Hague court on Kosovo's first prime minister

Prelims: *Current events of national and international importance| International relations*

Why in News?

The Hague court convicts Kosovo's former President Thaci of war crimes and sentences him to 25 years.

- He was convicted by a panel of judges at the Kosovo Specialist Chambers of murder, torture, cruel treatment and arbitrary detention.
- Thaci was a co-founder and commander of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), a group that fought for independence.
- It was a European Union-backed court, rather than the International Criminal Court.
- Background
- The Kosovo War was an armed conflict in Kosovo that lasted from 28 February 1998 until 11 June 1999.
- It was fought between the forces of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY), which controlled Kosovo before the war, and the Kosovo Albanian separatist militia known as the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA).
- Most of the people who died in the war in Kosovo were ethnic Albanians.
- About 1 million ethnic Albanian Kosovars were driven from their homes.
- The conflict ended when the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) intervened by beginning air strikes in March 1999 which resulted in Yugoslav forces withdrawing from Kosovo.
- In 2008, Kosovo declared its independence from Serbia, a move that Serbia refuses to recognise.
- Ties between Kosovo and Serbia remain tense, despite years of EU-mediated negotiations supported by the United States.
- Thaci became Kosovo's first prime minister when it declared independence in 2008.

Reference

[The Hindu| Hague court on Kosovo's former President]