

Anti-Defection Law

❖ Context

- The unfolding **political crisis in Maharashtra** has thrown the spotlight on the **anti-defection law**, and the roles of the Deputy Speaker and the Governor.

❖ About Anti-Defection Law

- The anti-defection law was **passed in 1985 through the 52nd Constitutional Amendment Act**.
- It added the **Tenth Schedule** to the Indian Constitution.
- This provision **prevents elected members from joining another political party** due to reward of office or other similar considerations.
- It **lays down the process by which a legislator may be disqualified** on grounds of defection.
- The decision on questions as to disqualification on ground of defection are referred to the **Chairman or the Speaker of such House**.
- The decision of the presiding officer **can be challenged in a court of law**.
- The law **does not specify a time frame** in which such a decision has to be made.
- Last year, the Supreme Court observed that **anti-defection cases should be decided by Speakers in three months' time**.

❖ Grounds of Disqualification

- If an elected member from a party **voluntarily gives up the membership of his party**.
- If a member **votes against the directive of the party** or ignores the whip.
- An **independent member joins a political party** after getting elected.
- A **nominated member joining a political party after six months** of getting nominated.

❖ Exceptions

- The law **will not be applicable if 2/3rd members of a party** have given their consensus for merging with another.
- **On being elected as the presiding officer** of the House, if a member voluntarily gives up the membership of his party or rejoins it after he ceases to hold that office, he won't be disqualified.

❖ Significance

- The anti-defection law has **provided stability to elected governments across the country**.
- It has **prevented ruling parties from indulging in horse trading** that was seen before the law.

Migration in India 2020-21

❖ Context

- Recently, a report named '**Migration in India 2020-21**', released by the **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI)**.

❖ Key Highlights

- The report separates the categories of '**temporary visitors**' and '**migrants**'.
- **Temporary Visitors:** It is defined as the ones who arrived in households after **March 2020** and stayed continuously for a period of **15 days or more but less than 6 months**.
- **Migrants:** It is defined as those, for whom the **last usual place of residence**, any time in the past, is **different from the present place of enumeration**.
- **0.7%** of the country's population was recorded as a '**temporary visitor**' across households during the July 2020-June 2021 period.
- Over **84%** 'temporary visitors' moved places for **reasons linked to the pandemic** ranging from loss of job/closure of unit/lack of employment opportunities, closure of educational institutions and health related reasons.

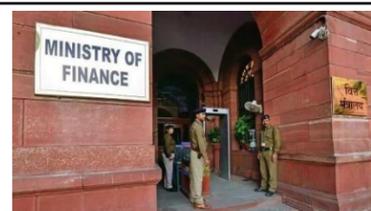
• All-India migration rate during this period:

- It was **28.9%** for July 2020-June 2021.
- **Migration rate in rural areas** - 26.5%.
- **Migration rate in urban areas** - 34.9%.
- **Male and female ratio:**
 - **Female:**
 - Females recorded a higher share of migration rate of **47.9%**.
 - It was **48%** in rural areas and **47.8%** in urban areas.
 - Among females, the highest level of migration rate was seen at **86.8%** for marriage.
 - **Males:**
 - The migration rate for males was seen at **10.7%**.
 - It was **5.9%** in rural areas and **22.5%** in urban areas.
 - **49.6%** of the males migrated in search of employment, to take up better employment/business/proximity to place of work.

Twin Deficit

❖ Context

- In its **monthly economic review report**, the **Ministry of Finance** highlighted two key areas of concern for the Indian economy - **fiscal deficit and current account deficit**.



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❖ About Fiscal Deficit

- It is the amount the government has to borrow to meet the **gap between the total expenditure and total non-debt receipts**.
- Higher fiscal deficit means the government will borrow more from the market **crowding out** savings available for the private sector.
- This will affect the sustainability of the **private investment cycle** which is being promoted by the government.
- The report has called for **curtailing revenue expenditure** by rationalisation.
- Capital expenditure** will help in creating productive assets like roads, ports etc. which will have a multiplier effect on value additions and economic growth.

