Mass Shootings in the U.S.

Why in news?

Two American cities, El Paso, Texas, and Dayton, Ohio recently witnessed lethal shootings resulting in mass fatalities.

What happened?

- El Paso and Dayton, more than 2,500 kilometres apart, witnessed lethal shootings resulting in mass fatalities.
- At least 31 people were dead, and many were injured.
- The El Paso attack was the deadliest mass shooting in the United States since November 2017.
- The attack bear tell-tale signs of a hate crime.

Was this a racist attack?

- In his reaction to the shootings, the U.S. President Donald Trump appeared to denounce the racist intention behind the shooting.
- He said, “In one voice our nation must condemn racism, bigotry and white supremacy,” and that these “sinister ideologies must be defeated.”
- Police investigating the El Paso shooting said they found an anti-immigrant document supporting white nationalist and racist views.
- They believe it was written by the suspect, Patrick Crusius - his focus on violent video games, mental illness and online bigotry leaves a glaring gap in policy: common-sense gun control reforms to curb the proliferation of deadly, military grade weapons and high-capacity magazines.

How successful were gun control measures?

- The battle to pass broad, effective gun control legislation has interrupted the past few decades of America’s unrelenting, 228-year-old love for guns.
- The regulations include tougher background checks for gun buyers and the banning of certain gun technologies and accessories.
- Despite
- There is sustained lobbying to push forward basic gun control laws through the U.S. Congress.
- However, despite this, the constitutional right to bear arms has never been more fiercely defended.

- E.g., former President Obama saw no fewer than 17 of his attempts to bring gun control to the floor of Congress defeated by conservative lawmakers
- The National Rifle Association quietly hands around $6 million annually to lawmakers in Washington to retain its pro-gun agenda as a top priority.
- Pro-gun lobbies consistently mobilise voters around the Second Amendment.
- The result of combining this ingrained "gun culture" with patchy gun regulations is ever more incidents of mass shootings.

Why does it need urgent attention?

- The societal and economic challenges that minorities face in the U.S. are already immense.
- Now they seem to become targets of a new vector of racist hatred, emboldened by the unregulated firepower of guns.
- If this continues, then America's "melting pot" dream will unravel fast.

Source: The Hindu

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