

**ENDLESS WOES : ON THE ISRAEL-HAMAS
CONFLICT AND PALESTINE****The Hindu**

Paper - II (International Relations)

Thirteen days after Hamas carried out a brutal attack on Israel, killing some 1,400 people, Israel's air strikes on the besieged, defenceless Gaza continue with disproportionate ferocity, killing 3,785 Palestinians, including hundreds of children. As Israel is amassing troops and tanks on its border with Gaza in preparation for a ground invasion, after ordering some one million people to evacuate from the northern half of the land strip, U.S. President Joe Biden and British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak travelled to Israel to declare their support for the Jewish nation's "right to defend itself". Mr. Biden's visit came hours after an attack on a hospital in Gaza left at least 500 dead. The Palestinians say the hospital, which was sheltering thousands, was hit by Israeli jets, while Israel claimed that a rocket fired by Palestinian militants caused the explosion. While truth is the first casualty of war, a vengeful Israel's mindless bombing of a tiny, blockaded enclave is pushing its 2.3 million people into an unimaginable struggle of life and death, even as the powerful nations are either looking away or busy backing Israel's campaign. Mr. Biden announced that Israel has allowed to let some 20 trucks of humanitarian aid into Gaza from Egypt. While any aid is welcome, 20 trucks of aid for two million people is, as the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies put it, "a drop in the ocean".

The October 7 Sabbath attack that Hamas carried out in Israel should be condemned without any hesitation. At the same time, collectively punishing Gaza in the name of fighting Hamas and carrying out indiscriminate bombing that is killing hundreds a day do not make Israel any better than Hamas. Moreover, this approach of the Israeli state towards the Palestinians has neither improved Israel's security nor helped the stakeholders find a solution to the crisis. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, on whose watch the country's biggest security crisis unfolded, says he will "crush" Hamas. But Israel does not have easy options. Reoccupying Gaza would lead to a prolonged urban war of attrition. Hamas rose to prominence using the vacuum left by the failures of Fatah and the Palestinian Liberation Organization. If Israel manages to diminish Hamas's influence in Gaza, nobody knows what comes next as the Palestine question, which is the ongoing Israeli occupation, remains unaddressed. In an ideal world, the U.S., the most powerful country which is ruled by a President who has stated his commitment to "a foreign policy centred on human rights", should be enraged by what its ally is doing and apply pressure on Tel Aviv to stop the bombing and start talking, involving regional powers. But as that is a non-possibility as of now, Israel is set to continue the attacks with impunity, multiplying the woes of millions of Palestinians.

Who is Hamas?

Hamas is a Palestinian political and militant organization that currently governs the Gaza Strip, one of the two Palestinian territories. Though it is headquartered in Gaza City, it also has a presence in the West Bank, in which Fatah exercises control.

What was the Yom Kippur War?

- ❖ The Yom Kippur War, also known as the Ramadan War, the October War, the 1973 Arab–Israeli War, or the Fourth Arab–Israeli War, was an armed conflict fought from October 6 to 25, 1973, between Israel and a coalition of Arab states led by Egypt and Syria.
- ❖ On the holiest day on the Jewish calendar, Yom Kippur, otherwise called the Day of Atonement, Israel was caught off guard by invading forces from Egypt and Syria.
- ❖ Motive: Egyptian and Syrian forces launched a coordinated attack against Israel on Yom Kippur, hoping to win back territory lost to Israel during the third Arab-Israeli war, in 1967.
- ❖ 1973 war thus ended in an Israeli victory but at great cost to all the parties.
- ❖ The war initiated a peace process, leading to the Camp David Accords in 1978, where Israel returned the Sinai Peninsula to Egypt, and the 1979 Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty, the first Arab country to recognize Israel as a state.
- ❖ However, Syria did not benefit from the war and ended up with no gains, while Israel expanded its occupation of the Golan Heights.

Expected Question

Que. Consider the following statements in the context of Yom Kippur war-

1. This war took place in 1973.
2. The Arab coalition was defeated in this.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) Only 1
- (b) Only 2
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Answer : c

Mains Expected Question & Format

Que.: What is the dispute between Israel and Palestine? What are the reasons for Hamas' current attack on Israel? Discuss.

Answer Format :

- ❖ Discuss the Israel and Palestine conflict in the first part of the answer.
- ❖ In the second part, discuss the reasons for the current attack by Hamas on Israel.
- ❖ Finally give a conclusion showing the way forward.

Note: - The question of the main examination given for practice is designed keeping in mind the upcoming UPSC mains examination. Therefore, to get an answer to this question, you can take the help of this source as well as other sources related to this topic.