Anger in Diplomacy: On Indian reaction to MNC Kashmir tweets

Why in news?

The advent of social media has changed how diplomacy is conducted between countries.

What is the issue?

- The social media posts, that appeared to be part of a coordinated exercise sponsored by the Pakistani establishment were put by companies, including Hyundai, Toyota, KFC, Pizza Hut, and pharma major Schwabe.
- It was put out on February 5, marked in Pakistan as Kashmir Solidarity Day.
- The posts contained what New Delhi termed as highly offensive messages calling for Kashmiri liberation.

What is the government's move?

- The government highlighted that this matter concerned India's territorial integrity on which there could be no compromise
- The Minstry of External Affairs and the Commerce Ministry ensured that several multinational companies withdrew the social media posts.
- The government even summoned the Korean Ambassador while ensuring that Indian embassies took up the issue with other governments.
- External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar also raised the matter with his Korean counterpart, who apologised to the Ind.an people.
- Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal added in Parliament that the original apology by Hyundai India was not adequately forceful as social media consumers in India threatened to boycott products made by the companies concerned.

What does this incident signify?

- The government must consider the big picture of how its actions, that appear to be at some variance with those of a secure and powerful global player, are viewed in the rest of the world.
- India's claims over Jammu and Kashmir are strong and widely acknowledged, that leaves no scopes for a few social media posts that appeared only in Pakistan change this.
- Holding foreign governments in democratic countries to account for the actions of their private companies could have unforeseen consequences.
- The apologies and statements thus extracted may prove to cause a devastating toll on the victor.
- It is also worth considering whether the Foreign Ministry's resources are better spent in furthering India's interests than spending on short-lived controversies such as the MEA's objection to pop star Rihanna's posts on the farmer protests last year.
- A quiet word with the MNCs might have worked better than a public display of diplomatic

opposition.

References

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