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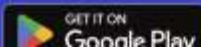


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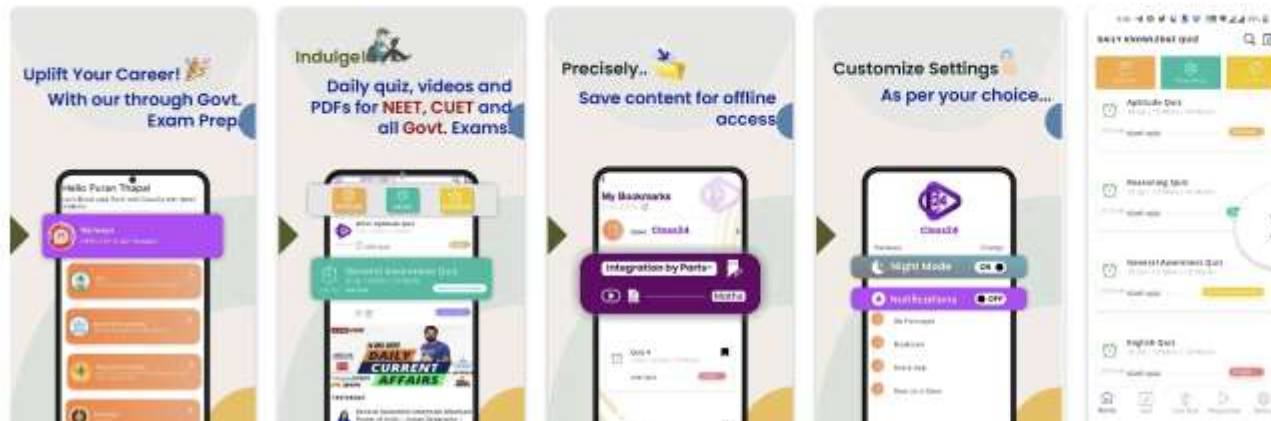
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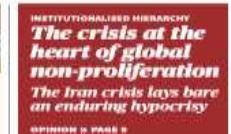
KEY PROJECTS
Semicon 2.0, new urea plants get Cabinet nod
BUSINESS ■ PAGE 12



CLINICAL DISPLAY
Spain roars past France, enters final
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DELIMITATION BILL
NDA pushes for a two-thirds majority
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INSTITUTIONALISED HIERARCHY
The crisis at the heart of global non-proliferation
The Iran crisis lays bare an enduring hypocrisy
OPINION ■ PAGE 6



EXPERIMENTAL PLAN
BSF to fence Sundarbans along Bangladesh border
NEWS ■ PAGE 6

INSIDE



Kota delivery row
Kln of five women write to President
NEWS

NEWS
The families of five women in Rajasthan's Kota who developed complications after their C-section delivery have written to President (Group) Murali Manjunath requesting for assistance if they die or require kidney transplant. The women have refused dialysis, insisting on a kidney transplant. ■ PAGE 4

Wangchuk loses 8.9 kg as his fast enters 18th day

NEW DELHI
Artist Sonam Wangchuk's indefinite hunger strike demanding resignation of Union Education Minister Dhamendra Prasad once again took a toll on Wednesday. He lost 8.9 kg since he began fasting, according to reports published by the Gorkha Janta Party over the past week. ■ PAGE 6

Mitra too ditches Mamata after ED issues summons

KOLKATA
In yet another setback to Trinamool Congress, chairperson Mamata Banerjee, senior leader and MLA Mitra crossed over to the rebel camp led by the leader of the Opposition, Nitya Banerjee. This comes a day after the Enforcement Directorate issued summons to him and his family members in an alleged recruitment scam. ■ PAGE 8

Dip in number of workers enrolled for job scheme

NEW DELHI
In the fortnight following the transition from the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme to the Atal Bhasidhar Mission, the number of registered workers fell from 27 crore to 26.35 crore, according to Ministry of Labour, a group of academics and activists. ■ PAGE 9

Kerala seeks T.N. help to combat narcotics menace

CHENNAI
Kerala Home Minister Rajitha Choudhary met Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C. Venu Mohan on Wednesday and discussed establishing a coordinated mechanism among the two southern States to crack down on drug peddlers and control the menace of narcotics. He said the two States would exchange intelligence to curb the menace. ■ PAGE 9

Iran threatens 'to halt all regional oil exports'

Oil and gas 'will either be for everyone or for no one', says Iran amid 'wave of strikes' by the U.S. | Blockade by U.S. has 'dismantled' the peace MoU, says Tehran; Brent crude price nears \$45 a barrel | Unless stocks are replenished, the world will be poorly equipped for the next shock, analysts say

AGENTS FRANKLY

TORONTO, WASHINGTON
Returning to war nearly a month after signing a memorandum of understanding towards peace in West Asia, the U.S. and Iran on Wednesday launched strikes on targets across the region. While the U.S. Central Command said it launched a "wave of strikes... designed to further degrade military capabilities," Iranian forces have used to attack commercial shipping in the Strait of Hormuz, Iranian state media reported. Explosions near the port city of Bandar Abbas, on the island of Qeshm, and on Bandar Imam Khomeini, Iranian media later said new U.S. strikes hit the

southern port city of Bush-
dir, home to the country's
only civilian nuclear plant.
Iran's Revolutionary
Guard said they targeted
the U.S. Fifth Fleet in Bah-
rain, where the military
said it had intercepted at-
tacks against civilian tar-
gets, while Jordan's armed
forces said they had downed three missiles
from Tehran. Deputy For-
eign Minister of the Islamic
Revolutionary Guard, Hossein
Shariat-
madari, said the renewed
U.S. blockade on Iranian
ports "has, in a way, dis-
mantled the Islamabad
memorandum", referring
to the interim deal reached
last month to halt hostil-
ties and pursue peace
talks. The Guards also
threatened on Wednesday
to halt all energy exports
from West Asia over the



U.S. blockade. "The export
of oil and gas from this re-
gion will be either for over-
economy or for no one," it
said.
The Brent crude oil, the
international standard,
traded close to \$45 a barrel
on Wednesday — more
than 15% higher than the
price before the war, but
still well below the nearly
\$120 reached at the height
of the conflict. Analysts
with the International Mo-
netary Fund (IMF) have
warned that while a sur-
plus of oil had kept prices
low, "much of that surplus
has now been used up."

"As tensions flare again
in the Strait of Hormuz,
that room from oil sur-
plus is now smaller and
shrinking further as spare
capacity has been de-
pleted, demand has con-
tinued to rise, and inven-
tories have been drawn,"
Adam Smith and Jean-
Marc Natal from the IMF
said in a blog post. "Un-
less inventories are replen-
ished, the world will start
from a weaker position
when the next shock
comes."

At the heart of the re-
sumption of hostilities has
been the dispute over the
strait of Hormuz, a water-
way that is crucial for oil
and gas flows.
Iran blocked the strait
after the U.S. and Israel
launched their massive at-
tack on February 28, using

it for leverage against its
rival for months before
briefly reopening it, and
then again saying it would
be closed "until the U.S.
ends its aggression".
The U.S., in turn, has
reopened its own block-
ade of Iran's ports, though
Mr. Trump has backed
down on a planned 20% le-
vy on ships using the strait.
In Tehran, there was no
sign of a return to conflict,
with Iran's state-owned
media saying it was watch-
ing the Strait of Hormuz
for any sign of aggression.
The retaliatory opera-
tions of the fighters will

continue, and the Strait of
Hormuz will remain closed
until the United States
ends its acts of aggression,"
the Guards have said.
A Norwegian tanker was
hit by an explosion caused
by an unidentified device
off the Oman coast early
Tuesday, the crisis re-
sponse company MTI Net-
work said.
Norwegian said one of its
naval vessels was struck dur-
ing an Iranian missile and
drones barrage, wounding
four crew members.
Since last week, re-
newed U.S. attacks have
killed at least 30 people in
Iran, government spokes-
person Farsnews Media-
gaza said. Separately, the mil-
itary announced that seven
of its personnel were killed
in Wednesday's strikes on
the southern.

