

## Political crisis in Iraq

### What is the issue?

More than nine months after Iraq held its October 2021 parliamentary elections, political leaders have been unable to form a government.

### What has led to the current deadlock?

- **No faith in democracy-** Iraq has failed to form a government after the October 2021 parliamentary elections in which Mr. Sadr's bloc won the most number of seats.
- Most Iraqis have simply lost faith that their democratic system will ever change their lives for the better.
- **Growing divisions-** A bitter power struggle between the country's dominant Shia parties have plunged the country into a deepening crisis, leading to the current violence.
- Usually in Iraqi politics, senior positions and ministries are parceled out to the three largest demographic groups in the country - Shiite Muslims, Sunni Muslims and the Kurdish ethnic group.
- Over the past few years, serious divisions have been growing.
- **Power struggle-** Part of the problem is the power struggle between Mr. Sadr and Mr. Maliki, the former Prime Minister who is a key leader of the Coordination Framework.
- **Foreign interference-** The rivalry has come about partially because al-Sadr is opposed to any foreign interference in Iraqi affairs, whether from the US or Iran.
- **The Coordination Framework** mostly represents militias formed in 2014 by local volunteers to fight against the Islamic State inside Iraq.
- These militias receive financial, military and even theological support from Iran and many members express allegiance to Iran over Iraq.

*Under muhasasa system, President is Kurdish, Prime Minister is Shia and Parliamentary speaker is Sunni in Iraq.*

### What do Sadrists want?

- In protest against the rival parties' continued boycott of Parliament, Mr. Sadr asked all the legislators of the Sadrist Movement to resign.
- The Coordination Framework took advantage of the resignation of the Sadrist lawmakers and went ahead with plans to form their government.
- Mr. Sadr, now out of Parliament, called for protests in the streets.
- The protestors stormed the Parliament building in the Baghdad's Green Zone.
- **Demands**

- Dissolution of Parliament
- Early elections
- Constitutional amendments to clear blockades that stand in the way of Mr. Sadr forming a majority government

### What lies ahead for Iraqi politics?

- **Sadr's demands-** As per the wishes of Mr. Sadr and his loyal followers, Parliament could be dissolved, and early elections could be called.
- Mr. Sadr's readiness to reach political tie-ups with the Sunnis, Kurds and left-leaning parties enhances his chances of forming a majority government, provided the political impediments are removed.
- **Shia Coordination Framework's demands-** The second possibility is the Shia Coordination Framework electing a new President and getting their choice elected as the next Prime Minister of Iraq irrespective of the protests.
- But, it runs the risk of violence as it would not be easy for the Framework to ignore their anger.

### References

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