Panjshir Resitance & the Aftermath of Takeover

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Why in news?

The Taliban who has taken control of all of Afghanistan is facing tough resistance from the Panjshir province.

What is the history of the province?

- When the Taliban took Kabul in 1996, then-President Burhanuddin Rabbani and Defence Minister Ahmad Shah Massoud, along with their allies, retreated to northern Afghanistan.
- They built a united front of anti-Taliban forces in the Panjshir Valley and launched a resistance.
- The Northern Alliance played a critical part in the U.S.-led attacks on the Taliban.
- India, Iran, and Russia also supported the province in resistance.
- The tough terrain allowed Massoud to keep the Valley away from the Taliban.
- After 20 years, the Taliban recaptured Kabul almost all of Afghanistan-except Panjshir.
- However, the Taliban appear to be stronger this time.

Located in the northeast of the country, the Valley is near the Hindu Kush mountain range. Dvided by the Panjshir river. Ringed by the Panjshir Mountains in the north and Kuhestan Mountains in the south. Mountain tops are covered by snow throughout the year. This difficult terrain makes the Valley a nightmare for invaders. Majority of the people living are ethnic Tajiks.

What are the pressing issues in Afghanistan?

- **Gender equality** - The Taliban has banned co-education in Afghanistan's Herat province , the first fatwa (order) issued after its takeover
- **Hunger** - The World Food Program has warned that some 14 million people are facing severe hunger in the nation
- **Law and order** - Taliban has proclaimed that democracy will not prevail in the state and only Sharia law will be imposed.
- **Human rights violation** -Reports of targeted killings and gunfires at Kabul airport by the Taliban fuelled fears that they will return to the repressive rule
- **Evacuation** - Taliban takeover has resulted in mass evacuations leading to a humanitarian crisis

What are its implications on India?

- Strategic setback for India which has spent $3bn or so to bolster the American-installed regime
- Major fear that it will once again become a training ground for terrorism
- Issuance of e-visas to afghan nationals might lead to the intrusion of terrorists into India.
- However, sticking to Citizenship Amendment Act would also exclude deeply persecuted communities like the Hazara Shias
- India is also has its concerns regarding the Pakistan-China duo interference in this issue

What are the challenges ahead for Taliban?

- Acceptance of Taliban regime domestically and in the international arena
- Providing effective governance to the people and spending on public services
- Controlling its forces who were accused of corruption and abuse of power
- Worsening civil war might push Afghanistan, one of the poorest countries years behind in development.
- More than 20% of Afghanistan’s gross income comes from foreign aid. In the wake of the Taliban takeover, IMF has suspended its funds.

Source: The Hindu, The Indian Express



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