Worth their salt



While some labourers at a saltpan in Thoudhukh, Tamil Nadu, on Wednesday, despite a good yield in salt, a major loss was seen in the industry with reduced demand for salt. ■ PAGE 10

Assam Rifles camp attacked, vehicles torched in Manipur

The Hindu Bureau GUWAHATI

A mob threw stones, van-
dalised an Assam Rifles
camp and damaged four
vehicles of the security
forces in Imphal town of
Manipur around 3.30 p.m.
on Tuesday.
The attack occurred af-
ter the paramilitary forces
launched an area domina-
tion patrol and search op-
eration based on "credible
intelligence inputs" regard-
ing the presence of armed
cadres in Imphal town.
At Makuloung, about 2 km away from the
nailed camp of the NSCN-
IM, an Ohlong.
The NSCN-IM (G M) refers to
the last militant faction of
the "National Socialist
Council of Nagaland". The
outlet prefers to call itself
the "National Socialist
Council of Nagaland".
The ceasefire Monitor-
ing Group, which ob-
serves, verifies, and re-
ports on compliance with



Assam Rifles camp (top) and remains of a vehicle following a mob attack in Sanjanti street of Imphal on Wednesday. ■ PAGE 11

Makuloung and Ohlong
villages. The columns ex-
ercised maximum restraint
and communicated with
the local representatives,
advising that the operations
were aimed solely at ensur-
ing security and maintain-
ing peace in the area, and
that the columns would
not enter any village with-
out the consent of the
authorities," the spokes-
person said.
At tensions escalated, a
large crowd gathered in
Imphal town around 5 p.m.
and prepared to march to
wards the Assam Rifles at
Naga Taptem in the dis-
trict. "Despite the withdra-
val of the columns, a large
mob reached the camp
around 9.30 p.m., hurled
stones, damaging property
and attempting acts of
violence," the spokesperson
said.
The mob vandalised and
damaged Assam Rifles
vehicles. A light vehicle

was set ablaze, while two
trucks were overturned
and damaged. A car of a ci-
vilian was also burnt dur-
ing the violence, an As-
sam Rifles official said.
Situation under control
Manipur force, who ap-
plied to disperse the vi-
olent crowd in coordination
with the Manipur Police
and the Central Reserve
Police Force, had subse-
quently regained control.
The situation in Imphal
is under control, a dis-
trict official said.
Neither the local peo-
ple nor the security per-
sonnel sustained any in-
juries, he said.
On July 10, unidentified
gunmen ambushed an As-
sam Rifles patrol in Ukhrul
district, killing two person-
nel and injuring several
others. Ukhrul, adjoining
Senapati, is considered the
stronghold of the NSCN-
IM, which is in cease-
fire mode since 1997.

India-U.K. social security pact is not retrospective

Arjun Lakshman LONDON

The India-U.K. Double
Contributions Convention
(DCC), allowing temporary
Indian and British workers
an exemption from paying
social security contribu-
tions in their host coun-
tries for 60 months, is not
retrospective, i.e., it will
not apply to Indians already
working in the U.K. and
British working in India
before July 15. The DCC
came into effect on Wed-
nesday. Normally, tempo-
rary foreign workers are ex-
empt from U.K. social
security contributions —
National Insurance (NI)
for the first 60 months.

**FULL REPORT ON
PAGE 14**



The reported data leak comes amid construction of four VVER reactors at the plant. ■ PAGE 15

Leak of Kudankulam nuclear plant data sparks 'commotion'

P. Subhakar TIRUVELVELI

The leak of highly sensitive
files of Kudankulam Nu-
clear Power Plant (KNPP),
reportedly as-
sessed by a ransomware
group from a contractor's
server, has triggered "ab-
solute commotion" in the
plant, KNPP sources said
on Wednesday.
After commissioning
two 1,100 MW VVER reac-
tors, KNPP is building
four more such units with
Russian collaboration.
Sources said the top
brain of the upcoming nu-
clear park is "completely
shaken" about the data
leak, which poses security
threat as it may let an ad-
versary map the support
system and identify
vulnerabilities.
According to Reuters,
more than 10,000 files dat-
ing between 2018 and
mid-2020, and linked to
KNPP's engineering blue-
prints on control, cooling
and ventilation systems,
and of vendors and sup-
pliers, etc. had been ex-
posed by World Leaks, a
Nuclear Power Corpora-
tion of India Limited said
the information claimed to
be available in public do-
main portals in "conven-
tional" manner of plant
collaborative service, and
does not relate to any nu-
clear safety or nuclear

security-related systems.
The leak originated
from a server hosted by
third-party provider Yotta.
The plant's contractor,
Arif Ambani's Reliance
Group, has admitted that
a "partial breach" had hap-
pened and the government
had been informed.
"Suspicious activity on
Yotta's server was noted on
May 29 last and it was re-
ported to June-end. Invest-
igation by Nuclear Power
Corporation of India Lim-
ited (NPCIL), the project
proponent, and Computer
Emergency Response
Team are on," the sources
said.
When the KNPP en-
countered a similar inci-
dent in 2019, whereas a
North Korean malware in-
fection on its administra-
tive network exposed the
plant's vulnerability,
NPCIL had dismissed it
saying their "unbreachable
standalone network" was
secure and no data could be
accessed by any dark web.
Neither KNPP's site di-
rector Ashok Bhattacharya
nor V.P. Singh, Station Director
of and 29, could be reached
for their comments on this
sensitive issue.
Senior manager of hu-
man resources and public
relations, K. Ramani, who
usually keeps in touch with
media for occasional mis-
take, said he had no com-
ments to make on the data
leak. ■ PAGE 15

Iran threatens 'to halt all regional oil exports'

Oil and gas 'will either be for everyone or for no one', says Iran amid 'wave of strikes' by the U.S.

Blockade by U.S. has 'dismantled' the peace MoU, says Tehran; Brent crude price nears \$85 a barrel

Unless stocks are replenished, the world will be poorly equipped for the next shock, analysts say

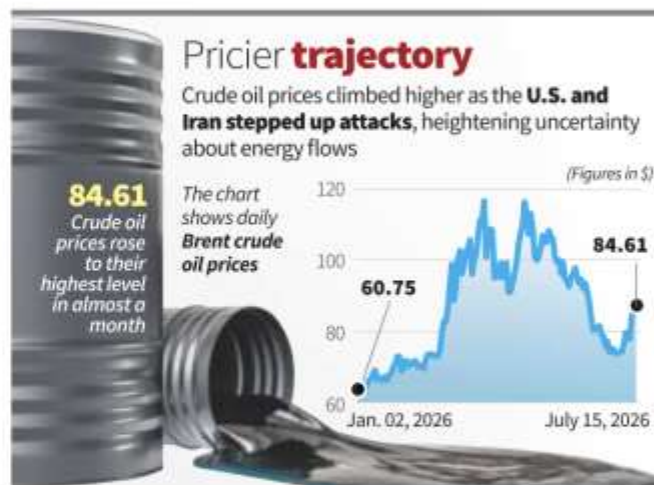
Agence France-Presse
TEHRAN/WASHINGTON

Returning to war nearly a month after signing a memorandum of understanding towards peace in West Asia, the U.S. and Iran on Wednesday launched strikes on targets across the region.

While the U.S. Central Command said it launched "a wave of strikes... designed to further degrade military capabilities Iranian forces have used to attack commercial shipping in the Strait of Hormuz", Iranian state media reported explosions near the port city of Bandar Abbas, on the island of Qeshm, and on Bandar Imam Khomeini. Iranian media later said new U.S. strikes hit the

southern port city of Bushahr, home to the country's only civilian nuclear plant.

Iran's Revolutionary Guards said they targeted the U.S. Fifth Fleet in Bahrain, where the military said it had intercepted attacks against civilian targets, while Jordan's armed forces said they had downed three missiles from Tehran. Deputy Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic, Kazem Gharibabadi, said the renewed U.S. blockade on Iranian ports "has, in a way, dismantled the Islamabad memorandum", referring to the interim deal reached last month to halt hostilities and pursue peace talks. The Guards also threatened on Wednesday to halt all energy exports from West Asia over the



U.S. blockade. "The export of oil and gas from the region will be either for everyone or for no one," it said.

