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# India's Diplomatic Engagement in the Israel – Gaza Conflict: Assessing Policies, Perspective and Potential Contribution

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**ABSTRACT:** Over the past weeks, India has expressed itself in statements, joint statements, and votes at the United Nations on the ongoing Israel-Hamas conflict, that saw a temporary pause for the exchange of hostages which began on Friday, November 24. Prime Minister Narendra Modi hosted two separate virtual summits, the concluding session of India's G-20 and the second edition of the 'Voice of Global South' Summit, and spoke about the ongoing Israel-Hamas conflict, as well as the importance of heeding the concerns of the developing world. External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar travelled to the U.K. for talks, held along with Defence Minister Rajnath Singh "2+2" dialogues with their counterparts from the U.S. and Australia where joint statements reflected the West's position much more.

**KEYWORDS-**Israel-Gaza, engagement, India, diplomatic, politics, conflict

## I. INTRODUCTION

The Gaza–Israel conflict is a localized part of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict beginning in 1948, when 200,000 Palestinians fled or were expelled from their homes, settling in the Gaza Strip as refugees.[1] Since then, Israel has fought 15[2] wars against the Gaza Strip. The number of Gazans killed in the most recent 2023 war — 27,000 — is higher than the death toll of all other wars of the Arab-Israeli conflict.[3][4]

Israel fought four wars against the Egyptian-administered Gaza Strip:[5] 1948 Palestine War, border attacks of 1949–1956, first occupation of Gaza during the Suez Crisis and the capture of Gaza in 1967. During the first occupation, 1% of Gaza Strip's population was either killed, tortured or imprisoned by Israel.[6] Following two periods of low-level insurgencies, a major conflict between Israelis and Palestinians erupted in the First Intifada (523 Gazans killed). The 1993 Oslo Accords brought a period of calm. But, in 2000 the Second Intifada erupted. Towards the end of the Second Intifada, Israel disengaged from Gaza in 2005, Hamas won the 2006 election and seized control of Gaza in 2007.[7][1,2,3]

In 2007, Israel imposed a land, air and sea blockade of the Gaza Strip,[8] turning it into an "open-air prison".[9][8] The blockade was widely condemned as a form of collective punishment,[10] while Israel defended it as necessary to stop Palestinian rocket attacks.[11] Hamas considered it a declaration of war.[12] A 2008–2009 Israeli invasion of Gaza resulted in more than 1,000 deaths and widespread destruction of homes, schools and hospitals. A 2012 Israeli operation also killed more than 100 people.

In 2014, Israel invaded Gaza in a major war that resulted in the deaths of 73 Israelis (mostly soldiers) and 2,251 Palestinians (mostly civilians). The invasion resulted in "unprecedented"[13] destruction, damaging 25% of homes in Gaza city and 70% of homes in Beit Hanoun.[13] After 2014, notable events in the conflict included the "Great March of Return" (2018-2019) and clashes in November 2018, May 2019 and November 2019. The 2021 crisis saw 256 Palestinians and 15 Israelis killed.

On October 7, 2023, Palestinian militants attacked Israel, killing 1,200 people (mostly civilians). Israel responded with bombing Gaza Strip and launching an invasion that has killed more than 29,000 Gazans .

India's position, as articulated since the October 7 terror attacks along the Israel-Gaza border by Hamas that killed more than 1,200 people, and then on the bombardment of Gaza by Israel where more than 13,000 have been killed, has been multi-layered. The Modi government has condemned terrorism in the strongest language and stood with Israel over the attack, although it hasn't thus far designated Hamas as a terror group. The government has called on



Israel for restraint, dialogue and diplomacy and condemned the death of civilians, and along with the U.S. and Australia, called for “humanitarian pauses” in bombardment, but has not so far called for a “ceasefire”. At the same time, India has reaffirmed its support for a “two-state solution” including a sovereign, viable state of Palestine existing in peace alongside Israel, supported the “socio-economic welfare” of the Palestinian people, and has sent 70 tonnes of humanitarian assistance including 16.5 tonnes of medicines and medical supplies via Egypt to Gaza in the past month, Mr. Jaishankar said at the BRICS emergency meeting chaired by South Africa .[4,5,6]

As BRICS held a virtual Extraordinary Joint Meeting in late November, the group informally agreed to condemn Israel's ongoing war in Gaza and expressed concern over the plight of civilians in the besieged enclave.

