The Post-Merkel Chapter in Indo-German Ties

Why in news?

An era of German politics ended as Angela Merkel handed over the chancellery to Olaf Scholz, opening a new chapter for Europe's biggest democracy.

Why is Angela Merkel's tenure so significant?

- Angela Merkel was the first woman Chancellor from the conservative party and has been the Chancellor for 16 years from 2005 to 2021.
- Her middle-of-the-road approach won her support at the domestic and European levels.
- Thrice she formed a government with the Social Democrats, termed the "Grand Coalition".
- As a strong export-based economy, Germany under Merkel outperformed France, the UK, Spain, and Italy in Europe, and posted robust exports behind only China and the US.
- During her tenure, the innovative "**kurzarbeit**" short-time work scheme saved thousands of jobs and prevented layoffs.

To know more about the Angela Merkel era, click here

What is the significance of this transition?

- For the first time in 16 years, Germany has a government without the Christian Democratic Union.
- Negotiations among the Social Democratic Party (red), the Free Democratic Party (yellow) and the Greens have resulted in the triparrtite"traffic light" coalition led by Olaf Scholz.
- For the first time, the foreign ministry is headed by a woman, Annalena Baerbock.

What issues demand the immediate attention of the new Chancellor?

- Concerns over the pandemic that continues to spiral
- The risk of a looming conflict with Russia on the Ukrainian border
- Maintaining European cohesion in the continuing wake of Britain's departure from the European Union

- Contending with Washington, an ally that has grown less dependable in recent years

What is the scope for Ind0-German relations post Merkel era?

- **Significance of Ind0- German relations -**The coalition document which was recently released contains a strong reference to India and the importance of strengthening the Indo-German strategic partnership.
- India is mentioned very prominently in the coalition treaty, signalling the ever growing importance of the partnership between the two countries.
- **Convergence over sectors**- Germany views India as an important partner for resolving global issues, including climate change, food security, energy and international peace and security.
- The Merkel initiative of establishing inter-government consultations should continue.
- **Indo-Pacific** – Germany, together with France, pushed for a European Union's Indo-Pacific Strategy which was released in 2021.
- India should be an important node while discussing issues relating to international security because Germany has an increased realisation of the importance of the Indo-Pacific.
- **Trade**- India is also mentioned in the context of the EU-India Connectivity Partnership as well as the Free Trade Agreement (FTA).
- India and Germany must realise the cooperative goals of the IP guidelines by involving businesses.
- German companies must be encouraged to use the liberalised PLI scheme to establish manufacturing hubs in India, which can export to ASEAN and Africa.

The India-EU Connectivity Partnership was launched inMay 2021 in the India-EU Leaders meeting in Porto, Portugal.

It was launched in digital, energy, transport, and people-to-people sectors, enabling the two to pursue sustainable joint projects in regions spanning from Africa, Central Asia to the wider Indo-Pacific.

- **Countering China**- The EU-India Connectivity Partnership was announced at the EU-India leaders meeting as a tool to counter China.
- The coalition sees the conclusion of an India-EU BTIA as an important aspect that will help develop relations.
- **Energy and transportation**- The high-speed railway project has been

hanging on for some time now.

- Germany can contribute to green railway infrastructure in a major way.
- **Contribution to African region**- India and Germany may initiate an Africa vaccine production facility.
- Germany has committed 250 million euro in loans to Africa for this.
- If it is implemented with India, as in the Quad initiative, such a facility can be established in the underserved East African region.
- **Climate**- Germany may pursue a more potent green foreign policy and climate agenda.
- If the German foreign ministry starts adopting an aggressive green role and determines its foreign policy engagement based on how German values and climate issues are seen by its counterparts, it may affect the bilateral relations.
- India and Germany must think afresh to engage more closely in areas of complementarity.

References

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