NAM at 60 Marks an Age of Indian Alignment

Why in news?

The birth anniversary of Jawaharlal Nehru this month and the 60th anniversary of the Non-Aligned Movement prompt reflection on Nehru's major contribution to the field of international relations.

How did NAM evolve?

> *The concept of not aligning a country's policy with others can be traced to the Congress of Vienna (1814-15) when the neutrality of Switzerland was recognised.*

- The NAM was founded during the collapse of the colonial system and the independence struggles of the peoples of Africa, Asia, Latin America and other regions and at the height of the Cold War.
- While some meetings with a third-world perspective were held before 1955, historians consider that the **Bandung Asian-African Conference** is the most immediate antecedent to the creation of NAM.
- This Conference was held in Bandung in **1955** with the aim of identifying and assessing world issues at the time and pursuing out joint policies in international relations.
- The principles that would govern relations among large and small nations, known as the **"Ten Principles of Bandung"**were proclaimed at that Conference.
- The NAM was formed during the Cold War to create an independent path in world politics that would not result in member States becoming pawns in the struggles between the major powers.
- The First Summit of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries was held in **Cairo, Egypt** in **1961**.
- Abdel Nasser of Egypt, Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Shri Jawaharlal Nehru of India, Ahmed Sukarno of Indonesia and Josip Broz Tito of Yugoslavia later became the founding fathers of the movement.

What led to the adoption of NAM by India?

- Nehru saw world problems as interlinked but considers India's interests first even before the merits of the case.
- Nehru was opposed to the conformity required by both sides in the Cold War.
- His opposition to alliances was justified by American weapons to Pakistan from 1954 and the creation of western-led military blocs in Asia.
- Non-alignment was the least costly policy for promoting India's diplomatic presence, a sensible approach when India was weak and and the best means of securing economic assistance from abroad.

What were the challenges?

- The difficulty was always to find a definition of this policy, which caused a credibility gap between theory and practice.
- In the early years, there was economic dependence on donor countries who were nearly all members of western military pacts.
- Indian equidistance to both Koreas and both Vietnams was shown by India recognising neither but it recognised one party in the two Chinas and two Germanies.
- The **Treaty of peace, friendship and cooperation** between India and the USSR of 1971 due to the Liberation war of Bangladesh came dangerously to a military alliance.

What were the failures of NAM?

- Nehru was hesitant earlier because in theory a coalition or movement of non-aligned nations was a contradiction in terms.
- According to then Defence Minister Krishna Menon, true non-alignment was to be non-aligned towards the non-aligned.
- Among the members there were varying alignments, non-internalising of their own concepts of human rights and peaceful settlement of disputes without violating the principle of sovereign domestic jurisdiction.
- Lack of collective action and collective self-reliance, and the non-establishment of an equitable international economic or information order were other failures.
- The years following Nehru's death, the non-alignment has undergone considerable changes by inclining to **greater alignment with the United States** at present.

References

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