Greece’s Wall - Afghan Refugee Crisis

Why in news?

- Greece has built a 40-km long wall and installed a hi-tech surveillance system on its border with Turkey.
- To avoid heavy migration of Afghan citizens into Greece via Turkey, and then further into Europe, following the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan.

What is the Afghan refugee crisis?

- The Taliban takeover of Afghanistan has given way to a new refugee crisis.
- 400,000 Afghans have fled their homes since the start of 2021, including almost 300,000 since May 2021.
- Afghan nationals enter Turkey from Iran and then, via land or sea enter Greece to eventually get into Europe.



What is Greece’s and Turkey’s stance?

- The European Union and Greece have been in talks to help each other in the possibility of massive migration from Afghanistan.
- EU nations should collectively act towards supporting the countries in the region “which will be affected by the migration wave”.
- EU should help the Afghan citizens in Afghanistan and in neighbouring countries like Iran.
- But the cooperation on migration should be promoted based on mutual understanding and interests.
- Because, the EU is not ready and does not have the capacity to handle and afford another major migration crisis like the one in 2015.

What is the 2015 migrant crisis faced by Greece?

- The European Union faced a huge inflow of migrants from neighbouring countries, especially the middle-east, during the **2015 Syrian war**.
- More than 1.3 million people fled to Europe, seeking asylum in the EU, Norway and Switzerland.
- Over 75% of those arriving in Europe had fled conflict and persecution in Syria, Afghanistan or Iraq.
- Most of these people arrived in Greece and Italy.
- 800,000 refugees had entered Greece from Turkey via sea, which was 80% of migrants arriving in Europe by the sea in 2015.
- Of this, only 150,000 had entered Italy; the rest remained in Greece.
- In addition to the sea crossings, 34,000 crossed from Turkey into Bulgaria and Greece by land.
- In 2016, Greece and Turkey reached an arrangement to halt the inflow of migrants into Greece via Turkey in return for financial support for Turkey.
- Thereafter, any migrants who had not applied for asylum or whose applications were rejected

were sent back to Turkey.

- In 2020, Turkey had opened its borders for migrants to move towards Greece, stating that it had “reached its capacity”.
- The wall at the Greece-Turkey border now comes after a discussion on the Afghanistan crisis between Greek PM Kyriakos Mitsotakis and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.



Source: The Indian Express

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