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FEBRUARY 28 ATTACK TO JUNE 18 PEACE AGREEMENT

» February 28

- The United States and Israel launched a war against Iran. In an airstrike on Iran's capital, the country's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and several senior military commanders were killed. A school in the city of Minab was attacked, resulting in the deaths of 156 people, including 120 children.

» March 1

- In retaliation, Iran began launching airstrikes against countries hosting U.S. military bases in the region and against American allies.

» March 2

- The Lebanese group Hezbollah entered the conflict by firing missiles into northern Israel in support of Iran.

» March 4

- An Iranian warship returning home after participating in an international naval parade in India was attacked and destroyed by the United States near Sri Lankan waters. A total of 104 sailors were killed or reported missing.

» March 9

- Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei assumed office as Iran's new Supreme Leader.

» March 17

- Ali Larijani, Secretary of Iran's National Security Council, was killed in U.S.-Israeli attacks.

» March 18

- Iranian Intelligence Minister Esmail Khatib was assassinated.

» March 21

- Following the sharp rise in global crude oil prices caused by Iran's closure of the Strait of Hormuz, the United States temporarily lifted restrictions on the sale of Iranian oil that had already been exported.

- » April 8
- The United States and Iran agreed to a two-week ceasefire.
- » April 11
- A delegation led by U.S. Vice President J.D. Vance held direct talks with senior Iranian negotiators in Pakistan. As no agreement was reached, the U.S. Navy began a maritime blockade against Iranian ports.
- » April 17
- The Strait of Hormuz was reopened but was closed again the following day.
- » April 21
- As Iran failed to respond to U.S. negotiations, Vice President J.D. Vance's planned visit to Islamabad for a second round of talks was postponed.
- » April 22
- U.S. President Donald Trump extended the ceasefire with Iran indefinitely.
- » May 4
- The Project Freedom initiative, launched to provide security for ships passing through the Strait of Hormuz, was suspended after just two days.
- » June 8
- Mutual attacks by Israel and Iran raised fears of a renewed full-scale war.
- » June 10
- The United States launched strikes against Iran after a U.S. military helicopter crashed following a collision with an Iranian drone.
- » June 15
- President Donald Trump formally announced that a peace agreement had been finalized and that the war between the two countries had ended.
- » June 18
- A peace agreement aimed at ending the conflict, which had lasted for more than three months, was electronically signed by the Presidents of the United States and Iran.

CAN COOPERATIVE FEDERALISM BE ACHIEVED?

- Although India has a federal system of government, it is not a federation created by provinces like the United States. Instead, it was designed as a federation with a strong central government to preserve national unity. That is why Article 1 of the Indian Constitution describes India as a "Union of States."

Today News...

- In other words, India is an integration of states. Nowhere in the Constitution is India described as a "Federation of States." This is a major difference between India and the United States. Nevertheless, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar stated that the Indian Constitution possesses a federal structure because powers are divided between the Union and the States.
- » The Principle of Federalism
- Part XI of the Indian Constitution is considered the core of Indian federalism. It deals with the distribution of powers, legislative authority, administrative relations, and mechanisms for resolving disputes between the Union and the States.
- The Seventh Schedule divides powers into three lists : Union List, State List, Concurrent List
- Parliament alone can legislate on subjects in the Union List, while State Legislatures can make laws on subjects in the State List. Both Parliament and State Legislatures can legislate on subjects in the Concurrent List. This division of powers is regarded as a fundamental pillar of Indian federalism.
- However, certain constitutional provisions that give overriding authority to the Centre are often viewed as inconsistent with the ideal of federalism.
- » An Extraordinary Historical Context
- When the Constituent Assembly drafted the Constitution, India was facing extraordinary circumstances, including Partition and communal violence. These conditions greatly influenced the shape of Indian federalism.
- Many members of the Constituent Assembly feared that highly autonomous states could threaten national unity in the future. Therefore, leaders such as Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Jawaharlal Nehru, and Alladi Krishnaswami Ayyar believed that a strong central government was essential for maintaining India's unity.
- According to Articles 256 and 257 of the Constitution, Parliamentary laws must be implemented by the states, and the Union Government may issue directions to ensure compliance. States, while exercising their executive powers, should not obstruct the executive authority of the Union.
- Critics argue that such provisions reduce state autonomy, whereas supporters contend that they are necessary to ensure uniform administration across the country. At the same time, the Constitution allows the Union to entrust certain administrative functions to states and vice versa. This is an example of cooperative federalism in practice.
- » Interstate Disputes and Cooperation
- Disputes between states, especially river-water disputes, often create tensions. Parliament has the authority to establish tribunals to resolve such conflicts.
- Under Article 263, the President may establish an Inter-State Council to facilitate coordination among states. This institution represents one of the most important features of cooperative federalism.
- Between 1950 and 1967, a single political party governed both the Centre and most states, minimizing conflicts. However, as regional parties became stronger, states increasingly emphasized their rights and autonomy, leading to more frequent debates about central intervention.

» Cooperative Federalism

- One of the fundamental questions before the Constituent Assembly was whether India should adopt a federal system with stronger states or a stronger Centre.
- Those advocating state autonomy argued that decentralization was necessary to protect India's diversity. Those favoring a strong Centre maintained that national unity required a powerful central government.
- As regional parties gained influence, debates intensified regarding state autonomy, taxation powers, financial resources, revenue sharing, and central intervention.
- Although the Constituent Assembly imposed certain limitations on federalism due to the extraordinary circumstances of the time, it did not intend to weaken states significantly.

» Changing Institutional Framework

- The earlier Planning Commission was replaced by NITI Aayog.
- The Planning Commission provided representation to all states, and decisions were often based on consultations with them. Critics argue that under NITI Aayog, the preferences of the Union Government have become more influential in decision-making.
- The GST Council, established in 2017, is frequently cited as an example of cooperative federalism. However, critics contend that it has reduced the taxation autonomy of states.
- Another continuing controversy concerns education. Originally a State List subject, education was moved to the Concurrent List during the Emergency period (1975–77), and this decision continues to face criticism.

» The Need for Consensus

- Issues such as : Financial distribution among states, The powers of NITI Aayog, The impact of GST, Returning education to the State List, The National Education Policy, The Three-Language Policy, continue to generate disagreements. Many observers attribute these tensions to excessive centralization of authority. Therefore, achieving consensus has become increasingly important.
- Strengthening Cooperative Federalism : For cooperative federalism to succeed, both the Union and State Governments must work together. Cooperation and mutual consultation are essential.
- Several commissions have emphasized this : The Sarkaria Commission (1983) recommended a strong Centre while increasing consultation with states. The Punchhi Commission (2007) emphasized strengthening cooperative federalism.
- Although the Rajamannar Committee Report (1969) was not fully accepted, it sparked a nationwide debate on federalism.
- There can be no disagreement that India must remain a united nation. However, that unity should not be based solely on centralized authority. It should emerge through the consent, participation, and cooperation of the states. Such an approach offers the most sustainable solution to the challenges of Indian federalism.