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# CURRENT AFFAIRS

**Date:** 15 April 2024

## “TWO ARCH RIVALS- IRAN AND ISREAL”

THIS ARTICLE COVERS ‘DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS’ AND THE TOPIC DETAILS OF “ TWO ARCH RIVALS- IRAN AND ISREAL”. THIS TOPIC IS RELEVANT IN THE “ INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS” SECTION OF THE UPSC CSE EXAM

### Why in the News?

Iran attacked Israel on April 13, 2024, in response to an alleged Israeli strike on an Iranian consulate in the Syrian capital of Damascus on April 1, 2024. The attack on the consulate reportedly killed multiple Iranian military personnel.

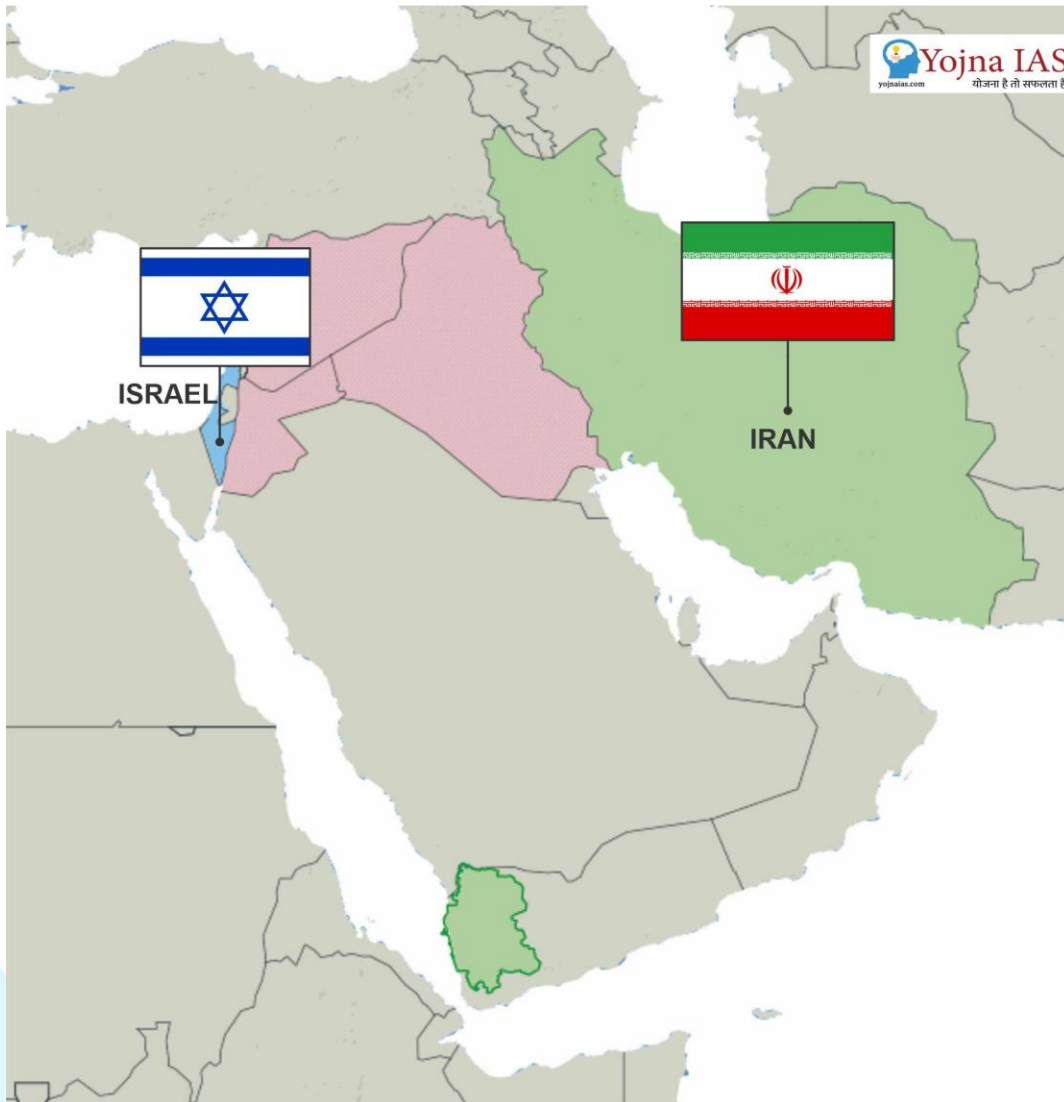
### MORE ABOUT THE NEWS-

Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps, along with the Popular Mobilization Forces, Hezbollah, and the Houthis, launched a large aerial attack on Israel using drones, cruise, and ballistic missiles in a retaliatory strike codenamed Operation True Promise. This marked Iran’s first direct military attack on Israel and escalated tensions between the two countries.

