

## **Al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri's Killing**

### **Why in news?**

The al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri was killed at a Kabul safe house by an American drone.

### **Who is Ayman al-Zawahiri?**

- Zawahiri, the Egyptian doctor-turned-terrorist-in-chief, had been leading al-Qaeda since the 2011 killing of his predecessor, Osama bin Laden. Zawahiri was an instrumental figure in most of al-Qaeda's big attacks, from the American embassy bombings in east Africa in August 1998 to the September 11, 2001 attacks.
- Inspired by the teachings of Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood cleric Sayyid Qutb, Zawahiri had formed an underground Islamist organisation as a teenager.
- Later, he headed the dreaded Egyptian Islamic Jihad, which merged with al-Qaeda a few months before the 9/11 attacks.
- Since then, he had been number two in al-Qaeda, which he took over after bin Laden's death.
- U.S. officials say Zawahiri moved back to Afghanistan earlier this year that turned out to be his last hiding place.

### **What will be the impact of the killing on the U.S.?**

- The operation is a significant counterterrorism win for the Biden administration just 11 months after American troops left the country after a two-decade war.
- US Secretary of State Antony Blinken accused the Taliban of violating the Agreement, by hosting and sheltering al-Zawahiri in Kabul
- The Taliban condemned the drone raid, also calling it a violation of the 2020 Doha Agreement.

*The Doha Agreement made the American and NATO withdrawal of forces from Afghanistan on the Taliban's assurances that the nation would not serve as a haven for al-Qaeda or ISIL to launch attacks against the US.*

### **What about al-Qaeda's presence in India?**

*As per the reports of officials, there are only 18 Indians known to have joined al-Qaeda between 2012 and 2015.*

- The police had arrested 22 members affiliated to the global terror group or were

inspired by its ideology.

- Over the past two years, surveillance had been mounted in Assam following reports that the Bangladesh-based Ansarullah Bangla Team (ABT), affiliated to al-Qaeda, was trying to scout for recruits.
- In 2014, Zawahiri, in a video, announced the creation of al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) to be led by an Indian Maulana, Asim Umar who is said to have been killed in a drone strike a few years ago.
- The AQIS, banned in 2018 under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA), was said to be backed by the Pakistani establishment to carry out attacks in India.
- In 2019, Zawahiri had for the first time released a Kashmir-centric video asking its cadres to inflict unrelenting blows on the Indian Army and make the country suffer.
- According to recent inputs, the group was trying to rebuild al-Qaeda's organisational machinery in India.
- Recently, the AQIS threatened that its members would carry out attacks in India in the backdrop of the controversial statements against Prophet Muhammed.

## References

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