The Brent crude oil, the international standard, traded close to \$85 a barrel on Wednesday – more than 15% higher than the

price before the war, but still well below the nearly \$120 reached at the height of the conflict. Analysts with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have warned that while a surplus of oil had kept prices low, "much of that room has now been used up."

"As tensions flare again in the Strait of Hormuz, that room [from oil surplus] is now smaller and shrinking further as spare capacity has been deployed, demand has compressed, and inventories have been drawn down," Azim Sadikov and Jean-Marc Natal from the IMF wrote in a blog post. "Unless inventories are replenished, the world will start from a weaker position when the next shock comes."

At the heart of the resumption of hostilities has been the dispute over the Strait of Hormuz, a waterway that is crucial for global oil and gas flows.

Iran blockaded the strait after the U.S. and Israel launched their massive attack on February 28, using

it for leverage against its foes for months before briefly reopening it, and then again vowing it would be closed "until the U.S. ends its aggression".

The U.S., in turn, has reimposed its own blockade of Iran's ports, though Mr. Trump has backed down on a planned 20% levy on ships using the strait.

In Tehran, there was no sign of a return to conflict, with Iranians thronging cafes to watch the France-Spain FIFA World Cup semi-final in huge crowds on Tuesday night.

Since the war began, Iran has asserted its control over the Strait of Hormuz and opened fire on ships for taking routes it says are unauthorised.

"The retaliatory operations of the fighters will

continue, and the Strait of Hormuz will remain closed until the United States ends its acts of aggression," the Guards have said.

A Norwegian tanker was hit by an explosion caused by an unidentified device off the Omani coast early Tuesday, the crisis response company MTI Network said.

Kuwait said one of its naval vessels was struck during an Iranian missile and drone barrage, wounding four crew members.

Since last week, renewed U.S. attacks have killed at least 30 people in Iran, government spokesperson Fatemeh Mohajeri said. Separately, the military announced that seven of its personnel were killed in Wednesday's strikes on the southeast.

Topic	Details
Headline	Iran threatens to halt all regional oil exports
Trigger	Fresh U.S. military strikes on Iranian targets
Iran's statement	"Oil and gas will either be for everyone or for no one."
Major concern	Possible closure of the Strait of Hormuz
Brent crude price	Around \$84.61/barrel (highest in almost one month)
Immediate impact	Rising oil prices, shipping risks, global inflation fears
Affected region	Entire West Asia (Middle East)

- According to the report:
- Nearly a month after both countries had signed a **peace Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)**,
- The **United States resumed attacks** on Iranian military facilities.
- Iran accused America of violating the agreement.
- Iran also claims the U.S. has effectively imposed a blockade on Iranian ports.
- Iran responded by saying:
- If Iran cannot export oil, then nobody in the region should be able to export oil.
-

● Share of global oil trade (million barrels/day)
↔ Chokepoints

Danish Straits
6.1% (4.9)

Strait of Hormuz
26.2% (20.9)

Turkish Straits
4.6% (3.7)

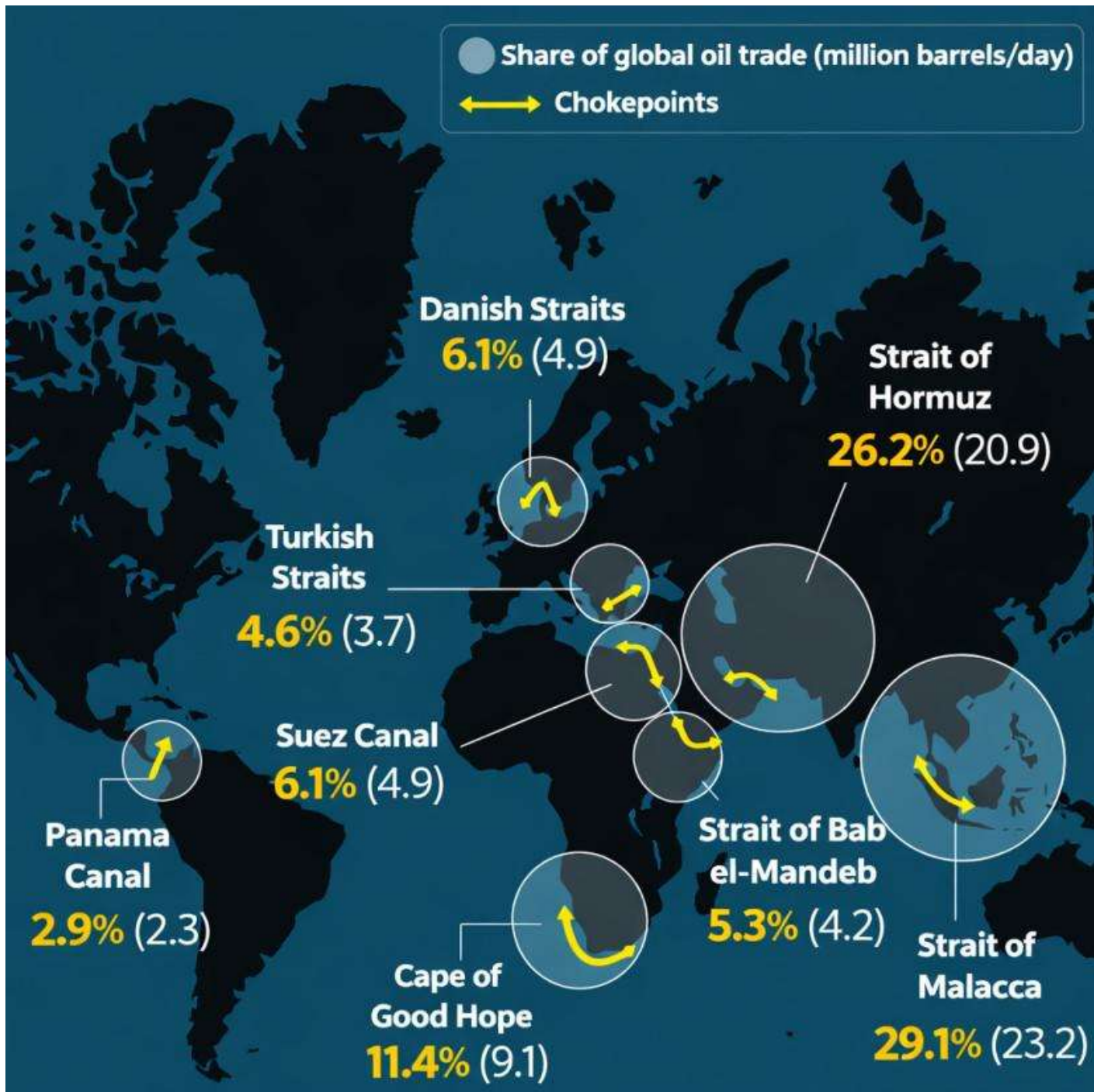
Suez Canal
6.1% (4.9)

Panama Canal
2.9% (2.3)

Cape of Good Hope
11.4% (9.1)

Strait of Bab el-Mandeb
5.3% (4.2)

Strait of Malacca
29.1% (23.2)



