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# **TODAY'S ANALYSIS**

## **(25 September 2023)**

### **TOPICS TO BE COVERED**

- **LOOK WEST POLICY**
- **ABRAHAM ACCORDS**
- **I2U2**



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## LOOK WEST POLICY

The policy was initiated in **2005** but was not pursued diligently. But since 2014, there have been active engagement. Our present focus is on:

- (1) The Arab Gulf countries
- (2) Israel
- (3) Iran

### IMPORTANCE OF WEST ASIA

- India's **energy** demand
- Big source of **remittances**
- Huge **Indian Diaspora** (8.5 million diaspora) (70% engaged in blue collared jobs)
- **Arms & Defence**
- National **Security** (Iran)

### ACHIEVEMENTS

- India has achieved a **strategic balance** in the region.
  - Israel Palestine **Dehyphenation**.
  - **Engagement with all** the players in the region despite of the differences amongst them.
  - **OIC** has **not taken a strong stance** against India on abrogation of **Article 370**.

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# ABRAHAM ACCORDS

**Signed in - 2020**

**Agreement between -** United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Israel.

**Mediated by -** The USA

**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.

## SIGNIFICANCE

- This accord clearly marks a **new beginning** in the relations between the **Sunni-ruled Gulf kingdoms** and the **Jewish state**.
- Under the agreement, the **UAE and Bahrain** would **normalise ties with Israel**.
- This will herald **better economic, political and security** engagement.

## THE PALESTINIAN ANGLE

- The agreements leave the Palestinian question **largely unaddressed**.
- Arab countries are signing **diplomatic agreements with Israel bilaterally**.

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- Due to this, the **Arab collective support for the Palestinian** movement for nationhood is **crumbling**.
- The vacuum left by the retreat of the Arab powers from the Israel-Palestine conflict is **being filled by the non-Arab Muslim powers**.
- These non-Arab Muslim powers include **Iran, Turkey and their allies**.
- The geopolitical sands may be shifting **but the core issue concerning Israel is unresolved**.

## IMPACT OF THE ACCORDS

- **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.

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- **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 program were started.
- Foster coexistence and religious tolerance - UAE has incorporated Holocaust education into its school curriculum as a mandatory subject.

## THE INDIA ANGLE

- **Improved connectivity** – Greater convenience of direct flights between the UAE and Israel, as well as between Israel and Bahrain.

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- **Indian students** – They are enjoying increased ease of travel, gaining improved access to Israeli univ. & the opportunity to explore international study prog.
- **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.

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## I2U2

- The **I2U2 (Israel, India, UAE & USA)** Grouping was **conceptualized** during the meeting of the **Foreign Ministers** of the **four countries** held on **18th October 2021**.

Each country also has Sherpa-level interactions regularly to discuss the possible areas of cooperation.

- I2U2 is aimed to encourage joint investments in six mutually identified areas:

- **Water,**
- **Energy,**
- **Transportation,**
- **Space,**
- **Health, and**
- **Food security.**

- It intends to mobilize **private sector capital** and expertise to help modernize the infrastructure, and **low carbon development pathways** for the industries, **improve public health**, and **promote the development of critical emerging and green technologies**.

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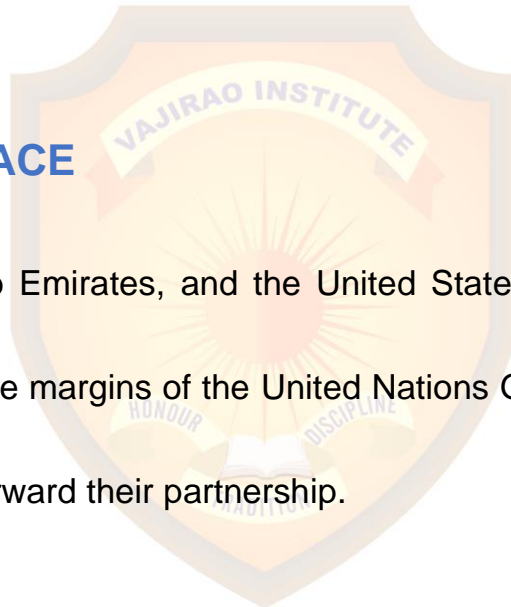


## OUTCOME OF THE FIRST I2U2 MEETING:

A joint statement by the four leaders said the **UAE will invest USD 2 billion** to develop a series of **integrated food parks across India**, incorporating **state-of-the-art climate-smart technologies to reduce food waste, conserve fresh water** and **employ renewable energy sources**.

## COOPERATION IN SPACE

India, Israel, the United Arab Emirates, and the United States, or I2U2 have announced a new joint space venture on the margins of the United Nations General Assembly in New York in September 2023 to take forward their partnership.



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