Pulwama Terror Attack on CRPF

Why in news?

Nearly 40 security personnel were killed in a terror attack on a CRPF (Central Reserve Police Force) convoy in Awantipora town of Pulwama district, Jammu and Kashmir.

What is the CRPF's role?

- The basic role of CRPF is maintenance of law and order, conducting operations based on intelligence, and providing law and order support to Army operations.
- After an operation has been concluded, it is the job of the CRPF to manage angry, stone-pelting crowds.
- CRPF also deals with Left Wing Extremism and does overall co-ordination of large scale security arrangement especially with regard to elections in disturbed areas.
- It is also tasked with guarding vital Central Government installations such as Airport, Powerhouses, Bridges, Doordarshan Kendras, AIR Stations, Governors' and CMs' residence, Nationalised Banks, etc.
- Before 2005, the job of providing law and order support was with the BSF (Border Security Force) which is now tasked only with border-guarding duty.
- The CRPF is the biggest paramilitary force present in the Kashmir Valley.
- More than 60,000 CRPF personnel are deployed across the state.

What is the recent attack?

- A CRPF convoy of 78 vehicles, carrying more than 2,500 jawans, was attacked on the Jammu-Srinagar highway.
- The Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) has claimed responsibility for the attack.
- It was carried out by a lone Jaish-e-Muhammad suicide bomber, who rammed a car carrying about 350 kg of explosives into the CRPF bus.
- JeM is also reportedly behind the 2001 Indian Parliament attack, 2016 Pathankot airbase attack that killed 7 security personnel, and 2016 Uri attack that killed 20 soldiers.

What is India's response?

- India has withdrawn the 'Most Favoured Nation' (MFN) status given to Pakistan.
- [The MFN status is given to an international trade partner, to ensure non-discriminatory trade between all partner countries of the WTO.
- A country which provides MFN status to another country has to provide concessions, privileges, and immunity in trade agreements.
- India had granted MFN status to Pakistan in 1996.]
- It was also indicated that the Ministry of External Affairs would initiate all possible diplomatic steps to ensure that Pakistan is isolated from the international community.

What is the larger significance?

- With Jaish-e-Mohammad in play, the focus is back to Jaish chief Maulana Masood Azhar being listed as a "global terrorist" at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).
- India's attempts to list Azhar as a "global terrorist" at the UNSC have been repeatedly blocked by China. (Click here to know more)
- The most recent effort began after India blamed Jaish for the attack on the Indian Air Force base in Pathankot in 2016.
- China intervened at the request of Pakistan and placed a technical hold on India's move in various instances.
- It subsequently used its veto power to block the proposal in UNSC in December 2016.
- China also blocked a proposal put forward by the US, the UK and France in January, 2017 to designate Azhar as a terrorist.

Source: Indian Express, The Quint

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