FOCUS ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE

ISRAEL

THE STATE OF ISRAEL TODAY

	THE STATE OF ISRAEL TODAY
Location	The State of Israel lies in western Asia, occupying a narrow strip of territory on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea. The country also has a narrow outlet to the Red Sea at the northern tip of the Gulf of Aqaba. All of Israel's land frontiers are with Arab countries, the longest being with Egypt to the west and with Jordan to the east. Lebanon lies to the north and Syria to the north-east.
Size	22,145 Sq. K.M. (8,550 Sq. miles). Land:21,671 sq. km. and water:474 sq. km.
Geographic coordinates	31° 30" north of the Equator and 34° 45" east of the Prime Meridian.
Geographic note	There are 242 Israeli settlements and civilian land use sites in the West Bank, 42 in the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights, 0 in Gaza Strip, and 29 in East Jerusalem as estimated in August 2005; Sea of Galilee is an important freshwater source.
Land boundaries	1017 km.
Coastline	273 km.
Maritime claims	Territorial sea: 12 nm, continental shelf: to depth of exploitation.
Land use	Arable land: 15.45%, Permanent crops: 3.88% and other: 80.67%.
Irrigated land	1,940 sq. km.
Elevation extreme	Lowest point: Dead Sea -408 m and highest point: Har Meron 1,208 m.
Population	9,043,387 estimated for 2023.
Population growth rate	1.43 % estimated for 2023.
Life expectancy rate	Total population: 83.54 years; male: 81.65 years and female: 85.53 years as estimated for 2023.
Birth rate	17.3 births/1,000 population as estimated for 2023.
Death rate	5.05 deaths/1,000 population as estimated for 2023.
Literacy	Total population: 97.8%; male: 98.7% and female: 96.8%. (2011).
Capital City	Jerusalem (Tel Aviv is the actual seat of the Government).
Other Large Cities	Nazareth, Haifa, Ramla, Tel Aviv, Beersheba, Rishon Leziyyon, Holon etc.
Religion	About 81% of the population profess adherence to Judaism, the officially recognized religion of Israel, while about 14% are Muslims.
Language	The official language of Israel is Hebrew, spoken by about two-thirds of the population, including most Jews. About 15% of Israeli residents, including Muslim Arabs, speak Arabic (which is also the language spoken by the inhabitants of the Occupied Territories, and the emerging autonomous areas of the West Bank and Gaza), while many European languages are also spoken.
Climate	The climate is Mediterranean, with hot and dry summers, when the maximum temperature in Jerusalem is generally between 30° C and 35° C (86° F to 95° F), and mild, rainy winters, with a minimum temperature in Jerusalem of about 5° C (41° F). The climate is subtropical on the coast but more extreme in the Negev Desert, in the south, and near the shores of the Dead Sea (a lake on the Israeli-Jordanian frontier), where the summer temperature may exceed 50° C (122° F).
International Relations	Israel is a member of the UN, WTO, Inter-American Development Bank and IOM.
Internet domain	il
International dialing code	+972
Currency	The unit of currency is the shekel (ILS) of 100 agorot.

NATIONAL ECONOMY

Israel's economy has weathered the pandemic exceptionally well. The Bank of Israel's (BOI) monetary and prudential measures provided liquidity, kept credit flowing, and prevented undue tightening of financial conditions. Fiscal measures supported households, businesses, and the public health system. Israel's world-leading vaccination campaign boosted confidence and helped mitigate the impact of the pandemic in the face of new, virulent variants. Banks' solid capital, liquidity, and asset quality also allowed them to support the economy.

