

## **After a gap of 20 years, Israel President to embark on 6-day visit to India later this month**

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**Jerusalem:** Israeli President Reuven Rivlin will lead a high-profile delegation on a six-day visit to India in mid-November.

### **File photo - Israel President Reuven Rivlin**

Rivlin would be only the second Israeli President to visit India since the establishment of diplomatic ties between the two countries in 1992 and his visit comes almost after a gap of 20 years since former President Ezer Weizmann visited India in 1996-97.

Rivlin will meet President Pranab Mukherjee, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Lok Sabha Speaker Sumitra Mahajan among others during his visit.

Sources said that cooperation in the field of security, education, cyber, energy, water and agriculture will be high on the agenda during his stay here.

Expressing his interest in visiting India following the historic visit of Mukherjee last year to Israel, he had earlier said that "the cooperation between the two countries is something that is said all over".

"The cooperation is not only in innovation but you know very well that we are trying our very best to address problems of agriculture, water, energy, cyber and every need of security that we have to work out in order to be prepared for the kind of burden of security that is imposed on both people. I would like to see your Prime Minister here," he had said.

### **PM Modi may visit Israel next year**

Speculation is rife that the Israeli President's visit would pave the way for Modi's visit to Jerusalem, the first by an Indian Prime Minister, and is likely to take place next year when the two countries celebrate 25th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations.

Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who on Sunday during a cabinet meeting mentioned about Rivlin's forthcoming visit of Rivlin to India, is also likely to visit New Delhi next year.

Israel is also very keen on strengthening ties between academic institutions in the two countries. The Israeli President in the past has complimented the Indian students in Israel, saying "they are among the best" of the lot.

Israel has consistently remained the second largest supplier of defence equipment to India for many years and its "timely" supply of Indian requirements during the Kargil War has earned it the tag of a "reliable" partner.

- With PTI Inputs