Pakistan's Response to Scrapping Art 370

Why in news?

Pakistan has decided to expel India's High Commissioner, snap trade relations with India and observe August 15 as a black day, following India's move on J&K.

What is Pakistan's stance?

- Pakistan has been wary of India's executive-legislative actions that scrapped Article 370.
- Pakistan has consistently described chief ministers of Jammu & Kashmir as "puppets".
- It has never recognised the legitimacy of the government in Srinagar.
- Given this, the announcement appears to be a knee-jerk reaction to the mounting pressures on the Pakistani establishment to respond to India's move.
- Ironically, this is the first time Islamabad has articulated that Article 370 was aligned with the interests of the Kashmiri people.

Can Pakistan interfere in this?

- Every Pakistani government and the country's permanent establishment have maintained that they could 'unilaterally alter the status quo in J&K'.
- Now, Pakistan is compelled to respond the other way, as India practically implemented the same idea.
- India's Ministry of External Affairs has described the move on Art 370 as India's internal matter.
- Going by this, Pakistan is not licensed to interfere.
- However, in the days to come, India can expect Pakistan to -
    i. raise the Kashmir issue at the United Nations
    ii. mobilise the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation
    iii. send envoys to friendly capitals

How does the future look?

- India is well placed to deal with Pakistan on the diplomatic front given the changed international context.
- India's economic status now has grown enormously in the last couple of decades.

- Also, there are doubts in the Western world about Pakistan's overt and covert support to Islamist terror.
- Given these, India has the space to deal with Islamabad's efforts to "internationalise" the Kashmir issue.

Is disturbing diplomatic relations wise?

- Downgrading diplomatic relations between troubled neighbours, snapping trade and transport links are never good ideas.
- India withdrew its High Commissioner to Pakistan after the 2001 Parliament attack, but chose not to send back the Pakistani envoy at the time.
- However, the Pakistani High Commissioner was expelled by India after the Kaluchak terror strike in 2002.
- However, despite all the troubles the two countries have had, High Commissioners have been able to return to their jobs since full diplomatic relations were restored in 1976.
- Diplomacy is a mechanism to ensure that channels of communication remain open.
- While India and Pakistan have used back channels in recent years, the presence of seasoned diplomats has always mutually benefited both.
- Pakistan needs to comprehend this.

Source: The Hindu

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