After a mild downturn in 2020, real GDP exceeded its pre-pandemic level reaching growth of 8.2 percent in 2021. Consumption and the high-tech sector led the recovery. The 2021 fiscal deficit—4.3 percent of GDP—was significantly smaller than expected due to buoyant tax revenues, and public debt declined to 69 percent of GDP. The current account reached a surplus of 4.6 percent of GDP, driven by exports of high-tech services. Unemployment declined to near pre-pandemic levels, and job vacancies are high across all sectors. Thus far, the war in Ukraine has had a limited impact on Israel's economy given its low direct exposure to Ukraine and Russia. Nonetheless, the economic outlook is subject to significant uncertainty.

Executive Board Assessment

The economic recovery is projected to solidify in 2022 and over the medium term. Growth will be supported by strong private consumption, investment, and net exports. With temporary factors winding down, inflation is projected to ease and stay within the BOI's target band over the medium term. The external position is assessed as moderately stronger than the level implied by medium-term fundamentals and desirable policies. The policy mix should remain agile in the face of high growth and still significant uncertainty.

The planned 2022 fiscal stance is appropriate, and the medium-term fiscal path aims to put debt on a downward path . In 2022, pandemic support should target the most affected sectors and vulnerable population groups. Refocusing medium-term policy on reducing public debt and rebuilding prepandemic buffers is also appropriate. However, the authorities' planned expenditure restraint may be challenging to implement given Israel's already low civil spending, and a review of public spending efficiency would therefore be useful. There is scope to increase tax revenues by broadening the tax base and making the tax system more progressive. This would also support a needed increase in growthenhancing spending.

The fiscal framework should be strengthened. A review of the framework should assess the appropriateness of the fiscal rules, the necessary size of fiscal buffers, the ability to face exceptional events, and the potential usefulness of establishing an independent fiscal council.

Inflation pressures have risen, calling for commencing data-driven monetary policy tightening. Inflation has exceeded the BOI's target range despite appreciation of the shekel, which continues to restrain price growth. Signs of underlying inflationary pressures are strong, and inflation expectations have increased quickly in line with CPI. The conditions are in place for the BoI to start raising the policy rate gradually. Foreign exchange purchases should taper off, allowing the shekel's value to be determined by market forces, without precluding future purchases should appreciation pressures threaten to move inflation or inflation expectations below the target band.

Emerging risks in the financial system need to be addressed. Housing risks stress the need to advance structural measures to ease housing supply. Further tightening of macro prudential measures could help stem banks' exposures to housing market risks and prevent potentially unsustainable borrowing. While Israel's financial regulatory architecture has served the economy well, the establishment of a committee to review it is welcome in view of the push for greater competition and financial innovation.

Well-targeted structural reforms could foster productivity, labor reallocation, and inclusiveness. Active labor market policies should seek to expand vocational training and improve its quality. A greater adaptation of the different education streams will be needed to help align student qualifications with labor market needs. Continued efforts to reduce trade barriers and red tape would

promote efficient resource allocation, investment, and innovation. Accelerating digital and physical Infrastructure would improve job accessibility.

Further efforts are needed meet the authorities' climate objectives. Options could include larger increases in carbon prices and providing greater regulatory and fiscal support for Israel's innovative green technologies.