OIL FLOW THROUGH THE STRAIT OF HORMUZ



20%
OF WORLD'S OIL

About 17 million
barrels per day

Primary export route
for Gulf oil producers

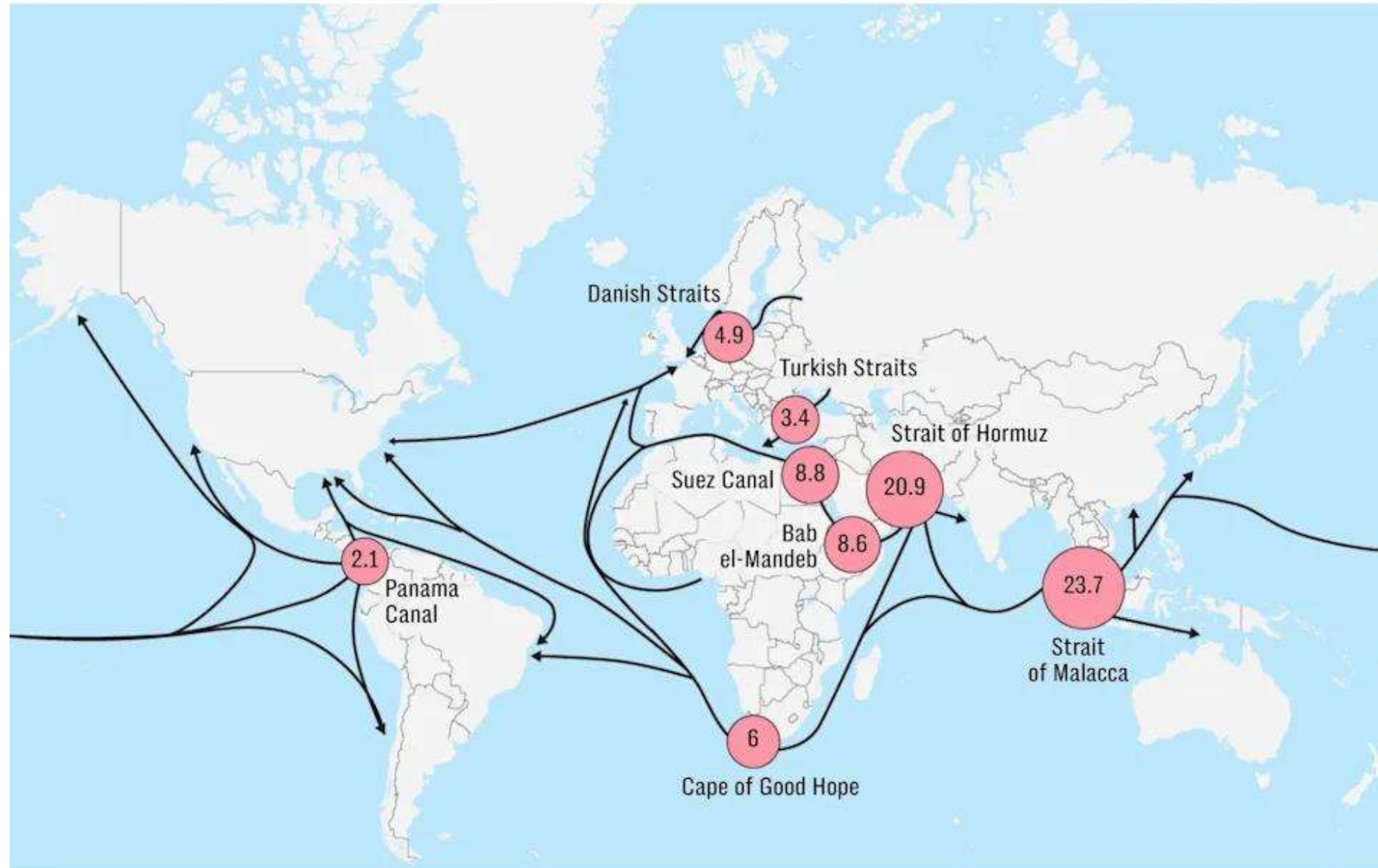
**ALTERNATIVE
ROUTES
LIMITED**





Dire straits

Daily volumes of petroleum and other liquids through maritime oil chokepoints (million barrels per day)



What is Iran demanding?

Iran says:

- Remove U.S. blockade.
- Stop military attacks.
- Allow Iran to export oil normally.
- Otherwise, regional exports may also be disrupted.

Military developments mentioned

The article reports:

Event	Details
U.S. strikes	Attacks on Iranian military targets
Iranian response	Threat to close Strait of Hormuz
Bahrain	Iran claimed action involving the U.S. Fifth Fleet
Oman coast	Norwegian tanker reportedly damaged by an explosion
Kuwaiti vessel	Reportedly hit during missile/drone attacks
Casualties	More than 300 people reportedly killed in Iran since renewed strikes, according to Iranian officials



The reported data leak comes amid construction of four VVER reactors at the plant. FILE PHOTO

Leak of Kudankulam nuclear plant data sparks 'commotion'

P. Sudhakar

TIRUNELVELI

The leak of highly sensitive files of Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant (KKNPP), reportedly accessed by a ransomware group from a contractor's server, has triggered "absolute commotion" in the plant, KKNPP sources said on Wednesday.

After commissioning two 1,000 Mwe VVER reactors, KKNPP is building four more such units with Russian collaboration.

Sources said the top brass of the upcoming nuclear park is "completely clueless" about the development that poses security threat as it may let an adversary map the support system and identify vulnerabilities.

According to *Reuters*, more than 19,000 files dating between 2016 and mid-2025, and linked to KKNPP's engineering blueprints on control, cooling and ventilation systems, list of vendors and suppliers, etc. had been accessed by World Leaks.

Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited said the information claimed to be available in public domain pertains to "conventional balance of plant common service facilities" and does not relate to any nuclear safety or nuclear

security-related systems.

The leak originated from a server hosted by third party provider Yotta. The plant's contractor, Anil Ambani's Reliance Group, has admitted that a "partial breach" had happened and the government had been informed.

"Suspicious activity on Yotta's server was noted on May 29 last and it was reported in June-end. Investigations by Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL), the project proponent, and Computer Emergency Response Team are on," the sources said.

When the KKNPP encountered a similar incident in 2019, wherein a North Korean malware infection on its administrative network exposed the plant's vulnerability, NPCIL had dismissed it saying their "unbreachable standalone network" was intact and no data could be accessed by any dark web.

Neither KKNPP's site director Ashok Bhatiya nor V.P. Sunil, Station Director (1 and 2), could be reached for their comments on this sensitive issue.

Senior manager of human resources and public relations Kannan, who usually keeps in touch with the media for occasional press statements, also did not pick up repeated calls.





Particular	Details
News	Sensitive data related to Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant (KKNPP) reportedly leaked
Location	Kudankulam, Tirunelveli District, Tamil Nadu
Plant Operator	Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL)
Foreign Partner	Rosatom (Russia)
Source of Leak	Third-party contractor's cloud server (Yotta)
Reported by	Reuters citing World Leaks
Investigation	NPCIL, Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT), Project authorities

- **What happened?**
- According to the report:
- A ransomware/hacker group allegedly accessed **highly sensitive engineering files** related to the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant.
- The leak **did not originate from the plant's own operational systems**.
- Instead, it reportedly came from a **cloud server maintained by a third-party contractor (Yotta)**.
- Yotta acknowledged a **partial security breach** and informed the Government.

What kind of data reportedly leaked?

Reuters reported that over **19,000 engineering-related files** were exposed.

These reportedly include:

Data Type	Importance
Engineering drawings	Reactor infrastructure
Cooling system details	Reactor safety
Ventilation system	Radiation control
Control systems	Plant operation
Vendor list	Supply chain
Equipment details	Security concern
Plant blueprints	Infrastructure mapping

The concern is that such information could help an attacker understand the plant's design and identify potential vulnerabilities.

Did the nuclear reactor itself get hacked?

According to NPCIL: No.

NPCIL clarified that:

- Nuclear safety systems were **not compromised**.
- Reactor control systems remain isolated.
- Operational systems are protected through an **air-gapped (standalone) network**, meaning they are not directly connected to the internet.

Air-Gapped Network

Feature	Meaning
Internet connection	No
External access	No
Purpose	Protect critical infrastructure from cyber attacks
Used in	Nuclear plants, defence systems, missile control, military networks

What is an Air Gap?

An **air-gapped network** is a computer network that is physically separated from public networks such as the internet.

Advantages

- Prevents remote hacking.
 - Limits malware spread.
 - Protects reactor controls.
 - Used for critical national infrastructure.
-

Why is the leak still a concern?

Even if reactor controls remain secure, leaked engineering documents may:

- Reveal plant layout.
- Expose infrastructure details.
- Identify vendors and contractors.
- Help adversaries study system architecture.
- Increase future cyber-security risks.

This is why experts describe it as a **security and intelligence concern**, even without evidence that operational systems were breached.

Year	Incident
2019	Malware linked to the Lazarus Group (North Korea) infected an administrative network.
Operational impact	Reactor operations were not affected, according to NPCIL.
Lesson	Administrative IT systems and operational control systems must remain isolated.

