



Three years of the Abraham Accords

This editorial is based on [Three years of the Abraham Accords](#) which was published in The Hindu on 21/09/2023. It talks about the achievements, obstacles and prospective trajectories associated with Abraham Accord while placing a particular emphasis on their relevance in Indian Context.

For Prelims: [I2U2](#) , [Abraham Accords](#), [West Asian Quad](#), **Prosperity Green & Blue agreement**, **Yemen War**

For Mains: [Bilateral](#), [Regional and Global Groupings and Agreements involving India and affecting India's interests](#), [Effect of policies and politics of countries on India's interest](#), [Indian Diaspora](#)

Three years ago, in September 2020, the United States mediated the **Abraham Accord** between the **United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Israel**, promising to normalize ties between these **Arab Gulf states** and **Israel**.

Abraham Accord heralded greater political, economic and security integration not only in the Middle East but has also brought better opportunities for India.

What are Abraham Accords ?

▪ About:

- The [Abraham Accords](#) are a series of agreements signed in **2020** between Israel and several Arab states, marking a historic shift in diplomatic relations in the Middle East.
- The Accords were named 'Abraham Accords' in reference to the supposed common ancestor of the Jews and the Arabs, the biblical Abraham, and as an expression of brotherhood.

▪ The primary countries involved in the [Abraham Accords](#) include:

- **Israel:** As a key party to the Accords, Israel agreed to normalize diplomatic relations with the participating Arab nations, marking a significant departure from the historically hostile relationships it had with many Arab states.
- **United Arab Emirates (UAE):** The UAE was the first Arab country to formally announce its normalization of relations with Israel under the Abraham Accords. This historic agreement includes the establishment of full diplomatic relations, as well as economic, technological, and cultural exchanges.
- **Bahrain:** Bahrain followed the UAE's lead by signing a similar agreement with Israel. The Bahrain-Israel Peace Agreement also encompasses diplomatic relations and cooperation in various sectors.
- **Sudan:** Sudan joined the Abraham Accords by agreeing to normalize relations with Israel. This marked a major shift in Sudan's foreign policy and led to the removal of Sudan from the U.S. list of state sponsors of terrorism.

- **Morocco:** Morocco, another Arab nation, joined the Accords with a commitment to normalize relations with Israel. This agreement included the United States' recognition of Morocco's sovereignty over Western Sahara in exchange for Morocco's engagement with Israel.

What is the Significance of the Accord ?

- The agreement shows how the **Arab countries** are gradually **decoupling themselves from the Palestine question**.
- **Full diplomatic ties** will be established between **Israel, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain** which will have a positive impact on the entire region.
- The deal buys **UAE** a lot of **goodwill in the US**, where its image has been tarnished by its involvement in the **Yemen war**.
- **In South Asia, it will put Pakistan in a bind**, whether to follow UAE's steps (will be seen as giving up Islamic cause of Palestine) or not to follow the UAE (since it is already in feud with the Saudis over not taking up the Kashmir case, Pakistan cannot afford another hostile Islamic Country).

What are the Advancements since the Abraham Accords?

- The Israeli embassy opened in Abu Dhabi in June 2021, UAE also opened its embassy in Tel Aviv.
- The **trade** between the UAE and Israel amounted to 900 million USD. There was also an agreement signed for a free trade area concerning government procurement and **Intellectual property rights(IPR)** endorsed in April 2022
- A **three-way trade water accord** signed between **Israel, UAE and Jordan**. Israel would either build a new desalination plant or deliver water to member countries.
- When it comes to **tourism**, after direct flights were established, **UAE** hosted more than 67,000 Israeli tourists during the first month after the Accords.
- For many Israelis unhappy with the economic woes of their country, the UAE became a destination for job seekers” .
- **Prosperity Green & Blue agreement** between Israel, the UAE, and Jordan determined that a solar field to supply 600 megawatts of electricity to Israel.

What are the shortcomings of the Abraham Accord?

- Despite the initial goal of Arab organizers, cooperation among **Israel** and its **Arab partners** has failed to produce tangible improvements in the **Israeli-Palestine** calculus
- Major players in the **Middle East** are still out of the agreement such as **Saudi Arabia** has held its firm commitment to the pre-existing **Arab Peace Initiative**.
- **Oman** and **Qatar** declined to formalize their ties within this framework.

How are Abraham Accords linked with Indian Interests?

