2 years of Russia-Ukraine War

Why in news?

February 24, 2024 marks second year of Russia-Ukraine war which started in 2022.

History of conflict between Russia and Ukraine
• **Crimea's annexation**: Russia took over Crimea, a part of Ukraine, by force in 2014 as Ukraine wanted to join the European Union which Russia sternly objected. • **Sea of Azov clash**-Post Crimea's annexation, Russia and Ukraine fought over the Sea of Azov. It is connected to the Black Sea by a narrow strait. • Russia built a bridge over the *Kerch strait* and blocked Ukraine's ships from passing through. • Russian backed rebels- Russia has been criticised for its involvement in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions in eastern Ukraine, it acknowledged that the two regions of Donbass region as independent republics which aggravated the issue. • **Migration crisis**- Belarus, Russian ally sent many migrants to the border of Poland (EU member), it caused issues for Poland and EU. • **Ukraine's pro-West stand**- Ukraine became independent from Russia after the collapse of Soviet Union, Russia described Ukraine as a puppet of West. • **NATO's expansion-** Ukraine's request to be a part of NATO angered Russia and it started placing troops near the Ukraine border.

How the war evolved in 2 years?

- **Russia invasion-** It attacked Ukraine from 3 direction the **south** (from Crimea and the Black Sea), the **east** (from the Donbass region and the border), and the **north** (from Belarus and the border).
- **Ukraine resistance-** Ukraine fought back against the Russian invasion, but faced a huge disadvantage in terms of military strength, resources, and allies.
- **Russian advance-** It captured key cities and ports such as *Mariupol, Kherson, and Zaporizhzhia* and imposed naval blockade on Ukraine cutting off its access to the Black Sea and the global market.
- **Black sea Grain initiative-** It is a UN brokered deal signed by Russia, Ukraine and Turkey to allow allow the safe transportation of grain and foodstuffs from Ukrainian ports to the rest of the world
- **Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant-** It is situated in Ukraine, both Russia and Ukraine have accused each other of shelling Europe's largest nuclear power plant.

Ukraine launched its first counter-offensive attack against Russian invasion focusing on Kharkiv region

- **Sabotage of Nord Stream pipeline-** It is a network of offshore natural gas pipelines that run under the *Baltic Sea from Russia to Germany*. The sabotage was widely blamed on Ukrainian nationalists, who claimed responsibility for the attack.
- **Kerch Strait bridge-** It was seen as a symbol of Russia's control over Crimea, it was damaged by a large explosion which caused parts of road bridge to collapse but Ukraine denied any involvement.
- **Ukraine gains-** Ukraine managed to regain some grounds in *Kharkiv* and recaptured *Kerson* , a startegic city in Black Sea coast.
- **The Battle of Bakhmut-** It is a city in the *Donetsk region*, it resulted in more number of casualties on both sides.
- **Wagner group rebellion-** In 2023, Ukraine launched a counteroffensive operation but faced a challenge from Wagner group, a Russian-backed private military company that had been fighting in Ukraine since 2014.
- **Adviivka-** Recently Russia captured the town Avdiivka, near Donetsk which was the largest territorial gain for Russia.

What is the current status of war?

- **Ukrainian resistance**- Despite initial predictions of a quick Russian victory, Ukraine has managed to hold its ground and repel Russian attacks.

  Ukraine has recaptured 54% of occupied territory, while Russia still occupies 18% of the country.

- **Russia's advantage-** It has an edge over Ukraine in terms of military strength, resources and diplomacy. Russia has weathered the Western sanctions and maintained its economic growth and energy exports.
- **War of attrition**- Russia has adapted this strategy using hybrid warfare, cyberattacks, and propaganda.

  War of attrition is a prolonged period of conflict during which each side seeks to gradually wear down the other by a series of small-scale actions.

- **Reduced fund from US**- Israel Palestine conflict has reduced media attention for Ukraine. US, as the main supporter of Ukraine and a key ally of Israel, has faced a dilemma of how to balance its involvement in both conflicts which would reduce funding from US to Ukraine.
- **Decline of Europe economy**- The European countries is witnessing economic decline, this would reduce the support for the Ukraine war.

What are the impacts of the war?

- **Humanitarian crisis**- As per UN 6.5 million civilians are internally displaced and 4 million have forced to flee to neighbouring countries.
- **Geopolitical change**- The war has challenged the transatlantic system, UN and it also

challenged the security and stability of Europe.

- **Impact on bilateral relations**- It has affected the relations between Russia and other countries such as China, India, Turkey and Iran.
- **Impact on economy-** The war has disrupted the global supply chains of energy, agriculture, and manufacturing, leading to higher prices and shortages in some regions.
- **Strengthening of NATO**- Due to Russia's actions, new countries like Finland and Sweden have joined NATO.

Impact of War on India	Impact of War on China
• **Balanced position**- India has refused to join the Western sanctions on Russia , it also expressed its support for Ukraine's sovereignty and, and has provided humanitarian assistance. • **Operation Ganga-** India launched a massive evacuation operation to bring back its citizens from the conflict zones of Ukraine. • **India's oil imports**- India has continued to buy Russian oil despite the war and the Western sanctions, taking advantage of the low prices and the availability. • **Diversification of imports**- India has diversified its source of oil importing from Middle East, Africa and the US.	• **Bilateral trade**- China has become Russia's largest trading partner, while Russia has become China's main source of oil and gas. • **Strong relationship-** China and Russia have supported each other on various global issues, such as the war in Ukraine, the conflict in Syria, the nuclear deal with Iran, and the situation in North Korea.. • **Common adversary-** Both Russia and China perceived US as a threat to their interests and security. • China hopes that the US focus on Ukraine and West Asia would reduce its attention in Indo-Pacific region.

What lies ahead?

- Russia does not aim to conquer all of Ukraine, but rather to achieve its strategic and political objectives, such as weakening Ukraine's sovereignty, securing its military and economic interests, and challenging the US and NATO influence in the region.
- Ukraine has defended its territory and sovereignty, but has faced difficulties and uncertainties in securing sufficient and continued support from the West.
- Ukraine wants to restore its borders and integrity, while Russia wants to keep its occupied territories and ensure Ukraine's neutrality.
- The incompatible peace talks between Russia and Ukraine would only further escalate the issue in ongoing war between the two countries.

References

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