❖ Current Account Deficit (CAD)

- The current account is composed of :
 - Trade account** - import and export of goods.
 - Invisible account** - import and export of services.
- The net deficit accounting both the accounts is called CAD.
- Widening CAD weakens domestic currency** as when imports are higher than exports, the demand of foreign currency to buy foreign goods is higher.
- It makes the **future imports costlier**.
- However, the domestic currency value is also impacted from the **capital side** too.
- Foreign portfolio investors** are pulling out money from the Indian stock market amid rising cost of money due to interest rates being raised by central banks to tame record level inflation.
- Foreign investors selling domestic assets raise the **demand of foreign currency** too.

INDIA'S BALANCE OF PAYMENTS TRAJECTORY (\$ bn)

	Q4 FY21	Q4 FY22	FY21	FY22
Trade deficit (goods)	-41.7	-54.5	-102.2	-189.5
Current account (deficit/surplus)	-8.1	-13.4	24	-38.7
Foreign Exchange (accretion/drawdown)	3.4	-16	87.3	47.5

Note: "-" denotes Deficit/Drawdown Source: RBI

Multi-modal Logistics Park Scheme

❖ Context

- The Centre has extended the concession period for its ambitious **multi-modal logistics parks (MMLPs)** scheme from **30 to 45 years**.

❖ Background

- The government has planned to build **35 mega freight-and-transport hubs** under its flagship **Bharatmala scheme**.
- It aims to smoothen freight mobility, improve efficiency and reduce logistics costs.
- A special purpose vehicle, **National Highways Logistics Management Ltd. (NHLML)**, has been set up by NHA for the purpose.

❖ About MMLPs

- Spread over **100 acres** each, they involve investment of **Rs. 1,000 crore** each.
- They are to be developed under **Public-Private Partnership (PPP)** model.
- They will transform the existing **point-to-point logistic model** in India to a **hub and spoke model**.
- In this model, freight from various places will arrive at a hub where it will be warehoused before being despatched to another hub and ultimately to destinations.

- This is expected to **reduce India's high logistics cost of 13-14% of GDP** to single digit.
- At the end of 45 years, the **facility will return to the government**.
- The foundation stone of **India's first MMLP** was laid at **Jogighopa, Assam** in Oct-2021.

❖ What is a Concession Agreement ?

- In essence, it is a **licence** awarded by the government to a private entity for execution and implementation of a public service.
- The government grants some **rights for a limited period** and in turn transfers certain **operating risks** to the private entity.

❖ Benefits of Longer Concession Period

- It would enhance investor interests.
- Since the park is to be developed in phases of 3-5 years, the earlier 30 year period would have left only 15 years for investors to recover their investment.

News in Between the Lines

Drug Resistant Typhoid

❖ Context

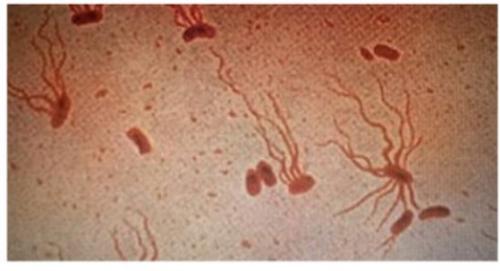
- According to a large genome sequencing study of the bacteria **Salmonella Typhi** published in *The Lancet Microbe*, the **effectiveness of antibiotics** for typhoid fever is threatened by the emergence of **resistant strains**.

❖ Key Highlights

- Typhoid causes **11 MN infections** & more than **100,000 deaths** per year globally.
- South Asia accounts for 70% of the global disease burden**.

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- Since 2000, multidrug resistant (MDR) *S Typhi* has declined steadily in India.
- Strains isolated were classified as MDR if they are resistant to **ampicillin, chloramphenicol and trimethoprim/sulfamethoxazole**.
- Even XDR strains for which only a single antibiotic is effective, have also been seen.
- The Indian government is considering the introduction of **two new typhoid conjugate vaccines** into the national immunisation program.

Insurance 'Pool' to Cover Fertiliser & Oil Shipments



❖ Context

- The **Rs. 500 crore 'pool'** created by the general insurance industry in India to provide insurance cover for shipments meant for importing fertilisers from **Russia, Belarus and Ukraine** may be extended to cover shipments of cheaper Russian oil.