Israel: Se	lected E	conomic	Indicat	ors, 2017	7–2023		
	2017	2018	2019	2010	2021	2022	2023
						Projectior	าร
Real Economy (percent							
change)							
Real GDP	4.4	4.0	3.8	-2.2	8.1	5.0	3.6
Domestic demand	4.1	4.5	3.6	-4.3	9.2	5.8	4.3
Private consumption	3.6	3.5	3.9	-9.2	11.7	6.6	4.8
Public consumption	3.4	4.3	2.7	2.5	2.9	6.1	3.3
Gross capital formation	6.3	7.0	3.8	1.0	9.9	4.0	3.9
Gross fixed investment	3.8	7.2	3.1	-4.0	10.5	5.7	2.7
Foreign demand (contribution to growth)	0.3	-0.5	0.2	2.3	-1.0	-0.7	-0.7
Potential GDP	3.7	3.6	3.5	1.7	5.1	4.0	3.9
Output gap (percent of potential)	0.3	0.6	0.9	-3.0	-0.2	0.7	0.4
Unemployment rate (percent)	4.2	4.0	3.8	4.3	5.0	3.9	3.8
Overall CPI (percent change, end of period)	0.2	0.8	0.8	-0.6	1.5	2.7	2.1
Overall CPI (percent change,	0.4	0.8	0.6	-0.7	2.8	2.4	2.0
average) GDP Deflator (percent change,	0.4	0.9	0.6	-0.3	1.2	1.6	2.5
average)							
Saving and investment							
balance							
Gross national saving (percent of GDP)	24.7	24.7	24.7	27.6	27.3	27.0	26.7
Foreign saving (percent of GDP)	-3.6	-2.8	-3.4	-5.4	-4.6	-4.5	-4.2
Gross capital formation (percent of GDP)	21.1	21.9	21.3	22.1	22.7	22.5	22.4
Public Finance (percent of GDP)							
Central government							
Revenues and grants	26.3	25.2	24.5	22.7	26.6	24.4	24.2
Total expenditure	28.2	28.1	28.2	34.1	31.0	28.0	27.5
Overall balance	-1.9	-2.9	-3.7	-11.4	-4.4	-3.6	-3.2
General Government							
Overall balance	-1.1	-3.6	-3.9	-10.8	-4.3	-3.4	-3.1
Debt	60.2	60.4	59.5	71.7	69.0	67.1	66.4
Balance of Payments (percent of GDP)							
Current account balance	3.6	2.8	3.4	5.4	4.6	4.5	4.2
Goods and services balance	1.9	0.8	2.0	4.6	3.8	3.3	3.0
Foreign reserves (eop, US\$ billions)	113.0	115.3	126.0	173.3	213.0	243.9	256.6
Exchange Rate							
NIS per U.S. dollar (period	3.60	3.59	3.56	3.44	3.23	3.12	3.12

average)									
Nominal effective exchange rate	118.7	118.3	123.2	128.8	134.6	138.8	139.7		
(2005=100)									
Real effective exchange rate	108.2	106.0	108.9	111.3	114.0	115.6	116.2		
(2005=100)									
Terms of trade (2010 = 100)	104.6	95.3	98.7	99.5	92.8	92.7	94.0		
Sources: Bank of Israel; Central Bureau of Statistics; Haver Analytics; and IMF staff estimates and projections.									

"NATIONAL ECONOMY" is based on IMF Executive Board Concludes 2022 Article IV Consultation with Israel March 21, 2022.

FOREIGN TRADE

Israel's total exports in 2016 were of the order of US\$ 52,175 million. It decreased to US\$ 49,372 million in 2020. Exports during the period from 2016 to 2020, in terms of percentage, grew highest (2.16%) in 2018 and fell maximum (-4.87%) in 2020 in comparison with 2017 and 2019 respectively. The annual average compound growth rate worked out at -1.37%.

Imports, on the other hand, were of the order of US\$ 69,810 million in 2020 while in 2016 it was US\$ 65,048 million. Imports during the period from 2016 to 2020, in terms of percentage, grew highest (11.37%) in 2018 and fell maximum (-7.78%) in 2020 as compared to 2017 and 2019 respectively. The annual average compound growth rate worked out at 1.78%.

Volume of trade registered an annual average (compound) growth rate of 0.42% from US\$ 117,223 million in 2016 to US\$ 119,182 million in 2020. Israel faced a deficit balance of trade during the said period. Israel's export and import, volume and balance of trade between 2016 and 2020 along with their growth rates are given in **Table-I.**

The main exportable commodities are citrus fruit and by-products, fruit juices, flowers, wines and liquor, sweets, polished diamonds, chemicals, tyres, textiles, metal products, machinery, electronic and transportation equipment. The main exports in 2005 were diamonds, chemicals and chemical products, machinery and equipment, agricultural products including citrus fruit etc. Major commodities imported in 2005 were food and live animals, cereals and cereal preparations, crude materials (inedible) except fuels, mineral fuels, lubricants etc., petroleum, petroleum products, etc., chemicals and related products, organic chemicals, basic manufactures, machinery and transport equipment, miscellaneous manufactured articles etc. Principal trading partners during the said period were Australia, Belgium-Luxembourg, Canada, France, Germany, Hong Kong, India, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Russia, South Africa, Singapore, Turkey, Uk, USA etc.

