

## Aiding Afghans

### What is the issue?

The Prime Minister has called for the international community to provide Afghanistan with immediate and unhindered access to humanitarian assistance.

### What is the current crisis in Afghanistan?

- In Afghanistan, banks are running out of money, civil servants have not been paid and food prices have soared, leaving millions at risk of severe hunger.
- The country is struggling with drought and severe poverty following the decades of war.
- The U.S. has frozen the reserves of Afghanistan making the situation vulnerable.
- The Taliban government's refusal to allow women to work and stopping girls from schooling have complicated the issue.



### What does UNHCR report say?

- UNHCR has published a report that states that half the population in Afghanistan (more than 20 million people) are in need of lifesaving

humanitarian assistance.

- An estimated 270,000 Afghans have been newly displaced inside the country since January 2021.
- The number of civilian casualties has risen 29 per cent during the first quarter of this year compared to 2020.
- The UN has received only 35% of the funds needed for its relief operations.

### **How can the situation be eased?**

- EU has already committed \$1.15 billion for Afghanistan and neighbouring countries where refugees have fled.
- The U.S. and China pledged \$1.1 billion at a donor conference in Geneva last month.
- G20 leaders have also pledged to help for Afghan humanitarian crisis at special summit.
- Maintaining links with terror groups including those that target India leaves little space for government to increase its engagement or to send aid directly to the new regime.
- Coordinating with the Taliban did not mean recognising their administration and hence India could contribute to international agencies that are working with displaced Afghans.
- The government could also consider liberalising its visa regime for Afghans.
- As a goodwill gesture, India could send food aid, including wheat, grain, fortified biscuits and other packaged food directly to Kabul.
- Regional leader like India have to play a key role in unfolding the humanitarian crisis because not only Afghans but also the rest of the world will pay a heavy price.

**Source: The Hindu**