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Israel-UAE Peace Deal

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Why in News

Recently, the President of the USA has announced that **Israel and the United Arab Emirates (UAE)** have **agreed to establish full diplomatic ties** as part of a deal to **halt the annexation of occupied land sought by the Palestinians** for their future state.

Both the UAE and Israel are the **USA's close allies in West Asia.**



Key Points

- The UAE has become the **first Gulf Arab state** to do so and only the **third Arab nation to have active diplomatic ties with Israel**.

Egypt made a peace deal with Israel in **1979**, followed by **Jordan** in **1994**.

- Under the deal, **Israel would suspend its plans to annex large parts of the occupied West Bank**.

- The West Bank is **sandwiched between Israel and Jordan**. One of its major cities is **Ramallah**, the **de facto administrative capital of Palestine**.

- Israel took control of it in the **Six-day Arab-Israeli war, 1967** and has over the years established settlements there.

- A **joint statement from the USA, the UAE and Israel** has been issued which says that **delegations would meet in the coming weeks** to sign deals on direct flights, security, telecommunications, energy, tourism and health care.

Both nations will also partner on fighting the **Covid-19 pandemic** together.

- It **remains unclear** what prompted Israel and the UAE to make the announcement now.

In June 2020, the UAE's ambassador to the USA **warned that Israel's plan to annex the Jordan Valley and other parts of the occupied West Bank** would **upend Israel's efforts to improve ties** with Arab nations.

- **Background:**

- **Formed in 1971**, the **UAE is a USA-allied federation of seven sheikhdoms** on the Arabian Peninsula which **did not recognise Israel** over its occupation of land home to the Palestinians.

- The **UAE relied on white-collar** (people who perform professional, desk, managerial or administrative work) **Palestinians** in creating its nation and **maintained its stance that Israel should allow the creation of a Palestinian state** on land it seized in the **1967 war**.

- In recent years, **ties between Gulf Arab nations and Israel have quietly grown**, in part over their **shared enmity of Iran** and the **Lebanese militant group Hezbollah**.

- The **UAE also shares Israel's distrust of Islamist groups** like the **Muslim Brotherhood** and the **militant group Hamas** that holds the Gaza Strip.

- **Impact on the UAE:**

- The deal **smoothens the UAE's international campaign** to be seen as a beacon of tolerance in the Middle East despite being governed by autocratic rulers.

- It **puts the UAE out first in a regional recognition race** among neighbouring Gulf Arab states.

- **Impact on Israel:**

- The announcement **justifies** the year-long claims of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that his **government enjoys closer ties to Arab nations** than publicly acknowledged.
- The deal gives Netanyahu a **domestic boost** at a time when Israel's coalition government is facing infighting and the possibility of early elections.

- **Impact on the USA:**

The recognition **grants a diplomatic win** to the USA President Donald Trump ahead of the November election.

Neither his efforts to bring the war in Afghanistan to an end nor efforts to bring peace between Israel and the Palestinians have been successful yet.

- **For Palestine:**

For Palestinians, who long have relied on Arab backing in their struggle for independence, the announcement **marked both a win and setback** for the **Israel-Palestine relations**.

While the deal **halts Israeli annexation plans**, the Palestinians have repeatedly **urged Arab governments not to normalize relations with Israel until a peace agreement** establishing an independent Palestinian state is reached.

Way Forward

- The deal marks a historic day and a significant step forward for peace in the Middle East.
- Opening direct ties between two of the Middle East's most dynamic societies and advanced economies will transform the region by spurring economic growth, enhancing technological innovation and forging closer people-to-people relations.

Source: IE