

## 'India's vote at UN not an issue'

A file photo of Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Israel.AFP

Not disheartened by India's vote against Israel at the UN General Assembly on the issue of Jerusalem, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has expressed hope that bilateral ties would receive a further boost during his milestone visit to the country.

India in December voted in favour of the UN General Assembly resolution, condemning the U.S. for its decision to recognise Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.

Mr. Netanyahu, who would be leaving for India on January 14, said: "Well I would have preferred a different vote to be frank but I don't think it materially changes the tremendous flowering of relations between India and Israel."

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had also visited the Jewish state in July, becoming the first Indian premier to do so.

"I think everybody can see that. Prime Minister Modi's visit was a very important milestone in that. My visit to India is the other one," Mr. Netanyahu said addressing the Government Press Office's annual end-of-year reception for the foreign press corps on Wednesday.

When asked about the impact of India's recent decision to cancel a half a billion dollars defence deal related to development of Spike Anti-Tank Guided Missile, the Israeli leader said, "I think you are going to see an expansion of economic and other ties regardless of this or that deal".

Pointing towards the tremendous strengthening of ties on all fronts, Mr. Netanyahu expressed optimism saying, "overtime I hope I will see a reflection of that more often in the voting of India in international forums.

"It does not nullify the fact that with India, with other countries in Latin America and Africa there is a tremendous increase of relations on all fronts," the Israeli Prime Minister noted.

"It just takes longer on the international front," he stressed.

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