Particular	Details
State	Tamil Nadu
District	Tirunelveli
Village	Kudankulam
Operator	NPCIL
Technology Partner	Rosatom (Russia)
Reactor Type	Pressurized Water Reactor (VVER)
Fuel	Enriched Uranium
Cooling	Seawater from the Gulf of Mannar
India's Largest Nuclear Plant	Yes, by planned installed capacity

Feature	Details
Full Form	Water-Water Energetic Reactor (Russian: Vodo-Vodyanoi Energetichesky Reaktor)
Origin	Russia
Reactor Type	Pressurized Water Reactor (PWR)
Moderator	Light Water
Coolant	Light Water
Fuel	Low-enriched uranium
Safety	Multiple passive and active safety systems

Year	Event
1988	India and the Soviet Union signed the Kudankulam agreement.
1998	Project revived after delays.
2013	Unit 1 commissioned.
2016	Unit 2 commissioned.
Ongoing	Construction of additional VVER reactors.

Plant	State	Reactor Type
Kudankulam	Tamil Nadu	VVER (Russia)
Tarapur	Maharashtra	BWR & PHWR
Kakrapar	Gujarat	PHWR
Rawatbhata	Rajasthan	PHWR
Kaiga	Karnataka	PHWR
Narora	Uttar Pradesh	PHWR
Gorakhpur (under construction)	Haryana	PHWR

Eye on supply chain, Cabinet approves Rs 1.27 lakh crore semiconductor push

Rs 62,500-crore mobile making scheme cleared

Soumyarendra Barik
New Delhi, July 15

THE UNION Cabinet on Wednesday approved the second iteration of India's ambitious Semiconductor Mission, with an outlay of Rs 1.27 lakh crore. The fresh six-year initiative will focus on subsidising the supply chain related to chip manufacturing in order to attract companies producing commodities like gases and chemicals used in production.

The Cabinet also approved a Rs 62,500-crore mobile phone manufacturing push — a five-year follow-on to the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme for smartphone assembly, which helped India successfully localise production. Compared to the first iteration of the India Semiconductor Mission (ISM), Government incentives have been slashed in the 2.0 version. For instance, the first scheme carried a uniform capex subsidy of 50% for fabrication and assembly plants. Under ISM 2.0, however, silicon plants will receive a subsidy of 40%, and other units 35%. Similarly, the incentive for advanced packaging has been kept at 35%, and 25% for the conventional version.

ISM 2.0 will also offer Government subsidies for research and development, and for talent development in the semiconductor sector. India's foray into semiconductor produc-



Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw showcases 'Made in India' semiconductor chips during the Cabinet briefing in New Delhi on Wednesday. ANIL SHARMA

tion and packaging has been outlined as a strategic move to insert itself into the global chip supply chain and deepen domestic value addition in its electronics sector. Used to power devices from toasters to fighter jets, semiconductors have become a critical resource amid heightened geopolitical tensions over the last few years.

By 2029, India expects to achieve the capability to design and manufacture chips required for nearly 70-75% of domestic applications, and by 2035, the country aims to be among the top semiconductor nations globally. ISM 1.0, launched in 2021, was conceived as a state-backed push to build a full-stack chip ecosystem, from fabrication and packaging to design and display manufacturing. Under the scheme, cumulative investments of around Rs 1.64 lakh crore have been committed. In this year's Union Budget, Fi-

nance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced ISM 2.0 to produce equipment and materials, design full-stack Indian IP and fortify supply chains.

Under ISM 1.0, the Government has approved a total of 12 chip plants, including various assembly and testing (ATMP/OSAT) plants being set up by the likes of Micron Technology, and a chip fabrication facility being developed by Tata Electronics in partnership with Taiwan's PSMC. These plants are being constructed in states including Gujarat, Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Odisha. At least three of these, including Micron, Kaynes Semicon and CG Semi, have started commercial production, though the fab is still under construction. These chips are also being exported.

The *Indian Express* first reported that the IT Ministry had prepared a blueprint for ISM 2.0 with an outlay of \$15 billion —

roughly equivalent to Rs 1.25 lakh crore at that time's forex rates. This newspaper had also reported that under the fresh scheme, the Government's focus for subsidies may shift to support the ancillary industry around chip manufacturing, and that incentives for assembly and testing plants may be slashed.

In the first iteration of the incentive policy, released in December 2021, the Centre had offered a 30% capex subsidy for chip packaging and testing plants. In September 2022, it raised the subsidy for such plants to 50%, reportedly as a precursor to Micron Technology's proposal, as the Government sought to facilitate the company setting up an assembly plant in India — eventually approved in June 2023. The PLI scheme for smartphone assembly was instrumental in attracting companies such as Apple to set up local production through

their contract manufacturing partners, establishing smartphones as one of the country's biggest export categories. Following the scheme, India has managed to take local value addition in the sector to 24%, compared to China's rate of 38%.

Under the fresh scheme, the Government has focused on local sourcing to boost domestic value addition, and on design and R&D by Indian brands, along with incentives linked to the export of smartphones, Union IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said. In line with sales-linked incentives under the PLI for smartphones, the fresh scheme provides incentive support on eligible sales for manufacturing of mobile phones in India at differentiated rates ranging from 2.25% to 5%.

The scheme will also provide an additional incentive of up to 1.5% linked to domestic sourcing of key components/sub-assemblies. For building Indian brands, an additional incentive at the rate of 3% on eligible sales will apply for design and R&D of the product. The scheme targets cumulative production of Rs 39 lakh crore during its tenure, up from Rs 22 lakh crore achieved under the previous PLI scheme. It aims to generate 60,000 direct jobs in mobile manufacturing and other sectors. Under the PLI scheme for smartphones, nearly 2 lakh jobs were created.

Vaishnaw said that under the PLI scheme, over Rs 19,000 crore was disbursed as incentives, while the Government collected direct taxes worth Rs 25,000 crore and Rs 3 lakh crore in GST from the smartphone industry.

National Investment Policy to boost urea production

Express News Service
New Delhi, July 15

THE CENTRE on Wednesday approved the National Investment Policy (NIP) for Urea-2026, which aims to make the country self-reliant in the production of fertiliser. Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw told the media on Wednesday.

A proposal of this effect was approved by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The CCEA approved the proposal piloted by the Department of Fertilizers. According to a statement, the policy will encourage new investments in the urea sector for setting up gas-based manufacturing units in India.

"Setting up of new urea manufacturing units will be covered under the NIP for Urea-2026 for Atmanirbhar Bharat (NIPU-2026)," the statement said, adding that under the New Investment Policy-2012, six new urea units have been set up, including four through Joint Venture Companies of nominated PSUs, and two by private companies. The period for new investment under NIP-2012 expired in October 2019. "There are 33 operational urea-manufacturing units with reassessed/installed capacity of 269.42 LMT. There is a need to increase the indigenous production of urea."

Particular	Details
Scheme	India Semiconductor Mission (ISM) 2.0
Total Outlay	₹1.27 lakh crore
Approved by	Union Cabinet
Additional Scheme	Mobile Manufacturing Production Linked Incentive (PLI)
Mobile PLI Outlay	₹62,500 crore
Objective	Build a complete semiconductor ecosystem and strengthen supply chains
Ministry	Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY)

Why has the Government launched ISM 2.0?

Semiconductors (chips) are essential for almost every modern electronic product.

They are used in:

- Smartphones
- Computers
- Electric Vehicles (EVs)
- Defence equipment
- Satellites
- Medical devices
- AI servers
- 5G equipment
- Consumer electronics

The COVID-19 pandemic and geopolitical tensions exposed the risks of depending heavily on imported chips, prompting India to strengthen domestic manufacturing.

What is India Semiconductor Mission (ISM) 2.0?