“We condemned any kind of individual or mass forcible transfer and deportation of Palestinians from their own land,” a statement read, chaired by South African president Cyril Ramaphosa, although a joint declaration was not issued.

Yet reflecting the divisions within the group, founding member state India took a milder approach. Indian external affairs minister S. Jaishankar reiterated calls for a two-state solution but did not hold Israel accountable for Palestinian civilian deaths in Gaza, which by that stage had reached 11,000, instead focusing on Hamas’ 7 October attack.

India’s softened critique, while quietly deepening ties with both Israel and, more broadly, the United States, marks a divergence from fellow BRICS members - Brazil, Russia, China, and South Africa - each of whom has separately denounced Israel's actions in Gaza. It also reflects a profound split within BRICS, often seen as a counterweight to Western global influence.

Moreover, on the sidelines of the COP28 climate change conference in Dubai, concerns over the violence in Gaza were raised by multiple leaders, officials, and delegates. Speaking to Israeli President Isaac Herzog, India’s Prime Minister Narendra Modi reportedly reiterated India's support for a two-state solution and a resolution to the Gaza war.

Ultimately, however, India's growing proximity to Israel has been evident since establishing diplomatic relations in 1992. This relationship has intensified under Narendra Modi's government, highlighted by Modi's historic visit in 2017, marking the first trip of an Indian Prime Minister to Israel.

Such actions signal a departure from India's long-standing policy of non-alignment among great powers, a stance maintained since its independence in 1947 and outlined as “actively neutral” by its first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, which it devoutly followed throughout the Cold War while upholding a largely pro-Palestinian stance.

India’s response to the Oct. 7 terrorist attack on Israel and the ensuing Israel-Hamas war have underscored the notable shift in India-Israel bilateral relations that has taken place under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Prime Minister Modi tweeted on Oct. 7, “Deeply shocked by the news of terrorist attacks in Israel. Our thoughts and prayers are with the innocent victims and their families. We stand in solidarity with Israel at this difficult hour.” The speed and firmness of the statement are uncharacteristic for India, and it highlights a deeper reorientation in its foreign policy regarding the ongoing regional crisis. Although the Ministry of External Affairs has emphasized New Delhi’s longstanding support for a two-state solution, this departure — of siding resolutely with Israel and without referencing the Palestine question — exemplifies India’s elevation of strategic interests over principled positions. This shift toward Israel is best understood by examining the confluence of two factors: structural imperatives and ideological underpinnings. Before delving into the details of how this shift has played out, it is helpful to first examine India’s historical stance on Palestine and Israel to better understand the Modi government’s current approach.[7,8,9]

A historical snapshot

India’s historical support for Palestinian rights is embedded in its own struggle for independence, which makes its recent tilt toward Israel even more evident. In 1947, India voted against the United Nations partition plan for Palestine along religious lines together with Arab states, preferring a federal state instead with a special status for Jerusalem, emphasizing its commitment to the Palestinian cause. This support for Palestinian statehood continued over the decades, with India recognizing the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people in 1974. Solidarity with Palestine was a cornerstone of Indian foreign policy, rooted in its anti-colonial and non-aligned principles, which resonated with the broader aspirations of Arab states and their firmly pro-Palestinian orientation.

