Amos Oz, Israeli Writer

Why in News?

Amos Oz, an Israeli writer and supporter of a two-state solution to the Palestinian conflict, passed away recently.

What was his contribution?

- Mr.Oz had accounted for every aspect of the divided land through novels, essays, a best-selling memoir, and interviews for over 50 years.
- He wrote about his country's rise following the Holocaust and life after, the struggles, contradictions, the push and pull between Jews and Arabs.
- He argued that granting of statehood to Palestine is "a question of life and death for the State of Israel."
- Relations between the two are at its worst and with U.S. President recognizing Jerusalem as the Israeli capital last year has put more obstacles on the road to peace.

What is his background?

- Oz was born Amos Klausner in Jerusalem to Eastern European immigrants.
- His father a right-wing academic, and mother a story-teller.
- At 15, he went to live in a kibbutz by himself, changing his surname to the Hebrew for "strength."
- He worked as a canteen worker and tractor driver and held various other jobs, but his heart was on writing.
- As a child he admits to being a "little Zionist-nationalist fanatic — self-righteous, enthusiastic and brain-washed".
- But after fighting in the 1967 and 1973 wars, he realized that there are two sides to a story.
- The boy-narrator in his book, Panther in the Basement, is full of righteousness but soon learns that there are things in the world that can be seen in a different way.

What was his stand?

- Though he pushed for a two-state solution, Oz was wary about dealing with the hard-line Hamas in Gaza.
- The powerful stories, of loss and longing where the personal and political overlap, that enrich most of his books will be his legacy.
- Oz's beautiful memoir, A Tale of Love and Darkness, is the tragic tale of his mother's suicide as also the city of Jerusalem in the 1940s, full of open hearts and capacious souls.

Source: The Hindu

