Three Years of Abraham Accords

Why in News?

September 2023 marks an important milestone for West Asia and North Africa - 3 years since the signing of the Abraham Accords.

What is Abraham Accord?

- **Signed in** - 2020
- **Agreement between -** United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Israel.
- **Mediated by** – The US
- **Objective-** To normalise ties between these Arab Gulf states and Israel.
- Following the signing of the Abraham Accords in 2020, 5 Arab states ***(Egypt, Jordan, UAE, Morocco and Sudan)*** have established diplomatic ties with Israel.

To know more about Abraham Accords 2020, click here

Background of Israel- Arab relation

- Arab governments refused to extend diplomatic recognition to Israel after its independence in 1948.
- A series of Arab-Israeli wars took place in the decades that followed which includes the *Six-Day War (1967)* and the *Yom Kippur War (1973)*.
- In 1979, ***Egypt*** became the first Arab country to conclude a peace treaty with Israel (***Camp David Accords***).
- Israel later agreed to a ***two-state solution*** with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in 1993, and, as a result, Jordan concluded a peace agreement with Israel in 1994.
- However, the two-state solution failed to materialize within the intended time frame.
- In 2002, the ***Arab League*** endorsed a Saudi proposal (known as the ***Arab Peace Initiative***) for its member states to establish normal relations with Israel in exchange for an independent Palestinian state.
- Negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority soon dissipated, the proliferation of Israeli settlements compounded the challenges of creating a viable state in the *West Bank and the Gaza Strip.*

How Abraham Accords promote regional ties among the parties?

- **Diplomatic ties** - It had led to normalising diplomatic ties of Israel with the UAE and

two other countries in the region, marking an important shift in the stance of West Asian countries on Israel.

- **Security** - Normalization has opened new opportunities for defense and security cooperation, especially among Israel, Bahrain, and the UAE, which share a common perspective on the security threat posed by Iran.
- **People to people connect** - – It not only connects governments but also brings people together, despite the differences in their language, religious beliefs, cultures and more.
- **Trade** - The scope of trade between Israel and other West Asian countries increased 74% between 2021 and 2022.
- **Tourism** –Number of visits from Israel to the UAE & Bahrain has increased largely.
- **Collaborative projects** –The *Prosperity Green & Blue agreement* was signed between Israel, the UAE, and Jordan.
- A solar field in Jordan to supply 600 megawatts of electricity to Israel in return for water from Israel.
- **Programmes for Youth** – Youth delegations between two nations have been initiated, encouraging bonds between tomorrow's leaders.
- **Educational collaboration** – Shared educational activities and advance student and professor exchange programme were started.
- **Foster coexistence and religious tolerance** – UAE has incorporated Holocaust education into its school curriculum as a mandatory subject.

How the Abraham Accords benefits India?

- India holds a significant position among Abraham Accord partners.
- **Improved connectivity** – Greater convenience of direct flights between the UAE and Israel, as well as between Israel and Bahrain.
- **Indian students** – They are enjoying increased ease of travel, gaining improved access to Israeli universities and the opportunity to explore international study programmes.
- **Trade** – The normalisation has increased the flow of economic opportunities reaching India.
- Companies from the UAE, Israel, Bahrain, and the U.S., are partnering with the Indian private sector.
- New joint ventures were set in Bahrain, Israel, UAE and India in critical sectors such as clean energy, health, innovation, technology, agriculture, water, trade, tourism, etc.
- **Promoted the I2U2 Group** – I2U2 group, which has been called the "*West Asian Quad*", comprises of India, Israel, the U.S., and the UAE.
- Its primary focus will be on joint investments in critical areas such as water, energy, transportation, space, health, and food security.

What are the shortcomings of the Accord?

- **Engaging other countries** - Despite some softening in its position on bilateral relations, Saudi Arabia has held firm in its commitment to the pre-existing *Arab Peace Initiative (API).*
- **For Palestinians** – The stalemate between Israel and the Palestinians is still a

hindrance to expanding the circle of normalization.

- None of these deals changed the situation on the ground in the Middle East's hotspots, particularly in Palestine.
- Israel continues to be engaged in systematic ethnic cleansing of Palestinians.
- **Public opinion** - Despite the normalisation efforts, surveys indicate that *Arab publics* continue to view *Israel in a negative light.*

References

1. The Hindu| Benefits of Abraham Accords to India
2. IE| Abraham Accords promote regional cooperation

