

PM Modi In Brunei

Why In News

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi landed in **Bandar Seri Begawan**, the capital of Brunei Darussalam, for his official visit to the country. The **first Indian PM** to visit the Southeast Asian nation, his trip also **marks 40 years** since India and Brunei officially established diplomatic ties.



Brunei - India

- Between the **14th and 16th centuries**, Brunei Darussalam was the seat of a powerful sultanate. Thus, the current Sultan represents one of the oldest continuously ruling dynasties in the world. **Brunei's Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah** was crowned as the 29th Sultan of Brunei on August 1, 1968, making him the longest-reigning monarch in the world at present.



- Ministry of External Affairs said in a press release that the first phase of Indians arriving in **Brunei started with the discovery of oil in the 1920s**. “Currently, approximately **14,000 Indians** are residing in Brunei. The contribution of Indian doctors and teachers to the growth and development of Brunei’s healthcare and education sectors has been well acknowledged,” it added.



- Brunei is part of India’s **‘Act East’ Policy and Indo-Pacific Vision**.
- The **‘Act East’ Policy** was formulated as the next step to the ‘Look East’ Policy which originated in the 1990s.
- In a world without the USSR, which India had close historical ties with, India sought to deepen its relations with other countries, like those in Southeast Asia.



About The Visit

- Prime Minister Modi visited Brunei's iconic **Omar Ali Saifuddien Mosque** in Bandar Seri Begawan. It was built by **Omar Ali Saifuddien III**, the 28th Sultan of Brunei and father of the incumbent Sultan. he also inaugurated the new Chancery of the High Commission of India.



- The Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to hold bilateral talks with Sultan of Brunei Hassanal Bolkiah at the Istana Nurul Iman, the latter's official residence in capital Bandar Seri Begawan, on the second day of his visit to the Southeast Asian nation.
- **Istana Nurul Iman, meaning "Palace of the Light of Faith,"** was commissioned by Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah in 1981. This magnificent palace is not only a symbol of Brunei's splendour but also holds the title of the world's largest residential palace, as recognized by Guinness World Records.
- The palace has hosted notable events, including the **28th Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Economic Leaders' Meeting**, which was held virtually from this magnificent venue.



**Asia-Pacific
Economic Cooperation**

- The Istana Nurul Iman Palace spans an **impressive 200,000 square meters**. The palace features 1,788 rooms, including 257 bathrooms, ensuring both ample space and privacy.
- Its 44 staircases, crafted from 38 different types of marble, enhance the palace's opulent design. Additionally, there are five luxurious swimming pools for relaxation and a mosque that accommodates 1,500 worshippers, underscoring the palace's role as a center of governance and spirituality.

Conclusion

- A Ministry of External Affairs release highlighted Brunei as a key partner in **India's 'Act East' Policy and Indo-Pacific Vision**. It noted that India and Brunei share a friendly relationship characterized by mutual respect and understanding on both bilateral and multilateral issues, with historical, cultural, and traditional ties spanning a millennium.

