

The Abraham Accords

The Abraham Accords are a joint statement made between Israel, the United States and the United Arab Emirates on August 13, 2020

It also refers to the agreement reached between Israel, Bahrain and the UAE to normalise relations between the three.

The original Abraham Accords were signed by the UAE's Foreign Minister Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Bahrain's Foreign Minister Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani, and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on September 15, 2020.

The first UAE Ambassador to Israel, Mohammed Al Khaja arrived in the country on March 1, 2021

The accords are named after the patriarch Abraham, regarded as a prophet in both Judaism and Islam.

This article will give further details regarding the Abraham Accords within the context of the Civil Services Examination.

The Situation in the Middle East

The relationship between Israel and the rest of the Arab nations has been hostile ever since Israel was founded in 1948. Largely the hostility was due to the question of Palestine and its sovereignty.

A total of three large scale wars between Israel and multiple Arab nations had taken place from 1948. The Third one, the Yom Kippur War of 1973 made sweeping changes in Middle-Eastern politics that would be evident for years to come.

Although Israel emerged as the victor, it realised that its long-term military domination would not always be guaranteed. Egypt and Syria meanwhile were frustrated at their efforts despite coming close to defeating Israel. Anwar Sadat, President of Egypt was wary of further conflicts with Israel. His country had lost more than they had gained and thus in an unprecedented step made the decision to recognise Israel as a sovereign nation.

To this effect the Camp David Accords were signed between Israel and Egypt. Formal recognition was granted by Egypt in 1979. This opened the possibility of peace with other Arab nations as well but such notions were met with hostility from other nations as well. Despite this Jordan became the second Arab nation to formally recognise Israel in 1994.

The scenario in the Middle East changed from time to time with even an agreement being signed between Israel and Palestine. This was the Oslo Accords being signed in 1993 and 1995. The accords fell apart at the beginning of the 2000s when a series of insurrections broke out in Israel. The situation remained in limbo until the Madrid Conference in 2018

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met Omani Foreign Minister Yusuf bin Alawi bin Abdulla. Two days after Netanyahu's visit at the time, bin Alawi suggested while at a conference in Bahrain that it was time for Israel to be treated like the other states in the Middle East although Bahraini officials disagreed with his statement.

Regardless it would be Bahrain along with UAE that would sign the Abraham Accords in 2020.

Significance of the Abraham Accords

The Abraham Accords stipulated that the UAE and Bahrain would establish their respective embassies in Israel and work together with Israel across a range of sectors, including tourism, trade and security.

The religious significance is that it would allow for Muslims to one of the holiest sites in Islam, the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem.

Following the signing of the accords, Sudan and Morocco also normalised relations with Israel in the same year. It is speculated that more countries will follow suit but given the factitious nature of Middle-Eastern politics it seems highly unlikely in the short-term at least.

Foreign relations experts are of the opinion that the rise of Iran's clout in the region has played a significant role in signing of the accords. Iran has been a long-time enemy of Israel and its leaders have vowed to continue the fight for Palestine's independence regardless of who makes peace with Israel.

For India, the Abraham Accords are a welcome step that may herald a new era of peace in the Middle East. Since it shares cordial relationship with all the signatories of the accord then India stands to gain unprecedented benefits as a result.

