

## Saudi Arabia - The Rise of Bin Salman

### Why in news?

\n\n

\n

- Crown prince 'Mohammed Bin Salman' has been radically reforming Saudi Arabia's polity.

\n

- The latest action has been a stringent anti-corruption crackdown on high-profile citizens & Royals.

\n

\n\n

### Who is Salman?

\n\n

\n

- **His Rise** - Salman, the son of the present King 'Al Saud', was appointed as Defence minister in 2015 at the young age of 30.

\n

- Due to his unorthodox methods, his popularity rose steadily & saw him replacing his cousin 'Nayef' as Crown Prince in June this year.

\n

- **His Work** - He piloted several economic reforms to drive the kingdom towards a sustainable post oil era.

\n

- Recently, he had even taken on the Salafi religious establishment and has projected himself as an ideological moderniser.

\n

- Notably, only this year, women were given the right to drive in Saudi.

\n

- **Current Issue** - Several senior government ministers, officials, billionaires and many powerful Princes were arrested recently.

\n

- The action was claimed to be part of an anti-corruption campaign.

\n

- But considering the high-profile names, it is seen as a move to consolidate Prince Salman's power.

\n

\n\n

## How does his clout fare?

\n\n

- \n• With the latest action, Prince Salman appears to have established himself as the most powerful Saudi Crown Prince in decades.
- \n• He is practically in charge of key policy decisions and is increasingly been seen as the real power centre in the kingdom.
- \n• He currently controls of all branches of the Saudi security services — the military, internal security and the National Guard.
- \n• But still, Prince Salman is said to be playing a risky game and a failure of his radical reforms could trigger an internal power struggle.

\n\n

## What are the challenges?

\n\n

- \n• **Upending tradition** - Power was traditionally distributed tactically among the different branches of the royal family to avoid dissent.
- \n• Also, decisions are usually forwarded to the Ulema (religious council) for approval.
- \n• By concentrating power in his own hands and turning against other Princes as well as some clerics, he has upset these equations.
- \n• **Foreign Policy Flips** - His foreign policy moves also backfired with the Yemen war spinning further out of control.
- \n• Syrian civil war too has effectively turned in favour of President Bashar al-Assad, who is seen as an adversary by Riyadh.
- \n• With the Riyadh-Tehran rivalry in West Asia hotting up again, needing urgent attention.
- \n• **Economics** - There has been many subsidy cuts which might generate a public backlash.

- \n
- The reforms for restructuring the economy has been a non-starter thus far.
- \n

\n\n

\n\n

**Source: The Hindu**

\n

