Afghanistan and terrorist attack

Part of: GS Prelims and GS-II- IR

The terrorist attack on a gurudwara in Kabul, claimed by Islamic State (IS), has killed 25 people, mostly members of Afghanistan’s persecuted Sikh minority.

FOR CURRENT IMPORTANT LOCATION: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3EBazqLy34M

Afghanistan is notorious for violence against its minority communities.

- The Hazara Shias were brutally attacked during the Taliban regime in 1996-2001.
- Most Hindus and Sikhs, once spread across the country in hundreds of thousands, have fled the country in past three decades.

Past:

- Post 9/11 attacks, US invaded Afghanistan with the aim to destroy Al-Qaeda terrorist group.
- For past two decades, there is a Civil War going on in Afghanistan between Taliban (Fundamentalist group supported by Pakistan) and the Afghan government (supported by USA).
- US and Taliban signed a peace deal in March 2020
- One of the provisions of peace deal was that the Taliban had committed themselves to eliminating the Islamic State from Afghanistan

Why Islamic State (IS) has attacked now?

- To send a message to its rivals that it continues to be a potent force
- Increasing influence of Taliban (reflected through peace deal with US) is clashing with IS’s own interest to control vast territory & spread its own ideology
- Hence, it wants to revive its own importance vis-à-vis Taliban
- IS wants to exploit the clashes between Taliban and Afghan government – unable to finalize on the prisoner swap part of the peace deal – to increase its own influence
- Division in Afghan Political leadership –Afghanistan now has two Presidents – meaning weak coordinated response on the perpetuators of attack

What are the consequences of the attack?

- Less focus on fighting the COVID-19 pandemic in Afghanistan – Iran (epicentre of the pandemic) borders the country => dangers of Afghanistan becoming a new epicentre.
- Abandonment of minorities in the country may lead to refugee crisis
- Derails the peace deal signed between Taliban and USA
- Increased instability in the region

What is the Impact on India?

- Internationalization of Kashmir Issue: IS has stated that it had carried out the attack in revenge for Kashmir.
- Doubts over Pakistan’s involvement in this attack shows that there is increased security
threat to Indians (workers & Officials) in Afghanistan

- Increased terrorism in the region is not in the Economic & Strategic interest of India

Afghanistan faces two contagions, new and old — COVID-19 and the relentless violence. A united effort has to be made for the ceasefire of violence so as to enable humanitarian assistance to deal with the pandemic.

👍 Jai Hind Jai Bharat