Anchoring Stability - India & Israel Cooperation in the Mediterranean region

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A growing pattern of regional convergence is reshaping cooperation in the Mediterranean, where India–Israel engagement increasingly reflects a shared geoeconomic approach cantered on connectivity, infrastructure development, and integrated trade corridors that support long-term regional stability and mutual benefit. According to the framework outlined in the paper IMEC and the New Geoeconomic Order by Prof. Shlomo Hasson, the Middle East is undergoing a structural transformation from a classical geopolitical toward a geoeconomic reality in which influence is increasingly shaped by infrastructure, logistics networks, energy systems, and digital connectivity. The war with Iran represents a defining moment in this transition, accelerating the shift from prolonged “Gray Zone” instability toward a new regional logic focused on resilience, connectivity, and the protection of critical economic infrastructure. Within this emerging landscape, Prof. Hasson argues that the region’s future stability will depend not only on deterrence and security arrangements, but also on the ability to build new bridges, corridors, and frameworks of connectivity that link regional and global markets. The growing importance of Gulf east–west land bridges and multi-corridor systems reflects a broader reconfiguration of regional and international relations, where economic integration and strategic connectivity increasingly shape geopolitical influence.

Following this line of thinking, India and Israel are working to shape a new connected reality. India is a civilizational state whose policies are deeply informed by its Dharmic heritage and long-standing philosophical traditions, where actions are often guided by principles rooted in ethical balance, responsibility, and peaceful coexistence. Kautilya's Arthashastra, composed in Sanskrit in the 4th century BCE, "भूम्यनन्तरः अरिः, भूम्येकान्तरं मित्रम्", which means, "The next state beyond that neighbour (mitra) shares a common interest with you — both have the same adversary — thus, naturally becomes a friend.", reflects a sophisticated understanding of regional relations and statecraft through the Mandala Theory, emphasizing the importance of strategic engagement, stability, and cooperation in interactions across borders and maritime spheres. India's broader civilizational outlook has consistently upheld diplomacy, harmony, and the pursuit of peace alongside strategic wisdom. Later in the 10th Century, Tamil poet Avvaiyar in her book titled "Kondrai Vendhan" says, "திரை கடல் ஓடியும் திரவியம் தேடு", which means, "Earn Wealth even by crossing the Seas". **This is the crucial juncture at which both Strategic-based Military cooperation and Trade & Commerce** come into play. Although India has a stronghold in the Indian Ocean, holding hands with another civilizational state like Israel gives regional alliances a possibility to collaborate in the modern world. Here, the Mediterranean Sea acts as a perfect turf to bridge the Eastern and Western worlds.

When assessing the strategic challenges facing Israel, regional security dynamics across the Eastern Mediterranean and the broader Middle East (West Asia) continue to play an important role. India, for its part, has historically maintained pragmatic and economically driven relations with Türkiye, with Istanbul remaining an important commercial gateway for New Delhi. However, recent developments have prompted a reassessment within India's strategic community. Following the Pahalgam terror attack and India's Operation Sindoor, contributed to growing concerns in New Delhi

regarding shifting regional dynamics. Additional reports of financial and drone-related cooperation with Pakistan have further strengthened the perception that India may need to broaden its strategic partnerships, trade corridors and regional connectivity frameworks in response to emerging geopolitical and security challenges. This, in turn, highlights India's growing imperative to establish a more outward and rooted presence in the Mediterranean as a means of strategic countering.

India's expanding outreach with the Cypriots, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent visit to Nicosia, signals a proactive step in this direction. Meanwhile, Greece continues to face persistent disagreements with Türkiye over the Eastern Mediterranean gas pipeline and the delimitation of the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). In this arena, Israel has consistently supported both Greece and Cyprus. India's close ties with Israel, Greece, and Cyprus could potentially lend additional diplomatic weight in multilateral forums, including discussions linked to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Conflict resolution frameworks thus emerge as a meaningful avenue for cooperation in advancing shared strategic interests.

Greece remains one of India's most trusted partners in Europe. Given the varied positions adopted by other European countries on Middle East politics, Athens could bolster a constructive bridge in forging deeper ties with Israel, thereby strengthening a potential trilateral framework. Historically, Greece and Cyprus have functioned as important gateways to Europe, facilitating maritime trade and logistics. Strategically, their geographic positioning near the Sea of Marmara and the Aegean Sea enables them to influence key maritime routes and, to an extent, moderate regional dynamics.

