



# The Indian Gen Z Worldview

*Where Israel stands in Gen Z's map of India's global partnerships*



I

Introduction

India and Israel established full diplomatic relations in 1992. In the decades since, the partnership has grown across defence, agriculture, water management, cybersecurity and trade. Its institutional record is well documented. How the relationship is understood by the Indian public, and by young Indians in particular, has been examined far less often. This study addresses that question for the cohort aged 18 to 29, which is also the first generation to have grown up entirely within the period of full diplomatic ties.

The study measures perceptions of several of India's partner nations, among them the United States, Russia and France, across five domains. This comparative structure allows Israel to be assessed in relation to other partners rather than in isolation, and places its standing in the context of countries with longer diplomatic histories and greater visibility in Indian media. The findings indicate that Israel occupies a strong position within this comparison, particularly on defence and technology, and that support for deepening the relationship exceeds its current prominence.

II

Methodology

The survey was commissioned by the India Israel Centre and conducted through an AI-assisted digital research platform in September 2026. The sample comprised 500 respondents aged 18 to 29, drawn from five regions of India, with an even gender distribution enforced at the sampling stage. Respondents rated India’s relationship with each of the countries on a five-point scale, from “very weak” to “very strong”, across five domains: diplomatic relations, defence and security, cultural and social ties, innovation and technology, and economic cooperation. For the diplomatic and defence domains, respondents rated the relationship as they perceived it in both 2025 and 2026.

| Parameter   | Specification                                       |
|-------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| Sample size | 500 respondents                                     |
| Age cohort  | 18–29 years (18–21: 177; 22–25: 189; 26–29: 134)    |
| Gender      | 250 male, 250 female                                |
| Regions     | North, Delhi NCR, South, East, West India           |
| Domains     | Diplomatic, defence, cultural, innovation, economic |

| Parameter    | Specification  |
|--------------|----------------|
| Field period | September 2026 |

Results are reported in two forms. The first is the Top-2-Box measure, being the proportion of respondents selecting “strong” or “very strong”. The second is the proportion selecting “moderate” or higher, which captures the broader base of favourable opinion. Because the study comprises a single wave, the 2025 ratings represent recalled rather than contemporaneously measured perception, and comparisons across the two years are described as perceived change.

III

Defence and Security

Defence is the domain in which Israel is rated most highly. **In 2026, 52 per cent of respondents rated India's defence cooperation with Israel as strong, and 83 per cent rated it moderate or stronger.** This places Israel third among India's defence partners, above France and the United States, and behind Russia, which has been India's principal defence supplier since the Cold War.

The perceived trajectory is also positive. Ratings of Israel on this domain rose from 47 per cent in 2025 to 52 per cent in 2026. The 2025 figure was itself higher than the corresponding figures for several other countries, including the United States, so the increase builds on an established position rather than a low starting point.

| Defence cooperation (2026) | Rated strong | Rank |
|----------------------------|--------------|------|
| Russia                     | 65%          | 1    |
| Israel                     | 52%          | 3    |
| Israel, Delhi NCR          | 58%          | —    |

Figure 1: Perceived strength of India's defence cooperation, Israel among India's partners (% rating strong, 2026).

IV

Innovation and Economic Cooperation

On innovation and technology, respondents rated Israel alongside the United States and France, the three countries forming the leading group on this domain. **Seventy-eight per cent rated India's technology cooperation with Israel as moderate or stronger.** For a country of Israel's size, grouping with two of the largest technology economies reflects the extent to which its reputation for innovation has established itself among young Indians. This is consistent with the content of the bilateral relationship, which includes defence technology, water, agricultural technology and cybersecurity.

Perceptions of economic cooperation were more favourable still. **Eighty-two per cent of respondents rated India's economic ties with Israel as moderate or stronger.** This is notable because the India–Israel free trade agreement remains under negotiation. Respondents therefore rate the economic relationship highly in advance of its formal conclusion, which indicates a favourable disposition on which the relationship can build as it develops.

*Eighty-two per cent of young Indians rate the economic relationship as moderate or stronger, and a majority in Delhi rate it strong, although the free trade agreement has not yet been concluded.*

V

Overall Standing and Future Orientation

Israel was rated above the mid-point on all five domains, with no domain falling into negative territory. The regard for Israel extends well beyond defence, holding across its technological, economic and cultural ties alike, so its overall standing does not rest on that one strength alone.

The sharpest finding concerns the future. Respondents named Israel as a country India should build stronger ties with around four times as often as they named it India's most important partner today. Support for deepening the relationship thus exceeds its current prominence by a considerable margin. This pattern is characteristic of a relationship that Young Indians appear to see the relationship as still developing rather than settled.

*Support for deepening ties with Israel runs at approximately four times its standing as India's most important partner today, indicating appetite ahead of present prominence.*

## VI Regional Variation

Perceptions of Israel are most favourable in the metropolitan and northern regions of the sample. Delhi NCR returned the highest ratings on every domain, including 58 per cent on defence, 55 per cent on innovation and 65 per cent on economic ties. The difference between the Delhi figure and the national figure was six points on defence, seven on innovation and fourteen on economic cooperation. The gap is largest on the economic domain, which also receives the least direct public coverage, and smallest on defence, which is the most visible.

| Israel: Delhi NCR and national | Delhi NCR  | National   | Difference |
|--------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|
| <b>Defence</b>                 | 58%        | 52%        | +6         |
| <b>Innovation</b>              | 55%        | 48%        | +7         |
| <b>Economic ties</b>           | <b>65%</b> | <b>51%</b> | <b>+14</b> |

Figure 2: Israel ratings in Delhi NCR compared with the national figure, by domain (% rating strong).

This relationship between exposure and perception has a direct implication. The ratings recorded in Delhi NCR indicate the level that national perception may reach as the visibility of the partnership increases through trade, technology and cultural contact. The regions returning lower figures, principally in the south and east, reflect lower exposure, and not settled reservation, and represent the areas of greatest potential change.

## VII Conclusion

Assessed against other partner nations, Israel holds a strong position in the perceptions of young Indians. It is rated among the leading partners on defence cooperation, and its rating has risen over the past year from an already established base. It is grouped with the United States and France on innovation, and its economic ties are rated favourably despite the free trade agreement remaining unconcluded. Across all five domains, perceptions are positive.

The most significant finding concerns the direction of opinion. Support for deepening the relationship exceeds its present prominence, and perceptions improve consistently with exposure. Taken together, the relationship rests on a favourable base, and its room to grow lies mainly in raising the visibility of a partnership young Indians already regard well.

*Young Indians hold a favourable and consistent view of Israel, strongest on defence and technology, and support deepening the relationship at a level well above its present prominence.*

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