

Israel-Pakistan Diplomatic Relations

Why in news?

There is much speculation in recent days about the establishment of diplomatic relations between Pakistan and Israel.

What is Pakistan's rationale?

- Pakistan is in the middle of a major debate on its international relations.
- It is believed that normal relations with Israel would improve Pakistan's standing in the US.
- It would help to deal with India's influence in U.S. and disrupt its partnership with the influential Jewish community in America.
- Pakistan's zeal to establish ties with Israel is driven by the belief that the special relationship with Israel has given India many advantages.
- Besides these, there are key changes taking place in the Middle East.
- There is growing engagement between Israel and some of the Sunni Arab states like Saudi Arabia and the UAE, that have been among Pakistan's closest partners.
- The shared threat perceptions about Iran have brought Saudi and UAE closer to Israel, though there are no diplomatic relations.
- [At present Egypt, Turkey and Jordan are among the few Arab and Muslim countries that have diplomatic relations with Israel.]
- The idea of having ties with Israel has been discussed in Pakistan before too.
- However, the current discourse is part of a new urgency to revamp Pakistan's foreign policy.

Why is the rethink on Pakistan's foreign policy?

- A key factor in Pakistan's rethink has been its difficulty in mobilising international support against India's policies towards Pakistan and Kashmir.
- Pakistan's "deep state"/"miltabishment" (military + establishment) is eager to put the nation's foreign policy back on track.
- It is keen to correct the emerging international tilt (with the exception of China) in favour of India.
- Pakistan's foreign policy rethink is also complemented by the decision to implement harsh [economic reforms mandated by the IMF](#).
- Another factor is the Pakistan's current alienation from its traditional allies

in the West and the Muslim world.

- There are efforts from Pakistan to end the steady deterioration in bilateral relations with the U.S., which is disturbed since the start of the decade.
- At this end, Pakistan offers to free the US from Afghanistan and facilitate a peace deal between the US and the Taliban.
- By doing so, it hopes to better its ties with Washington and more broadly with the West.
- Whether this strategy will survive the suspension of the peace talks with the Taliban, announced by Trump, remains to be seen.

What are Israel's priorities?

- Israel would hope that if Pakistan makes a move, Bangladesh would find it easier to overcome its own Islamist resistance to relations with Israel.
- Normal relations with the South Asian Muslims (more than 40% of the world's Islamic population) will be a huge diplomatic triumph for Israel.
- Ending its isolation in the Islamic world is a major priority for Israel.

Source: Indian Express