❖ Background

- **India is the world's largest urea importer.** It also imports phosphatic and potassic fertilisers.
- After **Russia had invaded Ukraine** and **sanctions** were imposed by the US and Europe, India's **fertiliser supplies** were impacted.
- Indian **general insurers and reinsurer GIC Re** had **cancelled all marine covers** which were issued for the import and export business from Russia, Belarus and Ukraine that go through **Black Sea and Sea of Azov**.
- Any delay would have adversely affected the nation's **food security** in a couple of months.

❖ More About the 'Pool'

- The 'pool', then was initiated at the instance of the **Ministry of Finance** after receiving due approvals from the insurance regulator.
- The pool can only cover the **cargo of the shipment and not the hull**.
- The 'pool' for fertilisers is administered by **state-owned GIC Re** and participated by all the general insurers.
- Any claim within **Rs 500 crore per shipment of fertiliser** from these three countries can be paid directly from the new 'pool' without any reinsurance support.

❖ About Russian oil

- Russia is offering its crude oil at a **25-30% discount**.
- It has overtaken Saudi Arabia to become **India's second largest oil supplier after Iraq in May** this year.
- However, the extension of insurance cover to oil is likely to happen after Indian banks work out an arrangement with Russian lenders in wake of the sanctions.

Credit Lines on Prepaid Instruments



❖ Context

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has issued a notification disallowing **non-bank prepaid wallets and prepaid cards** from loading credit lines.

❖ Key Highlights

- It has clarified that its master direction on **prepaid payment instruments (PPIs)** does not permit loading of PPIs from credit lines - a practice being undertaken by several **fintech credit card companies**.
- These companies typically tie up with **banks or NBFCs** and offer credit lines into their prepaid wallets.
- Any non-compliance in this regard may attract penal action under provisions contained in the **Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007**.

❖ What are Credit Lines?

- A credit line is a **preset borrowing limit** that allows an individual or a business access to credit at any time, as per need.
- It can be tapped into by the customer till the limit offered is not exceeded.
- Most fintechs offer a **credit product alongside their main offerings**.

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Forest Fire



❖ What are Pre-Paid Instruments?

- These instruments facilitate transactions against the value stored within or on the instrument.
- They are in the form of payment wallets, smart cards, mobile wallets, magnetic chips, vouchers, etc. As per the regulations, **banks & NBFCs can issue PPIs.**

❖ Context

- Recently, wildfires have ravaged parts of **Spain, Germany and Greece**, which have been facing the worst of Europe's extraordinary heat wave.

❖ Key Highlights

- The wildfires in Greece, Spain and Germany have all been **linked to hotter temperatures and low humidity caused by climate change.**
- In Spain, the **Sierra de la Culebra** mountain range is the worst affected.
 - It has destroyed almost 25,000 hectares and forced the evacuation of residents of 18 municipalities.

❖ About Forest Fire

- A wildfire is a major fire that **breaks out unpredictably in combustible environments** such as dry forests or bush.
- It often **burns uncontrollably over a large area** and length of time.
- A forest fire can be **triggered by** natural factors such as **prolonged hot, dry weather or lightning strikes, or human carelessness.**
- Wildfires **require a "fire triangle" of fuel, oxygen, and heat** in order to grow and spread, and can be extinguished when at least one of the three elements is removed.
- One of the reasons wildfires cause immense destruction is the **speed of their spread, which depends on the weather, winds, fuel, and topography.**
- High temperatures and droughts have contributed to devastating wildfires in **California, Australia, Brazil, and southern Europe.**
- **Slopes**, especially those that face the sun and retain more heat, are more prone to catching fire.

Snake Island



❖ Context

- Recently, **Ukrainian forces claim to have scored a 'significant' victory** against Russian forces after launching a new attempt to re-take Snake Island in the Black Sea.
- The strategically important Snake Island, which belongs to Ukraine, was **captured by Moscow at the start of the war.**

❖ About Snake Island

- **Zmiinyi Island**, also known as Snake or Serpent Island, is a **small piece of rock less than 700 meters** from end to end.
- It has been described as **being "X-shaped"**.
- It is **located 35 km from the coast in the Black Sea**, to the east of the mouth of the Danube and roughly southwest of the port city of Odessa.
- It has an **important role in delimiting Ukrainian territorial waters.**
- The island has been known since ancient times and is marked on the map by the tiny village of Bile that is located on it.
- The island is less populated, reported to have under 30 people in 2012.

