

## Rising Tension in West Asia

**Prelims** - Current events of national and international importance.

**Mains** - GS II: International Relations

### Why in News?

Recently, the tension in West Asia is rising with Israel growing more aggressive, the Trump administration turning more hostile and Iran retaliating with its diminishing strategic space.

### What are the recent issues in West Asia region?

- **U.S. armed force in West Asia** - U.S. has deployed more fighter jets and its second aircraft carrier to West Asia.
- It had launched waves of "pre-emptive" air strikes against Ansar Allah (commonly known as the Houthis) in Yemen.
- Bombing the Houthis (pro-Iranian group) signals that the U.S. is fully on board in Israel's mini-regional war.
- **Israel's military campaigns** - It resumed its bombing of Gaza, killing over 400 Palestinians in overnight attacks and effectively ending the ceasefire that had been in place since January 2025.
- It carried out heaviest air strikes in Lebanon since the November 2024 ceasefire, targeting Hezbollah, a key Iranian non-state ally.
- **Iran's Nuclear Programme** - The President of U.S. had sent a letter to Iran to negotiate a deal on Tehran's nuclear programme.
- U.S. wants Iran to give up its nuclear programme, restrict its conventional military capabilities and sever ties with the axis.

### How regional dynamics in West Asia is changing?

- **Israel's rise** - The election of Mr. Trump, who supports Israel's war policies, has given Tel Aviv the confidence to continue its mini-regional war without bothering about external pressure.
- The 2023 attack by Hamas in Israel made it to indulge in continuous attacks in 2 fronts
  - One focused on Gaza, and the other targeting Iran.
- It killed an Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) general in Syria, and then bombed the Iranian embassy in Damascus.
- **Changes in Syrian government** - The fall of the Bashar al-Assad regime in Syria has disrupted Iran's regional axis.

*Mr. Bashar al-Assad's Syria, Iran's only state ally in West Asia, had served as a crucial land bridge between Iran (through Iraq) and Hezbollah (in Lebanon).*

- The new regime of Sunni Islamists that is *hostile to the Shia theocratic Iran* taking over Damascus, the supply route has been severed.
- **Iran's growing ambition** - It *stepped up its nuclear programme*, enhanced support for the network, particularly the Houthis, and *expanded its weapons capabilities*.

*According to the International Atomic Energy Agency, Iran now possesses enough stockpile of 60% enriched uranium to make 6 nuclear bombs if further enriched to weapons-grade purity (90%).*

- **Weakening of Hezbollah & Iran** - In Lebanon, *Israel has degraded Hezbollah's militant infrastructure* and decapitated its leadership.
- Its ability to rebuild itself depends on supplies from Iran has been disrupted and so it will remain weak militarily, which would in turn weaken Iran's overall deterrence.
- The Israelis are tightening the *ring of fire around Iran*.

### Why destabilising Iran is a challenge?

- **Geographical advantages** - It is ring-fenced by mountains.
- **Safe military infrastructure** - Most of Iran's nuclear facilities are buried underground, some of them beneath mountains.
- Even a joint U.S.-Israeli operation may fail to eliminate them completely.
- **Technical knowledge** - Even if the facilities are damaged, Iran will still possess the *technical know-how to rebuild its military programme*.
- **Relatively stable government** - Iran, despite the occasional mass protests, has *no organised, militarised insurgency*.
- **Strategic advantage** - Its navy *has the Strait of Hormuz*, a vital oil transit choke point of the world.