In recent years, however, the India-Israel relationship has begun to change significantly. Although India recognized Israel in 1950, it did not establish diplomatic relations until 1992. In the following years, bilateral ties gradually gained



substantial momentum, particularly in agriculture, defense, tourism, and trade. Notably, India has become Israel's top market for defense exports, prompting a growing realization in New Delhi that Tel Aviv is vital for India's long-term strategic interests. Against the backdrop of burgeoning ties, the political glue that cemented India's policy shift occurred when Modi became the first Indian prime minister to visit Israel in 2017. The following year, in January 2018, Modi hosted Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in New Delhi, accompanied by a 130-strong trade delegation to boost commercial and diplomatic ties.

As these visits gained increasing salience, Modi also made a historic visit to Palestine a month after hosting Netanyahu, making him the first Indian prime minister to do so. Modi's visit to Ramallah served the purpose of reiterating India's enduring support for the realization of a "sovereign, independent Palestine living in an environment of peace." It also showcased New Delhi's balanced approach, aimed at reassuring its Arab partners that India's closer ties with Israel would not change its principled position on Palestine. In a similar vein, India had strongly opposed the Trump administration's recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital in 2017, voting in favor of the U.N. General Assembly resolution that denounced the move.

India's historical solidarity with the Palestinian cause, shaped by its anti-colonial principles, has witnessed a transformation in recent years. While maintaining support for Palestinian statehood, India has strategically deepened ties with Israel, especially in defense and trade. Prime Minister Modi's vision for a Middle East founded on open political, economic, and defense relations between Israel and the Gulf countries would benefit India but is at risk if the Israel-Hamas conflict escalates across the region. For Modi, a shift toward Israel makes sense, as a protracted war could imperil India's strategic interests and undo the groundwork it has laid to benefit from the region.

The structural and ideological traits bolstering India-Israel relations

Indian foreign policy is increasingly demonstrating three traits that exemplify the structural imperatives of its national interests: a strongly independent foreign policy, ambitious strategic goals, and a consistent stand against terrorism.[10,11,12]

New Delhi is walking multiple tight ropes on the foreign policy front, including refusing to condemn Russia's invasion of Ukraine, negotiating discounted oil purchases from Russia and Iran despite the global sanctions regime targeting them, and maintaining strategic relations with Saudi Arabia and the UAE while still doing business with their regional rival, Iran. India's refusal to park itself in any camp, particularly the U.S.-led Western one, has burnished its reputation as a power able to withstand political pressure to take sides. Where this matters is in India's relations with Israel, as New Delhi's increasing confidence shows that it is moving closer to Tel Aviv without the fear of a blowback in its relations with Arab and Muslim-majority states.

India's ambitious strategic goals showcase that it is a major player in global affairs and has the vision, political will, and economic weight to project its ideas. Announced at the G20 summit in New Delhi in September, the India-Middle East-Europe Corridor (IMEC) provides an alternative to China's Belt and Road Initiative. Although IMEC is still very much a concept — one that is not immune to geopolitical shifts — its strategic rationale is to counter China's increasing influence in the Middle East. Given Beijing's growing assertiveness and its revisionist territorial claims against India, New Delhi is confronted with the cold reality that it needs powerful friends to push back against China, even if this comes at the cost of its principles. Consequently, this makes New Delhi's embrace of Israel easier to understand.

On the terrorism front, given its history of dealing with cross-border attacks from Pakistan-sponsored terrorist groups, India looks to Israel as a model. So when the 2008 Mumbai attacks killed more than 175 people, including a targeted attack on the Jewish Chabad House, India was determined to change the calculus in its favor so that it could hit back against terrorist groups. Under Modi, New Delhi has demonstrated it has the political will to strike terrorist groups in Pakistan, which it did in 2016 and 2019. So when Hamas broke through the Gaza security fence and attacked numerous military and civilians targets on Oct. 7, killing over 1,200 people, Modi's response to Israel was, we get you.