Kaliningrad

❖ Context

- Recently, **Russia has warned Lithuania of "serious" consequences** after it banned the rail transfer of some goods to the Russian territory of Kaliningrad.

❖ Key Highlights

- Lithuania says it is only following the EU sanctions imposed over Moscow's invasion of Ukraine.
- The **sanctions list includes coal, metals, construction materials and advanced technology.**

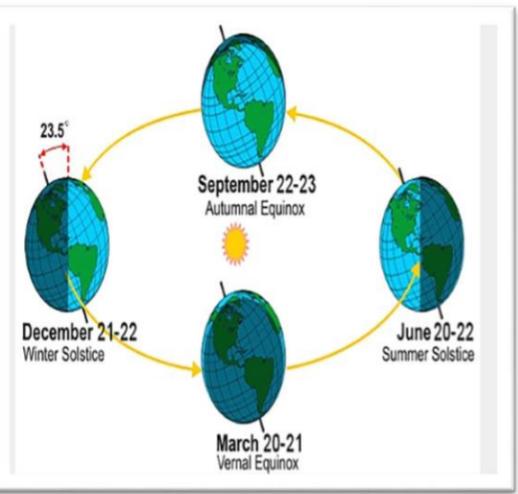
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- As a member of the Nato military alliance, Lithuania is protected by collective defense treaties.
- ❖ **Kaliningrad**
 - Kaliningrad is a **strategic region** where Russia's Baltic Fleet is headquartered.
 - It has **no border with mainland Russia**.
 - It is **bordered by EU and Nato members Lithuania and Poland**.
 - The western territory was **annexed from Germany after World War-2 in 1945**.
 - The region - where an estimated **one million people live** - relies heavily on imports of raw materials and spare parts from Russia and the EU.
 - Significance:** Kaliningrad is the **only Russian port on the Baltic Sea that is ice-free year round** and is an important launch point for the nation's naval fleet.
 - Its strategic location **prevents ships from having to circumnavigate Scandinavia** by way of a northern passage, traveling through the Arctic Ocean.

Summer Solstice 2022



- ❖ **Context**
 - **June 21** is the day of the summer solstice in the northern hemisphere.
- ❖ **Key Highlights**
 - The **summer solstice marks the beginning of the astronomical summer** and occurs when the earth has its maximum tilt towards the sun.
 - For temperate regions, the summer solstice is when the sun reaches its highest point in the sky.
 - The Earth orbits the sun at an angle.
 - So for **half the year**, the **Northern Hemisphere is tilted towards the Sun** and therefore, it is summer for the Northern hemisphere and winter for the Southern Hemisphere.
 - During the other half of the year**, the Northern Hemisphere is tilted away from the sun, thus creating winter in the Northern Hemisphere & summer in the south.
 - Solstices happen twice per year:**
 - One for the winter and one for the summer and this is interchanged depending on which Hemisphere you live in.
 - The longest day of the year happens on the day of the summer solstice since the earth receives the longest period of daylight during the day.
 - The Prime Minister of India suggested **June 21** as the **international day of yoga** at a UN address in 2021.

National Initiative for Promoting Upskilling of Nirman workers (NIPUN)



- ❖ **Context**
 - The government launched a project named **NIPUN** for skill training of 100,000 construction workers.
- ❖ **About**
 - It will provide trainees with '**Kaushal Bhima**', three-year accidental insurance with **coverage of Rs 2 lakhs**, **digital skills** such as cashless transactions and the BHIM app, orientation about entrepreneurship, and EPF and BOCW facilities.
 - The project NIPUN is an **initiative of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA)** under its flagship scheme of the **Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM)** to train over 1 lakh construction workers, through fresh skilling and upskilling programmes and provides them with work opportunities in foreign countries also.
 - The **National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC)**, is the **nodal agency** under the **Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE)**, Government of India, will be the Implementation Partner for the project NIPUN.
 - NSDC** will be responsible for the overall execution of **training, monitoring and candidate tracking**.
 - The **NIPUN project implementation** is divided into **three parts**, training through **Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)** at construction sites training through Fresh skilling by Plumbing and Infrastructure **Sector Skill Council (SSC)**.

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