

## India says Israel has taken U.N. vote in its stride

Prime Minister Narendra Modi welcoming his Israeli counterpart, Benjamin Netanyahu, and his wife, Sara, at the forecourt of the Rashtrapati Bhavan on Monday. V. Sudershan

India's recent vote at the United Nations General Assembly, opposing U.S. recognition of Jerusalem as the Israeli capital, did not dent ties as the scope of the bilateral relations is "much larger" and it could not be determined by just one issue, the External Affairs Ministry said here on Monday.

Speaking to presspersons, Vijay Gokhale, Secretary in charge of Economic Relations in the Ministry, said both sides viewed ties "holistically" and they sought an early resumption of peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians.

"Our side expressed our position on both the status of Jerusalem and Palestine. Both sides agreed that our relationship is much larger and our relationship is not determined by this [vote]," Mr. Gokhale said.

The Palestine issue was discussed by the delegations led by Prime Ministers Modi and Netanyahu and sources said the Israelis were aware that Mr. Modi was likely to visit the West Asian region soon, which may include a trip to the Palestinian capital of Ramallah. Both sides also discussed possibilities of resuming the stalled peace talks between the Israel and Palestine.

### Peace discussions

"The two Prime Ministers discussed the developments pertaining to the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. They reaffirmed their support for an early resumption of peace talks between Israelis and Palestinians for arriving at a comprehensive negotiated solution on all outstanding issues, based on mutual recognition and effective security arrangements, for establishing a just and durable peace in the region," a joint statement released after the bilateral meeting mentioned.

*The Hindu* reported earlier that Israeli Ambassador Daniel Carmon had said the talks about India's vote at the General Assembly were continuing through bilateral "diplomatic channels".

Official sources said the discussion on India's traditional position was held in a frank manner and both sides agreed that this one issue should not become an impediment given the widespread convergence of a number of issues in the bilateral relations.

"Israelis understand that there are several factors that determine our position over Palestine," another official said.

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