The second layer that explains India's close ties with Israel is the ideological underpinnings of their bilateral relationship. The ideological confluence between Modi's Hindu nationalist Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP) and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's right-wing Likud party is their shared hostility toward minorities: Indian Muslims for the BJP and Arab citizens in Israel for Likud. Both parties' ideologues privilege majoritarianism over constitutional rights that safeguard minority rights, play the victim card to justify their discrimination, and draw on their countries' democratic histories to exemplify their commitment to the preservation of minority rights while simultaneously dismantling them.

Indian politics have changed dramatically since Modi's BJP won elections in 2014, repeating its success in 2019. The BJP's leadership overtly articulates a doctrine of "Hindutva," which unapologetically champions a Hindu majority strain and dominance over India, disregarding the country's ethnic, linguistic, or religious diversity. The BJP's



Hindutva political ideology means that it does not regard India's 200-plus million Muslims in its electoral calculations, preferring instead to whip up Hindu nationalist sentiments to expand its voter base and drive up turnout among Hindus. This gives Modi and the BJP increasing political mileage to pursue the party's majoritarian agenda at home. India's passage of the Citizens Amendment Act, which discriminates against Muslims, and state-led enforcement actions that make interfaith marriage between Hindus and Muslims dangerous are examples of changes in India's political switchboard. Similarly, under Netanyahu, Israel passed a "basic law" in July 2018 declaring it the "Nation-State of the Jewish People," leaving out any mention of the country's Arab minority and further marginalizing them. Moreover, increasing settler violence against Palestinians, ramping up of settlement expansion in the occupied West Bank, and legislative reforms that would severely curtail the power of the judiciary are all emblematic of a systemic assault on Israeli democracy have taken place under Netanyahu's watch. In sum, Modi's and Netanyahu's ideological confluence and stewardship of their democracies to serve select ethnic groups along exclusionary religious lines has undoubtedly helped draw India and Israel closer.

## II. DISCUSSION

In the post-Cold War era, India maintained a low profile in commenting on conflicts, including those in the Middle East. For instance, despite global criticism from the Global South towards the US-led Iraq war in 2003, India largely remained neutral as the invasion took place.

More recently, in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, India fortified its commercial and diplomatic ties with Russia as it faced Western sanctions, thus becoming an increasingly significant ally for Moscow. Trade turnover between India and Russia more than doubled in the first half of 2022, with an increase of nearly 120%. [13,14,15]

This paradox of balancing the West's ties with Russia is perfectly illustrated by India's importing of Russian crude oil and subsequently selling it to Europe, despite Western sanctions on Russia. Yet apart from its dalliance with Moscow, which may even be plateauing, India is increasingly positioning itself within the US-led order.

On 7 October, soon after the violence erupted following Hamas' attack on southern Israel, Modi wrote on X "we stand in solidarity with Israel at this difficult hour" showing its clear solidarity with Israel, even before US President Joe Biden could express support for Israel. And as Israel has ramped up its attacks on Gaza, India has refrained from criticising Tel Aviv, while having previously condemned Hamas.

Although India has still sought to project a non-aligned image and one that is solely against violence (i.e. from Hamas), the government's position has triggered criticisms from opposition figures that it is too supportive of Israel's actions and its war in Gaza.

For example, Sonia Gandhi, parliamentary chairperson of the Indian National Congress party, accused Modi of "expressing complete solidarity" with Israel after the government abstained from a UN vote calling for a ceasefire in late October.

While India said it abstained as the resolution didn't condemn Hamas, India has also tried to outlaw pro-Palestinian protests, akin to some Western European countries which had unequivocally supported Israel as the war broke out.

While this move has repressed protests in most parts of India, it's particularly targeted the India-controlled Kashmir province, which it unilaterally declared as part of its territory in 2019. For New Delhi, this could be a way of curtailing resistance from within that region.

Indeed, one key opposition leader and Muslim cleric, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, said he has been put under house arrest each Friday since the start of the war and that Friday prayers have been disallowed at the biggest mosque in Srinagar, Kashmir's main city.

