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US-Saudi Nuclear Deal, 2026

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Why in News?

The U.S. and Saudi Arabia have signed the "123 Agreement", a civil nuclear cooperation agreement and a bilateral nuclear safeguards agreement.

- **Objective** – It is a 30-year multi-billion-dollar deal that enables the transfer of civil nuclear materials, technology and equipment from the U.S. to Saudi Arabia.
- **"123 Agreement"** (Atomic Energy Act of 1954 of USA) – It is a legal framework for peaceful nuclear cooperation between the United States and another country.
- Saudi Arabia may be allowed to enrich uranium on its soil to produce fuel at a US-built enrichment facility, instead of relying on imported fuel.
- **New condition for Saudi** – Saudi Arabia would have to join the Abraham Accords and normalise ties with Israel, or else the deal is off.
- **Exclusive for American Companies** – The 30-year deal secures exclusive participation for American companies like Westinghouse to construct the kingdom's nuclear infrastructure, blocking geopolitical rivals like Russia and China from gaining an industrial foothold.
- **Exception** – The reported agreement does not include the *"Gold Standard" safeguard* package.
- **Gold Standard** – It usually bars uranium enrichment and spent fuel reprocessing in the partner country.
- The deal also does not include the Additional Protocol of the International Atomic Energy Agency.
- **Nuclear Concerns** – Nuclear nonproliferation groups have warned for years that such a deal could set Saudi Arabia on the path to developing a nuclear weapon.
- Riyadh has in the past said it would need a nuclear weapon if its regional rival, Iran, acquired one.

Reference

The Guardian | U.S – Saudi Nuclear Deal, 2026

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