Syllabus subtopic: Effect of Policies and Politics of Developed and Developing Countries on India’s interests, Indian Diaspora.

Prelims and Mains focus: about the proposals in the west asia plan and its implications; about the Israel- Palestine dispute

News: U.S. President Donald Trump on Tuesday unveiled West Asia plan as part of a peace plan to end decades of conflict in the region.

What are Trump’s proposals?

- The US will recognise Israeli sovereignty over territory that Mr Trump's plan envisages being part of Israel. The plan includes a conceptual map that Mr Trump says illustrates the territorial compromises that Israel is willing to make.

- The map will "more than double the Palestinian territory and provide a Palestinian capital in eastern Jerusalem", where Mr Trump says the US would open an embassy. The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) said Mr Trump's plan would give Palestinians control over 15% of what it called "historic Palestine".

- Jerusalem "will remain Israel's undivided capital". Both Israel and the Palestinians hold competing claims to the holy city. The Palestinians insist that East Jerusalem, which Israel occupied in the 1967 Middle East war (Six Day War), be the capital of their future state.

- An opportunity for Palestinians to "achieve an independent state of their very own" - however, he gave few details.

- "No Palestinians or Israelis will be uprooted from their homes" - suggesting that existing Jewish settlements in the Israeli-occupied West Bank will remain. In exchange, Israel would agree to accept a four-year freeze on new settlement activity while Palestinian statehood is negotiated.
Israel will work with the king of Jordan to ensure that the status quo governing the key holy site in Jerusalem known to Jews as the Temple Mount and al-Haram al-Sharif to Muslims is preserved. Jordan runs the religious trust that administers the site.

Territory allocated to Palestinians in Mr Trump's map "will remain open and undeveloped for a period of four years". During that time, Palestinians can study the deal, negotiate with Israel, and "achieve the criteria for statehood".

A plan that overturns Palestinian aspirations:

- Until now all of the most difficult aspects of an Israeli-Palestinian peace deal - the so-called final status issues - like borders; the future of Israeli settlements in the West Bank; the long-term status of Jerusalem; and the fate of Palestinian refugees, were to be left for face-to-face talks between the Israelis and Palestinians themselves.

- Not any longer. The deal proposed by President Trump and enthusiastically endorsed by Prime Minister Netanyahu essentially frames all of these issues in Israel's favour.

- The Palestinians were not just absent from this meeting - they have boycotted the Trump administration ever since it unilaterally moved its embassy to Jerusalem. But they have essentially been presented with an ultimatum - accept the Trump parameters or else, and they have been given some four years to come around.

- While President Trump is offering the Palestinians a state it would be a much truncated one. No Jewish settlers will be uprooted and Israeli sovereignty will apparently be extended to the settlement blocs and the Jordan Valley. The Palestinians might have a capital in the East Jerusalem suburbs. This "take it or leave it offer" will appal many long-standing students of the region. The question now is not so much what benefit this deal might bring but how much damage it may do by over-turning Palestinian aspirations.
What reaction has there been?

- In his address, President Abbas said it was "impossible for any Palestinian, Arab, Muslim or Christian child to accept" a Palestinian state without Jerusalem as its capital.

- The militant Palestinian Islamist group Hamas, which controls the Gaza Strip, also rejected the deal which it said aimed "to liquidate the Palestinian national project".

- The UN said it remained committed to a two-state solution based on the borders in place before the 1967 war, when Israel seized the West Bank and Gaza.

- Israeli human rights group B'Tselem said the proposals envisaged a form of apartheid. It said Palestinians would be relegated "to small, enclosed, isolated enclaves, with no control over their lives".

- Israel's Peace Now organisation said the plan was "as detached from reality as it is eye-catching". It said the plan's green light for Israel to annex the settlements in exchange for a perforated Palestinian state is unviable and would not bring stability.

100 years of Israeli-Palestinian conflict: “Key moments”

- **Nov 2019**: Trump administration says it no longer considers Israeli settlements in occupied territory as inconsistent with international law, putting the US at odds with most of international community
- **Dec 2017**: Donald Trump announces US recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital - Palestinians cut off relations with Trump administration
- **April 2014**: Last round of direct Israel-Palestinian peace talks collapse amid acrimony
- **Sept 2000- Feb 2005**: Second Palestinian uprising
- **Sept 1993**: Israel-Palestinians sign Oslo peace accords, agreeing framework for eventual peace deal; 20 years of on-off peace talks - and violence - follow
- **Dec 1987-Sept 1993**: First Palestinian uprising against Israeli occupation
- **June 1967**: Middle East war - Israel occupies East Jerusalem, West Bank and Gaza Strip; years of hostility and bloodshed follow; UN Security Council Resolution 242 calls on Israel to withdraw from "territories occupied in recent
conflict" and recognises the right of "every state in the area to live in peace within secure and recognised boundaries" 

- **May 1948**: British Mandate for Palestine terminates; Israeli statehood declared, Arab countries invade, conflict creates 700,000 Palestinian refugees; 800,000 Jews expelled or flee from Arab countries in wake
- **Nov 1947**: UN recommends partitioning Mandate Palestine into Jewish and Arab states - Jewish leadership in Palestine accept, Arab leadership reject; violence between two sides escalates
- **July 1922**: League of Nations entrusts Britain as Mandatory power to put terms of Balfour Declaration into effect
- **Dec 1917**: British forces conquer and occupy Palestine; in years that follow, violence between Jews and Arabs increases
- **Nov 1917**: Britain (fighting Ottoman Empire in WWI) issues "Balfour Declaration" expressing support for Jewish "national home" in Palestine on condition that the rights of non-Jewish communities there are not prejudiced
- **Pre-1917**: Turkish Ottoman Empire rules over Jewish and Arab communities in geographical area referred to as Palestine, the Holy Land or (by Jews) the Land of Israel.