Brexit drove the Britain's Election

Why in News?

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson swept the election with the most important takeaway i.e. the likelihood of Brexit being put on the fast track.

Why is it being said that the election was about Brexit?

- Because that was the narrative that drove the election.
- It is too simplistic to read the result as a message that most voters in Britain are in favour of Brexit.
- With Brexit inevitable, it was a question about how the process should unfold.
- On this, Johnson's Conservative Party had a clearer plan than the Labour Party.
- While campaigning, Johnson promised to resolve the long-pending issue and projected the opposition as likely to keep delaying a resolution.
- The Labour campaign talked about a revised Brexit plan, but proposed to take that through yet another national referendum.
- More than Brexit, it was the prospect of closure that appears to have decided the election.
- The Conservatives broke votes away from the pro-Brexit section of Labour's base.

How will Brexit proceed?

- So far, no plan offered in Parliament had won majority support.
- But now, because of the sheer size of the victory, Johnson's plan is more likely to find support, despite the many factions created by opinions on Brexit.
- Besides, the vote can potentially be interpreted as public endorsement for Johnson's plan, although that is not really the case.
- With Parliament due to sit soon, it is expected to try and pass Johnson's Withdrawal Agreement Bill.
- After that, Britain has to negotiate the terms of a treaty, including its time-frame, with the European Union.
- "Brexit day" is on January 31, but the process of implementation will continue long after that.

What are the challenges ahead?

- The PM's priority though will be to see through Britain's formal departure from the EU at the end of January.
- There will be a **transition period until the end of 2020** when Britain will abide by EU rules and regulations but won't be a part of it.
- During that time, Britain will aim to negotiate the details of an enduring **trading relationship** with its principal commercial partners in Europe and outside the EU.
- That will be a huge task and is likely to be marked by rows and recriminations.
- Economic **forecasters believe that Brexit will impede economic growth**, perhaps even triggering a brief recession.
- That would make it more difficult for the Conservative government to deliver on its promise of greater public spending.
- There is another more **intangible issue** which Mr. Johnson will have to address.
- For the past few years, Brexit has polarised British politics, fractured relationships, and soured public debate. Britain is wounded.
- Its PM has in the past proved to be a divisive figure who has sought to fan the flames of populism and nationalism to gain political advantage.
- The PM now should move away from his theatrical rhetoric and provide a healing balm for his bruised nation.

Source: Indian Express, The Hindu

SHANKAR IAS PARLIAMENT
Information is Empowering