Life of Mugabe and Ruins of Zimbabwe

Why in news?

Former Prime Minister of Zimbabwe Robert Gabriel Mugabe passed away recently.

Who is Robert Gabriel Mugabe?

- Robert Gabriel Mugabe is a Zimbabwean revolutionary and politician who served as Prime Minister of Zimbabwe for nearly four decades.
- He was a representative figure among Africa's anti-colonial nationalists.
- Mugabe had led his country to freedom, promising to remove poverty and usher in prosperity.
- Soon after he negotiated independence from Britain in 1980, Mugabe spoke about reconciliation with the white minority that had oppressed the native communities, and of building a multi-racial society.
- This was in sharp contrast to many African nationalist governments which had sought to rebuild their society and economy by expelling minority communities that controlled the resources.

How Mugabe's policy ruined the administration of Zimbabwe?

- Mugabe followed a pattern of centralized power, he overstayed in office and turned into an authoritarian ruler.
- He banned all opposition and ruled with an iron fist, until his luck ran out and he had to leave the office.
- Mugabe's reconciliation project was hindered by the reality on the ground, where almost all arable land was owned by the white minority while its former colonial ruler, Britain, refused reparations to facilitate distribution of resources.
- Zimbabwe's largely agrarian economy collapsed in the wake of land seizures in the last decade, leading to hyperinflation, corruption and collapse of the state itself.
- Mugabe's record mirrors similar failures elsewhere in the African continent, where a host of nationalists had failed to translate the imagination of the anti-colonial struggles they led to building successful democracies.

- Ideas like Pan Africanism, African socialism, Pan Arabism and Negritude could not transcend the logic of capitalism and the nation-state.
- The transition from colony to the republic was also complicated by Cold War politics and the reluctance of the former colonial powers to let go of their influence.
- Thus the projects of nationalization and socialization of resources of the leader like Mugabe could not meet the needs and aspirations of their people.

Source: Indian Express

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