Aiding Afghans

What is the issue?

The Prime Minister has called for the international community to provide Afghanistan with immediate and unhindered access to humanitarian assistance.

What is the current crisis in Afghanistan?

- In Afghanistan, banks are running out of money, civil servants have not been paid and food prices have soared, leaving millions at risk of severe hunger.
- The country is struggling with drought and severe poverty following the decades of war.
- The U.S. has frozen the reserves of Afghanistan making the situation vulnerable.
- The Taliban government's refusal to allow women to work and stopping girls from schooling have complicated the issue.

What does UNHCR report say?

- UNHCR has published a report that states that half the population in Afghanistan (more than 20 million people) are in need of lifesaving humanitarian assistance.
- An estimated 270,000 Afghans have been newly displaced inside the country since January 2021.
- The number of civilian casualties has risen 29 per cent during the first quarter of this year compared to 2020.
- The UN has received only 35% of the funds needed for its relief operations.

How can the situation be eased?

- EU has already committed $1.15 billion for Afghanistan and neighbouring countries where refugees have fled.
- The U.S. and China pledged $1.1 billion at a donor conference in Geneva

last month.

- G20 leaders have also pledged to help for Afghan humanitarian crisis at special summit.
- Maintaining links with terror groups including those that target India leaves little space for government to increase its engagement or to send aid directly to the new regime.
- Coordinating with the Taliban did not mean recognising their administration and hence India could contribute to international agencies that are working with displaced Afghans.
- The government could also consider liberalising its visa regime for Afghans.
- As a goodwill gesture, India could send food aid, including wheat, grain, fortified biscuits and other packaged food directly to Kabul.
- Regional leader like India have to play a key role in unfolding the humanitarian crisis because not only Afghans but also the rest of the world will pay a heavy price.

Source: The Hindu

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