There are international airports at Tel Aviv (Ben Gurion), Eilat and Haifa. Tel Aviv is the busiest airport. El Al is the state-owned airline. In 1998, services were also provided by another Israeli airline, Arkia, and by over 40 international carriers.

Israel has three commercial ports—Haifa, Ashdod and Eilat. The former is a natural harbour, enclosed by two main bread waters and dredged to 45 ft. below mean sea level. In 1965, the deep-water port was completed at Ashdod, which had a capacity of about 8.6m tons in 1988.

The port of Eilat is Israel's gateway to the Red Sea. It is a natural harbour, operated from a wharf. Another port, to the south of the original one, started operating in 1965.

BILATERAL TRADE WITH INDIA

Indo-Israel bilateral trade in 2018-19 was of the order of Rs.39,428.57 crores. It increased to Rs.86,623.14 crores in 2022-23. The annual compound growth rate of volume of trade during the period from 2018-19 to 2022-23 was 0.57%. India enjoyed a surplus balance of trade during the said period **(see table II).**

The average annual compound growth rates of exports and imports worked out at 27.35% and 8.44% respectively.

India's exports to, and imports from Israel of Merchandise Goods between 2018-19 and 2022-23 with their growth rates are presented in **Table II.**

India's top ten merchandise goods exported to and imported from Israel during 2018-19 to 2022-23, along with their growth rates are depicted in **Table III & IV** respectively.

Some Important Links

Embassy of Israel in INDIA

3, Aurangzeb Road New Delhi-110011 **Telephone:** +91-11-2301 3238 **Fax:** +91-11-304 14555 **Web:** <u>delhi.mfa.gov.il (External website that opens in a new window)</u>

Embassy of India in ISRAEL

140 Hayarkon Street, PO Box 3368, Tel Aviv-61033, **Telephone:** 00-972-3-5291999 **Fax:** 00-972-3-5291953 **Email:** indemtel@indembassy.co.il

Names and addresses of the organizations engaged in foreign trade in Israel are:-

Ministry of industry and Trade 30, Agron Street JERUSALEM 94190 Tel: (009722) 6220661 Fax: (009722) 6222412 Email: <u>maxli@moit.gov.il</u> URL: <u>http://www.moit.gov.il</u> Israel Export Institute 29, Hamered Street P.O. Box 50084 TELAVIV 61500 Tel: (009723) 5142830 Fax: (009723) 5142902 Email: <u>ailana@export.gov.il</u> URL: <u>http://www.export.gov.il</u>

Federation of Israeli Chambers of Commerce (FICC) 84, Hahashmonaim Street P.O. Box 20027 TELAVIV 61200 Tel: (009723) 5631020 Fax: (009723) 5619027 Email: <u>chamber@chamber.org.il</u> URL: http://www.chamber.org.il

Trade Point Israel 2, Shtibal Street P.O. Box 57061 TELAVIV 61570 Tel: (009723) 5461884 Fax: (009723) 5461930 Email: <u>tpisrael@tpisrael.org.il</u> URL: http://www.tpisrael.org.il

<u>Sources</u>

The Statesman Year Book, the Europa World Year Book, Monthly Bulletin on Statistics UN Publication, IMF, World Bank.org, BBC News, the World Fact Book, World Development Indicator, MEA, wikipedia.org, expresstextile.com, Embassy of India in Israel <u>http://india.gov.in</u> and D.G.C.I & S etc.