Feature	Details
Launch	Second phase of India's Semiconductor Mission
Budget	₹1.27 lakh crore
Goal	Create a complete semiconductor ecosystem
Focus	Manufacturing, packaging, design, R&D, materials, supply chain
Timeline	Multi-year programme

Objectives

Objective	Explanation
Reduce imports	Manufacture chips in India
Increase value addition	Produce components domestically
Attract global firms	Bring leading semiconductor companies to India
Develop local ecosystem	Materials, chemicals, gases, testing and packaging
Generate employment	High-skilled manufacturing jobs
Boost exports	Make India an electronics manufacturing hub



Company

Micron Technology

Tata Electronics

Kaynes Semicon

CG Power and Industrial
Solutions

Project

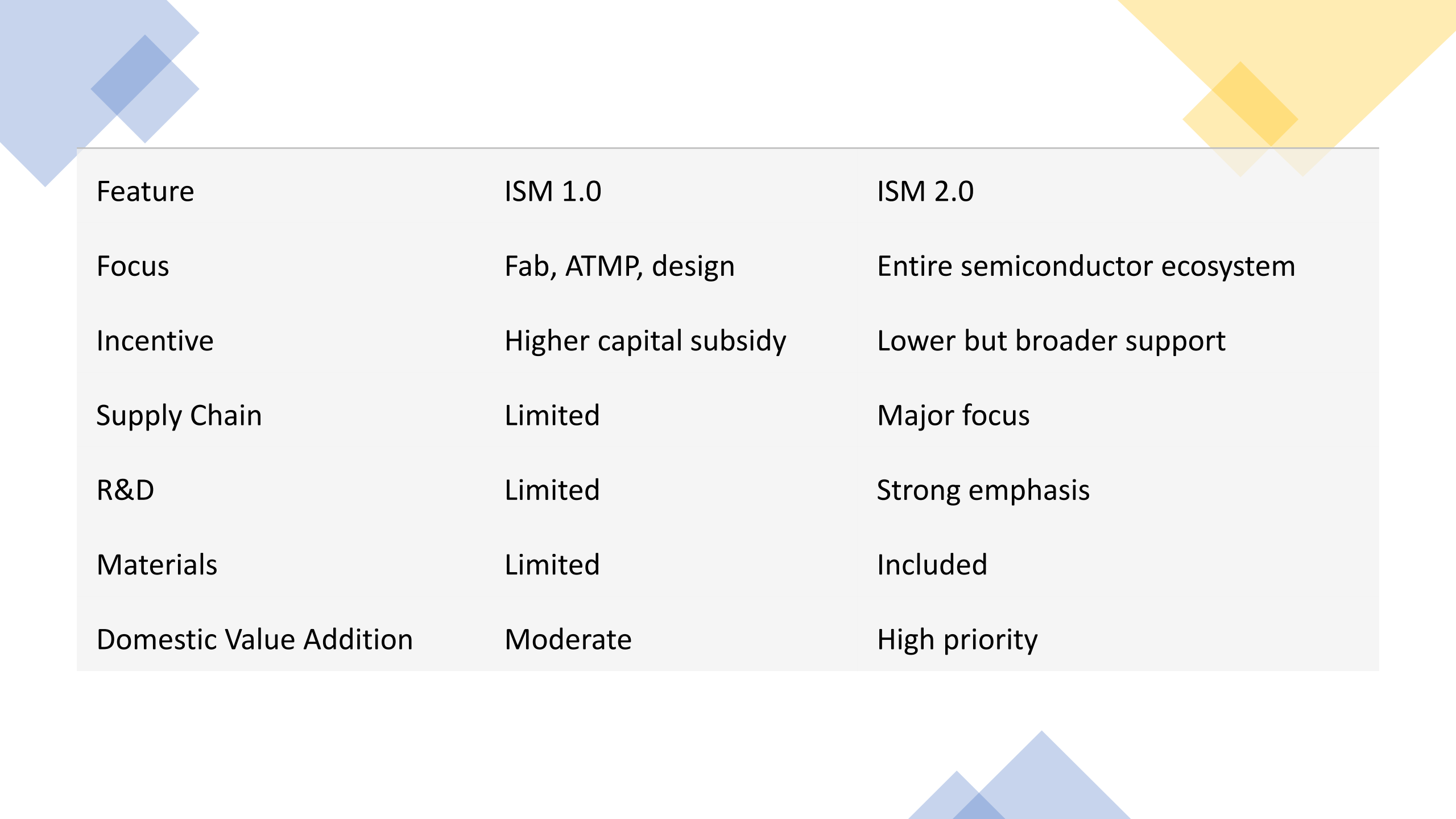
Assembly & Testing (ATMP)
plant in Gujarat

Semiconductor fabrication unit

Packaging and semiconductor
projects

Semiconductor assembly
project





Feature	ISM 1.0	ISM 2.0
Focus	Fab, ATMP, design	Entire semiconductor ecosystem
Incentive	Higher capital subsidy	Lower but broader support
Supply Chain	Limited	Major focus
R&D	Limited	Strong emphasis
Materials	Limited	Included
Domestic Value Addition	Moderate	High priority

What is ATMP?

Full Form	Assembly, Testing, Marking and Packaging
Purpose	Final stage before chips reach manufacturers
Importance	Creates jobs and builds semiconductor capability

Mobile Manufacturing PLI Scheme

Particular	Details
Scheme Size	₹62,500 crore
Duration	5 years
Objective	Promote smartphone manufacturing in India
Incentive	Production-linked incentives based on eligible sales and localisation

Challenges for India

Challenge	Description
High capital cost	Fab plants require billions of dollars in investment
Skilled workforce	Need for specialised engineers and technicians
Technology gap	Advanced process technologies are dominated by a few countries
Water requirement	Fabrication plants consume ultra-pure water in large quantities
Reliable electricity	Continuous high-quality power supply is essential
Global competition	Strong competition from Taiwan, South Korea, China and the U.S.

National Investment Policy for Urea (NIP-2026)

The Cabinet also approved the **National Investment Policy for Urea (NIP)-2026**.

Feature	Details
Objective	Increase domestic urea production and reduce import dependence
Strategy	Encourage investment in new gas-based urea plants
Expected Benefit	Higher fertiliser self-reliance and improved food security

SEMICON 2.0 & MPMS: WHAT'S NEW?

Semicon 1.0

Outlay: ₹76,000 cr

Focus on fabs
& OSAT

DLI only for startups

Initial focus on
28 nm fabs



Semicon 2.0

₹1.27 lakh crore

Entire semiconductor
ecosystem

Extended to large firms

Roadmap to 7 nm and
eventually 2 nm

Earlier Mobile PLI

Focus on assembly

Production
incentives

Helped India become
No.2 producer

Value addition 23-24%



MPMS

Focus on value

Incentives plus local
component kicker

Target 30% global
production share

Target 44-45%

JPMORGAN POISED TO BECOME FIRST \$1-TRILLION BANK



JPMORGAN CHASE IS closing in on a historic milestone that no bank has ever achieved — a \$1-trillion market valuation. Powered by record profits, Wall Street dominance and investor confidence in CEO Jamie Dimon, the banking giant is now just one strong rally away from rewriting financial history.

\$919 billion

Current market value, after record quarterly earnings

\$1 trillion

Valuation milestone that would make JPMorgan the world's first trillion-dollar bank

28%+

Rise in JPMorgan shares over the past year (approximately)
Highest-ever profit posted by any US bank

DEALMAKING BOOM

■ M&A and capital markets activity are rebounding, boosting investment banking fees

■ Balanced business model

■ Strength in both Wall Street investment banking and Main Street consumer lending

ROBUST DEAL PIPELINE

Strong investment banking activity expected through 2026

THE 'JAMIE PREMIUM'

Investors continue to assign a valuation premium to CEO Jamie Dimon's leadership



WHY IT STANDS APART

■ Largest balance sheet among US banks

■ Market leader in investment banking and lending



Karnataka Announces India's First Government-Driven AI University

Particular	Details
Announcement Date	14 July 2026
State	Karnataka
Proposed Institution	India's first Government-driven Artificial Intelligence (AI) University
Announcement Venue	Google I/O Connect India 2026, Bengaluru
Objective	Build a world-class AI education, research and innovation ecosystem
Associated Initiative	AI Hub for startups, researchers and industry
Proposed Additional Infrastructure	Two Green AI Data Centres

Why is an AI University Needed?

Artificial Intelligence is becoming a foundational technology across sectors such as healthcare, education, manufacturing, agriculture and defence. A specialised AI university can help build talent and support research.