- **Diplomatic Ties:**
 - The **Abraham Accords** provides the atmosphere for India to foster stronger ties with **Arabs** countries as well as Israel.
 - Formation of **I2U2** observed as an offspring of abraham accords. It was also unofficially described as the “**West Asian Quad**” and the “**Indo-Abrahamic construct**”.
- **Investment opportunities:**
 - The grouping encourages joint investments in six mutually identified sectors which includes **food security, health, transportation, space, water and energy**
 - Recently, the International Federation of **Indo-Israel Chamber of Commerce (IFIICC)** was established in Dubai.
- **Technological Cooperation:**
 - India's **technological capabilities**, finances from the UAE and Israel's innovative capabilities could lead to further cooperation among the three nations.
 - In the first of these ventures, an **Emirati project** for a **robotic solar panel** was endorsed by **Eccopia**, an Israeli company, which has a manufacturing base in India.

▪ **Diaspora Relations:**

- The vibrant **Indian diaspora** in the Gulf now has the convenience of direct flights between the UAE and Israel, as well as between Israel and Bahrain.
- **Indian students** are enjoying increased ease of travel, gaining improved access to our universities and the opportunity to explore international study programmes.

What are the Challenges of the Abraham Accords ?

▪ **Palestinian Issue :**

- Challenges concerning the **Palestinian future** and the opposition to these Accords from **Iran** and **Qatar**. 86% of Palestinians believe the normalization agreement with the UAE serves only Israel's interests and not their own

▪ **Lack of regional support:**

- **Bahrain**, a small country that seeks protection and takes political cues from Saudi Arabia, has become a topic of concern for those hoping to normalize relations with Israel

▪ **Cultural Conflicts :**

- **Shia-Sunni** rifts in the region may get wide and violent. Saudi Arabia (Sunni) and Iran (representing Shia) have a long history of enmity. .

▪ **Multilateral Power Struggle:**

- The **US** may be a pre-eminent power in the Middle East, but Russia has made a space for itself, spending a lot less money. In recent years, China has indicated its willingness to play a larger role in this region, and is close to both UAE and Israel and, increasingly, Saudi Arabia

▪ **Funding Constraints:**

- **Abraham Fund** was set up as a part of the Accord and it delegated approximately **3 billion USD** to development initiatives in the Middle East. Change in administration in the US which has seemingly diluted the potential of the Accord.

What is the Way Forward ?

▪ **Open Dialogue:**

- Addressing the **Palestinian** issue by open and inclusive dialogue among all signatory parties including Israel and the participating states.
- Encourage **diplomatic solutions** for regional conflicts in Middle east particularly in Yemen, Syria and Libya

▪ **Counter Extremism:**

- Avoid using land and resources for **separatist movements** and interfering into internal affairs of neighboring countries.
- Share intelligence and cooperate to counter extremist ideologies,

▪ **Multilateral Diplomacy:**

- Continue to engage with **multilateral diplomacy** through United Nations, Arab League and others

▪ **Balancing Regional Relations:**

- A balance between Shia and Sunni, between Persian and Arab, is key to sustainable peace.

▪ **Regional cooperation:**

- Encourage collaborative efforts on economic development, technology, energy security, food security, health and cultural exchanges.

Conclusion

While it is clear that a good beginning has been made for closer Israel-Arab ties with the Abraham Accords, their success and extension to other countries will depend on a range of factors that are currently impacting the geopolitical environment, including the US-China rivalry and West Asia politics of alignments and realignment.

Drishti Mains Question

Critically examine the success of Abraham Accords. Discuss the economic, cultural and strategic

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Prelims

Q.Consider the following statements: (2023)

Statement-I: Israel has established diplomatic relations with some Arab States.

Statement-II: The 'Arab Peace Initiative' mediated by Saudi Arabia was signed by Israel and Arab League.

Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above statements?

- (a) Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is the correct explanation for Statement-I
- (b) Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is not the correct explanation for Statement-I
- (c) Statement-I is correct but Statement-II is incorrect
- (d) Statement-I is incorrect but Statement-II is correct

Ans- C

Q. The area known as 'Golan Heights' sometimes appears in the news in the context of the events related to (2015)

- (a) Central Asia
- (b) Middle East
- (c) South-East Asia
- (d) Central Africa

Ans: (b)

Mains:

Q. "India's relations with Israel have, of late, acquired a depth and diversity, which cannot be rolled back." Discuss (2018)