

Saudi Arabia in West Asia

- For years, the main driver of Saudi foreign policy was the kingdom's hostility towards Iran. This has resulted in proxy conflicts across the region.
- Saudi Arabia announced a deal, after China- mediated talks, to normalize diplomatic ties with Iran.
- Soon after, there were reports that Russia was mediating talks between Saudi Arabia and Syria, which could lead to the latter re-entering the Arab League before its next summit, scheduled for May in Saudi Arabia.
- Earlier this week, a Saudi Omani delegation traveled to Yemen to hold talks with the Houthi rebels for a permanent ceasefire.
- In fact, Iran would continue to drive Saudi Arabia's security concerns and strategic calculus.
- But Saudi Arabia's response to the Iran problem has shifted from strategic rivalry and proxy conflicts to tactical de-escalation and mutual coexistence.
- In Syria, Mr. Assad, backed by Russia and Iran, has won the civil war. In Yemen, while the Saudi intervention may have helped prevent the Houthis from expanding their reach beyond Sana'a and the north, the Saudi-led coalition, which itself is now in a fractured state, failed to oust them from the capital.
- Also, the Houthis, with their drones and short- range missiles, now pose a serious security threat to Riyadh. In parallel, the U.S.'s priority is shifting away from West Asia.



Why are there changes now?

- To begin with, these changes do not mean that the structures of Saudi Arabia's relations with Iran are undergoing a transformation.
- The Kingdom is also trying to develop advanced missile and drone capabilities to counter Iran's edge in these areas with help from the U.S. and others.

- But at the same time, the Saudis realize that the U.S.'s deprioritization of West Asia is altering the post-war order of the region.
- What Saudi Arabia is trying to do is to use the vacuum created by the U.S. policy changes to autonomic its foreign policy.
- Despite protests from Washington, Saudi Arabia joined hands with Russia to affect oil production cuts twice since the Ukraine war began, aimed at keeping the prices high which would help both Moscow and Riyadh. (Saudi Arabia is currently undertaking massive infrastructure projects aimed at transforming its economy and to sustain those projects and meet its economic goals, the Kingdom needs high oil prices).
- It has also built stronger trade and defense ties with China, and the Iran reconciliation deal, under China's mediation, announced Beijing's arrival as a power broker in West Asia.
- At the same time, Saudi Arabia has placed orders for Boeing aircraft worth \$35 billion and entered into conditional talks with the U.S. on normalizing ties with Israel.
- DE Americanisation of West Asia is not a Saudi goal. Rather it is trying to exploit America's weakness in the region to establish its own autonomy by building better ties with Russia and Chin.
- While the Saudis are trying to build cross-Gulf stability, another part of West Asia remains tumultuous which was evident in the Israeli raid at Jerusalem's Al Aqsa, Islam's third holiest place of worship, last week.
- This triggered rocket attacks from Lebanon and Gaza and in return Israeli bombing of both territories. Israel also keeps bombing Syria with immunity.
- The impact of the escalation of tensions between Israel and Iran on cross-Gulf stability remains to be seen.
- Another challenge for Saudi Arabia is to retain the course of autonomy without irking the U.S. beyond a point.

THE HINDU

Weaponization of space



- Weaponising space entails putting weapons in space or on celestial bodies, along with developing weaponry that can travel across space as well as from Earth to destroy targets in the outer spectrum.
- Locating orbital or suborbital satellites to strike opponent spacecraft, utilizing ground-based specific ascent missiles to target space assets, jamming indicators sent out by opponent spacecraft, using laser light to immobilize enemy satellites, plasma targets, orbital ballistic missiles, and satellite strikes on Earth aims are all such examples.
- The militarization of space is not anything like space weaponization.
- The militarization of space occurs when space assets are utilized to acquire relevant data to aid armies in conducting terrestrial, aerial, and marine activities.
- Using the space field against land objects or targeting weapons in orbital space, on the other hand, comes under the realm of weaponization, as does harm or destroy another province's space holdings.
- Analysts believe that the extraordinary increase of Chinese space assets, and also China's aim to rule outer space, has heightened the

need for democratic states to join together to protect their strategic objectives while also promoting long-term stability in the skies above.

- They believe that a slew of technological advancements over the last few years have resulted in a dramatic increase in the devastating capability of space

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Belfast agreement



What is the Good Friday Agreement?

- The Good Friday Agreement, also known as the Belfast Agreement, was a political deal designed to bring an end to 30 years of violent conflict

in Northern Ireland, known as the Troubles.

- It was signed on 10 April 1998 and approved by public votes in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

What were the Troubles?

- Northern Ireland was created in 1921 and remained part of the UK when the rest of Ireland became an independent state.
- This created a split in the population between unionists, who wish to see Northern Ireland stay within the UK, and nationalists, who want it to become part of the Republic of Ireland.
- From the late 1960s, armed groups from both sides, such as the Irish Republican Army (IRA) and Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF), carried out bombings and shootings - and British troops were sent to Northern Ireland.
- The Troubles lasted almost 30 years and cost the lives of more than 3,500 people.

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6GHz spectrum

- The primary differences between wireless frequencies are the range

(coverage) and bandwidth (speed) that the bands provide.

- The 2.4 GHz band provides the most coverage but transmits data at slower speeds.
- The 5 GHz band provides less coverage but transmits data at faster speeds.
- The 6 GHz band, introduced with the new WiFi 6E standard, provides the least coverage but transmits data at the fastest speeds of the three frequencies.
- Your WiFi connection on a particular frequency band can also be affected by interference from other devices.
- Many WiFi-enabled technologies and other household devices use the 2.4 GHz band, including microwaves and garage door openers. When multiple devices attempt to use the same radio space, overcrowding occurs.
- Wireless range decreases with higher frequencies because higher frequencies cannot penetrate solid objects, such as walls and floors.
- However, higher frequencies allow data to be transmitted faster than lower frequencies, so higher frequencies like 5 GHz and 6 GHz allow you to upload and download files faster than 2.4 GHz.
- The 5 GHz band tends to have less overcrowding than the 2.4 GHz band

because fewer devices use it and because it has 23 channels for devices to use, while the 2.4 GHz band has only 11 channels. The number of channels that are available to you depends on the wireless regulations in your region. If you're experiencing a lot of interference from other devices, consider using the 5 GHz bands.

- The 6 GHz band is newly certified and is exclusive to devices that support WiFi 6E.
- This means that on 6 GHz, the WiFi network doesn't need to slow down to accommodate legacy devices.
- The 6 GHz band also supports almost twice as many channels as 5 GHz. Fewer devices, more spectrum, and more bandwidth means less interference and network congestion.

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