Major Reasons

Reason	Explanation
Skill Development	Create AI-ready workforce
Research	Promote advanced AI research
Innovation	Encourage new AI products and startups
Industry Collaboration	Link universities with technology companies
Global Competitiveness	Strengthen India's position in AI

Courses Expected to be Offered

Undergraduate	Postgraduate	Research
Artificial Intelligence	Machine Learning	AI Algorithms
Data Science	Deep Learning	Robotics
Robotics	Computer Vision	Natural Language Processing (NLP)
Cyber Security	AI Ethics	Quantum AI
IoT	Cloud Computing	Generative AI

What is Artificial Intelligence (AI)?

Artificial Intelligence is a branch of computer science that enables machines to perform tasks that typically require human intelligence.

Examples

- Learning from data
- Pattern recognition
- Speech recognition
- Language translation
- Decision-making
- Image recognition
- Autonomous driving
- Medical diagnosis

Major Branches of AI

Branch	Application
Machine Learning	Predictive analytics
Deep Learning	Image and speech recognition
Natural Language Processing (NLP)	Chatbots, translation, virtual assistants
Robotics	Industrial automation
Computer Vision	Facial recognition, autonomous vehicles
Reinforcement Learning	Gaming, robotics, autonomous systems

Green AI Data Centres

The Government has also proposed establishing **two Green AI Data Centres**.

Proposed Location	Purpose
Hoskote (near Bengaluru)	AI computing infrastructure
Near Mangaluru	AI infrastructure and cloud computing

Why Green Data Centres?

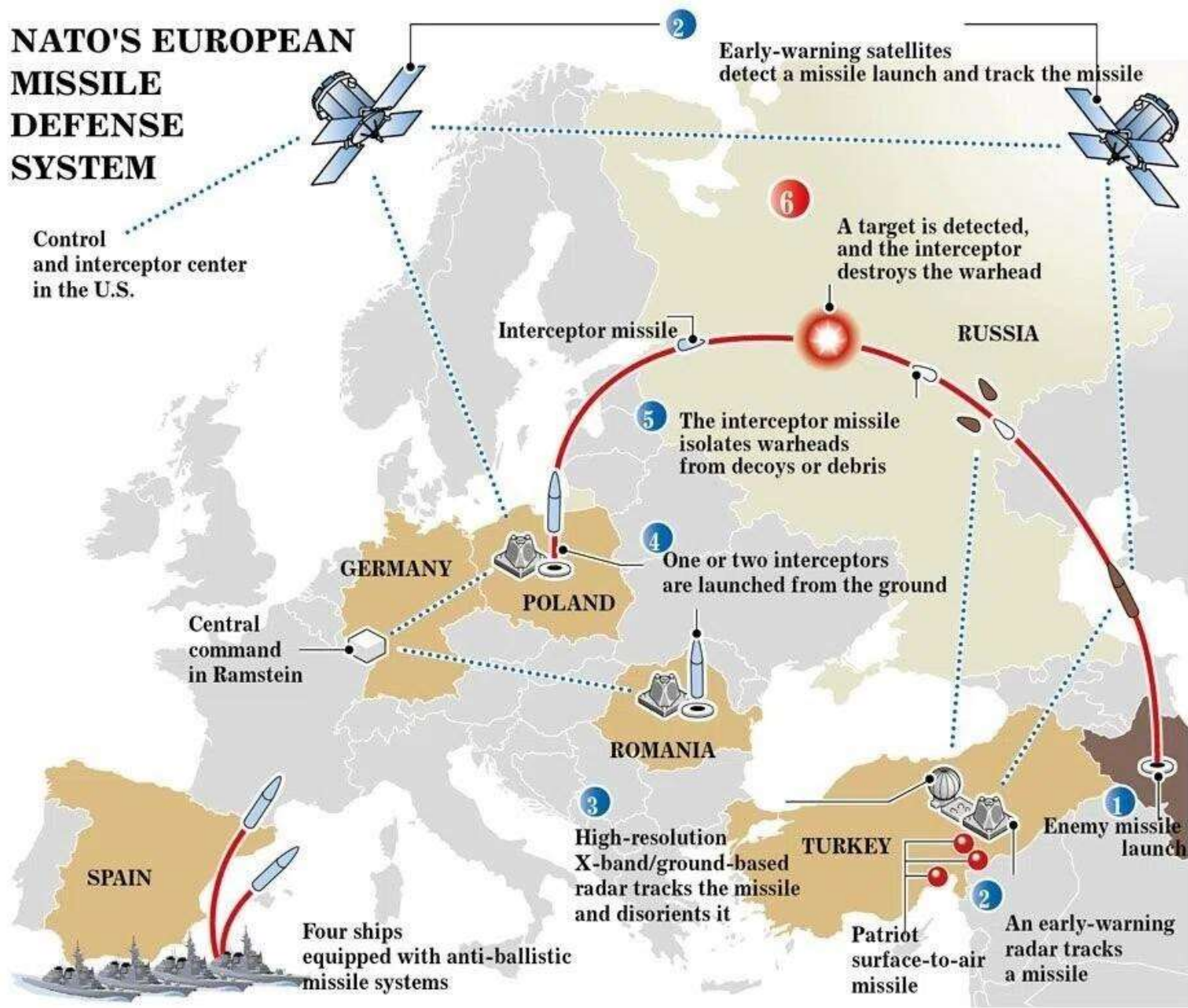
Green data centres aim to reduce environmental impact by using:

- Renewable energy
- Energy-efficient cooling systems
- Lower carbon emissions
- Sustainable infrastructure

Nine European Countries and Ukraine Form Integrated Anti- Ballistic Missile Defence Coalition



NATO'S EUROPEAN MISSILE DEFENSE SYSTEM



Particular

Details

Event

Formation of Integrated Anti-Ballistic Missile Defence Coalition

Date

13 July 2026

Place

Paris, France

Members

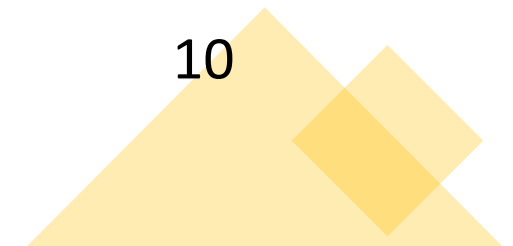
9 European countries + Ukraine

Objective

Develop integrated anti-ballistic missile defence for Europe

Background

Russia–Ukraine War and growing missile threats



S.No	Country
1	Denmark
2	France
3	Germany
4	Italy
5	Netherlands
6	Norway
7	Spain
8	Sweden
9	United Kingdom
10	Ukraine

Why was this coalition formed?

