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Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict

Why in news?

The European Union lawmakers has urged the bloc to impose sanctions on Azerbaijan for carrying ethnic cleansing against Armenian residents of [Nagorno-Karabakh region](#).

Where is Nagorno-Karabakh located ?

- **Location-** Nagorno-Karabakh is a landlocked, mountainous and forested region falling within the boundaries of Azerbaijan.
- It is located in the South Caucasus region, which straddles the border between Eastern Europe and western Asia.
 - It is roughly made up of modern-day Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia.
- **Predominant population-** Nagorno-Karabakh, called Artsakh in Armenian, hosts a predominantly ethnic Armenian population (1.2 Lakh) having close cultural, social, and historical ties with Armenia.
- The conclave is connected to Armenia through the 5-km Lachin Corridor.
- **Religion-** The Armenians are Christians, while Azeris are Muslims.
- **Places** - The capital of Nagorno-Karabakh is Stepanakert, with Susha being another major city in the region.



What is the conflict about?

- The conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh is called one of the “*frozen conflicts*” of the world.
- **1921** - When Czarist Russia gave way to the Soviet Union in 1921, Nagorno-Karabakh was part of the Azerbaijan SSR (Soviet Socialist Republic).
- **1988** - Nagorno-Karabakh legislature passed a resolution declaring its *intention to join Armenia*, despite being geographically located within Azerbaijan.
- **1991** - With the collapse of Soviet Union in 1991, Armenia and Azerbaijan achieved statehood while Nagorno-Karabakh officially declared independence.
- **1993** - War broke between two countries, Armenia had captured Nagorno-Karabakh region and it additionally occupied 20% of the Azerbaijan’s geographical area.
- **1994** - ***Bishkek protocol*** (a ceasefire) was *brokered by Russia* making Nagorno-Karabakh de facto independent with a self-proclaimed government in Stepanakert, but still it relied on Armenia.
- **2020** - Both countries went to war again and Azerbaijan managed to seize control of the territory around Nagorno-Karabakh.
- **2022** - The Lachin Corridor was blockaded by Azerbaijan, causing severe shortages of essential goods including food, fuel and water in Nagorno-Karabakh.
- After an agreement to reopen the Lachin Corridor for aid deliveries sparked hopes of easing the crisis, Azerbaijan launched an anti-terrorist offensive in Nagorno-Karabakh and claimed to have regained full control over the region.
- **2023** - Almost all of the 1,20,000 ethnic Armenian population has fled the breakaway region since Azerbaijan seized it back in a lightning offensive.

What is India's stand on the conflict?

- **Diplomacy-** Post 2020 conflict, India believes that any lasting resolution of the conflict can only be achieved peacefully through diplomatic negotiations.
- **Peaceful resolution-** India supports the ***OSCE Minsk Group's*** continued efforts for a peaceful resolution of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

| Peaceful resolution | About |
|---|---|
| The package deal (1997) | It envisaged simultaneous removal of Armenian forces from occupied areas and the determination of Nagorno-Karabakh's status but was rejected. |
| The step-by-step approach (1997) | It suggested gradual steps starting with Armenian withdrawal, return of displaced refugees, and ending of hostilities followed by talks for a future resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh issue which was rejected too. |
| The common state proposal (1998) | It would endow Nagorno-Karabakh with a separate passport, law enforcement and currency, but within Azerbaijan's internationally recognised borders. |

- **2023 conflict-** India encouraged the parties to move forward on ensuring long-term peace and security in the region through dialogue and diplomacy.
- **Strategic ties-** The geographical location of the countries make the region a viable corridor for connecting with Russia and Europe through Central Asia and Iran.
- Armenia and Azerbaijan are members of the *International North South Transport Corridor (INSTC)*, which India is keen to develop.
 - India supports Armenia's proposal to include [Iran's Chabahar port](#) in INSTC.
- The tensions in the region directly impact India's plans to bypass Pakistan as the gateway to Europe and Russia.

India-Armenia Ties

- **Historical relation** - Indian settlements in Armenia were established by two princes (Krishna and Ganesh escaping from Kannauj) in 149 BC.
- Emperor Akbar, who is believed to have an Armenian wife Mariam Zamani Begum, granted Armenian traders privileges and considerable religious freedom.
- Today, the Armenian community is mainly settled in Kolkata.
- **Diplomatic relations** - With Armenia, India opened its embassy in 1999, has a treaty relationship, and has received as many as 3 Heads of State. There have been 2 visits from India at the level of Vice President.
- **Political relations-** Armenia publicly endorses India's position on the resolution of the Kashmir issue on a bilateral basis and supports India's aspiration for a permanent seat in the expanded UN Security Council.
- **Defence ties-** In 2022, the India signed a deal to supply Armenian with PINAKA multi-barrel rocket launchers, anti-tank munitions, and ammunitions worth US 250 million dollars.

India Azerbaijan Ties

- **Historical ties**-The 'Ateshgah' fire temple in the vicinity of Baku is an 18th-century monument that has wall inscriptions in Devanagari and Gurmukhi.
- Silk route is a surviving proof of the hospitality that Indian merchants to Europe enjoyed in Azerbaijani cities such as Baku and Ganja.
- **Diplomatic relations** -After the collapse of the Soviet Union, India recognised the independence of Azerbaijan and established diplomatic relations.
- However, Azerbaijan's proximity to Pakistan has been perceived as an irritant in the ties and there has not been a single visit at the level of the Head of State/ Government between the two countries.

What about the global response?

- Former International Criminal Court Chief Prosecutor warned that there was a reasonable basis to believe Azerbaijan was committing a genocide in Nagorno-Karabakh region using starvation as "invisible genocide weapon".
- The European Parliament approved a resolution saying it considers that the current situation amounts to ethnic cleansing and strongly condemns threats and violence committed by Azerbaijan troops.
- The lawmakers called on EU's 27 member states to adopt targeted sanctions against individuals in the Azerbaijani government over the assault and alleged human right violations in Nagorno-Karabakh.

References

1. [Indian Express-Nagorno-Karabakh conflict history](#)
2. [The Hindu- EU Parliament decries ethnic cleansing in Nagorno-Karabakh](#)



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