### History of Two Arch-Rivals-

The rivalry between Iran and Israel primarily stems from ideological, geopolitical, and religious differences.

- **Geopolitical Competition:** Both countries vie for influence in the Middle East. Iran seeks to establish itself as a regional power, often through support for proxy groups like Hezbollah and Hamas. Israel sees Iran’s support for these groups as a threat to its security.
- **Religious Differences:** Iran’s population primarily follows the Shia Muslim faith, whereas Israel’s population is predominantly Jewish. This religious contrast contributes to ideological tensions and perceptions of each other as adversaries.
- **Historical Context:** Iran’s Islamic Revolution in 1979 replaced a pro-Western monarchy with an Islamic Republic hostile to Israel. Since then, Iran’s leadership has often expressed anti-Israel sentiments, including calls for its destruction.
- **Israeli Security Concerns:** Iran’s nuclear program and its rhetoric about Israel’s annihilation have heightened Israeli concerns about its security and survival. Israel views Iran’s nuclear aspirations as posing an existential danger to it.
- **Proxy Conflicts:** Iran and Israel have engaged in proxy conflicts across the Middle East, including in Syria, Lebanon, and the Palestinian territories. Their support for opposing factions exacerbates tensions and reinforces their status as arch-rivals.



### How Iran-Israel conflict can affect the Global Geopolitics-

- **Escalation of tensions:** The conflict could escalate into a larger regional conflict, with the potential for increased violence and instability in the Middle East. This could pose a threat to global security and potentially lead to a more significant military confrontation between major powers.
- **Strained international relations:** The conflict could strain relationships between countries with significant stakes in the region, such as the United States, Russia, China, and European powers. This could lead to increased tensions and potential conflicts in other areas of the world.
- **Proliferation of weapons:** The conflict could lead to the proliferation of weapons, particularly if Iran or Israel were to resort to using nuclear, chemical, or biological weapons. This could pose a threat to global security and public health.
- **Displacement of populations:** The conflict could result in the displacement of large numbers of people, particularly if the fighting were to escalate or reach densely populated urban areas. This could lead to humanitarian crises and refugee flows, placing additional burdens on neighbouring countries and the international community.

- **Economic consequences:** The conflict could disrupt trade, investment, and economic growth in the region, which could have global economic repercussions. Additionally, the conflict could lead to increased energy prices due to potential disruptions in oil production and distribution.

### What is India's stake in Iran-Israel conflict-

India has a complex stake in the Iran-Israel conflict, as it seeks to maintain a delicate balance between its strategic partnerships with both countries while also trying to protect its own interests in the region.

- **Energy Security:** India relies heavily on oil imports, with around 80% of its oil needs being met by imports. The Persian Gulf region, including Iran and Iraq, is a major source of oil for India. A disruption in the supply of oil from the region could have a significant impact on India's economy and energy security.
- **Non-Proliferation:** India is a member of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) and has been actively promoting nuclear non-proliferation. The Iran nuclear deal (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action or JCPOA) was a significant diplomatic achievement for India, as it sought to curb Iran's nuclear ambitions and ensure that its nuclear capabilities remain peaceful. A conflict in the region could potentially undermine India's non-proliferation efforts.
- **Terrorism:** India faces the challenge of terrorism from various sources, including elements within Pakistan and Afghanistan. Iran and Israel are both known to be counter-terrorism partners, and India would prefer to see stability in the region to address its own security concerns.
- **Balance of Power:** India has been pursuing a policy of strategic autonomy, seeking to reduce its dependence on any single country for defense and security cooperation. The Iran-Israel conflict could potentially force India to choose sides, which could be detrimental to its strategic interests.
- **Regional Stability:** India has been trying to play a role as a mediator in the Middle East peace process and has diplomatic relations with both Israel and Iran. A conflict between Iran and Israel could destabilise the region, potentially affecting India's own stability and security.
- **Indian Diaspora:** Members of the Indian diaspora living in countries with a significant presence of Israeli or Iranian nationals might feel increased safety concerns due to the heightened tensions between the two countries.

