Gujral Doctrine of Foreign Policy

Why in news?

November 30 marks the 11th death anniversary of IK Gujral, the mastermind behind the doctrine that shaped India's foreign policy.

Who is Mr. Gujral?

- Inder Kumar Gujral was born in 1919 in Jhelum, India [now in Pakistan].
- He has served as the ***12th Prime Minister of India*** from April 1997 to March 1998.
- He was the 2nd PM to govern exclusively from the Rajya Sabha.
- He was the Minister of Information and Broadcasting during the Emergency in the Indira Gandhi led cabinet.
- As a Minister of External Affairs (EAM), he propounded '***Gujral Doctrine',*** which called for better relations with neighbouring countries.
- Gujral was also the member of the ***Club of Madrid***, an independent non-profit organisation composed of 81 democratic former Presidents and Prime Ministers from 57 different countries.
- The submission of ***Jain Commission's report*** ultimately led to the fall of the IK Gujral led government.

Journalist Bhabani Sen Gupta coined the term "Gujral doctrine".

What is the Gujral Doctrine?

- Gujral Doctrine consisted of ***5 principles***, as outlined by Gujral at a speech in Chatham House in London in 1996.
- It was based on the understanding that India's size and population made it a major player in South East Asia, and its position could be better cemented by adopting a non-domineering attitude towards its smaller neighbours.
- It also emphasised the importance of keeping dialogue going.

Gujral named the countries from which India would not expect reciprocity, and it did not include Pakistan.

What are the successes of Gujral Doctrine?

- Gujral's approach to foreign policy helped strengthen trust and cooperation in India's

neighbourhood.

- **River water sharing** - Gujral's policy of non-reciprocal accommodation led to the signing of a 30-year treaty between India and Bangladesh in 1996.
- He even ensured Bhutanese consent for digging of a canal from a Bhutanese river to augment the flow of water to Ganga.
- He showed his willingness to revise the controversial ***Mahakali treaty with Nepal*** which was received well in Nepal.

Mahakali Treaty has been signed in 1996 for the purpose of Integrated Development of the Mahakali River (known as River Sarda in India), including Sarda Barrage, Tanakpur Barrage and Pancheshwar Project.

- **Approach with Pakistan** - With Pakistan, Gujral kept talks going.
- Under his tenure as EAM, India unilaterally eased travel restrictions, permitting Pakistani tourists to visit India and easing travel for Pakistani businessmen to India.
- **Nuclear treaty** - Despite international pressure, Gujral firmly refused to sign the ***Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT)*** in 1996.

CTBT is a multilateral treaty that bans all nuclear explosions, for both civilian and military purposes, in all environments.

What are the criticisms of Gujral Doctrine?

- Gujral has received criticism for
  - Failing to convince the foreign affairs bureaucracy to follow the doctrine wholeheartedly.
  - Going too soft on Pakistan, and leaving India vulnerable to the threats of the future, including the many terror attacks.

References

1. The Indian Express | Gujral doctrine
2. India Today | About Gujral

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