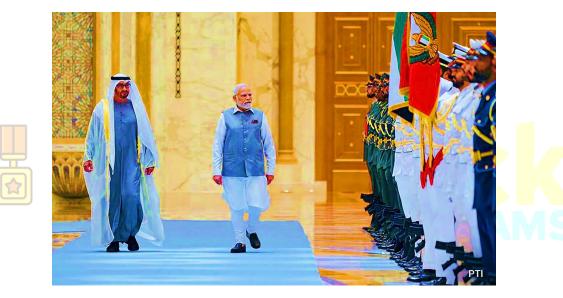


First Hindu Temple In Abu Dhabi

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.



- 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.

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- 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.

