplier. The latter was forged virtually on the frontlines

The two leaders inspect the Israeli Guard of Honour