New Delhi is exploring synergies with the Great Sea Interconnector, which aims to link Israel, Cyprus, and Greece into a unified Mediterranean electricity system. Energy security considerations reinforce this trajectory in the hydrocarbon domain as well. State-linked actors have previously expressed interest in Israeli offshore gas assets, reflecting a broader strategy of diversification away from Persian Gulf supply concentration. Complementing this is the development of overland freight corridors from the United Arab Emirates through Saudi Arabia to Haifa, designed to mitigate exposure to maritime chokepoints such as the Bab el-Mandeb Strait.

In terms of India-Middle-East-Europe-Economic Corridor (IMEC), Saudi Arabia becomes one of the key partners in connecting the Mediterranean. It is one of the key founding members of IMEC, which was initiated during 2023's G20 Summit held in Delhi. Israel also sees Saudi Arabia as a potentially important partner in emerging regional connectivity frameworks, where goods shipped from Jeddah could help support a complementary transportation corridor linked to Haifa. Such developments could broaden regional access to evolving trade routes while encouraging greater economic cooperation and creating opportunities for constructive diplomatic engagement.

Further, India and Israel are on the verge of signing the Free-Trade Agreement (FTA). India had signed the Terms of Reference (ToR) in November 2025. Following the launch of the first rounds of India-Israel FTA negotiations in late February 2026, bilateral trade which stood at approximately USD 3.62 billion in FY 2024-25, is projected to double upon the agreement's signing. This pact is expected to transform India-Israel cooperation in the Mediterranean into a formidable alliance, a dynamic further amplified by the EU-India FTA trade pact finalized in January 2026, which serves as a critical economic link to regional partners like Greece and Cyprus. At this crossroad, enhanced partnerships become increasingly relevant. India, with its substantial economic capacity and resource base, alongside Israel's technological

and intelligence capabilities, could complement Greece and Cyprus in shaping a more balanced environment aimed at protecting maritime infrastructure and strategic trade routes from regional and hybrid threats. Such a collaborative framework, if pursued carefully, has the potential to emerge as a significant stabilizing factor in the Mediterranean region.

In light of emerging regional realignments, it is increasingly useful to adopt a broader analytical lens that goes beyond traditional military alignments. Instead of focusing primarily on shifting security blocs, greater emphasis should be placed on developing and understanding regional economic cooperation frameworks that can strengthen trade, enhance infrastructure connectivity, and foster long-term patterns of interdependence across the region. Within this context, IMEC provides an overarching framework for interregional connectivity, conceptualizing a structured pathway for economic integration. It further implies the importance of safeguarding infrastructure, enhancing networked connectivity, and diversifying risk through distributed systems, while maintaining coordinated security arrangements across participating states.

In parallel, India's energy strategy is increasingly oriented toward long-range interconnection frameworks. Subsea corridor enhances data resilience and latency while reducing dependence on more volatile routing pathways, thereby forming the telecommunications backing of a broader transcontinental network. A critical enabling layer of this architecture is the Blue-Raman subsea fiber optic system, a joint initiative involving Google and regional partners, designed to connect Mumbai to Haifa and extend onward to Italy. Beyond its practical function, this infrastructure constitutes a foundational digital backbone for enhancing data flows, commercial exchange, and broader economic interlinkages across the corridor. In this emerging system, ports are evolving from logistical endpoints into strategic nodes. The Adani Group's role in Haifa reflects the integration of Indian logistics with Israeli security

technology, enhancing the resilience of a key maritime gateway against both cyber and physical disruptions.

India and Israel's strategic positioning is increasingly tied to stabilizing their immediate peripheries in order to sustain connectivity-driven economic integration under conditions of regional volatility, particularly amid Iranian influence and escalation risks. The Indian Navy's increasing engagement in the Mediterranean should be understood less as conventional forward deployment and more as an emerging model of distributed maritime security built around partnership-based presence. In this context, the Indian Navy's first bilateral naval exercise with the Hellenic Navy in the Mediterranean, alongside the deployment of the frigate INS Trikand across multiple Mediterranean ports, reflects an expanding pattern of rotational maritime presence. This approach combines operational reach with sustained diplomatic engagement and efforts to enhance interoperability with partner navies in the region. Rather than establishing permanent naval basing, India is contributing to a framework of shared situational awareness and infrastructure protection, particularly relevant for safeguarding critical maritime assets such as shipping corridors, port infrastructure, and subsea connectivity systems within broader initiatives.

Amid growing regional volatility, connectivity and strategic trust are becoming central pillars of international cooperation. India, together with Greece and Cyprus and leveraging Israel's strategic position in the Eastern Mediterranean, can help establish a constructive regional framework. Beyond economic utility, digital and physical infrastructure increasingly serve as the backbone of resilient regional integration and secure connectivity. For India and Israel alike, sustaining such linkages depends on stabilizing their immediate peripheries amid persistent geopolitical uncertainty.



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