India and Israel launch first round of Negotiations for Free Trade Agreement

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The first round of negotiations for the India-Israel Free Trade Agreement (FTA) commenced on 23 February 2026 in New Delhi, and is scheduled to take place until 26 February 2026. The Terms of Reference (ToR) was signed in November 2025 establishing a structured framework for discussions on identified areas to enhance trade, and economic cooperation.

Total merchandise trade between the two countries stood at USD 3.62 billion in FY 2024-2025. India and Israel share complementarities across several sectors, and the FTA will be a catalyst to further enhance the bilateral trade by providing certainty and predictability to businesses, including MSMEs.

During this round, technical experts from both sides will engage in sessions covering various aspects of FTA such as trade in goods, trade in services, rules of origin, sanitary and phytosanitary measures, technical barriers to trade, customs procedure and trade facilitation, intellectual property rights, among others.

During the opening session, Commerce Secretary, Shri Rajesh Agrawal, underscored that the FTA negotiations had begun at an opportune moment of Hon’ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's visit to Israel from 25-26th February, 2026. Shri Agrawal underscored the significant opportunities available to both sides in sectors such as innovation, science and technology, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, high-tech manufacturing, agriculture, and services. He emphasized that the FTA will enable both countries to harness and fully leverage these opportunities.

Chief Negotiator of India, Shri Ajay Bhadoo, Additional Secretary, Department of Commerce, reiterated the significance of this engagement for the two countries and encouraged both sides to work on a balanced agreement to build a forward looking framework for an evolving partnership. Chief Negotiator of Israel for the FTA, Ms. Yifat Alon Perel, Senior Director Trade Policy & Agreements and Deputy Trade Commissioner, Foreign Trade Administration, Ministry of Economy and Industry, Israel, expressed that the two countries shared a close relationship, and that the FTA has the potential to strengthen supply chains, enhance cooperation and open new markets for both countries.

This engagement highlights the strategic importance of India-Israel bilateral relationship, and reinforces India’s commitment to strengthen economic partnerships in line with national priorities and global aspirations. Both sides are working towards concluding a balanced and mutually beneficial agreement.

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