Armenia-Azerbaijan Peace Deal-II

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Why in news?

Armenia and Azerbaijan agreed on a Russia-brokered ceasefire in and around Nagorno-Karabakh region.

What led to the war?

- In 1991 when the Soviet Union collapsed, the newly independent Armenia and Azerbaijan went to war over Nagorno-Karabakh.
- Nagorno-Karabakh had been an autonomous region within Azerbaijan during the Soviet years.
- Armenians have made historical claims over the enclave, which is largely populated by ethnic Armenians.
- By the time the all-out war came to an end in 1994, Armenia had captured Nagorno-Karabakh and seven surrounding districts.
- In, Azerbaijan launched the offensive vowing to take back Nagorno-Karabakh and other Armenian-occupied districts.
- In six weeks of fighting since September 2020, Azeri forces retook territories, including some 40% of Nagorno-Karabakh itself.

How the ceasefire was achieved?

- Russia, which has a security agreement with Armenia, remained neutral in the early days of the war.
- When Azerbaijan captured Armenian territories, Armenia sought Russian help.
- But Mr. Putin said the security guarantee is for Armenia, not for the Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh.
- However, Russia was concerned about the rapid change in the status quo and the more assertive security role Turkey was playing in its backyard.
- Under pressure from Moscow, both sides agreed to cease the operations.

What are the terms of the ceasefire?

- According to the ceasefire, Armenia agreed to withdraw its troops from much of the territories around Nagorno-Karabakh.

- The core of the enclave with ethnic Armenians and Stepanakert as its capital would remain outside the control of Azerbaijan.
- Armenia lost territories it controlled since the 1990s.
- But it avoided a total defeat as much of Nagorno-Karabakh would remain independent of Azeri control.
- Russia would send some 2,000 peacekeepers to the region, who would patrol between the Azeri troops and Nagorno-Karabakh.

Did Russia get what it wanted?

- Russia could enforce the ceasefire and keep Turkey and western countries out of the final talks.
- This shows that Moscow remains a dominant power in the region.
- But the war also showed that the Russian dominance in the region could be challenged.

Is the conflict over?

- It’s not. The war has altered the balance of power in favour of Azerbaijan.
- It stopped short of taking the entire Nagorno-Karabakh for now, but it doesn’t mean that it won’t go for it again.
- The status of Nagorno-Karabakh remains unsettled.
- This means that the conflict has only been postponed, not resolved.

Source: The Hindu

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