
4. Saudi Arabia's Foreign Policy

Why in News?

- Recently, Saudi Arabia is making a significant shift in its foreign policy as it moves away from its aggressive stance towards Iran and seeks to create balance between great powers while also transforming its own economy.

Highlights

- Saudi Arabia's foreign policy had always centered around Iran, resulting in proxy conflicts across the region. Its stance, in the past, has always been aggressive towards Iran.
- However, recently Saudi Arabia announced a deal, after China-mediated talks to normalise diplomatic ties with Iran.
- There has been a shift from strategic rivalry and proxy conflicts to tactical de-escalation and mutual coexistence with Iran.
- Saudi Arabia has also been trying to balance between the US, its largest arms supplier, Russia, its OPEC-Plus partner, and China, the new superpower in the region.
- Recent regional bets were either unsuccessful or only partially successful.
- Failed regional policies such as for Syria and Yemen, where the Saudi intervention failed to deter the Iran-backed Houthi rebels.
- Also, the Houthis, with their drones and short-range missiles, now pose a serious security threat to Saudi Arabia.
- The US's priority is shifting away from West Asia.
- US's deprioritisation of West Asia, making Saudi Arabia realise that it needs to establish its own autonomy by building loyal alliances with other great powers.
- China, which has good ties with both Iran and Saudi Arabia, offered to mediate between the two, and the Saudi seized the opportunity.