India and Israel's alignment has intensified on the back of their strategic imperatives and shared ideological underpinnings. Although India sent humanitarian aid to Palestine on Oct. 22 and Modi tweeted his shock at the loss of



lives during the bombing of al-Ahli Hospital in Gaza, Indian foreign policy has demonstrated that it will privilege national interests over principled positions. If there was any doubt, India abstained from the U.N. General Assembly vote in late October calling for a humanitarian truce. This is unsurprising, and to expect a different approach would be risible. But what is different is India's boldness and the uncharacteristic firmness with which it has moved toward Israel; these underscore its confidence that its geopolitical context and emergence as a major player in global affairs, particularly checking China, means it is an indispensable and strategic partner. We should get used to seeing India play by its terms even if it dilutes its stance and rhetoric in support of the Palestinian cause.

### III. RESULTS

India's backing of Israel can be largely attributed to realpolitik considerations. Israel is India's biggest supplier of weapons, which includes drones, radars, and missile systems. The two countries have also collaborated on joint defence research and development projects in other sectors like technology and innovation.[16,17,18]

Indeed, while security and defence cooperation underpins their cooperation, commercial ties have advanced, particularly with Indian software companies' growing presence in Israel. And despite some disagreements over specifics, like the amount of Indians that can work in Israel, there have been negotiations over a free-trade agreement (FTA).

Yet observers have also drawn similarities between Israel's right-wing Likud Party and India's Hindu nationalist Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP), particularly exemplified by the apparent closeness between Benjamin Netanyahu and Modi.

More broadly, India's foreign policy in the Middle East, particularly with Israel, aligns with its wider strategic goals within US-led frameworks. This is underscored by India's key role in the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) agreement, which, although still in the nascent stages, signals a strengthening of ties with Western alliances. This economic corridor, proposed in September, also aims to rival China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

The IMEC's progress has been delayed due to the war, and the risks of a wider regional conflict have further threatened its fruition. For this reason, India will continue hoping for a quick resolution to the war, although favouring its ties with Israel.

India's participation in the Quad since 2017, a security initiative led by the US in the Indo-Pacific, further indicates its inclination towards such alliances, particularly amid concerns over China.

While Israel enjoys much support within India, particularly among BJP supporters, Modi still contends with a large proportion of the population being supportive of Palestine. The southern Indian state of Kerala is another region that has seen mass rallies in support of Gaza and against Israel.

"India is the biggest consumer of weapons manufactured in Israel. Indian taxpayers' money should not be given to kill innocent Palestinian children. So India should scrap all military deals with Israel and sever diplomatic ties with it," Kerala's Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said at a rally in November.

In the wake of the Israel conflict, Aditya Raj Kaul, an Indian journalist known for his pro-BJP views, posted on X (formerly Twitter) about the atrocities committed by Hamas, alleging that a pregnant woman was dissected by Hamas, killing the unborn child. As of writing, the post has been viewed 10.2 million times with more than 21,000 retweets, including one from Ben Shapiro, who disseminated it to his large following.

However, this story remains unverified.

The Israel-Palestine conflict was a hotbed for conspiracies and false information even before the current flashpoint. While researchers so far have found minimal evidence of disinformation of foreign origin, the ongoing conflict between Israel and Hamas in the Gaza Strip has nonetheless observed a surge in misinformation. This reveals the significance



and salience of the digital battlefield in modern day warfare and combat, engaging the participation of citizens beyond the Middle East in a battle of discourse and ideology.

Amid this fragmented information sphere, the manufacture of and engagement with pro-Israel content among Indian nationals, more significantly among right-wing Hindu nationalists, have not escaped popular attention.

BOOM, a reputable Indian fact-checking service, found several verified Indian X users at the front and center of a “disinformation campaign” that targets Palestine with negative news while supporting Israel. In one instance, a video purporting to show young girls taken by a Palestinian fighter as sex slaves was circulated on X. This video had no context and was likely from a school trip to Jerusalem, but this was shared widely by Indian accounts.

