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Egypt Resumes Severed Relations With Qatar

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Why in News

Recently, **Egypt resumed the severed diplomatic and economic ties with Qatar.**

Egypt was part of an **Arab quartet** (other members were Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Bahrain) which had accused Qatar of supporting terrorism and being too close to Iran due to which they had imposed a land, air and naval blockade on Qatar in **2017.**



Key Points

- **Reasons for the Reassumption of Ties:**

- **Solidarity and Stability Deal:**

- Recently, Gulf states signed a '**solidarity and stability**' deal at the 41st **Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)** summit.

Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and UAE are the members of GCC.

- In this summit, members of the GCC removed all the sanctions over Qatar and **reopened their land, sea and air borders** to Qatar.

- In solidarity with the Arab quartet (whose three members are in GCC), Egypt too resumed its ties with Qatar.

- **To Unite Against Iran:**

Egypt conciliated with Qatar to strengthen the Gulf region against the threats posed by the **Iranian regime's nuclear and ballistic missile programme** which has always been opposed by the USA and GCC members.

- **Growing Power of Qatar:**

- Qatar is one of the **world's largest natural gas producers** and among the countries with **the highest per-capita income**, and is also **host of the 2022 Football World Cup**.

- Under the Government of Mohamad Morsi (2012-13), Qatar was the highest investor in Egypt.

- **Support from USA:**

- The United States and Qatar have extensive economic ties. The USA is the largest foreign direct investor and its single largest destination of exports.
- Due to good mutual relations between Qatar and USA, the USA **mediated the solidarity and stability deal** to unite all the gulf countries against Iran which also triggered Egypt's reconciliation.

- **Reasons For Earlier Discord:**

- **Ties with Muslim Brotherhood:**

- Post Arab spring and the downfall of Mohamad Morsi (former president of Egypt whom Qatar favoured) regime, Qatar supported Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt to secure its influence within that country as well as domestic support from other Islamist groups.
- However, the **Muslim brotherhood were outpowered** by the current regime under **Abdel Fattah el-Sisi** which has allegiance with the Arab quartet.

Gulf states monarchs and dictators are against the Islamist movements under Muslim Brotherhood because it aims for **political reforms** that might **threaten their regime**.

- **Independent Foreign Policy Approach:**

- In the past, Qatar has long been dominated by Saudi Arabia. Since 1995, Qatar initiated an independent foreign policy approach and established friendly relations not only with other countries such as the USA, Europe, Israel and Iran but also with the Palestinian, Hamas and the Islamist parties as well.
- Assumption of such **high-profile roles in regional mediation and cooperation** did not go well with the GCC members and Egypt.

- **Good Relationship with Iran:**

Qatar shares a **huge gas field with Iran**, which is an incentive for it to retain good relations with the Iranian regime.

- **Significance for India:**

- India has good relationships with Egypt as well as all the GCC states including Qatar. Such reconciliation and rapprochement between countries in the region could expand the opportunities for India.
- The Gulf region is one of the **biggest markets for Indian goods** and is the most important supplier of hydrocarbons to its economy. Peaceful relationships between these gas and oil reserve rich states are favourable to **catering to the energy needs of India**.
- The Gulf countries host more than millions of Indian migrants. They are mostly the workers who carry out development activities and they are the prime sources of remittances to India.
- Improved mutual relationships with gulf countries and Egypt could provide employment and investments opportunities for India in areas such as **food processing**, healthcare, education, culture, defence and security.