One year of Russia-Ukraine War

Why in news?

February 24 marks one year since Russia began its invasion of Ukraine.

What is the history of conflict between Ukraine and Russia?

- **Annexation of Crimea** - Ukraine was one of the republics within the USSR during the cold war days, and has remained a strong ally of Russia till 2013.
- While it was planning to sign an association agreement with the European Union in 2013, Russia subsequently annexed "Crimea" (Russian speaking province in Ukraine).
- **Naval skirmish over the Sea of Azov** - After Crimea's annexation in 2014, Russia gained control over both sides of the Kerch strait.
- Later, the Ukrainian vessels attempt to travel from the Black Sea to the Sea of Azov was denied by the Russian coast guard.
- **Russian backed rebels** - Russia has been criticised for its involvement in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions in eastern Ukraine.
- There, Russian-backed separatists have been fighting with Ukrainian troops.
- **Other conflict -** Belarus, a Russian ally was blamed for the migration crisis in the EU's Polish border.

What are the consequences of the war?

Socio-economic concerns

- **Millions of people fleeing –** According to the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR), the war has led to the second-largest displacement crisis in the world.
- **Poverty –** 40% of the Ukraine's population is now dependent on humanitarian aid.
- **Recession** - According to the World Bank, the country's gross domestic product (GDP) shrank by 35% in 2022.
- **Billions for Ukrainian military –** Since the beginning of the invasion, Ukraine has received billions in military, humanitarian, and financial aid, the US tops the list of donor countries.
- The EU and its member states have mobilized over €50 billion, with Germany being one of the largest arms suppliers to Ukraine.
- In addition, NATO has increased its military presence on its eastern flank.
- **Bucha Massacre –** Ukrainian President accused Russian troops of committing the most terrible war crimes since World War II in Bucha, Ukraine.
- **Resilience in Russia –** The situation in Russia is less critical than expected, as the economy has not suffered as much in comparison.
- The International Monetary Fund (IMF) forecasts minimal growth of 0.3% this year.

Environmental Concerns

- **Damages** - The conflict has seen many damages with incidents involving nuclear power plants, energy infrastructure, mines and industrial sites.
- **Emissions** - Emission from the conflict was estimated to be around 33 million (mn) tonnes of CO2 and 23 mn tonnes of CO2 from fires.
- To know more about Environmental concerns, Click Here

What is the position of India?

- The UN and its bodies have voted on resolutions pertaining to the Russia-Ukraine war at least 39 times in the last year.
- India, which has maintained a diplomatic balancing act and has walked the tightrope between US-led West and Russia, has **abstained** on most occasions.
- India's voting shows a nuanced and calibrated stance adopted by Delhi in the past one year.
- India stated it is deeply disturbed by the war, but it did not name Russia at all.
- India called for cessation of violence and hostilities and flagged its concern about Indian nationals.
- India called for respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty, and respect for UN charter and international law.
- India advocated diplomacy and advocated dialogue and diplomacy will be the path forward.

What is the way forward?

- With a year of geopolitical turmoil due to the Russia-Ukraine crisis, India as the chair of G-20, will face the challenge of negotiating a declaration while balancing between Russia and the West.
- One of the ways it will look to address the Russia-Ukraine war will be to talk about the adverse impact of the war in terms of energy and food security.
- The framing of the argument is expected to be on the humanitarian concerns of the war.

References

1. Indian Express | One year of Russia-Ukraine war
2. Indian Express | Russia's war on Ukraine in numbers
3. Indian Express | How India's position has evolved over time in Russia-Ukraine War

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