"<u>NOTICE</u>"

Rights of permission for reproduction in part or entirely of these official papers published in the Indian Trade Journal is reserved by the Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence & Statistics, 565, Anandapur, Kolkata – 700 107.

			TABLE - I					
	ISRAEL	<u>_'S TOTAL EXP</u>	ORTS AND IMPO	RTS, VOLUM	E AND BALAN	CE OF TRADE		
			BETWEEN 201	<u>6 TO 2020.</u>				
					(Figures in US MIL	LION DOLLARS)		
Year	Exports	Percentage	Import	Percentage	Volume	Percentage	Balance	
		Growth in		Growth in	of	Growth in	of	
		Exports		Imports	Trade	Vol. of Trade	Trade	
2016	52175		65048		1,17,223		-12873	
2017	53063	1.70	68006	4.55	1,21,069	3.28	-14943	
2018	54211	2.16	75741	11.37	1,29,952	7.34	-21530	
2019	51899	-4.26	75697	-0.06	1,27,596	-1.81	-23798	
2020	49372	-4.87	69810	<i>-7.78</i>	1,19,182	-6.59	-20438	
Annual								
Compound								
Growth Rate	-1.37		1.78		0.42			
NOTE :	Figures rela	ate to calendar y	ear, January to De	cember.				
SOURCE :	UN COMTRAD	DE PUBLICATIO)N					

	TABLE - II										
INDI			= RT FROM ISRAI	EL MERCHA	NDISE						
	GOODS DURING 2018-2019 TO 2022-2023										
	(Value in CRORES)										
Exports	Percentage	Import									
	Growth in		Growth in	of	Growth in	of					
	Exports		Imports	Trade	Vol. of Trade	Trade					
25958.72		13469.85		39428.57		12488.87					
23844.07	-8.15	11296.59	-16.13	35140.66	-10.88	12547.48					
19985.46	-16.18	14481.58	28.19	34467.04	-1.92	5503.88					
35770.46	78.98	22974.53	58.65	58744.99	70.44	12795.93					
68278.05	90.88	18623.14	-18.94	86901.19	47.93	49654.91					
27.35		8.44		21.84							
Figures relate	to Financial Yea	r April to Marc									
Directorate Gene	eral of Commerc	ial Intelligence	& Statistics,								
Ministry of C	ommerce & Ind	ustry, Kolkata	700 107.								

			TABLE -III							
		-	JOR MERC	-						
		<u>18-2019 TO</u>	2022-2023			RATES		(Value in Re		1
SI. No.	Name of the Merchandise Commodities		1	Value of	of Exports	Annual Growth Rates				
		2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	19-20 over	20-21 over		22-23 over
							2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
1	Petroleum Products	11202.30	9177.50	4600.90	12143.83	44620.50	-18.07	-49.87	163.94	267.43
	Share in total export	43.15	38.49	23.02	33.95	65.35				
2	Pearl, Precs, Semiprecs Stones	7003.28	6431.40	6171.32	10922.17	10161.86	-8.17	-4.04	76.98	-6.96
	Share in total export	26.98	26.97	30.88	30.53	14.88				
3	Other Misc. Engineering Item	364.22	365.08	678.75	858.34	1110.51	0.24	85.92	26.46	29.38
	Share in total export	1.40	1.53	3.40	2.40	1.63				
4	Consumer Electronics	110.43	307.11	722.75	1320.49	939.48	178.10	135.34	82.70	-28.85
	Share in total export	0.43	1.29	3.62	3.69	1.38				
5	Ceramics And Allied Products	171.61	168.20	290.79	289.50	543.52	-1.99	72.88	-0.44	87.74
	Share in total export	0.66	0.71	1.46	0.81	0.80				
6	Cotton Fabrics, Madeups Etc.	303.85	333.64	401.86	511.82	537.64	9.80	20.45	27.36	5.04
	Share in total export	1.17	1.40	2.01	1.43	0.79				
7	RMG Cotton Incl Accessories	374.60	374.49	291.43	436.34	527.83	-0.03	-22.18	49.72	20.97
	Share in total export	1.44	1.57	1.46	1.22	0.77				
8	Bulk Drugs Drugs Intermediates	217.13	154.70	182.79	328.05	525.76	-28.75	18.16	79.47	60.27
	Share in total export	0.84	0.65	0.91	0.92	0.77				
9	Rice-Basmoti	321.65	304.97	388.19	375.12	521.23	-5.19	27.29	-3.37	38.95
	Share in total export	1.24	1.28	1.94	1.05	0.76				
10	Agro Chemicals	356.18	359.41	320.92	220.17	518.59	0.91	-10.71	-31.39	135.54
	Share in total export	1.37	1.51	1.61	0.62	0.76				
	Total export to ISRAEL	25958.72	23844.07	19985.46	35770.46	68278.05	-8.15	-16.18	78.98	90.88
	NOTE : Figures relate to Financial Year,	April to Ma	arch.							
	SOURCE : Directorate General of Comm	•		atistics. Mir	histry of Co	mmerce & l	ndustry, Kolk	ata : 700 107		