### Future Course of Action for India-

- **Diplomatic engagement:** India should actively engage in diplomatic efforts to resolve the conflict between Iran and Israel. This may include mediating negotiations, offering support for peace talks, and promoting dialogue between the two countries.
- **Maintain strategic autonomy:** India should continue to maintain its strategic autonomy in the Middle East, avoiding getting directly involved in the conflict between Iran and Israel. This would help ensure regional stability and allow India to focus on its own national interests.
- **Support regional partners:** India should support its regional partners, such as Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and other Gulf countries, in maintaining stability and security in the Middle East. This can help India build and maintain strong relationships in the region.

- **Promote economic cooperation:** India should continue to pursue economic cooperation with both Iran and Israel, focusing on areas such as energy, trade, and technology. This can help create opportunities for economic growth and development in the region, which can contribute to long-term stability.
- **Promote cultural exchange:** India should encourage cultural exchange programs and educational initiatives between its people and those in Iran and Israel. This can help build understanding and goodwill between the two countries, fostering a more peaceful and cooperative relationship.
- **Monitor the situation:** India should closely monitor the situation in the Middle East, particularly any developments that could directly impact its national security or regional stability. This will allow India to respond appropriately and effectively to any changes in the conflict.

The Iran-Israel conflict has the potential to significantly affect global geopolitics, posing risks to international security, economic stability, and diplomatic relations. It is essential for the international community to work towards resolving the conflict peacefully and promoting dialogue between the two countries to mitigate these risks.

#### Prelims Based Question-

**Q1. Which of the following countries DOES NOT share a border with Israel?**

- (a). Syria
- (b). Jordan
- (c). Saudi Arabia
- (d). Lebanon

**ANSWER: C**

#### Mains based Question-

**Q1. What are the historical and geopolitical factors that have contributed to the ongoing conflict between Iran and Israel, and how has this conflict impacted the geopolitical dynamics of the Middle East? How can this conflict impact India's regional interests?**

[Vikas](#)

## SWISS NEUTRALITY

THIS ARTICLE COVERS 'DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS' AND THE TOPIC DETAILS OF "SWISS NEUTRALITY". THIS TOPIC IS RELEVANT IN THE "INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS" SECTION OF THE UPSC CSE EXAM.

#### WHY IN THE NEWS?

The Swiss government recently announced that it will host a two-day high-level conference in June to achieve peace in Ukraine. However, Russia has clarified that it will not participate in the initiative. The top Swiss diplomat said more than 100 countries would be invited to the gathering.

Switzerland said in January it would host a peace summit at the request of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy. Since then, it has held talks with the EU, G7 member states, and countries such as China and India to gauge their interest in participating.

### **BACKGROUNDS OF THE SWISS NEUTRALITY:**

Swiss neutrality refers to Switzerland's long-standing policy of neutrality in international conflicts. This policy has been a cornerstone of Swiss foreign policy for centuries, dating back to the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648, which recognized Switzerland as a neutral territory during the Thirty Years' War.

Switzerland has the oldest policy of military neutrality in the world. It has not participated in a foreign war since the Treaty of Paris in 1815 established its neutrality, although the country did have a civil war in 1847. Switzerland's commitment to neutrality is enshrined in its constitution, and the country has not been involved in any military conflict since the early 19th century. This neutrality has allowed Switzerland to avoid entanglement in the wars that have plagued Europe, even during the World Wars.

### **THE OBJECTIVE OF THE SWISS NEUTRALITY:**

It will "provide a platform for a high-level dialogue on achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace for Ukraine based on international law and the UN Charter". The conference will aim to "create a common understanding of the framework conducive to this goal and a concrete roadmap for the peace process". **Some more objectives are:**

- **Protecting Swiss sovereignty:** Neutrality helps safeguard Switzerland's independence and sovereignty by avoiding entanglement in foreign conflicts. This allows Switzerland to pursue its interests and policies without being influenced by the agendas of other nations.
- **Preserving peace:** Switzerland contributes to preserving peace regionally and globally by remaining neutral. Its stance reduces the risk of being drawn into conflicts and helps mitigate tensions between conflicting parties.
- **Facilitating diplomacy and mediation:** Switzerland's neutral status enables it to act as a mediator and facilitator in international disputes. Its reputation for impartiality and trustworthiness makes it a preferred location for diplomatic negotiations and peace talks.
- **Promoting humanitarianism:** Swiss neutrality aligns with the country's tradition of humanitarianism. Switzerland has a long history of providing aid and assistance to victims of conflict and natural disasters, and its neutral status enhances its ability to do so effectively.

**Amit Pradhan**