

## Mains Master

### Old and strong

#### Context

The fall of the Soviet Union, the rise of India and China, the U.S.-China tensions, the deepening of U.S.-India ties, and the Russian-Chinese partnership intensified by Russia's break with the West and the war against Ukraine have had a profound effect on Russian-Indian relations. Of the three pillars of the Moscow-New Delhi relationship, only one remains: the arms trade. Russia remains a major supplier of weapons to India, and Russian equipment still makes up a vast portion of Indian Armed Forces' force structure; but Russia is facing competition in the Indian arms market. India's desire to diversify its supply of weapons and develop its own defence industry has resulted in declining Russian arms deliveries to India in recent years. But because of War-time sanctions, Russia has emerged as one of the largest Fuel suppliers to India, diversifying bilateral relations beyond defence. Recently India's FM paid visit to Russia and this Editorial by The Hindu, try to analyse the outcome of the visit.

#### Key Takeaways from Jaishankar's Russia Visit:

##### - Unwavering Commitment Amidst Global Uncertainty:

- Despite global tensions and India's delicate balancing act, Jaishankar's visit reaffirmed the unwavering commitment between India and Russia.
- Both nations demonstrated a willingness to address challenges and strengthen ties through concrete agreements and strategic dialogues.

##### - Smoothing Over Perceived Differences:

- The visit effectively countered any narratives of discord or weakening ties.
- Jaishankar's direct engagement with Putin, the length of his stay, and the warmth exchanged signaled a mutual desire to maintain close cooperation.

##### - Substantive Progress Across Key Areas:

- Agreements on Kudankulam nuclear power expansion, connectivity projects, trade talks, and joint military production showcased tangible progress.
- Continued coordination at multilateral platforms like the UN, SCO, and BRICS highlighted shared global visions.

##### - Resilience in the Face of Sanctions:

- India's unwavering commitment to increasing Russian hydrocarbon imports, despite Western sanctions, underscored the strength of their partnership.

##### - Reaffirming a "Constant" in World Politics:

- Jaishankar's declaration of the India-Russia relationship as "the only constant in world politics" over the past six decades sent a powerful message to both allies and rivals.

#### - Looking Ahead:

- The resumption of the annual leadership summit in 2024 signals a renewed commitment to high-level engagement.
- The focus now shifts to addressing pending issues like the rupee-rouble payment mechanism and S-400 delivery, while navigating a complex geopolitical landscape.
- **Enduring Partnership in a Rebalancing World:**
  - India and Russia's strategic convergence and shared history remain strong foundations for their partnership.
  - Their ability to weather global shifts and maintain close ties will be closely monitored by both supporters and detractors of the relationship.

### Desperation in distress: On migration attempts by Indians to the developed world

#### Context

The article explores recent Indian migrant outflows, pinpointing distress, vulnerability, and limited domestic opportunities as driving factors. It proposes solutions like crackdowns on traffickers, public education, and global collaboration.

The recent incident of Indian nationals being detained at a French airport and the sharp rise in attempts to enter the US through Mexico highlight a complex issue: the desperation driving some to seek dangerous and uncertain opportunities abroad.

#### Contributing Factors:

- **Distress in India:** Reports citing religious persecution and agrarian crisis suggest dissatisfaction and hardship as potential motivators.
- **Vulnerability and Misinformation:** Lack of awareness and potential exploitation by traffickers leave individuals susceptible to deception and dangerous journeys.
- **Limited Domestic Opportunities:** Restricted migration within the developed world and economic struggles at home may push some towards unconventional paths.

Addressing the Challenges:

- **Government Intervention:** Crackdowns on traffickers, investigation into the French incident, and addressing the root causes of distress in farming communities are crucial steps.
- **Raising Awareness:** Public education campaigns can empower individuals to recognize deceptive practices and make informed decisions.



• **Seeking International Collaboration:** Dialogue with destination countries and regional cooperation may enhance border security and address human trafficking networks.

