

Arab Spring

July 26, 2022

In news– Tunisian President Kais Saied is set to secure more power under a new constitution. It is feared the changes will deal a major blow to democracy in Tunisia, widely seen as the only success story of the “Arab Spring” uprisings against autocratic rule.

What is the Arab Spring?

- Arab Spring is a wave of pro-democracy protests and uprisings that took place in the Middle East and North Africa beginning in 2010 and 2011, challenging some of the region’s entrenched authoritarian regimes.
- It began in response to corruption and economic stagnation and was **first started in Tunisia as the Jasmine Revolution.**
- From Tunisia, the protests then spread to five other countries: Libya, Egypt, Yemen, Syria, and Bahrain, where either the ruler was deposed or major uprisings and social violence occurred including riots, civil wars, or insurgencies.
- Sustained street demonstrations took place in Morocco, Iraq, Algeria, Iranian Khuzestan, Lebanon, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, and Sudan.
- **A major slogan of the demonstrators in the Arab world was** ‘the people want to bring down the regime’.
- **Not every country saw success in the protest movement,** however, and demonstrators expressing their political and economic grievances were often met with violent crackdowns by their countries’ security forces.

About Tunisia-

- Tunisia, officially the **Republic of Tunisia**, is the **northernmost country in Africa.**
- It is a **part of the Maghreb region of North Africa**, and is **bordered by Algeria to the west** and southwest, **Libya**

to the southeast, and the Mediterranean Sea to the north and east.

- Tunisia is situated on the Mediterranean coast of Northwest Africa, midway between the Atlantic Ocean and the Nile Delta.



- Though it is relatively small in size, Tunisia has great environmental diversity due to its north–south extent. Its east–west extent is limited.
- Differences in Tunisia, like the rest of the Maghreb, are largely north–south environmental differences defined by sharply decreasing rainfall southward from any point.
- The Dorsal, the eastern extension of the Atlas Mountains, runs across Tunisia in a northeasterly direction from the Algerian border in the west to the Cape Bon peninsula in the east.
- North of the Dorsal is the Tell, a region characterized by low, rolling hills and plains, again an extension of mountains to the west in Algeria.
- In the Khroumerie, the northwestern corner of the Tunisian Tell, elevations reach 1,050 metres (3,440 ft) and snow occurs in winter.
- **The Sahel, a broadening coastal plain along Tunisia's eastern Mediterranean coast, is among the world's premier areas of olive cultivation.**
- Inland from the Sahel, between the Dorsal and a range of

hills south of Gafsa, are the Steppes. Much of the southern region is semi-arid and desert.

- Tunisia is situated in the warm temperate zone between latitudes 37° and 30° N.
- In the north the climate is Mediterranean, characterized by mild, rainy winters and hot, dry summers with no marked intervening seasons.
- This changes southward to semiarid conditions on the steppes and to desert in the far south.
- Saharan influences give rise to the **sirocco, a seasonal hot, blasting wind** from the south that can have a serious drying effect on vegetation.
- It contains the eastern end of the **Atlas Mountains** and the **northern reaches of the Sahara desert**, with much of its remaining territory being arable land.
- Its coastline includes the African conjunction of the western and eastern parts of the Mediterranean Basin.
- **Tunisia is home to Africa's northernmost point, Cape Angela; and its capital and largest city is Tunis**, located on its northeastern coast, which lends the country its name.
- The city of Tunis is built on a hill slope down to the lake of Tunis.
- The city is located at the crossroads of a narrow strip of land between Lake Tunis and Séjoumi.
- **The population of Tunisia is essentially Arab Berber.**
- However, throughout the centuries Tunisia has received various waves of immigration that have included Phoenicians, sub-Saharan Africans, Jews, Romans, Vandals, and Arabs.
- Arabic is the official language, and most natives speak a dialect of Tunisian Arabic.
- **In 2011, the Tunisian Revolution, triggered by the lack of freedom and democracy** under the 24-year rule of president Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, overthrew his regime

and catalysed the broader Arab Spring across the region.

- Free **multiparty parliamentary elections were held** shortly after; the country again voted for parliament on 26 October 2014,
- Tunisia remains a **unitary semi-presidential representative democratic republic**; and is the **only North African country classified as “Free” by Freedom House**.
- **From 2014 to 2020, it was considered the only democratic state in the Arab World**, according to the Economist Intelligence Unit’s Democracy Index and was rated a hybrid regime in the 2021 Index.
- Tunisia is well integrated into the international community. It is a member of the United Nations, La Francophonie, the Arab League, the OIC, the African Union, the COMESA, the Non-Aligned Movement, the International Criminal Court, and the Group of 77, among others.