Syrian Conflict Concerns

Why in news?

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The local Syrian populace have assigned filters to ‘news’ and ‘threats’ issued locally and globally.

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What are the ongoing concerns in Syria?

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- Since March 2011, fighting in Syria has killed an estimated 465,000 people, injured more than one million.
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- The wars has forced about 12 million people or half the country's pre-war population from their homes.
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- Forces loyal to the Syrian government have retaken major rebel strongholds, as well as large swaths of territory in the country's south in recent months.
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- Recently US conducted drills with rebel forces (anti-Assad faction) in South-Eastern Syria.
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How Syrian neighbourhood sees Syrian events?

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- In Syria few Syrian populace assign certain non-serious threats as ‘dawda’ (noise) and more serious ones as tahdid (threat).
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- A majority of the Syrians dubbed USA’s drill as it ‘dawda’, but USA cleared that such exercises were a show of force.
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- US also claims Russian administration for the miscommunication or escalation of the tensions in this region.

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- This assertion on preventing of any ‘escalation’ is probably where the Syrians know the US limitation in entering the Syrian quagmire.
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What are the concerns faced by Iran in this regard?

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- Iran and Syria recently signed an agreement on defence and technical cooperation in Damascus.
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- Iran’s Defence Ministry claimed that the agreement “will define the areas of bilateral presence, participation, and cooperation in defence ties”, adding that Syria has put the era of war behind it and has entered the era of reconstruction.
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- US exercise on Syrian soil made Iranians to worry, as the exercises took place is Al-Tanf, which sits on the strategically significant Baghdad-Damascus highway.
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- This highway is once a major supply route for Iranian weapons into Syria.
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- US dominance on the Al-Tanf base makes it a bulwark against Iran and part of a larger campaign against Iran’s military expansion in the Middle East.
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- It signifies that the US is narrowing down its Middle Eastern objectives sharply to that of limiting Iranian influence.
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What is in the future?

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- Clearly signifying a reduction in their active military presence in Syria, Iran might be looking at helping reconstruction and de-mining in the post-war effort.
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- Reducing Iranian presence against Iranian wishes will be quite the tight rope walk for Assad. Iran is Assad’s only all-weather friend.
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- The Syrian civil war might be coming to a close, but the larger war is far

from over and Iran is the one friend Syria needs in the Middle Eastern vicinity.
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- The only hope for Assad is if Iran volunteers to reduce presence and limit influence to backchannels in Syria.
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- Also, the popular grain in Iran is against foreign intervention or investments into expensive military expeditions, when their own economy is in a downward spiral.
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Source: Business Line

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