

## **Fruits of incitement - US Capitol Hill Violence**

### **Why in news?**

An armed and angry mob of US President Donald Trump's supporters stormed Capitol Hill and clashed with police just as Congress convened to validate Joe Biden's presidential win.

### **What happened?**

- The U.S., said to be the "greatest nation on earth," became hostage to an ugly attempted coup led by a mob, with slogans of support for outgoing President Trump.
- The mob was eventually ejected, and lawmakers went on to reconvene and formally certify the election results.
- Mr. Trump too finally committed to an "orderly transition."
- However, major social media platforms locked Trump's accounts for violating their civic integrity policies.
- This includes inciting violence with months of contentious posts that made baseless allegations about electoral fraud.

### **What was the immediate cause?**

- The mob is said to have been methodically planned online via social media.
- The immediate trigger for the mob (Republican Trump's supporters) was the surprise victory of two Democratic candidates.
  - Democratic candidates Raphael Warnock and Jon Ossoff won in the 5 January 2021 run-off election in Georgia.
  - That election was necessitated by the fact that no candidate won 50% of the popular vote in the 3 November 2020 general election.
- Their win gives Democrats 50 seats in the Senate, which is tantamount to control of the upper chamber of Congress.
  - The incoming Vice-President, Kamala Harris, will cast a deciding vote in a tie.

### **What is the larger concern?**

- The January 6 [2021] mob attack exposes sheer viciousness.
- The event is an "unprecedented assault" on the very soul of democracy.
- Also, there was more than two months of hateful rage online and offline

following the 2020 election.

- This is a proof that political America is deeply polarised, brimming with anger and disenchantment at the ground realities.
- At the core is a sense of frustration that grips Middle America, including the white middle class and blue-collar workers, over the inevitable changes to the U.S. economy and society.
- There is a view that the forces of immigration and globalisation have led to this explosive combination of racial prejudice and economic insecurity.
- In reality, Mr. Trump's harsh rhetoric exploited this sense of alienation and socioeconomic dysfunction for narrow political and personal gains.

### **What lies ahead?**

- Now, Mr. Biden has an opportunity to strike a more balanced note.
- On the one hand, he has to revive the waning spirit of bipartisan consensus and tackle the thorny issue of comprehensive immigration reform.
- On the other, he has to redress the ills of runaway free-market liberalisation and forge a post-COVID-19 economic vision that can truly deliver on the American dream.

**Source: The Hindu**