## Moving Forward:

- Acknowledging the multi-faceted nature of migration is essential. Relying solely on border control overlooks the social and economic factors influencing people's choices.
- Investing in domestic opportunities, especially in rural areas, can provide viable alternatives and deter the allure of risky ventures abroad.
- Protecting vulnerable populations from exploitation and misinformation requires a comprehensive approach involving law enforcement, social assistance programs, and community outreach.

## Is right-wing populism seeing a resurgence across the world?

### Context

The article examines the global resurgence of right-wing populism, defining its characteristics, regional variations, and the factors fueling its rise. It delves into the challenges to democratic institutions, common ethno-nationalist trends, and the reasons behind growing distrust in governance and democratic processes.

### Overview of Right-Wing Populism Worldwide:

- **Definition of Right-Wing Populism:** It challenges the legitimacy of democratic institutions and claims to represent the true voice of the people against perceived elite or non-representative forces, combining economic appeals with identity-based grievances.
- **Left vs. Right-Wing Populism:** Left-wing populism focuses on rich elites dominating policy, while right-wing populism targets minorities as 'other' and questions their legitimacy, both sharing anti-democratic tendencies.

### Common Trends and Regional Variances:

- **Common Ethno-Nationalist Trends:** Prevailing majority vs. 'Other' identities across regions and blaming outsiders and minorities for societal issues.
- **Regional Distinctions:** Different issues and appeals based on unique contexts and the influence of strong vs. weak political party systems on populist emergence.

### Factors Fueling Right-Wing Populism:

- **Grievances and Systemic Collapse:** Traditional party systems collapsing, leading to a crisis of governance and a lack of trust in democratic processes.
- **Fiscal Space and Governance:** Limited fiscal resources leading to ineffective governance, resulting in governments resorting to identity-based appeals due to fiscal limitations.

### Root Causes of Growing Distrust:

- **Ideological Shifts:** Growing emphasis on ideology over governance shaping political outcomes and the rise of ethno-nationalist ideologies impacting social and political spheres.
- **Diverse Blame Game:** Common trend of blaming 'others' for societal issues, with specific issues driving discontent varying across regions.

## Is Pegasus spyware targeting journalists in India?

👤 Amnesty International and The Washington Post alleged ongoing use of the Pegasus spyware, targeting journalists in India, including Siddharth Varadarajan and Anand Mangnale.

📱 Amnesty's Security Lab found traces of Pegasus on their devices, allegedly installed via a "zero-click exploit," requiring no action from the device owner.

🔒 The exploit, named "BLASTPAST," involves attempting to link with Apple HomeKit and sending malicious content via iMessage.

🚚 NSO, Pegasus's maker, claimed vetting its technology only for law enforcement agencies fighting crime, denying targeting journalists or non-criminal individuals.

📅 In 2021, the 'Pegasus Project' highlighted potential surveillance of journalists and officials in India.

⚖️ A Supreme Court committee examined the allegations, with the government reportedly not cooperating, and activists petitioned the Court, alleging mass surveillance.

## Connected Lending

- 🏠 The RBI's recent announcement outlines plans to establish a unified regulatory framework concerning 'Connected Lending' (CL) for entities under its regulation.
- 🌐 'Connected Lending' refers to the extension of credit to individuals or firms linked through ownership or control, including direct or indirect ownership, exertion of control, or familial and group ties.
- 🇮🇳 Examples of connected parties include a firm's parent company, major shareholders, subsidiaries, affiliated entities, directors, and executive officers.

## Mudiyettu : Traditional temple ritual theatre

### A legend unfolds



**Age-old ritual:** The traditional temple ritual theatre of Mudiyettu, an offshoot of the Bhadrakali cult based on the tale of a battle between Goddess Kali and demon Darika performed by Thirumariyoor Kunjan Marar Smanaka Gurukulam in Irinjalakuda on Thursday. THILAKA KAKKAT