Libya Ceasefire Agreement

Why in news?

Rival parties in Libya announced a historic ceasefire.

What happened?

- This was followed by the 5+5 Libyan Joint Military Commission (JMC) talks in Geneva.
- This will give way to the possibility that the long-drawn conflict might be coming to an end.
- This is the first, crucial, brave step towards a comprehensive settlement of the long Libyan crisis.

What is going on in Libya?

- Libya has been embroiled in a tussle for power between rival militias ever since Muammar Gaddafi was ousted from power by NATO-backed forces in October 2011.
- Gaddafi's death marked the end of 42-year rule by the former Army officer which was in power since 1969.
- In the wake of Gaddafi's ouster, dozens of militias led by multiple warlords scrambled to occupy the power vacuum.
- As a result, Libya turned into a war zone with different militant leaders claiming control of the North African nation.
- Some of the issues of dispute among the warring factions include control of the oil infrastructure, governance, national finances and the military.

Are other countries involved?

- The UN-backed internationally recognised government called the Government of National Accord (GNA) is led by Fayez al-Sarraj.
- The GNA took power in 2015 under the UN-brokered Libyan Political Agreement.
- This Tripoli-based government is supported by allies Qatar and Turkey.
- Turkey has sent troops to Libya, which includes Syrian rebel fighters who are aligned with Turkey.
- Turkey maintains that it has sent these troops to help the UN-backed government in the west.

- The GNA's authority is challenged by the factions controlling the east.
- The eastern part is controlled by rebel forces under the Libyan National Army (LNA) which is supported by Russian military contractors.
- Between 2014 and 2019, the LNA has conducted military operations against the Islamic State in the east.
- The spread of the Islamic State has further complicated the situation and is also one reason the US is one of the foreign states that has intervened.

What has been the impact of the civil war in Libya?

- As per the Council on Foreign Relations' Global Conflict Tracker, the civil war in Libya has created over 50,000 refugees and asylum seekers, while more than 268,000 people have been displaced.
- As per the Congressional Research Service report, since April 2019, over 2,600 Libyans including hundreds of civilians have been killed.

What is the new ceasefire agreement about?

- As per this new agreement facilitated by the UN, all foreign mercenaries and armed forces will have to withdraw within the next 90 days.
- The parties also agreed that any violations in the ceasefire will be dealt by a joint military force, which will be under a unified command.
- But, the ceasefire does not apply to UN-designated terrorist groups.
- The agreement has established a Joint Police Operations room.
- This operations room will implement and propose special arrangements to secure the areas that are cleared of military units and armed groups.
- Further, the 5+5 have also agreed to open the land and air routes that connect the regions and cities of Libya.

What will be the impact on oil reserves?

- Significantly, Libya has Africa's largest oil and gas reserves.
- With regards to oil production, the different parties have agreed that the commanders of the east and west petroleum facilities will work directly with a representative appointed by the National Oil Corporation.
- This representative will recommend a plan for restructuring the Petroleum Facilities Guards to ensure that the flow of oil continues.
- This is a significant development since control of the oil infrastructure is one the elements of competition between the GNA and LNA.

Source: The Indian Express



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