Sudan Massacre

Why in news?

Over 60 people had been massacred in Sudan's Darfur region.

What had happened?

- This marks a further escalation in the violence blighting the territory since the 2019 ouster of Sudan's dictator Omar al-Bashir.
- About 500 armed men targeted the Masalit community in west Darfur.
- 20 people were gunned down in a South Darfur town.
- This had happened when displaced farmers were returning to the region under a government-backed agreement with the original landowners.
- Days earlier, a police station was burned down, vehicles were set on fire by protesters in a small town, and militias attacked another.
- So, Sudan declared an emergency in the North Darfur region.

What do these incidents remind?

- These incidents are a reminder of the unfinished task of restoring stability in Darfur.
- This is racked by a conflict between the nation's Arab rulers and the African ethnic communities demanding greater autonomy from Khartoum.
- Nertiti town in central Darfur has become the epicentre of the growing opposition in the region.
- The mass sit-ins since June have attracted wider support from the professional classes.
- These classes have spearheaded the 2019 popular uprising that led to the fall of the autocratic regime of Mr. Bashir.

What are the demands?

- Women's groups demanded for a basic protection following the violence.
- In response, Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok has announced the deployment of additional security forces in the region.
- However, the continuing tensions merely reinforce concerns that the government's assurances have not translated into concrete measures.
- Another key demand is the hand-over of Mr. Bashir to The Hague to be tried for genocide and atrocities in Darfur.

- [Mr. Bashir is now imprisoned in Khartoum.]

What would this hand-over mean?

- Extraditing Mr. Bashir could serve as a useful trade-off for the government to restore ties with the West.
- Sanctions would be removed and investments would arrive.
- Sudan's population counts on advances in economic growth and guarantees of democratic freedoms to better its prospects overall.
- But, top military officials in the transitional government are concerned about the risk that others close to him could be implicated.

What would be tested?

- The issue will test the tenuous ties between the military and the civilian-led government.
- It will also test the credibility of progress to a participatory democracy.

What could be done?

- At any rate, securing the peace in the nation's west is critical for Sudan's broader democratic transition that was set in motion last year.
- An immediate end to the violence in Darfur should be Sudan's uppermost priority.
- Restoration of normalcy is also the only route to the timely conduct of democratic elections.

Source: The Hindu

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