Fact-checker Pratik Sinha has referred to India as the “disinformation capital of the world” due to the rise of right-wing nationalism in the country. There have been attempts to attribute the spread of false information in India on the Israel-Gaza conflict to the BJP’s IT Cell, a department within the ruling party that handles its social media accounts and campaigns. However, beyond the element of state-sponsorship in the spread of mis- and disinformation, this episode reveals wider trends surrounding fake news and grassroots engagement in the production, dissemination, and export of misinformation in India.

#### The Politics of India-Israel

The links drawn between India and Israel are not new. Ideological resonance has been observed for a long time between the two countries, and this has grown in recent years with the rise of a more muscular Hindu nationalism in India under Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Scholars have identified the solidarity and affinity among Hindu nationals in India for the Israeli cause, pointing to heavy ideological resonance between Hindutva and Zionism. Madhav Golwalkar, former head of the BJP’s ideological wing, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), articulated a vision of the Hindu nation emphasizing the racialized notion of a state, drawing parallels with Zionism.

This understanding of the Hindu nation has continued to influence the current BJP government under Modi, manifesting in policies like the controversial Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), which has been compared to Israel’s discriminatory Law of Return. Both measures grant citizenship rights to ethnic majority individuals beyond the state while denying Muslims within the state citizenship rights. For Hindu nationalists, the religious significance of Israel’s sovereignty serves as an aspirational model.

More recently, Modi departed from India’s usual neutrality in conflicts, which was maintained in the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war, by issuing a strong statement of support for Israel and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in response to Hamas’ attacks. This move reflects the close diplomatic ties established between Modi and Netanyahu since 2014, with Modi being the first Indian prime minister to visit Israel and Netanyahu calling him a “kindred spirit.” This camaraderie has set the tone for India-Israel relations, and India’s economic and strategic ties with Israel are increasingly apparent.

While India’s Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) asserts that India recognizes and supports the Palestinian cause and advocates for the “resumption of direct negotiations towards establishing a sovereign, independent, and viable State of Palestine living within secure and recognised borders, side by side at peace with Israel,” Modi’s leanings toward Israel reflects what has been called his “biggest ideological departure from Congress on Middle East policy.”

#### The Right-Wing Digital Network

The transnational nature of right-wing ethnonationalist affinities presents the possibility to observe and study right-wing nationalism as a network. This virtual ecosystem has become the fertile ground for normalization and dissemination of hate, fueling calls for violence within these networks.



Within Israel, there is an observed normalization of right-wing extremist views within Netanyahu’s new coalition, which features the inclusion of the far-right in the government. This right-wing allyship can also be seen in Israel’s embrace of far-right movements across Europe – and in the strengthening ties between India and Israel.

In reflection of this solidarity, Israeli Ambassador to India Naor Gilon congratulated India on its Cricket World Cup win over Pakistan, announcing on X that he is glad that Pakistan would now be unable to achieve a victory that it would have attributed to Hamas. Gilon also added an emotional note, thanking “Indian friends” for “showing their solidarity with Israel by displaying posters during the match.”

Worryingly, this camaraderie has trickled down to the populace. Beyond the political sphere, the right-wing nationalist network serves as a social phenomenon and a mobilizing force in society. The internet as a global civic space has facilitated the flourishing of digital populism, marked by the use of the internet for participation and mobilization, and the creation of an environment conducive for the circulation of nativist and xenophobic narratives.

At the grassroots level, the pervasive impact of the rise of Hindutva can be seen in the prevalence of pro-Israel sentiments among supporters of the Hindu right. These ideological affinities between Hindu nationalists and Israel manifested online long before the ongoing conflict. Since Modi assumed office in 2014, it has become common to see tweets from Hindu nationalists expressing unwavering support for Israel and Netanyahu. This sentiment is often referred to as the “India-Israel brotherhood,” and these expressions of support often go hand-in-hand with condemnations of Palestine, Pakistan, and even Muslims in general, further underscoring the shared ideological alignment between these two groups.

