

# First Hindu Temple In Abu Dhabi

## Why In News

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will commence his **two day visit to the United Arab Emirates** where he will be inaugurating the **first Hindu temple 'BAPS Mandir'** in Abu Dhabi.
- During his visit, he will **address the Indian diaspora** filled with thousands of crowds besides meeting the top leadership of one of India's closest strategic partners in West Asia.



## Top Agenda Of PM Modi's UAE Trip

- The **Ministry of External Affairs**, in its special briefing marked the visit as crucial amid the fact the Prime Minister will **meet Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan (MBZ)** whom he met in December last year during his visit to Gujarat.
- During his visit, **Foreign Secretary Vinay Mohan Kwatra** said the two sides are likely to ink a number of agreements to shore up cooperation in several key areas following a bilateral meeting with the UAE leader.
- "We are also looking to see if we can arrive at an understanding on investments in the **field of digital infrastructure**, arrangements for the protection and promotion of capital flows," said Kwatra during a press briefing.



- Kwatra said there may be some understanding of **cooperation in the domains of ports and the maritime sphere.**
- The prime minister will also meet with **Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum**, the vice president, prime minister and defence minister of the UAE.

## Inauguration Of BAPS Mandir & 'Ahlan Modi' Event

- The Prime Minister will participate in the **World Government Summit 2024** on Wednesday in Dubai as the guest of honour and deliver a special keynote address at the summit.
- Modi will **also inaugurate the BAPS Mandir**, the first Hindu temple in Abu Dhabi. The prime minister is scheduled to **address the Indian community** in the UAE at an event in Zayed Sports City.



## BAPS

- The Following the donation of land by the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan in 2015, the **foundation stone for the temple** was laid by **PM Modi in February 2018**.
- The UAE government allocated an additional land of 13.5 acres to make it a total of 27 acres. The construction began in December 2019.



**BAPS**

- The temple has been constructed at a **budget of ₹700 crore**. It required more than four lakh labourers, including skilled artisans from India to make the masterpiece.
- The design of the temple draws inspiration from the **Vedic architecture** and sculptures. Besides, the temple **houses seven spires**, each symbolising an Emirate of the UAE. The primary aim of the spirals is to promote unity and harmony amongst the multicultural landscape.
- The temple's complex includes a visitor centre, prayer hall, thematic gardens, and more. Additionally, it has around 100 sensors installed in the foundation to check the seismic activity and temperature changes.
- **Bochasanwasi Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan (BAPS)** : Formed in 1905, Bochasanwasi Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan (BAPS) Sanstha is a Hindu organisation. It aims to preserve the Indian culture and Hindu ideals of faith, unity, and selfless service in various communities across the world.
- According to the BAPS' official site, there are more than **1,100 temples and 3,850 permanent centres** of peace and reformation across the world. It invites people of all ages, backgrounds, and beliefs to the centres and temples.





## India's Bilateral Relations with the UAE

- India and the UAE established diplomatic relations in 1972.
- The greater push has been achieved in bilateral relations when the visit of India's **Prime Minister to the UAE in August 2015** marked the beginning of a new strategic partnership between the two countries.



- Further, during the visit of the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi to India in January **2017 as the chief guest at India's Republic Day celebrations**, it was agreed that bilateral relations were to be upgraded to a comprehensive strategic partnership.
- The UAE is also among the **top four investors in India** in terms of foreign direct investments in 2022-23.



- About **3.5 million strong and vibrant Indian community** forms the largest expatriate group in the UAE. The UAE was invited as **special invitee for G20** during India's Presidency of the grouping.
- In Feb 2023, the **India-UAE-France (UFI) trilateral** was formally launched. With India's active support, the UAE joined SCO as dialogue partner in May 2023.
- The **UAE also joined BRICS** as a member on January 1 with India's support. The India-UAE defence cooperation is also on an upswing in the last few years. In January 2024, the first India-UAE bilateral army exercise '**Desert Cyclone**' was held in Rajasthan.