### What lies ahead?

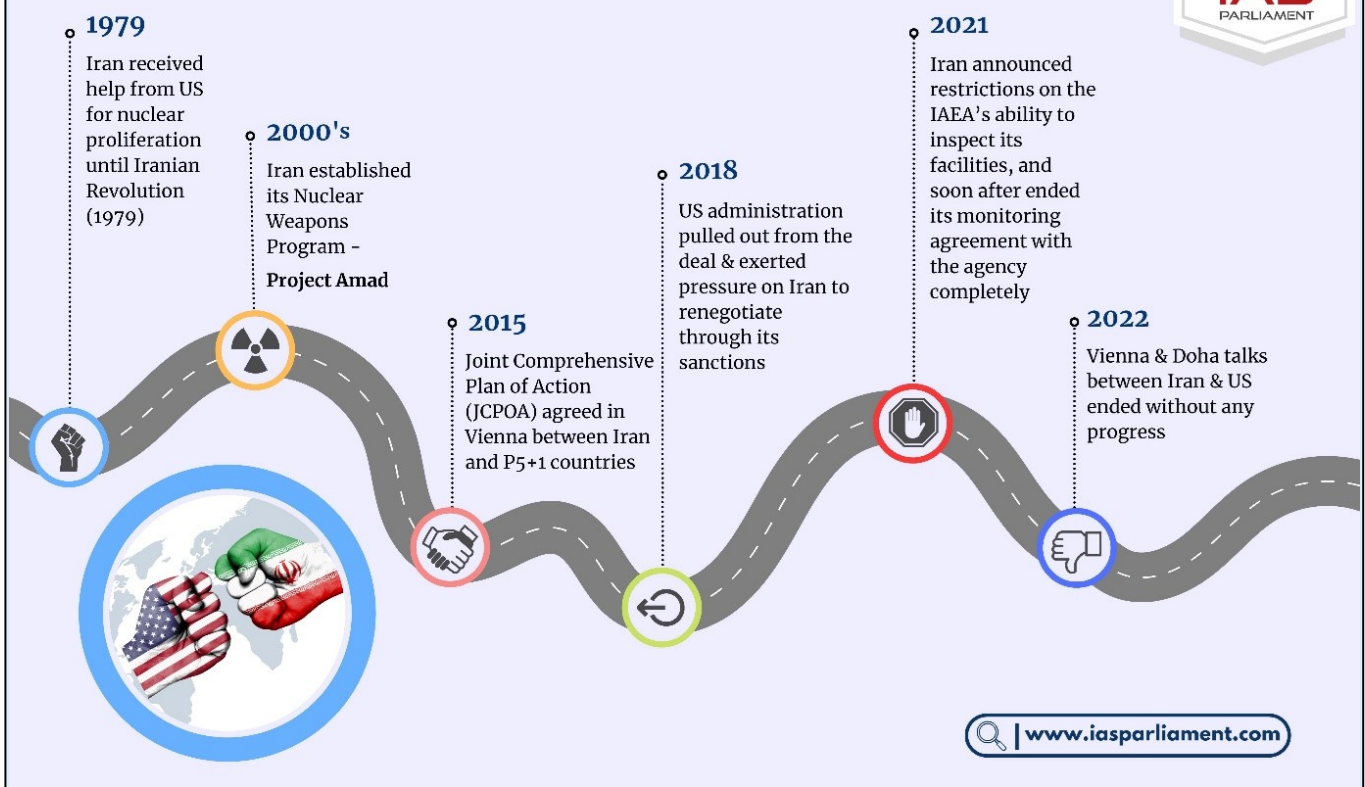
- **Diplomatic engagement** - Iran has expressed willingness to engage in "indirect talks", focusing on the nuclear programme, essentially a return to the 2015 framework.
- **Addressing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict** - Reviving meaningful peace negotiations based on international law and relevant UN resolutions.
- Supporting a two-state solution, if all parties involved are willing to engage in that process.
- **De-escalation of regional conflicts** - Efforts to reduce proxy wars and limit external interference.
- A coordinated international effort is needed to address the complex challenges facing the region.
- **Economic development** - Investing in economic development and creating opportunities for young people.
- This can help reduce the appeal of extremist ideologies.

## Quick Facts

### Iran's Nuclear Deal

- It is an agreement on the Iranian nuclear program reached in Vienna and is also called as *Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action* (JCPOA).
- **Signed in** - 2015.
- **Signatories** - It is signed between *Iran and P5+1* (China, France, Germany, Russia, UK, USA).
- **Failure of Iran nuclear deal** - While the deal restricted Iran's nuclear programme, it left its nuclear processing capabilities, extensive *ballistic missile programme untouched*.
- In 2018, *U.S. unilaterally withdrew* from the agreement and reimposed sanctions on Iran, effectively sabotaging the agreement.

## HISTORY OF IRAN NUCLEAR DEAL



## Reference

[The Hindu| Tightening Ring of Fire Around Iran](#)