#### Grassroots Disinformation and the Right-Wing Digital Network

While this exploitation of international events to fuel domestic events is not new, what can be observed is the emergence of a voluntary and decentralized disinformation campaign by Hindu nationalists in support of Israel. Calling themselves “digital champions” of Israel, individual accounts with large followings push unverified one-sided news against Hamas, which have gained substantial momentum online. This phenomenon has not escaped the attention of global netizens, and it has triggered an onslaught of memes and satirical content aimed at the Hindu nationalists’ vocal support for Israel.

The fervor of Indian netizens for Israel was evident even before the recent escalation of violence. The recognition of said support has since been put on the record, with the official account of Israel’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ thanking India after “India is with Israel” trended on Twitter.

Disinformation and the right-wing network are mutually reinforcing. First, disinformation utilizes narratives derived from this right-wing network, with the success of the campaign riding on the highly emotive nature of right-wing beliefs. As the current conflict unfolds, Israel’s intense retaliation toward Hamas and the deadly strikes against Gaza are being co-opted by Hindu nationalists to advance their anti-Muslim agenda. The intertwining of domestic politics with larger global issues has given fresh voice to the stoking of anti-Muslim hate as narratives borrowed from a foreign conflict are used to justify the persecution of Muslims in India.

Second, the spread of disinformation containing right-wing narratives serves to circulate, perpetuate, and therefore reinforce “rhetoric and motifs” common and central to a variety of right-wing and far-right discourses.

But the right-wing network does not bear sole responsibility for the fragmented information landscape. The larger Israel-Palestine conflict remains a highly affective one; people of different cultures and creeds find themselves and their own experiences in one facet of the conflict or another. Individuals consume and thus perpetuate misleading information that bolsters their worldview, contributing to the onslaught of misinformation.





## The Ever-Evolving Landscape of the Conflict Information Sphere

Amid conflicting, partisan information, netizens, experts, and traditional media continue to debate who perpetrated the devastating bombing of the Al-Ahli Baptist Hospital in Gaza. However, as of now, this remains undetermined.[19,20]

In a post on X, a user that claiming affiliation with Al Jazeera alleged that she witnessed a misfired Hamas rocket hitting the hospital. Al Jazeera later released a statement to clarify that said user has no ties to the network. Multiple X users have pointed out the user had previously only posted on Indian politics and cricket, only recently turning her attention to Gaza, insinuating her origin.

As the violence in Gaza becomes increasingly egregious, Modi has conveyed his condolences at the loss of lives at the Al Ahli Hospital in Gaza, pledging that India will continue to send humanitarian aid to the Palestinian people. Indian netizens are divided on Modi's stance, however, amid the ideological alignment and friendship with Netanyahu's Israel. The dynamism of the unfolding events may thus see the pluralization of narratives and grassroots disinformation attempts targeted at both sides of conflict. But one thing is for certain: In the case of Indian social media, digital boots are continually deployed on the information battlefield.

## IV. CONCLUSION

To balance out this pressure over its support for Israel, India has made some aid deliveries to Gaza, mostly through contributions to UNRWA. We could expect to see Modi reiterate calls for a two-state solution and an end to the war, particularly as global criticism over Israel's campaign and its humanitarian consequences will certainly intensify.

Ultimately, despite contending with some pro-Palestine views from its populace and seeking to avoid reputational damage in the global south over its support for Israel, India has opted to maximise its position within the US-led order while prioritising cooperation with Israel.