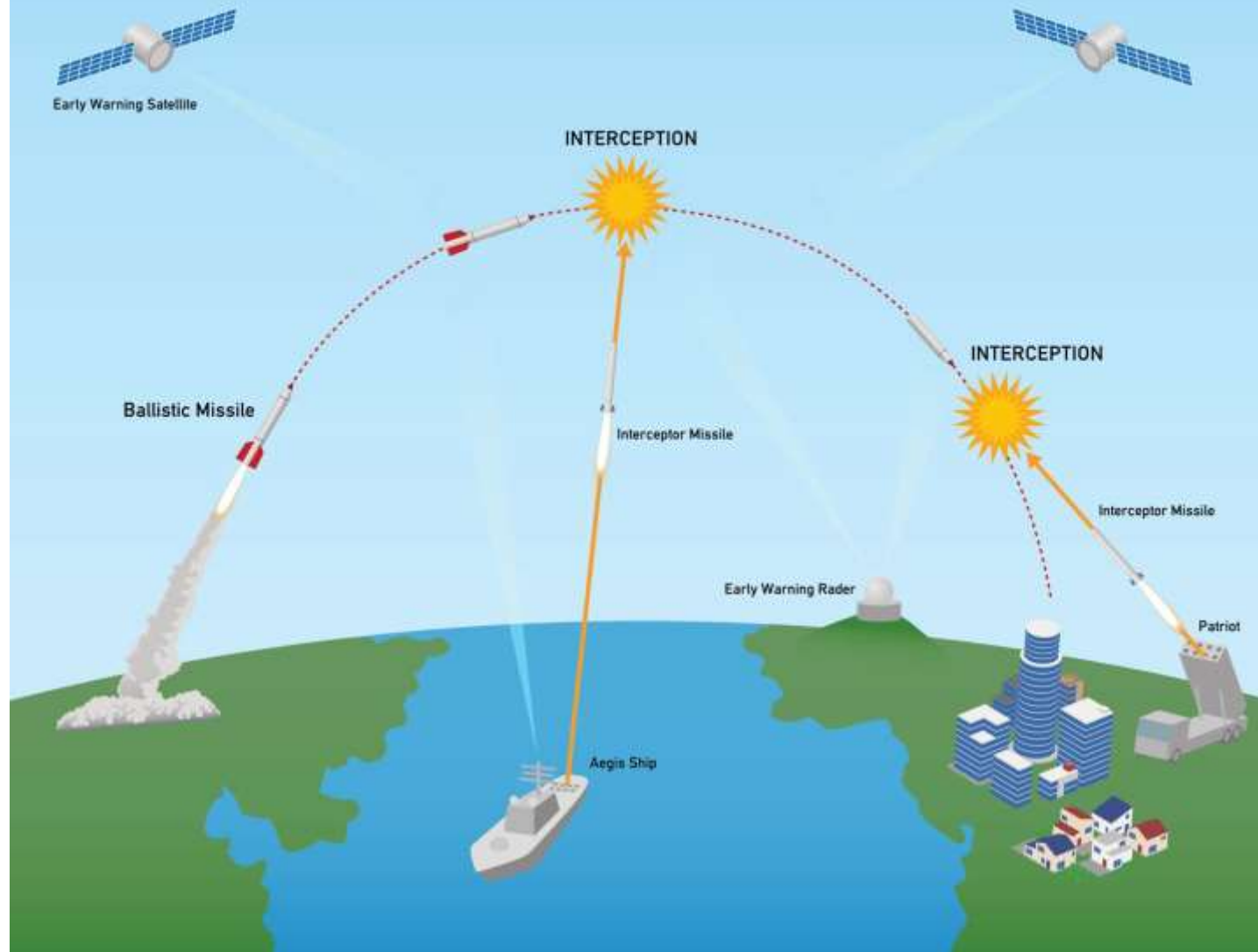
The coalition is a response to:

- Increasing ballistic missile threats.
- Lessons from the Russia–Ukraine conflict.
- Growing use of drones and hypersonic weapons.
- Need for a coordinated European missile shield.
- Better sharing of technology, intelligence and defence resources.

What is an Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Defence System?

An **Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Defence System** is designed to **detect, track, intercept and destroy ballistic missiles** before they reach their targets.

Ballistic Missile Defence



System

Patriot (USA)

THAAD (USA)

Aegis BMD

Iron Dome (Israel)

David's Sling (Israel)

Arrow-2 / Arrow-3 (Israel)

S-400 (Russia)

S-500 (Russia)

Purpose

Short to medium-range missile defence

High-altitude interception

Sea-based missile defence

Short-range rockets and artillery

Medium-range missile defence

Long-range ballistic missile interception

Air and missile defence

Advanced missile defence



Feature	Details
Agency	Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)
Programme	Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD)
Interceptors	Prithvi Defence Vehicle (PDV), Advanced Air Defence (AAD), Prithvi Air Defence (PAD)
Capability	Multi-layer interception of incoming ballistic missiles
Status	Under phased development and testing



Country	System
USA	Patriot, THAAD, Aegis BMD
Israel	Iron Dome, David's Sling, Arrow
Russia	S-400, S-500
India	DRDO BMD Programme
China	HQ-19 (under development/testing)

Grey Hornbill
Returns to
Gujarat's Gir
Forest After
Six Decades











Particular

Details

Species

Indian Grey Hornbill

Scientific Name

Ocyrceros birostris

Location

Gir Forest, Gujarat

Event

Successful return after about **60 years**

Evidence

Scientific study published in the journal
Birds

Conservation Method

Reintroduction and habitat restoration





- The **Indian Grey Hornbill** has returned to **Gir Forest, Gujarat**, after an absence of more than **six decades**.
- Researchers have confirmed that:
- The birds are surviving.
- They are breeding successfully.
- The habitat is supporting a self-sustaining population.
- This marks an important conservation milestone.

Particular	Details
Common Name	Indian Grey Hornbill
Scientific Name	<i>Ocyrceros birostris</i>
Family	Bucerotidae
Habitat	Dry deciduous forests, urban parks, agricultural landscapes
Distribution	Indian subcontinent
Diet	Fruits, insects, small reptiles and seeds
IUCN Status	Least Concern (LC)

Unique Features of Hornbills

Feature	Importance
Large Curved Beak	Helps in feeding
Casque (Helmet-like Structure)	Used for display and sound resonance
Tree Cavity Nesting	Female seals herself inside the nest during incubation
Seed Dispersal	Essential for forest regeneration

Why are Hornbills Called "Farmers of the Forest"?

Hornbills consume fruits and disperse seeds over long distances through droppings.

This helps:

- Forest regeneration.
- Plant diversity.
- Natural reforestation.
- Ecosystem balance.

Why Did the Species Disappear from Gir?

Possible reasons include:

- Habitat degradation.
- Loss of mature nesting trees.
- Human disturbance.
- Decline in food resources.

Reason

Explanation

Habitat Improvement

Better forest management

Conservation Efforts

Protection of wildlife

Availability of Nesting Trees

Improved breeding habitat

Reduced Disturbance

Better ecosystem health

Word of the day

Convalescence:

gradual healing (through rest) after sickness or injury

Synonyms: recuperation, recovery

Usage: *During my convalescence, I thought that others in the world must be suffering like me.*

Pronunciation:

newsth.live/convalescence

International Phonetic

Alphabet: /ˌkɒn.vəˈles.əns/

Word of the day

Gaffer

An elderly man, a person who exercises control over workers

Synonyms: boss, supervisor

Usage: *We need to ask the gaffer if we can leave early today.*

Pronunciation: newsth.live/gaffer

International Phonetic

Alphabet: /gæfə/

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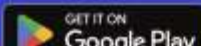
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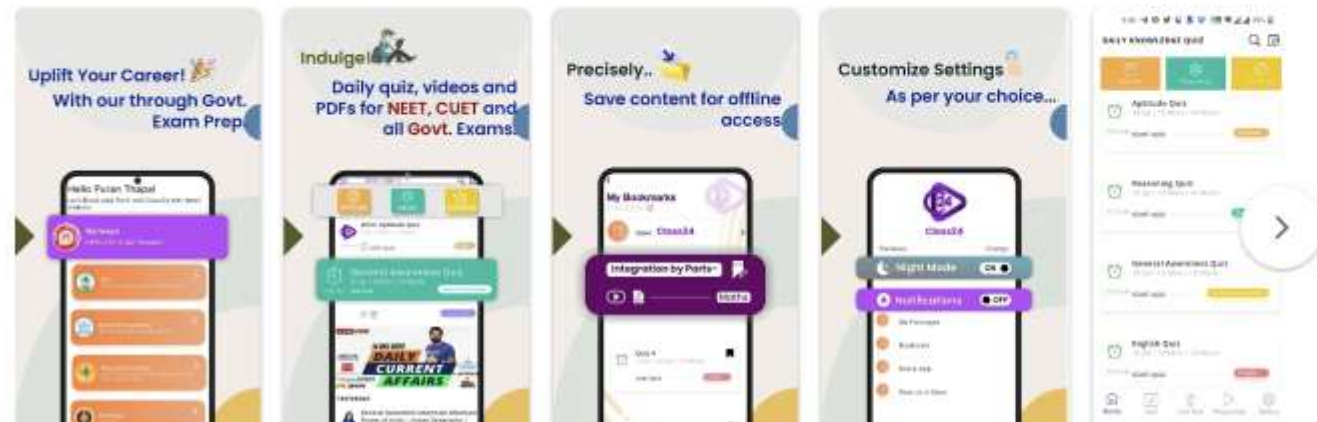
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