



Mains Practice Question

Q. Analyse India-Saudi Arabia relations amidst geopolitical flux in Southwest Asia. (250 words)

05 Nov, 2019 GS Paper 2 International Relations

Approach

- Briefly discuss the historical relations between India and Saudi Arabia.
- Mention instances which indicate geo-political flux in the Southwest Asia region.
- Discuss how it impacts the relations of both the countries.

Introduction

India has traditionally shared close relations with Saudi Arabia. It has been a strategic partner of India since the signing of the **Riyadh Declaration in 2010**. The recent visit of Indian Prime Minister to attend the Riyadh Summit has increased the **mutual understanding** of both the countries on core issues.

Body

Geopolitical flux in Southwest Asia

- Southwest Asian sub-region has been under volatile circumstances, ranging from **India-Pakistan tensions** to **crises** in **Yemen, Syria** and **Afghanistan**. This geopolitical flux can get aggravated due to **rising prices in the oil market**.
- In spite of this, Riyadh Summit demonstrates maturity and strategic construct in India-Saudi Arabia ties.

India-Saudi Arabia relations

- **Mutual support towards domestic issues:** Saudi Arabia expressed an understanding of recent Indian actions in Jammu and Kashmir. On the other hand, India strongly condemned the various attacks on Saudi civilian facilities.
- **Diplomatic engagement:** India has an opportunity to engage with Saudi Arabia for diplomatic gains in the context of its close relations with Pakistan.
 - Also, being a major regional player, it holds the key for multilateral engagements in the ongoing peace talks in Afghanistan and Syria.
- **Geostrategic importance:** Saudi Arabia has identified India as one of the **eight strategic partners** with whom it intends to deepen partnership in areas of political engagement, security, trade and investment, and culture.
 - India has an opportunity to engage with Saudi Arabia's other major economic partners like USA, Russia, China for trade and investment in the region, considering the vast mineral resources of the region.
- **Energy security:** Saudi Arabia is crucial for India's energy security, being a source of 17% or more of crude oil and 32% of LPG requirements of India. Mutual cooperation is necessary to handle situations such as attacks on Saudi oil reserve facilities and piracy in Indian Ocean.

Conclusion

Despite changing geo-political scenario in the Southwest Asia, regional security and economic development remains the top priority of national leaders. Both, India and Saudi Arabia have hostile neighbours, which create opportunity for mutual assistance and greater security cooperation.

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