	IN	DIA'S MA	JOR MERC	HANDISE			EL			
		2018-2019 TO 2022-2023 AND THEIR GROWTH RATES						(Value in F	S)	
SI.	Name of the Merchandise Commodities			Value	of Imports			Annual Gro	wth Rates	
No.		2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	19-20 over	20-21 over	21-22 over	22-23 over
							2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
1	Pearl, Precs, Semiprecs Stones	6263.72	4600.11	4687.85	9855.70	6100.48	-26.56	1.91	110.24	-38.10
	Share in total imports	46.50	40.72	32.37	42.90	32.76				
2	Fertilizers Manuactured	1384.46	1084.30	956.83	1508.31	3233.63	-21.68	-11.76	57.64	114.39
	Share in total imports	10.28	9.60	6.61	6.57	17.36				
3	Electronic Components	182.80	519.26	920.60	1075.52	1344.90	184.06	77.29	16.83	25.05
	Share in total imports.	1.36	4.60	6.36	4.68	7.22				
4	Petroleum: Crude	1.22		363.40	1346.07	806.16	-100.00		270.41	-40.11
	Share in total import	0.01		2.51	5.86	4.33				
5	Agro Chemicals	391.34	422.17	483.19	617.99	784.65	7.88	14.45	27.90	26.97
	Share in total import	2.91	3.74	3.34	2.69	4.21				
6	Electronic Instruments	404.23	502.04	586.63	736.09	717.69	24.20	16.85	25.48	-2.50
	Share in total import	3.00	4.44	4.05	3.20	3.85				
7	Consumer Electronics	264.72	500.77	1011.19	992.52	625.84	89.17	101.93	-1.85	-36.94
	Share in total import	1.97	4.43	6.98	4.32	3.36				
8	Telecom Instruments	1218.63	738.77	2177.94	2261.08	582.10	-39.38	194.81	3.82	-74.26
	Share in total import	9.05	6.54	15.04	9.84	3.13				
9	Other Misc. Engineering Items	54.06	190.09	383.19	805.65	527.81	251.63	101.58	110.25	-34.49
	Share in total import	0.40	1.68	2.65	3.51	2.83				
10	Medical And Scientific Instruments	379.66	351.75	250.96	293.35	368.29	-7.35	-28.65	16.89	25.55
	Share in total import	2.82	3.11	1.73	1.28	1.98				
	Total import from ISRAEL	13469.85	11296.59	14481.58	22974.53	18623.14	-16.13	28.19	58.65	-18.94
	NOTE : Figures relate to Financial Y	ear, April to	March.							
	SOURCE : Directorate General of Comr	nercial Intel	ligence & St	atistics, Min	istry of Com	merce & Ind	ustry, Kolkata	: 700 107.		