As India strives to establish its economic and political influence globally as an emerging power, prioritising relationships with the US and Israel is a strategic choice it is currently pursuing.[21,22]

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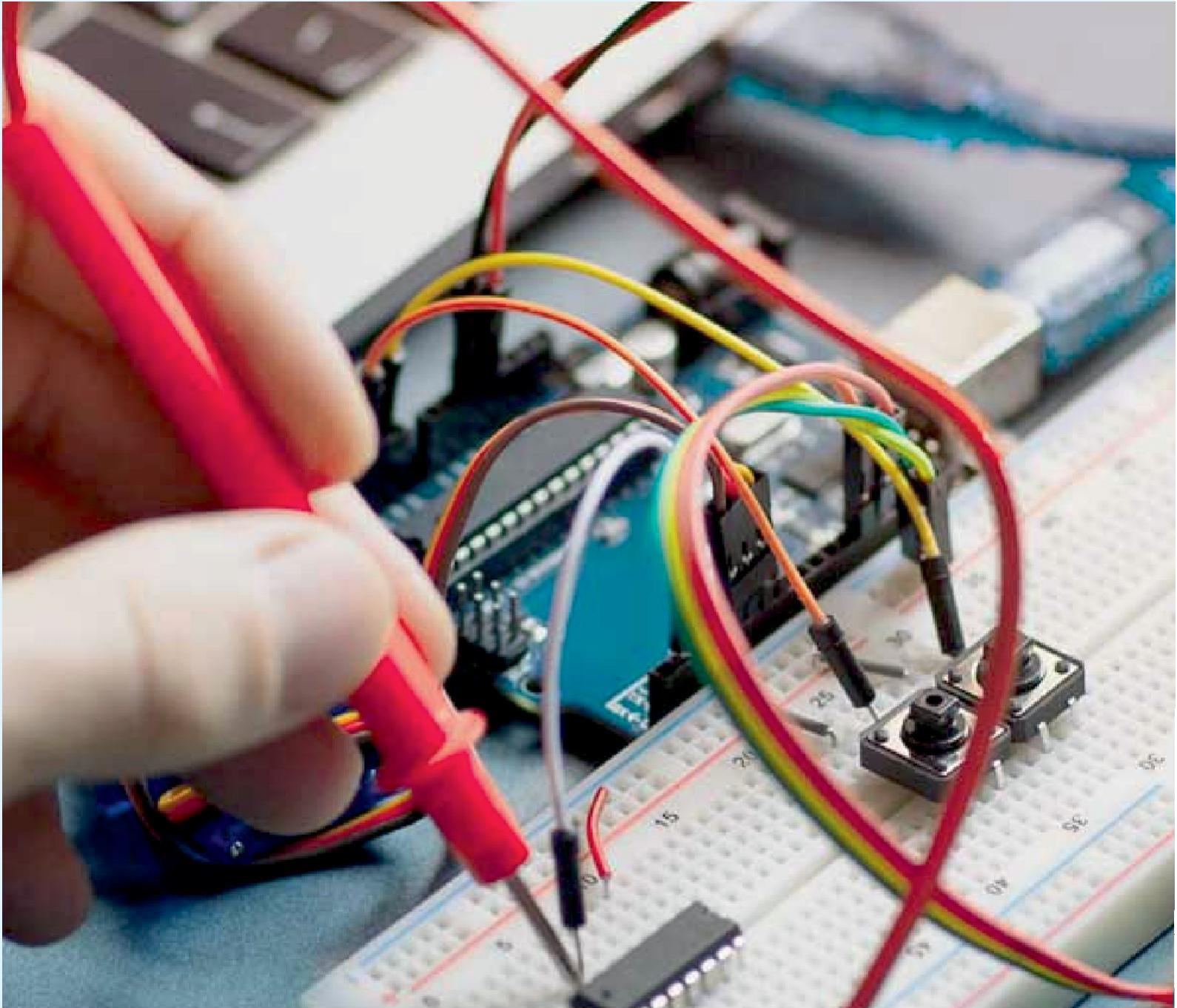
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